

e Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Litt

Emerson Bennett

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Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

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The Past but lives in words: & thousand ages
Were blank, if books had not evoked their ghosts,
And kept the pale, unbodied shades to warn us
From fleshless lips. Bulwer.
Let us revive the Past, and from the graves,
Long hallowed, wake the sleepers, and make them
Tread anew the paths they tread, and act once
More their several parts upon the stage
Of life, ere they retire forever.

Anon.

CHAPTER I.

Change is written on the tide
On the forest's leafy pride;
All, where'er the eye can rest,
Show it legibly imprest.

Rev. J.H. Clinch.

On the banks of the beautiful Ohio, some five or six miles above the large and flourishing city of Cincinnati, can be seen the small and pleasant village of Columbia, once laid out and designed to become the capital of the great West. This village stands on a beautiful plain, which stretches away from the Ohio in a north-easterly direction, between two ridges, for a goodly number of miles, and at the base of what is termed Bald Hill a hill of a conical shape, from the summit whereof you can command every point of compass, and some of the most delightful views in the western country.

Standing upon this hill, with your face toward the south, you first behold, immediately below you, a cluster of dwellings, mostly white, with their green lawns in front, and their flowery gardens in the rear, with one or two neat, unostentatious looking churches rising above them, as if to give a quiet and moral beauty, if we may so express it, to the scene. Beyond these buildings, which constitute the principal village of Columbia, the eye at once falls upon an open, variegated and fertile plain, over which it wanders for something like a mile, to rest again for a moment upon a few brick and wood-colored houses, half hid amid a grove of beautiful trees, then upon the smooth, silvery Ohio, which here comes sweeping past with a graceful bend, and, lastly, upon the green and romantic looking hills of old Kentucky. Turning to the left, or eastward, you behold, some mile or two miles distant, a woody ridge, which intersects the Ohio at right angles, and, stretching away northward, forms the eastern boundary of the plain. At the base of this ridge, can be seen, here and there, a quiet farm-house, and portions of the Little Miami, as it rolls its silvery waters onward through a most delightful grove, to unite with, and be lost in, the placid bosom of La Belle Riviere. Between you and the Little Miami, and for many a mile up toward its source, lies the plain we have mentioned, now divided as far as you can see, into lots of four or five acres each, all of which, being under cultivation, present, in the summer season, with their different products, a pleasing variety of colors, as if to enchain the attention of the beholder with an unspeakable sensation of delight. Following the course of the plain away to the north-east, you behold, some few miles distant, another pleasant village, with its neat, white houses peeping from among the green foliage of the surrounding trees. Turning again to the south and west, and following the windings of the Ohio, you can perceive the village of Fulton along its banks, some two miles away, with here and there an elegant mansion, all standing out in bold relief against the green background of a neighboring ridge, and not unfrequently finding themselves mirrored in the river's placid bosom. A view of the delightful city of Cincinnati is here cut off by a bend in the ridge and river; but notwithstanding, the landscape, taken as a whole, is one of the most pleasing that can be found on the globe.

Such is an outline, only, of the scene which is presented to the beholder of modern days; but very different was it sixty years ago, when along the banks of the river and over the plain and hills, instead of the quiet village and its hum of civilization, and the many pleasant farms under cultivation, and the farm-houses sending up in graceful wreaths the smoke of their peaceful fires, there was a vast, unbroken forest, inhabited by the barbarous, untutored savage, and the thousand wild beasts of the wilderness. As it is with the early settlement of this portion of the country we have to do, we must leave the scene as it now exists, and go back to the period when the hardy pioneer left his comfortable and well-protected home, to venture hither, and dare all the dangers and suffer all the privations of frontier life.

As early as November, 1788, a party, consisting of some twenty persons, conducted by Major Benjamin Stites,

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landed at the mouth of the Little Miami, and began a settlement upon the purchase of ten thousand acres, which the Major had previously made from Judge Symmes. Among this party were many whose names afterward became noted in history, and whose descendants still occupy prominent positions in the community whereof they are citizens. They were the first adventurers into this region of country, and were a month in advance of the party which landed at, and erected the first log cabins on, the present site of Cincinnati. On their arrival, they immediately constructed a log fort, built several cabins or huts, and then proceeded to lay out the town of Columbia into streets or lots, on the plain we have described believing at the time, that it would eventually become the great capital of the West.

Beginning at Crawfish Creek, a small stream which was to form the north-western boundary of the city, ascending the Ohio for more than a mile, and extending back from the river for three-quarters of a mile, taking in a portion of what is now called Bald Hill, they laid out the ground in streets and squares. The residue of the plain, between this imaginative city and the Little Miami, and for three miles up this stream, was cut up into lots of four or five acres each, intended for the support of the town, when it should come to maturity. These lots have since been divided by trenches, and so remain at the present day; and as you view them from Bald Hill, one covered with greensward, another with a crop of wheat, a third with corn, a fourth with oats, and so on, the whole plain appears like a many-colored carpet of beautiful squares.

The first pioneers of the Miami Bottom were soon joined by others; and, in the course of a few years, Columbia became quite a flourishing place, and, for a time, took the lead of its sister towns, Cincinnati and North Bend the last since noted as the residence of General Harrison. At this period, these three villages, with the exception of Marietta, higher up the river, were the only white settlements in Ohio; and as it was more than suspected by the inhabitants of each, that one of them was destined to become the great emporium of the West, each looked upon the advancement of its neighbor with a jealous eye, and sought, by every means, to push itself forward to the grand desideratum. For a time, Fortune seemed bent on playing her pranks, by now favoring this one, now that, and so alternately raising and depressing the spirits of each; but, at last, as the world already knows, she yielded the palm to Cincinnati, by establishing there a fort and garrison, which rendered it, with its natural advantages, a place of greater security than either of the others, and, consequently, a more desirable location for those venturing into the Western Wilds.

About the period when rivalry between the places named was at its height and when the momentous question was pending, as to which would be the favored spot of fortune, the Queen City of the West our story opens. Columbia, as we said before, had already made rapid advances, and taken the lead of her rival sisters, in point of business and population. Over the broad plain, between Bald Hill and the Little Miami, were now scattered some forty or fifty log cabins, and at the southern base of this hill, on a little knoll where, at the present day, can be seen a neat grave-yard, with its marble and sand-stone slabs recording the names of many who, since then, have gone to the shadowy realms of death stood a rude sanctuary, the first building erected solely to the worship of God by the pioneers of the Miami Valley. Around this humble sanctuary was a grove of beautiful trees, in whose branches a thousand merry songsters, of all hues, sang blithely. Side by side with this place of worship, on the same knoll, amid the same delightful grove, was erected a block-house, for the protection of the inhabitants in the immediate vicinity. Hither, on a Sabbath morning, when the toil of the week was over, the villagers of both sexes, and all ages, would repair, to listen to the word of God, as it fell from the lips of the venerable Stephen Gano (father of the late General Gano), whose mild, noble, benevolent countenance, his long, white flowing locks, and his solemn, tremulous voice, as he raised his eyes to Heaven in supplication, or forcibly pointed out to his hearers the way to eternal life, made his remarks deep, grand and impressive. And the more so, it may be, that each felt himself to be in the wilderness, surrounded by the hostile savage, and knew not at what moment he might be called to his last account, a victim to the fatal rifle, or the bloody tomahawk and scalping-knife.

To avoid a surprise and be prepared for any emergency, during the hours of worship, sentinels were stationed without the walls of the sanctuary, who, with loaded rifles on their shoulders, paced to and fro with measured tread, examining minutely every object of a suspicious character; while those within sat, with their weapons by

their sides, ready, at a moment's warning, a given signal, to rush from the house of quiet devotion, to the field of blood and slaughter. Not only to church, but to their places of labor, where they repaired in companies, and, in fact, on all occasions, the early settlers went armed.

Besides the block-house on the knoll, there were one or two others nearer the river, and one some half a mile further up the plain, close by where now winds a broad and beautiful turnpike, and on the site of which now stands a private dwelling. Bald Hill (now owned by N. Longworth, one of the wealthiest gentlemen in the country, and by him devoted to the cultivation of the grape) was, at the period referred to, covered by a dark, dense forest, where prowled the wild beasts, and not unfrequently lurked the murderous Indian, seeking his "great revenge" on his more civilized and less wily foe.

Such, reader, is an outline view of the scene where our story is laid, and the condition of the country at the time of its opening. Having said this much of general facts, we shall now proceed to detail.

CHAPTER II.

A lovely being, scarcely formed or molded
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded.

Byron.

Her eyes, her lips, her cheeks, her shape, her features, Seem to be drawn by Love's own hand.

Dryden.
Strange being he,
Of whom all men did stand in awe; and none
Knew whence he came, nor how, nor whither bound,
Nor cared to question. Strange things he told,
And true then disappeared mysteriously. *Old Play.*

It was a lovely day in spring, and earth had donned her raiment of many colors, and seemed smiling to the whispering zephyr that softly floated over her. The bright sun had already passed the zenith of the day, yet his oblique rays fell warmly upon the great forest, extending over the Miami Bottom, and pierced through the foliage, here and there, down to the earth, and kissed the violet, the rose and the lily, and danced to and fro to the music of the swaying branches. A thousand songsters, of all hues from the bright red-bird, the black-bird, the paroquet of green and gold, to the white and plaintive dove flew hither and thither, fluttered among the leaves, and made the perfumed air heavy with their melody. Here might be seen the bear, sitting upon his haunches, or lazily crawling off to seek his lair; there the timid deer, daintily cropping the green herbage, or, startled by some rude sound, bounding away with an unmatched grace and the speed of the flying arrow. Underneath the leaves, occasionally, lay coiled the wily copper-head, ready to strike his victim; and the sound of the rattle-snake could ever and anon be heard, giving the generous, but if unheeded, perchance fatal, warning. Here, too, more cunning, more deadly than all the dread beasts or serpents of the forest, might peradventure be found the swarthy savage, with his murderous weapons in hand, crawling stealthily and silently onward, to execute his fell design upon some innocent and unwary foe of his race.

But for the dangers everywhere lurking in this forest of beauty, it might have seemed a Paradise indeed, unsurpassed by that primitive Eden, where man first broke the holy command, and entailed misery upon his descendants even to the last generation of time.

But notwithstanding the peril which surrounded her, which perchance lay hid behind each bush and beneath each

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leaf, there was one, a fairy, beautiful being, who seemed to give no thought to danger, as if her own fair self were an amulet of safety. She was standing on the bank of the Little Miami, some two hundred rods above its junction with the Ohio, her back braced against a tall old Sycamore, her head bent a little forward, and her eyes, those sparkling orbs of the soul, resting upon the dark waters rolling slowly onward before her, perchance to catch a glimpse of her own fair face, perchance to watch the motions of the finny tribe, or perchance to behold the pictures of light and shade, which the sportive sunbeams, streaming through the rustling leaflets, made upon the glassy surface of the quivering stream.

Beautiful creature! how shall we describe her? how convey, by the dull pen, to the optical sense, the etheriality, the reality, the sunny brightness of the being in form divine before us? We can give the outline of form we can describe the shape of her features, the color of her hair and eyes yet how shall we convey the ever-varying expression of her countenance the buoyant, merry, sympathetic, versatile soul, which animated, and made to differ from others, the clayey tenement which it inhabited! We cannot we despair of doing it; and yet we will do, to the extent of our ability, and let the imagination of the reader supply the deficiency.

Know then, reader, that she whom we have introduced to your notice, was an angel not of heaven, but of earth; not pale and pensive, with wings upon her shoulders, as we sometimes see the tenants of paradise represented but full of color, life, music, soul a bright being, calculated to adorn the sphere where her lot was cast, and yet, when done, to "shuffle off the mortal coil," and be equally an ornament among immortals! Her age was sweet, glowing, imaginative seventeen; that age of all others in woman, the most peculiar and full of strange sensations; when she stands timidly, as it were, between two periods girlhood and womanhood just pensively looking back and bidding adieu to the one just brightly looking before and greeting the other: when, if by chance she sees through the rose colored optics of love, the whole pathway before her seems strewn with bright, unfading flowers, and every thing appears so new and perfectly beautiful; and she dreams not that serpents, and thorns, and ashes, and coffin-palls, lie in her path, to make her weep and mourn, and sigh for the rest of the grave to which time is bearing her.

Bright, rosy, buoyant seventeen! how many thousands daily look back to it with a sigh, as they think of the hundred still unexecuted plans laid out for coming time, and contrast their present conditions with those they intended to occupy! At seventeen, all is sweet indecision, uncertainty and inexperience; and life is then to us only an ever-varying kaleidoscope, where every thing we behold no matter how we twist and turn it by pretended reason is a beautiful flower; and flower upon flower, each more bright, lovely and fascinating than the last; and if we dream of change at all, it is always change for the better.

Happy seventeen, then, was she who stood leaning against the old sycamore God keep her from the cold, stinging, unhappy experience of many of her sex! In form she was a beauty light, slender, graceful full of youthful elasticity and vigor with a well developed bust a small, white, plump, dimpled hand, and a foot so exquisite, it might have rivalled that of the divine Fanny of modern days. Her features corresponded with her form were fine and comely, and radiant with the glow of health but remarkable for nothing save expression. Had they been chiselled in marble; with the soul absent, they would not probably have even excited a passing remark; but with the soul there that ever varying soul they took the beholder captive to their charms, drew him forward as the magnet draws the needle, held him fast as the iron chain the prisoner. The predominant expression of her countenance was a bright, roguish, girlish smile, which almost invariably hovered around two as pretty lips as were ever seen, and was a type of her nature and happy heart. The skin of her features, though somewhat dark, was smooth and transparent, where every thought seemed to make a passing impression, as the light breeze upon the still bosom of a glassy lake. Her cheeks were tinted with the rose, and slightly dimpled; and her mouth was set with a beautiful row of pearly teeth. Her eyes were dark and sparkling, full of vivacity and animation, and yet so softened by long fringy lashes, that it seemed as if she were eternally looking love. Her hair was a glossy, light brown; and now, when the sunlight fell upon it (for her hood was held in her left hand), it gave out a bright, golden hue. On the present occasion, she wore a loose riding dress, carelessly arranged, which, together with her partially dishevelled hair, showed that her mind was not entirely occupied with external appearances. In her right

hand she held the bridle rein of a sleek, coal-black steed, from the saddle of which she had apparently just dismounted; and by her side, lolling as if from hard running, and occasionally looking up into her sweet face, crouched a large, Newfoundland dog. For a moment she stood gazing into the limpid stream, in the position we have described her, and then giving her head a shake, as if to throw back the ringlets that had fallen somewhat forward over her eyes, she turned to her canine companion, and, in a clear, ringing voice, as if addressing an individual, said:

"So, my Bowler, you think you have had a hard chase, eh? In faith, I thought Marston's legs would prove too much for you?"

Here she turned, and stepping around the tree, patted the proudly arched neck of her horse: while the dog arose, and approaching her, rubbed his head in a familiar manner against her hand.

"Ah, Bowler, dog, you look tired," she continued, stooping down and playfully caressing the brute; "you can watch, better than keep Marston's company particularly when he is in such fine running trim as now. Come, Marston," she added, to the beast, "let us away again, for I trust you are now refreshed;" and as she adjusted her dress, preparatory to mounting, she struck out in a full, silvery voice, in the following

SONG.

"Cheerily, merrily, off we go,
Over hill and plain with glee,
And the swiftly bounding roe,
Scarce can keep our company;
Swift, as arrow in its flight,
Speed we with a wild delight.
"Horse and rider, linked in one
Instinct, reason, both combined
This to guide, and that to run,
How the breezes lag behind!
Cheerily, merrily, off we go,
Swifter than the bounding roe."

"Well sung, pretty Kate Clarendon," said a deep, heavy voice behind her.

Kate (for the fair being we have described was none other than our heroine), who was in the act of mounting, started and wheeled around with a look of alarmed surprise; while the horse pricked up his ears, and the dog, with a savage growl, sprang in front of his mistress, ready to defend her with his life.

"Be not alarmed, fair being," continued the strange voice; and at the same instant, a thick cluster of bushes, growing on the bank of the stream some ten paces distant, was parted by a large, sunburnt, hairy hand, and a tall, athletic, singular looking figure emerged therefrom. Toward him the dog now sprang furiously; but the next moment, and ere he had gained half way between his mistress and the stranger, he dropped his tail between his legs, and then wagging it in token of recognition, trotted up to the other as if to solicit a caress.

The new comer, as we have said, was a singular looking being. In stature he was tall being full six feet and in person very ungainly. His legs and arms, each very long and sinewy, were joined to a crooked, bony body. He had tremendous breadth of shoulder, from which he tapered down to his feet, in shape not unlike a wedge. His neck was slim, but full of large muscles and veins, which seemed to stand out from it like cords. His head was rather large, even for his body, with features very coarse, and, to one unacquainted with him, exceedingly repulsive. He

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had a big, Roman nose, sallow, sunken cheeks, and a prominent chin, covered with a thick, coarse, dirty, grizzly beard, which extended down even to his broad, hard, bronzed bosom, and added, to his otherwise unpleasing exterior, an almost ferocious look. About his eyes, if indeed eyes they could be called, he had a remarkable appearance; and a stranger, at first sight, would have pronounced him totally blind. The lid of one eye was closed entirely; and that of the other so much so, as just to leave a dull, lead-colored rim of the lower part of the ball visible. To add to this disagreeable appearance, the nearly closed lid quivered continually, like the leaf of the aspen; while the ball of the eye rolled around in every direction, as if the owner were suffering mortal agony. Above these lids, across the lower portion of a high, dark, wrinkled forehead, extended light, shaggy brows; and his hair, which was also light, coarse and matted, came down to his shoulders. He wore no hat; but instead, a strip of deerskin, painted white, on which were some strange devices in black, passed across his brow, and around his head, giving to him an air of mystery. His costume was as simple as an Indian's. It consisted of a frock made of deerskin, with the hair outside, which was worn next his body, reached to his knees, and was tightened around his waist by a rough belt. To this frock were no sleeves, and, in consequence, his brawny arms were entirely naked; neither did it fit close around his neck, but left a large portion of his breast bare also. On his feet were moccasins, which completed his attire; and in his belt, instead of the usual weapons of that day, was only a long knife. Strapped to his back was a rude knapsack, in which he carried jerk, a blanket, and various implements. In one hand (the nails of which were very long, and the back of which was thickly covered with hair) he held a stick of witch-hazel, at one end of which were prongs, not unlike the tines of a fork. To conclude, the age of this strange personage might have been forty, or perhaps fifty, so difficult was it to determine by his rough, weather-beaten countenance. His voice was very deep, a little inclined to the sepulchral and his language, ever good, was often metaphorical.

Such is a description of the personal appearance of one of the most remarkable individuals ever known. Who he was, or whence he came, none could tell. Among the settlers of the early times, he appeared mysteriously, and as mysteriously disappeared; and as he pretended to be gifted with second sight, or a sight into futurity, there were not wanting those superstitious enough to believe him either a supernatural being, or leagued with the devil. This feeling he took care to foster, by his acts, such as incantations, strange mutterings to himself, occasionally a wild manner, and eccentricities of various kinds. In fact, it is not to be wondered at, that, in those times, he should excite a feeling of awe and superstition; for often, when thought far distant, would he make his appearance among a group of individuals, who had perchance been conversing of him; and this so suddenly, many times, as really to alarm them; and then again, ere any one was aware how, as suddenly disappear. He was sometimes on the pretended search for mines or money, and not unfrequently did he excite persons to dig for treasures. He told fortunes, occasionally, and occasionally, too, uttered prophesies and prophetic warnings. Among the whites he came and went as he chose, and also among the savages, who respected him as a "great medicine" and prophet to injure whom would be to offend the Great Spirit. By the latter he was called Kitchochobeka, or Great Medicine; and by the former, Blind Luther, the Necromancer.

As soon as Kate saw his person in full, she said, with a gay laugh:

" 'Pon my word, Luther, for once you startled me, for I deemed myself entirely alone."

"We are never alone, Kate," returned the other, shaking his head gravely; "the spirits of the dead are always with us."

"O, come, come," rejoined the fair girl, tossing her head gaily, though not without a perceptible shade of uneasiness in her countenance: "Come, come, Luther, do not seek to make me superstitious; you can find plenty of proselytes without me, you know. But tell me how long have you been concealed in you thicket?"

"As long as it would take you to count ten."

"But how got you there so silently?"

"By my will, and the wings of the wind."

"By your will, for one thing, most undoubtedly; but as to the *wings* of the *wind* why, I rather think that a joke of yours eh, my conjuror?" and the gay girl closed with a laugh.

"He to whom the future is as an open scroll, legibly written, never stoops to joke," was the grave reply.

"And do you really pretend to know the future, in sincere earnest?"

"Do you pretend to know the voice of your own mother, girl?"

"But now," said Kate, in a coaxing, coquettish tone, "be honest, Luther, for once, now do, and tell me have you any faith in yourself? All in confidence, you know, between you and I; for of course *I* will never mention it. O no, I will give you a proud example of a woman keeping a secret;" and the black eyes of fairy Kate sparkled with a roguish expression.

"You jest, girl," replied the other, solemnly, and in an offended tone, "with the great mysteries of nature. Have I faith in myself? Have you faith in what you behold? Look yonder, and tell me what you see!" and he pointed with his finger toward the great luminary of the day.

"I behold trees, and leaves, and birds, the sky and sun," answered Kate, who looked in the direction indicated by the finger of the other.

"And do you believe the things you have named really exist?"

"Most assuredly I do."

"Why do you so believe?"

"Because I see them."

"And see you nothing more?"

"Nothing of importance."

"I do," rejoined the Necromancer, in a guttural voice, so changed from the tone in which he had just been conversing, that Kate turned to him with an involuntary expression of surprise and wonder; which was not lessened, by observing him standing with his gaze fixed on high, in wrapt meditation, while every feature seemed expressive of some strange sight, and his lips moved as if uttering words, though no sound issued from them.

"And what do you see, strange man?" inquired the maiden, after a minute's pause, while a thrill of mysterious awe made her blood creep coldly through her veins.

"A century of futurity, and God permitting man to seize upon the elements and harness them to his task," answered Luther, in a solemn tone. "I behold, springing from the earth, only a few miles distant, a great city. I behold the light and smoke of its fires, and hear the voices of many thousand inhabitants, and the clink of the hammers of industry, and see it gradually spreading itself, enlarging on every hand, as the eagle when he raises his wings to soar on high. I behold the dust of the earth put into a great crucible, and lo! it comes forth another substance. It is seized, and wrought upon, and shaped like no living thing that now exists; and yet it is to be a thing of life and motion, with rolling legs, and speed beyond the speed of the deer, endurance beyond calculation, and strength exceeding a hundred horse. Its breath, its vitality, its soul, is vapor; and though it travels with tearing

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velocity, through mountains, over streams, hollows and plains, dragging a thousand times its own weight behind it, yet so gentle is it, when properly handled, that a child can guide and command it; but once let it get the upper hand, and the strength of ten thousand men would be no more to it than a thread to a ship in the gale. I behold, too, the great timbers of the forest transformed to leviathans, whose vital power is also vapour, and which, with spoutings that can be heard afar off, glide swiftly over the bosom of rivers, against wind and tide, and plow foaming channels in the mighty deep, and carry the sons of earth in their great bosoms. I behold the red lightning, also, drawn from the thunder-car of heaven, and sent courier throughout the Christian world. I behold the great blue vault of heaven turned to an ocean, over which sail ten thousand vessels, looking down upon, forests and mountains, that now to us seem almost impassable barriers. And I behold plague, and famine, and war, and blood, and fire, and flood, and desolation, and woe, and crime, stalking apace, by whose dread calls and thunderings, thrones totter, governments of tyrants are overthrown, and liberty shoots upward, like a beautiful tree, and spreads its ever-green branches abroad to the uttermost ends of the earth, beneath which all nations at last repose in security, and smoke together the calumet of peace. And the vision has gone from me and all is darkness and I behold no more for the great seal of obscurity is now set upon my sight."

During this speech of Blind Luther, his countenance was lighted up with the fires of an enthusiastic soul, until in part it had the sublime look we conceive the seers to have had of old, when they uttered those great and mystic truths, which shall descend to all generations; and our fair heroine gazed upon him in wonder, not unmingled with admiration; for there was something lofty and elevating in his manner and strange eloquence. As he concluded, he waved his hand with a majestic gesture, and then turned suddenly to Kate.

"You think me demented or perhaps an idiot; yet what I have just uttered, is written on the great seal of the nineteenth century. You do not understand it you think me an impostor, perhaps?"

"No, Luther," answered Kate, "not an impostor; but I fear, at times, you let a wild imagination get the better of your reasoning powers."

"It is seldom," returned Luther, "that I condescend to experiment, in order to convince frail mortality I am what I pretend; but in the present instance I shall do so; as it is necessary, for your future welfare, that you believe in me, and adhere to my instructions. Behold my power!"

As he concluded, he brought the fore-finger of his right hand in front of his face, and strode slowly toward Kate, who fixed her gaze upon him in curious wonder. When he had reached within a pace of her, he paused, fastened his eye upon hers for a moment, and said:

"You are now under the influence of my spirit. You have not power to move a limb without my consent."

Kate made an effort to move, but found, in truth, she had not the command of a single muscle. She was like a rock. Not even her eyes could she turn away from that strange being who stood before her. For the first time in her life she felt superstitious for the first time in her life she secretly acknowledged a power in man beyond the scope of reason. As she thought upon it, her blood ran cold, and cold drops of perspiration stood upon her face and body.

"And now you believe," said the Necromancer, at length, waving his hand.

"I believe you are a wonderful being," answered the other, with a shudder.

"Yet fear me not girl; I am your friend. Open me your hand."

Gazing for a few moments into the soft, white palm, which Kate, in compliance with his request, now extended toward him, he said, solemnly:

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"Eventful destiny is thine thou of the sunny locks, fairy form, and laughing eye!" And he proceeded to chant the following mystical lines:

"Where the parent stem is broken,
'Neath the tree that's old and oaken
Where the night-wind cool is blowing,
O'er the life-blood warmly flowing
By unchanging Fate's decree,
And Almighty Destiny,
One shall stand thou sawest never,
Yet shall see and love forever:
And he unto thy spirit,
Shall a legal right inherit:
Yet moons shall come and wane,
And the harvest leave the plain,
And the earth be green again,
And tribulations sore
Shall befall thee o'er and o'er
Ere thy evil all be mated,
And thy web of joy completed.
Come, ye fates, and set the seal,
On what I of ye reveal!"

He paused, and struck the palms of his hands three times together.

"These are strange words, Luther," said Kate, "and I do not understand them."

"Thou shalt understand all in time," answered the other.

"When sorrows dark do weigh thee down,
Thou shalt behold this mystic crown;

[Here he touched the band around his head]

"And in the depths of deepest woe,
The mysteries I have told thee, know;
Whate'er thy fortune, nobly bear,
And yield thee never to despair.

"My mission first is ended, and so I leave thee. Farewell!"

He waved his hand, and turned to depart; but just as he did so, Kate uttered a piercing scream, and wheeling suddenly around, Luther perceived her features distorted with horror for notwithstanding his apparent blindness, he could see very distinctly. She was looking upward, at an angle of sixty degrees; and turning his own gaze in that direction, he beheld, to his amazement and alarm, the fiery, glaring eyeballs of a large panther, crouched on a neighboring tree, and just in the act of springing. There was not a moment to be lost; and catching Kate by the arm, as though she were an infant, he swung her upon the back of her coal black steed, and shouted: "Away! away!"

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The next moment, horse and rider were bounding over the plain, and man and beast were closing together for the death struggle; for in his haste to spring, that his prey might not escape him, the panther had fallen a little short of Luther, who, dodging quickly around the tree, had thus time to draw his knife and prepare himself for defense.

As to Kate, knowing that she could render Blind Luther no personal assistance, she rode swiftly to an open field, some quarter of a mile distant, where several laborers were at work, to whom she quickly made known the peril of the Necromancer. Seizing their rifles, which were always their companions, some five or six hardy fellows started immediately to the assistance of Blind Luther (whom all knew and respected), preceded by Kate herself. When they arrived at the spot, to their astonishment, they found the panther lying dead, but not a single trace of his opponent.

"He's not here now," said one.

"He's the devil," returned another.

"Wonderful being," observed a third.

Uttering such, and similar remarks, they spent some half an hour in examining the animal, the ground round about, and then returned to their labors, more than ever convinced that Blind Luther was something superhuman.

As for Kate, she explained to the others how Luther had suddenly appeared to her, and the manner of their separation; but of their conversation she told nothing; and her thoughts on what she had seen and heard she kept to herself. As she rode slowly over the plain, however, to the dwelling of her father, some half a mile distant, a close observer might have seen a sedateness on her countenance, a sadness in her eye, that accorded but ill with her naturally light-hearted, merry look.

CHAPTER III.

With all that's ours, together let us rise,
Seek brighter plains, and more indulgent skies;
Where fair Ohio rolls her amber tide,
And Nature blossoms in her virgin pride;
Where all that Bounty's hand can form to please,
Shall crown our heavy toils with rural ease.

David Homphreys.

Misfortune does not always wait on vice, Nor is success the constant guest of virtue.

Havard.

George Clarendon, the father of our fair heroine, was a native of eastern Pennsylvania, and only son of a gentleman, who, to use the phrase, was "well to do in the world." At an early age, he was sent to school in Philadelphia, where he received a good education, and became acquainted with a merchant's daughter, between whom and himself sprang up an intimacy, which, in course of time, ripened into an ardent passion, and was at last productive of a happy marriage. Not having any set occupation, he entered into partnership with his father-in-law; and for many years afterward, the firm of Cooly & Clarendon was extensively known and respected.

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During this time, a daughter was added to the family the bright, rosy, mirth-loving Kate, whom we have just described, and on whom both parents doated fondly, looking upon her as an angel sent from Heaven to minister to their happiness. Years rolled onward, and all went smoothly; and of course Kate, who gave promise of making a beautiful and intelligent woman, was not neglected. As soon as she became of a suitable age, she was sent to school, and every means possible taken to secure her a polished education which she, to her praise be it said, was not slow to profit by. At the age of fourteen, she returned to her parents. At fifteen, extensive preparations were being set on foot for giving a grand party, that she might make her debut in society; but ere the consummation of this event, the firm of Cooly & Clarendon, to the utter astonishment of every one, suddenly failed. This was caused by the failure of a large mercantile house in England, with which our Philadelphians had a too close business connection.

After having honorably discharged their debts, by other property in their possession, Clarendon and his partner found they had but little left them; and the former at once resolved to take what means he had, and set out for the West forthwith; there to embrace the more sure, if not more profitable, occupation of agriculture.

Having completed his arrangements, he bid adieu to his friends, and departed with his family, on a journey of adventure to the frontiers. His first stopping place was Pittsburgh; but not satisfied with the appearance of the town, he joined a party descending the river, and landed at Marietta Still dissatisfied, he joined the party of Major Stites, and was one of the first who landed at the mouth of the Little Miami, on the ground we have before described.

About half, or perhaps three-fourths of a mile above the mouth of the Miami, and a hundred rods west of this stream, was the spot selected by Clarendon for his residence. Here, soon after his arrival, he erected a comfortable log-cabin, whither he soon removed his wife and daughter, who meantime had remained at Marietta.

As must naturally be supposed, it was anything but agreeable to people brought up in the refined manner of the Clarendons, and used all their lives to luxury, to be changed so suddenly from their former enjoyments, to all the rough, rude customs of pioneer life; and from a state of security and ease, be transported to one of danger and hardship. But they had counted the cost beforehand, and prepared themselves for the worst; so that the change proved less severe than it might otherwise have done. Happiness is not to be found in externals it lies within, and depends altogether upon the mind and as the Clarendons, instead of fretting and complaining of what they could not alter, strove to look upon everything as happening for the best, and sought to be cheerful and to cheer each other with words of hope and encouragement, so they soon found themselves in possession of enjoyments beyond what at first thought seemed possible for them to obtain.

As for Kate, always light-hearted and merry, she was not slow in finding means to make life pass gaily and agreeably, even in the wilds of the frontiers. She was exceedingly fond of the art equestrian; and that she might not be deprived of all the privileges to which fortune had hitherto entitled her, her father purchased the steed, on which the reader has already seen her mounted, and on which it was her delight to scour the surrounding country, accompanied by the playmate of her youth, the faithful Bowler.

Kate soon grew to like her new home, and to be the favorite of every one who knew her. Her frank, cheerful, merry disposition and winning ways, won the hearts of all; and there was not a man, woman or child, in the village of Columbia, but spoke of her in the highest terms of praise; nor one whose face did not grow brighter at her coming. She ever had a cheerful word and a smile for all, either young or old. She was the belle of the village, by general acclamation, and yet none were envious. Whatever Kate did was perfectly right; and as to the young men, the greatest poltroon of them all would have put his life in jeopardy to gratify her slightest wish. She was a queen, and reigned supreme; and though England's sovereign of modern days may possess more power and splendor, yet Victoria, in the height of her popularity, never had admirers more ardent, nor subjects more devoted, than had simple Kate Clarendon.

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Our fair heroine had but one fault perhaps this was not a fault, strictly speaking but if so, it was a fault of circumstances one of which almost every pretty woman is guilty and one which, if not carried to extremes, is certainly pardonable: she was, in a measure, a coquette. Among the villagers she had many admirers, of whom there were three, genteel young men, special suitors for her hand, at the opening, of our story. For these three, it was rumored, Kate held a preference over all others; but which one of the three was most admired by the fair girl, none could tell not even themselves for to-day it was apparently this one, and the next day that, so that each was alternately buoyed up with hope, and depressed by disappointment. All the gossips contended she had a choice; but the difficulty lay in finding out the favored one. Whenever Kate was importuned on the subject herself, she invariably replied with a laugh, that she liked them all, but that her choice was neither. This, however, was not believed; and those who strove to keep a record of every event transpiring in the world of Columbia, were daily on the look-out for the news of a wedding of beholding the merry Kate caught in the noose Hymenial.

The father of Kate, was a man some forty years of age, large and well-proportioned, with a noble, manly, handsome countenance, and manners dignified and pleasing. Among the villagers he was very popular; and being a man of fine intellect and education, he was looked up to, by most, with much deference and esteem. His wife was a mild, quiet lady, of a sweet, benevolent disposition, a few years his junior, who also stood high in the estimation of the people; so that, among all the villagers, there was, probably, no family that enjoyed a greater share of genuine, heart-felt popularity, than the Clarendons.

The residence of the Clarendons was a well-constructed double cabin, with puncheon floors and clap-board roof. Their furniture, of course, was of the plainest description; for in those days, and in this section of country, it was impossible to have other. They had some good clothing, and a number of small articles of value, which they had brought with them from the East. The cabin itself stood upon a very slight knoll, and fronted the west, surrounded by a tall grove of beech, sugar-tree, locust, &c. with the exception of an acre in the rear, that had been cut away, and the ground turned into a handsome garden of vegetables and flowers. There seemed but one fault in the whole arrangement; and that was, that the dwelling was too much exposed its nearest neighbor being at the distance of nearly half a mile. This was remarked upon by some of the settlers at the time of its erection; but Clarendon himself declared that he had no apprehension, and the subject was never again referred to.

Time rolled on smoothly, and the Clarendons, at the date of our story, found themselves once more in rather prosperous circumstances. But as it is with Kate we have for the present especially to do, we will return to her forthwith.

CHAPTER IV.

Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike;
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.

Pope.
There's danger in the dazzling eye,
That woos thee with its witching smile.

Mrs. Osgood.
But then her face,
So lovely, yet so arch so full of mirth,
The overflowing of an innocent heart.

Rogers.

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Upon the youthful mind of Kate, the words of the Necromancer made a deep impression; and for several days after their interview, it was noticed by her friends, with some concern, that, contrary to her usual manner, she appeared sad, thoughtful, and even abstracted. But as it was known she had received a severe fright from the panther, the cause was attributed to this, and every one looked to see it gradually wear off, and behold her again bright with her own cheerful, happy smile. Wear off the sadness certainly did; and a week from the event we have chronicled, Kate appeared the same smiling, joyous being as before.

About this time, the young people of Columbia decided on having a ball which, if it could not rival in splendor some in the older settlements, might, at least, in heart-felt enjoyment. Accordingly, an appropriate place was selected, a fiddler engaged, and every preparation thought necessary for the coming event speedily set on foot. The building chosen for the purpose, was a new double cabin, which had just been completed, and only waited this kind of christening, as some of them termed it, for the young couple, who were to tenant it, to take up their abode therein. Flowers of all hues, together with sprigs of cedar, were collected; and the walls and ceiling were decorated with hangings of green, and with beautiful festoons and boquets. In one apartment a long table was spread, and covered with such delicacies as the country then afforded; and many dishes there were (composed of deer, bear and buffalo meat), which, among us of the present day, would be considered great rarities. An old banner of stars and stripes (that had been somewhat torn and riddled in the long and sanguinary struggle of the Revolution, which belonged to one of the settlers, who had himself carried it in the heat of battle, and which was held in great veneration by all) was procured and arched over the door of entrance; and not all the purple and crimson robes of royalty, could have excited one tithe of the pride in the bosoms of those simple-minded pioneers, than did this soiled and dirt-begrimmed bunting of "red, white and blue."

The belle of the ball was, of course, to be our youthful Kate; and as she was to be escorted thither by one individual only, and as there were three young men who laid equal claims to the honor of being her beau-gallant for the occasion, there was, as a natural consequence, some peculiar sensations excited in the breasts of each, in regard to which should be the favored one.

Unwilling to take an undue advantage of each other, they met to decide the matter by themselves. Among other things, one proposed that they should draw lots for the preference; another, that they should run a race for it; and the third and last, that they should all go in a body together, and allow her to make her own selection. This last proposition was finally agreed to, as the point at issue would, in this way, be decided by the girl herself; and, consequently, each would know which was the most favored suitor of the three.

Accordingly, the next morning, which was a beautiful one indeed, and the third preceding the gala night, our three lovers mounted themselves on fine horses, and together rode over the plain toward the residence of their fair umpire, to have the pending question decided by her own sweet lips and voice each to be made happy or miserable, as the case might turn out.

Kate was seated in the door of her cot, gazing upon the lofty old trees, that threw their deep, cool shadows over the luxuriant earth beneath, watching the birds that hopped from branch to branch, and listening to their happy, musical, artless songs, the while humming some tune herself, in a corresponding strain of melody. At length the tones of her voice swelled out, rich and clear, in the following

SONG.

"Sing, ye warblers, sing!
Make the forest cheery
Swell your throats,
With glorious notes,
And let not earth seem dreary.
"Sing, ye warblers, sing!"

To the streams and flowers
In your prime,
Improve your time,
And golden make the hours.
"Sing, ye warblers, sing!
God lists your voices
Nature hears,
Through morning tears,
And in the sound rejoices."

As Kate concluded, she leisurely cast her eyes over the plain, and, as she did so, an observer might have seen them widen, brighten and twinkle with an expression of quiet, mischievous satisfaction. Turning to her mother, who was seated behind her some little distance, within the cottage, needle-work in hand, she said, gaily:

"I do wonder, mother, whether you and I are going to be taken by storm, or whether it be me alone."

"Why so, Kate?" inquired Mrs. Clarendon.

"Why, yonder come three gallant gentlemen, all mounted, who individually honor me with their addresses and words of flattery. One alone, or one at a time, is enough, Heaven knows! but, heigh-ho, here are three together what shall I do?"

"Well, Kate, if you would follow my instructions, you would not be troubled this way," returned the mother of our heroine, reprovingly. "Why don't you make a selection, and dismiss the others? It does not look well to see a young lady with too many beaux, I can assure you."

"But which shall I select, dearest mother mine?" asked Kate, with a roguish smile.

"How should I know! Select the one you esteem the most."

"But suppose they are all alike in my estimation?"

"Why, then, you do not love any, and so discharge them all."

"Discharge them, indeed!" rejoined Kate, laughing. "Why they would all go mad, and hang or drown themselves that is, if I may believe their assurances and then what awful crimes would be laid to my charge, and what a weight would eternally be on my conscience!"

"Go to, Kate," replied her mother, smiling; "there is no use in trying to do anything with you, for you turn everything into ridicule. You are a spoiled child, Kate, I fear."

"Heigh-ho! I fear so, too," rejoined Kate, drawing a long sigh, and pretending to be very serious, although she could scarcely refrain from a burst of merriment. "But I say, mother, would I not be worse spoiled indeed, should I discharge all these gay youths, and have not a single one left to help myself with? O, would not that be awful!" And Kate clasped her hands together, with a stage struck air, and rolled her eyes upward in mock solemnity.

"Have a care, child, or that will be your fate in earnest," said her mother, her own risible muscles requiring a great effort to keep them quiet, as she gazed upon her daughter. "Have a care, Kate, or they will discharge themselves."

"Do you think so, mother? O, wonderful youths! how I envy them such firmness of decision."

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"Many a gay coquette has died an old maid, despised and rejected by those she once flirted with, and rejected herself," pursued Mrs. Clarendon. "Better take warning in time daughter mine."

"An old maid!" exclaimed Kate, in mock horror, shaking her head, and throwing about her sunny curls in wanton profusion. "O, horrible fate horrible! To think of living without a lord to control all one's actions to hold the purse to give one grave advice on the most trifling subjects to tell one how to dress where one may go when one must stay at home; to think of living without a family to slave for to have no one to take care of but one's self: oh! this *must* be horrible! No, no! I must not think of such a thing; and as here come my cavalier gallants, I will strive to secure one, at least, in time to save me from a destiny so awful."

As Kate concluded, the three young men we have alluded to, rode up to the door, and each made his obeisance, and spoke his morning salutation.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Kate, in return. "Really, I know not what to think of beholding you three together. Are you on a mission of peace or blood?"

"Peace, most decidedly," answered the foremost, a fine, comely youth of twenty, with dark, bright eyes, brown curly hair, and an intelligent countenance. He was the son of a respectable citizen of the village, and was called Albert Danvers.

"We never enter a lady's company with any other motive," added the second, a square-built, robust, jolly-faced young man of nineteen, whose countenance indicated health and happiness. He was also the son of a settler, and was called Orville Danbury.

The third member of the party was older, more marked in his appearance than either of the others, and consequently will require a more minute description. His age was about twenty-three, and his figure slim and tall. His features were rather effeminate than manly, with a pale, sallow complexion, and were expressive of habitual thought on gloomy subjects. He had black, sunken, piercing eyes, a straight, well-formed nose, a rather pretty mouth, and a round and prominent chin. His lips were thin and habitually compressed; and when he smiled, which he did but seldom, and then as if by an effort, there lurked around them an expression both sensual and sinister. He had little, very little beard so that his face was as smooth almost as a lady's. His forehead was high, but not of a prepossessing cast, and was marred by deep furrows, as if the mind were continually employed on some difficult theme. His hair was black and curly; and what was somewhat rare in that part of the country at that day, was kept well oiled and brushed. His suit of fine broad-cloth, neatly fitted to his person, contrasted forcibly with the coarse, loose, home-made, woolmixed grey of his companions.

The origin of Rashton Moody (so he termed himself) was not definitely known to any of the villagers. About a year previous to the date of our story, he made his appearance in Columbia, bearing a pack upon his shoulder, and with him bringing the implements of a surveyor. As a person of his profession happened to be wanted at the time, he was immediately given employment, and had remained in the vicinity ever since. His dress, occupation, and finished manners, at once made him the beau ideal of all the young ladies of the village, to whom his slightest expression was an oracle of wisdom; and in whose pale, thoughtful, half-melancholy countenance, they saw enough to excite their sympathies, together with a world of romance; and consequently, of all their imaginings, he was the hero. But if all fancied him, it was evident that he did not reciprocate; for after a time, he gradually withdrew his company from all save Kate Clarendon; and if there chanced to be a gathering where she was not expected to be present, Rashton Moody was invariably absent. Had Kate not been a great favorite with all, this marked expression of regard for her alone, from one so universally popular, must have made her many enemies among her own sex.

Now, as often happens in such cases, the individual himself, and the preference shown by him for her company, were less agreeable to Kate, than they would have been to almost any other unmarried lady in Columbia. But

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Kate, as we have said, was a little inclined to be coquettish; so that whatever might be her real feelings, they were concealed by a dissemblance that completely deceived all; and, moreover, it was perfectly natural that one of her turn of mind should feel flattered by the attentions of a personage so much sought for by others, whether she cared for him herself or not. Had Kate expressed the real sentiments of her heart, she would have said that she liked Danvers, could endure Danbury, but that the company of Moody was really disagreeable to her. Notwithstanding all this, however, there was, to her, rare sport in having what she termed three devoted lovers of respectability; and so she encouraged all collectively, but managed to evade committing herself with any individually. Her plan was adopted more for her own amusement, doubtless, than for any other purpose. Her delight was in drawing them on to a certain point, and then, just as the conversation was becoming somewhat serious, adroitly turning it by some light remark foreign to the subject. As she cared less for Moody than either of the others, so she feared him the more; for there was something about him, that, in spite of herself, always made her gloomy, and chilled all the warm impulses of her joyous heart. Could she with propriety have dismissed him, doubtless she would have done so; but to do this, while receiving the attentions of others, would have called for an explanation, and she had none suitable to give. Neither would it do, as she looked upon the matter, to wound his feelings, by treating him less civilly than his rivals. Thus matters stood between the various parties, at the time we have chosen to introduce them to the reader.

"Well, Sir Knight of the Black Armor," said Kate, addressing Moody, in a tone of innocent raillery, after having waited a sufficient time for him to begin the conversation, "how is it that your lips are more sealed than your companions in arms of the Hodden Grey?"

"True love is ever silent," returned Moody, laconically, fixing his dark, piercing eyes upon Kate, in a manner so earnest, as to draw a blush to her cheek.

"Nay," said Kate, rallying, "that is not to the point, sirrah! We were not talking of love."

"Only thinking," observed Moody.

"Nay, sir, I deny that, for myself, I was even thinking of love."

"I cannot say as much for myself," sighed Moody.

"Faith, but you are becoming sentimental," replied Kate, forcing out a ringing laugh, to cover the embarrassment she felt from a remark so pointed. "Come, my gallant cavaliers," she added to all, "will you not dismount, and honor the dwelling of a poor maiden, for a short time?"

"Why, as to that," replied the first speaker, Albert Danvers, "I can say, for myself, that nothing would be more agreeable to me, were it not that I think the errand on which we came can be better done as we sit."

"I agree with you," said Danbury.

"Say on, my noble seniors I am all attention," replied Kate.

"As I have been appointed spokesman," said Danvers, "I may as well "

"Not make any blunders," put in Kate, with a laugh.

"Exactly."

"Well?"

"Well, first you must know, fair Miss Clarendon "

"Stop!" interrupted Kate; "no eulogy on the party present. No flattery to the face, Albert."

"Well, then, you must know, Miss Kate, if you do not already, that a few nights since, in solemn conclave met, the young people of Columbia decided on having a ball rude, it is true but still a ball and the best we can give."

"Hum! indeed! Well?"

"And at this ball, it was anxiously hoped, and certainly expected, would be collected all the fair faces of the town."

"Yes?"

"In which case, Kate Clarendon could not be absent."

"Hum! flattery again."

"Whereupon the query afterward came up, as to which should be the lucky man, out of a certain three, to escort her thither."

"Which was decided "

"Nay, which has not been decided at all, but left to your own fair self to say."

"How? I do not understand you."

"Why, simply, Miss Kate, you are to choose out of the three before you, which one you will have for your gallant on the occasion."

"In earnest?"

"Earnest, I assure you."

Kate looked at the three mounted young men, for a moment, seriously, and then burst into a wild, merry laugh, and clapped her hands with childish delight.

"Well, if this is not the funniest thing I ever heard of," she exclaimed: "Three young men, riding off to their lady-love together, to be picked from as a farmer would select a sheep from his flock for the slaughter. Well, trot out here, and let me consider.

"First," continued Kate, as if soliloquising, "there is Albert Danvers a good-looking fellow enough, but then he don't know how to sit his horse properly, keeps his knees too stiff, and is too tall, I think, and broad in the shoulders, to suit my taste. Then there is Orville Danbury not quite so good-looking as the first, is too short and clumsy, has a face too big, and laughs too much: I can't take him. Lastly, here is Rashton Moody too tall, too slim, too pale and sallow, dresses too nice, and don't laugh enough; and when he does laugh, makes one have the cold chills. He won't do. Gentlemen," concluded Kate, her dark, sparkling eyes twinkling with merriment, "I have thought the matter over, seriously, and, 'pon my word, I really don't think I shall be able to make a choice."

"Then," said Moody, quickly, "allow me to tender my services alone."

"Why, really, Sir Knight of the Black Armor, I "

"Unfair! unfair!" cried Albert and Orville. "Kate must make her own selection, or we go back as we came those are the terms of agreement."

"Terms, or no terms, I shall do as I think proper," replied Moody, haughtily.

"Come, come no airs here!" returned Danvers, his dark eyes flashing.

"Do you pretend to dictate to *me*, sir?" retorted Moody, angrily.

"Hold, comrades! you are in the presence of a lady," said Danbury.

"And pretend to come on a mission of peace," rejoined Kate. "I thought you would be at each other's throats soon, when I saw you ride up. Fie! my cavaliers for shame!"

"Your rebuke is just, and you shall hear no more from me of a quarrelsome nature," replied Danvers. "But come will you not make a choice between us, for your escort to the ball?"

"I *fear* to choose *now*, lest I revive the quarrel," answered Kate, pointedly.

"I pledge you my honor, that I will abide the decision without a word," said Danvers.

"And I," said Danbury.

"I shall do as the others," said Moody, sullenly, compressing his lips, and looking downward.

"I have it!" exclaimed Kategaily, a new idea at the moment striking her. "I have it! I will decide it by a race. I will have my Marston, and mount him, and have five rods the start, and he who overtakes me first, shall be my companion for the ball. What say you, my cavaliers?"

"Agreed! agreed!" cried Danvers and Danbury, in a breath.

"I shall take my chance of course," said Moody, drily.

"Mother, where is Icha?" inquired Kate, springing into the house.

"He is at work in the garden, child; but what strange freak have you got in your head now?"

"A race for a lover," answered Kate, laughing; and darting to the door in the rear, the next moment her clear voice was heard calling, at the top of her lungs, the name of Ichabod Longtree.

Presently an answer was returned; and shortly after, the personage bearing the poetical appellation just mentioned, made his appearance. He was a tall, gaunt, bony man of thirty, with a long, thin visage, small, grey, cunning eyes, a large nose and mouth, with teeth projecting, a falling off, double chin, and, taken as a whole, anything but a beauty. For many years, while the Clarendons were in good circumstances, he had served them in the capacity of gardener; and so attached had he become to the family, particularly to his "little pet," as he was wont to term Kate that when he was paid off and discharged, he refused to go, and begged, with tears in his eyes, that he might be allowed to accompany them to the West. For some time, Clarendon tried to dissuade him from this; but finding his arguments of no avail, he at last consented, on condition that he must expect no wages, unless he, Clarendon, again became prosperous. As affection, not money, was the tie which bound Ichabod Longtree to the Clarendons,

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so he, in consequence, made one of the party, and had remained with them ever since employing his time as gardener, hostler, and an attendant in general upon the ladies.

"Well, Icha," said Kate, as the personage in question made his appearance, "saddle Marston, and bring him to the door. I am off for a race."

"Yes, and some day you'll jest git your neck broke in a race, my little pet," returned Ichabod.

"Never you mind my neck, but do as I bid you!"

"O, don't fear me; I'll go straightway;" and off went Ichabod for the horse.

In a few minutes, the coal-black pony of Kate stood before the door, arching his proud neck, and pawing the ground, impatient to be off. Kate, meantime, had thrown on her riding-dress, and in another moment she was in the saddle.

"Now, my cavaliers," she said, gaily, "square your horses' heads, and wait the word."

Complying with her request, each put his beast on a line with his neighbor, while Kate rode out in front, to a suitable distance, and turning upon her saddle, said:

"Ready, all! Now!"

At the last word, her riding-whip touched the flank of Marston, and away bounded the fiery beast with great velocity, and forward leaped the horses of the rivals, in eager chase.

It was a beautiful and novel sight. Erect upon her rushing steed, motionless as if carved there from marble, sat Kate Clarendon, her tightened reins held gracefully in her snowy hands, speeding onward fearlessly, amid the labyrinthian forest, gradually gaining upon her pursuers, who now, becoming separated from each other, somewhat, by the difference in the speed of their horses, were spurring and whipping forward with all their might. On, on they dashed startling the tenants of the wood causing the birds to flutter and twitter above them, or leave what they considered a dangerous vicinity while ever and anon the ringing voice and laugh of Kate, echoing through the forest, urged on her pursuers almost to desperation. Forward they dashed, for half an hour, on a circuitous route, when the horse of Moody, being of exceedingly good bottom, began to distance his rivals, and gradually gain upon the pony of Kate. This Kate perceived with any thing but satisfaction, and urged Marston to do his best. In vain, however, did her noble animal renew all his powers of velocity; in vain fell the whip upon his flanks; he had met with more than his equal; and steadily the beast of Moody came bounding forward, every step shortening the distance between them. At last, Kate, who saw she must soon be overtaken, sought, by a manoeuvre, to turn, pretend to yield, and then suddenly pass Moody, and by a straight course, gain her home in advance of him, and thus clear herself; but the design was anticipated the effort failed and two minutes after, the hand of Moody was laid upon her bridlerein.

"I have won!" he said, his black eyes sparkling, and a rather malicious smile of triumph hovering around his almost white and closely compressed lips. "I have won, Miss Clarendon fairly won."

"You have won, that is certain, whether fairly or not," replied Kate, pettishly, with a vexed expression on her usually laughing countenance.

"I have won, by your own proposal, at all events," he replied, rather coolly, "and of course I shall claim my reward."

"Of course you will *claim* it," rejoined Kate, pointedly, "and of course you will *get* it."

"You seem displeased, Miss Clarendon."

"Hamlet says, 'I know not seems,' " answered Kate, drily. "Let us return."

"Perhaps if one of my rivals had won, you would have been better suited," observed Moody, fastening his eyes keenly upon his fair companion.

Kate made no reply; but jerking the rein of her beast rather hastily, started him into a gallop.

A cloud suddenly came over the face of Moody, and he placed his hands to his temples, as if in pain. Then dark thoughts could he traced in the gleam of his eyes, and a cold, sinister smile played around his mouth. Then muttering "If you tread upon a serpent, beware of his fangs!" He tightened his rein, and, spurring forward, soon overtook Kate, who was riding in advance. When he reached her side, his countenance had resumed its usual expression. On their way to the residence of our heroine, they were joined by the others, who, after passing some few dry congratulations on the termination of the chase, and perceiving all was not right, relapsed into silence. The remainder of the way was passed without a word from either party. At the door of the cottage, each took leave of Kate, rather ceremoniously, and then departed Moody by himself not one of the four pleased with the morning's work.

CHAPTER V.

The bright and youthful dancers meet,
With laughing lips and winged feet;
And golden looks come flashing by,
Like sudden sunshine through the sky.

Mrs. C. H. W. Esling.
Do I not in plainest truth tell you,
I do not, nor I cannot love you?

Shakspeare
Repulse upon repulse met ever
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success.

Milton.

At an early hour, on the evening of the ball alluded to in the preeeding chapter, Rashton Moody, finely mounted, rode up to the door of the Clarendons. Kate had previously completed her preparations, and in a few minutes she was mounted on her beast, and bearing him company to the place appointed. But although she strictly complied with her agreement, in accompanying him to the ball, yet it was clearly evident to Moody, by her manner, that his company was not so agreeable to her as he could have wished. All his efforts to draw her into conversation, only resulted, on her part, in the utterance of monosyllables; so that, in a short time, he gave up the attempt in despair; and the remainder of the ride over the plain was passed in silence both occupied with thoughts of their own those of Moody, we fear, not being of the most harmless nature imaginable.

The ball turned out to be a fine affair at least for those days and great hilarity prevailed. Kate, on the present occasion, however, seemed not herself. She danced, it is true; was lively and even gay; but those who observed

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her narrowly and there were many who did, among whom were Danvers and Danbury perceived that the *feeling* of joyousness, usually so apparent on such occasions, was sadly wanting. Some, who noticed it, even went so far as to question her on the subject; but she even replied, with a forced laugh, that her looks must belie her, as she never felt more cheerful in her life.

Moody, too, was more cold and distant than usual; rarely spoke to any, and then very briefly; seldom smiled, and altogether seemed in an ill-humor. But the dance, notwithstanding, went gaily on; the fiddler, to the best of his ability, "discoursed his eloquent music," and a stranger, to have seen the sparkling eyes, the rosy cheeks radiant with smiles, and the bounding forms, as they whirled over the floor, and heard the jests, and the laugh, and peradventure the gay song, from such as chose not to be occupied with the "fantastic toe," would have pronounced it a happy assemblage, without one present who did not *feel* what all seemed to enjoy.

Between ten and eleven o'clock the company was invited to partake of refreshments, and all crowded to the adjoining apartment, where ample justice was done to the viands before them, and where the same hilarious feelings continued to prevail. As soon as this was over, Kate announced her intention of returning immediately. On hearing this, every one looked surprised, and a dozen crowded around her at once.

"Are you ill?" inquired one.

"Or displeased with the ball?" said another.

"Or grown exceedingly sober of late, and wish to keep good hours?" added a third.

"None of these, I assure you," answered Kate.

"What is it then?" asked a fourth.

"O, I see through it," cried a fifth, a young man, rubbing his hands together, in a manner expressive of mirth about to be enjoyed: "I see through it. She's not been herself the whole evening, and I can guess the cause."

"Out with it, then," cried one.

"Shall I tell, Kate?" asked the young man, with a leer, and smiling mischievously.

"Certainly," replied our heroine, a little sarcastically; "if you know anything, tell it, and put these anxious friends out of suspense. Don't you see they are *dying* for your knowledge?"

"Yes, let us have it, Charley, do!" put in a merry girl of sixteen.

"Why, then," said Charley, making his face long and serious, "you must know my most worthy friends, that Miss Kate Clarendon, the beautiful being here before you, has had a quarrel with her lover, Mr. Rashton Moody, and is anxious to make an escape early, in order she may have time and opportunity to put all to rights again before she sleeps."

A hearty laugh followed this speech, with cries of "Good! good!" "That is it, for the world!" "Stupid we did not see it before."

The features of Kate flushed, an angry frown came on her brow, her eyes flashed, and she bit her lips in sheer vexation.

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"The gentleman informant," she said, with a touch of severity, "always was remarkable for his penetration; and I have no doubt he could see completely through a mill-stone, as we say in the East provided, that is, there were a hole through it eight inches in diameter. For once, however, allow me, who ought to know, to say, with all deference to his superior judgment, that he is most decidedly mistaken. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a happy evening!" and turning upon her heel abruptly, Kate, with a dignified, but graceful step, moved away, and disappeared from the apartment. Each of the group looked at each other in surprise and with a crest-fallen countenance; for not one, by his or her innocent jest and laugh, had dreamed of giving offense.

Moody, who a little apart had watched the whole proceedings, at once took an abrupt leave, and hastened after Kate; and presently both were mounted, and riding over the plain toward the house of the latter.

The atmosphere was very clear, and the bright moon, which had risen an hour before their departure, shed a soft luster over all, and bathed the deep forest of the plain in a flood of mellow light which, as it came crinkling through the slightly rustling leaflets overhead, and fell upon the soft earth like quivering beads of quicksilver, made the scene superbly enchanting. For some distance nothing was said; and the hollow trampling of the horses' feet, the snapping of some dry twig, the sighing of the forest, and the chirp and hum of the thousand night-watchers, were the only sounds that broke the otherwise death-like stillness. At length Moody, desirous of starting a conversation, said:

"Somehow, Miss Clarendon, you seem low-spirited to-night, and have left the party earlier than is your wont. Has anything of importance transpired to mar your happiness?"

"I cannot say there has," replied Kate, briefly.

"Then why not be gay, as usual?"

"People do not feel at all times alike, and I suppose I have a right to be serious occasionally."

"O, certainly, Miss Clarendon; no one has a better right. I merely spoke, because I take a deep interest in your happiness."

"Indeed, sir! O, I was not aware of that," answered Kate, in a tone of provoking coolness.

Moody bit his lips, and moved nervously on his saddle, for he felt severely the sting of her words. "I am sorry," he said, at length, that you have not ere this discovered the motive I had in addressing you; and that, of all others, it should surprise you that I sought your happiness."

Kate made no reply; and after waiting for one a few moments, Moody resumed:

"You must have perceived, Miss Clarendon, or at least you should have been aware, that my attentions to you thus long, have not been attentions of mere gallantry, but have sprung from deeper and I trust more sacred feelings."

"To tell you the truth," replied Kate, in the same indifferent tone she had hitherto used, "I have never troubled myself enough about the matter to perceive anything the kind."

"What am I to understand from this?"

"Whatever you choose."

Again Moody bit his lips, and remained for a short time silent; during which he passed an openspot in the forest, where the moon shone full upon his face, and exhibited features now grown dark and fearful with a thousand

angry thoughts, over which played a bitter, sinister smile.

"If I conjecture rightly," he said at length, "my company must be most disagreeable to you."

"You might be more in error," was the consoling reply.

"Then wherefore have you silently encouraged me so long? why have you not made this manifest before?"

"Perhaps there has been no occasion for my doing so."

"I see how it is: you have coquetted me, and led me to make a fool of myself."

"You are quick-sighted."

"Not uncommonly so, or I should have seen through your base artifice ere this."

"Sir!" said Kate, angrily, "your language is unbecoming a gentleman; and if you cannot carry a more civil tongue in your head, I pray you leave me, and I will find my way home by myself."

"Not so fast, my lady, for I design doing no such thing; and moreover, my language, which you are pleased to think uncivil, is only in keeping with your own."

"You wish to quarrel with me, sir!"

"Not at all; I wish to treat you as a lady, if you will allow me to do so."

"Then why not cease your conversation, and continue silent?"

"Because I do not choose to do so."

"Indeed!"

"Ay, Miss Clarendon, indeed!"

"Then," rejoined Kate, pettishly, "I will allow you the estimable privilege of conversing with yourself, while *I* remain a listener only."

"Nay, but you must talk also," returned Rashton, riding up close to her side, and laying his hand upon her bridle-rein.

"How, sir! what means this?" cried Kate, indignantly, not without some alarm, however.

"I said you must talk, also," replied Moody, coolly.

"Ha! you would force me to talk, eh?"

"I simply said you *must*," answered the young man, with a strong emphasis on the last word.

"What would you have?" asked Kate, her heart now fluttering with a strange, undefinable fear.

"I would hold a conversation on what has now become, to me at least, a grave subject."

"And that is "

"Love."

"I am not in the humor to talk now, on what I do not understand."

"For the matter of that, it is easily comprehended."

"Well, sir, what would you say?"

"That I love you."

"Umph! your actions show it."

"Ay, I agree with you, they do show it, in everything I do. Think you, if I did not love you, Miss Clarendon, I would have sought your company, to the exclusion of all other?"

"May be so like things are often done."

"Not by one of my nature and temperament."

"As to that, I cannot say; but before the matter goes any further, allow me to observe, that if you love me, I am sorry for it; as there is no reciprocity of feeling, and consequently can be no encouragement on my part given."

"Is this really so?" rejoined Moody, with something like a sigh.

"Really so, I assure you."

"It pains me to hear it, for I had hoped it were otherwise. But tell me candidly do you love another?"

"That I suppose I have a right to keep secret."

"And that, on the same principle, I feel I have a right to know."

"I am not aware, sir, what constitutes your right to any such knowledge," answered Kate, drily.

"That matters not; but again to the question: Do you, or do you not love another?"

"I decline answering, sir," replied Kate, haughtily; "but whether I do or not, understand one thing, I do not, and never can love you."

Again Moody bit his lips, until the blood almost sprang through; and could Kate have seen the dark, devilish expression on his features then, she would have trembled with very fear. At length he spoke, but in a voice so altered and husky, that she started, thinking it was another who addressed her.

"Weigh well your words, girl," he said, "and beware of their import, for I am one that cannot be trifled with. If you have trifled with me thus far if you have led me on to hope, without a cause, save to make an idle jest then the consequences rest with yourself."

"I do not understand you," said Kate, in some trepidation.

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"I am fully aware of that neither do you know me. I am not a foot-ball, maiden, to take quietly the kicks of the world, merely for the amusement of others. I am but I will not say what; you may some day learn to your sorrow."

"This is strange speech, sir!"

"Perhaps it is to you to me it is simply natural."

"But at what do you aim, Mr. Moody? Am I to understand that you threaten me?"

"You have said that you do not, and never can, love me."

"I repeat it."

"Then wherefore did you lead me to suppose otherwise? wherefore did you encourage my addresses?"

"I deny that I did. You called upon me at different times others did the same and I treated you as I did them, civilly, and nothing more. You never asked me for my company, my hand, nor my love; and if you chose to call, it was not my place to tell you to desist, so long as you behaved yourself as a gentleman. I have yet to be informed, sir, that the calls of a gentleman upon a lady, are tacit acknowledgements, on her part, that she desires him above all others, and that, as a matter of course, she must love him, and yield him a right to inquire into all her thoughts and actions. You should be aware, sir, that it is the duty of a *lady*, to treat with respect those who call upon her, provided they move in society her equals and behave themselves properly, whether she secretly admires them or not."

"And to this duty, then, as you call it, I suppose I am indebted for all the favors I have received at your hands?"

"To nothing else, I assure you."

"Had I known this in time, before my mind was fully set upon you before I had received what I considered secret encouragement from yourself, that my passion was returned it might perhaps have saved us both a world of trouble. But it is too late now; and, as I said before, the consequences must rest with yourself. To be plain, Kate Clarendon, I love you love you with a wild, burning, consuming passion, that, unless I can attain my object, will destroy me."

"But I do not love you, and that should be sufficient to destroy that passion."

"It is not, though. You may be as cold as marble, and yet my passion for you will be unabated; in sooth, if anything, methinks its fire would burn more fiercely, or be smothered for a time, only to burst out in a terrible, devouring, destructive flame. No, Kate, the die is cast; there is no alternative you must be mine!"

"Never!" cried Kate, energetically.

"Nay, be not too sure of that. I have staked my all upon it, and it is life or death. You little know the nature of him now by your side, girl. Sooner than you should escape me, and be another's, I would bury a knife in your heart, draw it forth, and with the blood still warm upon the blade, plunge it into my own, and thus perish with you."

"Oh God!" cried Kate, covering her face with her hands; "you chill my blood with horror."

"I cannot help it. I must let you know the consequences of a refusal. Be mine, or die!"

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"Let us talk no more of this, now," said Kate, shuddering.

"Ay, but now is the time; an opportunity for such conversation may not soon present itself again, and the moments must be improved as they pass."

While conversing thus, the two had been riding steadily forward, and, just at this moment, a glimpse of Kate's residence could be seen through the trees. Never, to her eyes, had it looked so enchanting as now; so eager was she to escape from her companion, whose strange, wild language was well calculated to alarm her. A moving light, flashing through a window of the cottage, assured Kate that some one was astir; and instantly she felt her spirits rise, and her courage revive.

"See!" she cried, in something resembling her usually light, silvery tone; "we are almost back to the race-ground. Yonder light must be carried by Icha. Poor soul! he always waits up for his little pet, as he calls me."

"The more reason, then, that we should not be in a hurry," returned Moody, taking hold of Kate's rein, and stopping both horses.

"How, sir! what means this?" cried Kate, angrily, and in some alarm.

"It means, girl, that I am determined to improve the present opportunity, to bind you by solemn oath, to myself."

"Are you mad, sir, to talk thus? Do you think that I am the person to tamely submit to your insults in this manner? Unhand that rein, sir, or I will raise an alarm that will bring to me such aid as will chastise you for your presumption."

"Nay, speak not so haughtily; you are not yet out of my power," returned Moody, in a low, determined tone. "If you wish to behold your friends again, with honor, swear you will be mine, and your road is free otherwise (and he grasped her rein more tightly), you shall know what a bold man may dare."

"Swear to be yours, I never will," answered Kate, "let the result be what it may."

"By heavens! then," said Moody, "you see not the inside of yon cottage again."

As he spoke, he struck both horses with his riding-whip, and, as the fiery beasts reared under the smart, and attempted to rush forward, he suddenly wheeled their heads in a direction opposite the cottage, and would have dashed into the mazes of the great forest, had not Kate suddenly uttered a prolonged and piercing shriek, and, with the agility of an accomplished equestrienne, disengaged herself from the saddle, slid to the ground, and darted away toward the cottage. Perceiving that she had escaped him, Moody reined in his horse, leaped to the ground himself, and instantly gave chase. Kate now uttered shriek upon shriek, and sped forward with all her might; but her dress soon became entangled with the shrubbery, and in another moment an arm of Moody was thrown around her, and a hand placed upon her mouth.

"Fiends seize me!" he cried, "if yon escape me now, though all hell were in pursuit!" and lifting her as though she were an infant, he instantly sprang back to his horse, and attempted to remount; but the struggles of Kate, and the uneasiness of his beast, prevented him. By this time, lights were seen flashing near the cottage, and distant voices were heard, lending hope to the one and despair to the other.

"Too late, I see," growled Moody; "then there is no alternative;" and instantly a long, bright blade flashed in the moonlight, above the head of our heroine.

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Kate saw and shrank away from it, with an agonizing shriek; but this could not save her; she still saw it gleaming already was it on its descent and she shut her eyes in horror, and tho't her fate was sealed. Already was it near her heart a second more, and her spirit would be flown when suddenly it was checked by some obstruction, and the next moment Kate found herself released, and the villain who had sought her life stretched upon the ground.

She looked up, and, in the dim light which the moon made among the trees, saw the tall, shadowy form of the Necromancer standing over her.

"Girl," said the strange being, "thy destiny is not thus to die. Arise!"

"God bless you, sir!" cried Kate, springing to her feet, and grasping his rough hand with a warm pressure, while tears of joy started to her eyes. "God bless you, Luther."

"I did not save thee, girl; it was a Higher Power," said the other, solemnly; and he raised his bare arm majestically in the moonlight, and his fore-finger pointed upward.

At this moment Moody gave a groan, and rose into a sitting posture.

"Villain!" cried Luther, seizing him by the collar, and jerking him to his feet: "Villain! did I not know that thou wert sent here as a messenger of evil, to fulfill the decrees of fate, I would crush thee as a worthless worm!"

"Ha!" exclaimed Moody, starting back, and gazing upon the other, for a moment, while his whole frame shook with fear: "Blind Luther! you here? I thought you far away."

"I told thee," rejoined the Necromancer, almost fiercely, "it was my unenviable destiny to be near thy evil deeds to follow thee, as the carrion-eater the wounded wolf."

"This way," said a voice, which Kate instantly recognized to be her father's; and with a cry of joy, she sprang toward him, and the next moment was clasped in his arms, while Ichabod, his companion, exclaimed in alarm:

"Why, darling pet, what's happened?"

"Ay, what means this? and who are those I hear yonder?" inquired her father, anxiously.

"Kate instantly proceeded to detail what had occurred, in as few words as possible; but ere she had concluded, her father sprang forward, exclaiming:

"Where is the villain?"

Moody would have fled, but for the iron grasp which Luther laid upon his shoulder, and the imperative command:

"Stay! and behold your victim."

As Clarendon caught sight of Moody, he strode up to him like a madman, and, seizing him by the collar, smote him on his face several times, with the palm of his hand.

"Now go, disgraced and worthless dog!" he said, releasing him, "and tell your friends, if you have any, that you are as far beneath them, as Hell is beneath Heaven!"

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For something like a minute, Moody stood over—powered with rage; his dark eyes darting forth fiery gleams, like those of an enraged wild beast; his hands clenched, his teeth grinding together, and white foam issuing from his lips. Then he started, with a howl of fury, and felt for his knife, which, fortunately, was not about him. Finding he was foiled in every way, he turned upon his heel, and shouting hoarsely, "I will be revenged!" darted out of sight.

"He prophesies and speaks the truth!" said the Necromancer, solemnly.

"Strange man, I thank you with my whole soul!" said Clarendon, advancing to Luther and grasping his hand. "You have saved the idol of my heart my more than life."

"Would I could the latter, as the former," replied the Necromancer, mysteriously.

"What mean you?"

"Full of life and hope thou must, Early seek thy native dust,"

was the no less mysterious answer of Luther.

"I pray you be more lucid in your explanation, if, as I doubt not, your words hold a meaning," said Clarendon.

"O yes, do, now," said Ichabod, coaxingly, approaching the fortuneteller; "do, now, tell us what you mean, good Mr. Luther, and I'll see that you get good fare, as long as you've a mind to stay with us, if it's to next January."

Luther drew up his form erect, and waving his hand with dignity, replied:

"For whom the scroll is filled and sealed,
The future may not be revealed
Other than that which now you hear:
When the new moon shall be near,
One, whose blood now warmly flows,
Shall in death find stern repose:
When the earth drinks blood and rain,
Some shall see this form again;
Then a child can tell the tale,
Over which now hangs a vail.

"What light is that yonder?" added Luther, pointing toward the dwelling of Clarendon, as he concluded his mysterious rhymes.

Each looked in the direction indicated, but saw nothing; and turning round, Clarendon was about to ask the Necromancer what he meant, when, to his astonishment, he found the latter had disappeared. He called his name several times, in a loud voice, but no answer was returned. Ichabod, determined that the Necromancer should not escape without his full quota of thanks, at once darted into the surrounding bushes, and sought him in every direction, but in vain.

"I am half inclined to be superstitious myself," said Clarendon. "But come, darling Kate, let us return on foot by ourselves, while Ichabod looks after Marston;" and taking the hand of his daughter in his own, both set off toward the cottage, pondering upon the villainous conduct of Moody, and the strange appearance, disappearance, and language of the Necromancer.

CHAPTER VI.

The sky grew darker. Soon came booming on
The deep-voiced thunder, whilst at distance rolled
The wild winds' dirge-like, and yet tempest tone;
And lightning's evanescent sheets of gold
Burst, in their anger, from the clouds' huge fold.

T. D. English.
Is there a crime
Beneath the roof of Heaven, that stains the soul
Of men with more infernal hue, than damn'd
Assassination?

Cibber.

Dead! dead! ay, dead! forever dead to those That loved him!

At an early hour on the morning succeeding the night of events just detailed, Ichabod Longtree, who being in his way something of a gossip, was stirring betimes, that he might be first with his wonderful news among the villagers. With a mysterious air, and sundry additions and embellishments, where he thought them necessary, he told his tale to a gaping crowd, who, with feelings of indignation too deep for words, at once proceeded to the residence of Moody, with the intention of punishing him according to his deserts. Had they found him, under the excitement they were then laboring, it is more than probable the affair would have had a tragical termination; but he was gone, and no one knew whither, so that pursuit was out of the question. The whole affair created a great sensation, and was a common topic for several days. As a story loses nothing by being repeated, particularly when it borders on the marvelous, so the tale in question, as it went from one to another, became distorted to a wonderful degree until at last an old lady, in telling it for the twentieth time, actually vouched for the truth of the assertion, that Moody had placed the knife against the heart of Kate, and was pressing with all his strength upon the handle, without making the least impression, when a dark cloud suddenly enveloped him, and Luther appeared in a flame of fire, and seized and bore him off, amid terrible thunderings, and the most awful shrieks of woe that mortal ear ever heard.

As for Kate herself, her gay spirits seemed suddenly to have left her. She grew reserved and silent, and withal, not a little melancholy. In vain her friends who after the events we have detailed, flocked to see her in numbers tried to enliven her by their conversation, and frequent sallies of wit. She said little to any, and if she smiled at all, it was one of those wan smiles, which, contrasting as it did so forcibly with her former ringing laugh, was really painful to observe. From a laughing, frolicsome, light-hearted girl, she seemed changed to a serious, thoughtful woman; and all so suddenly, as to make it rather marvelous. It was evident that something preyed upon her mind, and depressed her spirits, and many were the conjectures concerning it. Some hinted that she loved Moody, and that his base actions had destroyed her confidence in him; and though she had torn him forever from her heart, yet there had been left an aching void, from which time alone could relieve her. Others said it was owing to the fright she had received, and that in a few days she would be herself again. But these were conjectures only, for Kate kept her secret close locked in her own breast; and when questioned on the matter, she ever managed to answer in such a way that none were made the wiser for it.

Thus matters ran along for several weeks, and flowery spring was just taking leave of the year, to give bright summer her accustomed place and reign over the advancing golden harvest. Since that eventful night, Rashton Moody had never been seen nor heard of by any of the villagers; and the circumstances connected with his

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disappearance, having been discussed time and again, were now becoming worn out topics, of but little interest to any. Luther, too, had not since made his appearance, and it was doubted by some that he ever would. Danvers and Danbury had both called upon Kate, separately, some two or three times; but finding their reception very cold, had at last given up their visits, in despair of ever being able to win her affections.

It was about this time, say some six weeks from the night of the ball, that Kate Clarendon and her mother were seated a little apart, in their own dwelling, engaged upon some coarse sewing. The night for it was an early hour in the evening was very dark, and now and then a flash of lightning, followed by the rumbling sound of distant thunder, together with a cool damp breeze, which blew steadily from the west, announced that a shower was fast approaching. For some time mother and daughter kept silence both intently occupied with the work in their hands when a vivid flash of lightning, that seemed to crinkle and play upon their needles, made them involuntarily start together and utter exclamations of surprise.

"How near, and how loud!" cried Mrs. Clarendon, alluding to the lighting, and the thunder which followed with a crashing report immediately after. "I was not aware that the shower was so near us."

"O, I wish father would come," said Kate; "I always feel so gloomy in a thunder-storm, and so frightened, too."

"You have no cause for being frightened now, Kate," replied Mrs. Clarendon, "more than at any other time. We are all in the hands of God, at all times, and are just as safe, if he so wills it, when the elements are in dire commotion, as when every thing is clear and tranquil."

"I know it, mother; but at the same time, I cannot avoid feeling more timid, when I behold dark clouds lowering around me, darting forth their angry lightnings, and hear the mighty thunders that seem to shake the earth beneath them, than when all is bright and clear."

"It is natural, my child, that we should feel our danger more sensibly, when we can see it; but, nevertheless, it is no nearer us at such times than at others."

"But I wish father would come!" rejoined Kate, rising, and advancing to the door. "How dark!" she continued, as she gazed forth; "and see yon cloud! how angry it looks! and how full it is of electricity! Hark! mother, do you not hear a roaring sound?"

"I do," answered Mrs. Clarendon, approaching the door herself and listening. "It is the wind and rain coming through the forest."

"How mournfully it wails," sighed Kate, shuddering. "Oh, my blood feels chilly in my veins. It seems as if somebody were dying, and this were the funeral dirge. Ha! the lightning again! how fearful!" exclaimed she, starting back, as at the moment a bright flash almost blinded her, and a crash of thunder, following close, made the cabin tremble to its center.

"Better stand away from the door, Kate," said the dame, anxiously, retreating herself.

"I thought," replied Kate, "you just now implied that all times and places were alike as to danger?"

"I said we should not fear, child, at one time more than another; that we were all in the hands of a just God, who watches over us; but I did not say it would be right to needlessly expose ourselves; and it is dangerous standing in a door, during a severe thunder-storm, from the tendency of the lightning to follow a current of air. But see yonder!" added Mrs. Clarendon, pointing toward the forest; "methought I just now saw the figure of a man; perhaps we had better shut and bolt the door."

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"O, it is Icha," exclaimed Kate, joyfully, as at the moment another flash revealed to her the tall, ungainly form of the gardener, hurrying forward with immensely long strides. "Poor Icha is afraid of a drenching, judging by his movements; but is it not singular that I did not see father with him!"

"He must be near, though, I think," returned the mother of Kate, rather uneasily, moving toward the door again herself.

A few large drops of rain now began to patter on the leaves of the trees, and on the roof of the cabin, while a loud roaring, like that of a near water-fall, announced the body of the shower to be near at hand. The next moment Ichabod Longtree came bounding into the room, nearly out of breath, bearing a rifle on his shoulder.

"Well, Icha," exclaimed Kate, hurriedly, "where is father?"

"Why, isn't he here?" asked Ichabod, in reply, looking round the apartment, as if he expected to behold the object of inquiry.

"Did he not go with you?" inquired Mrs. Clarendon, quickly, slightly turning pale.

"Why, yes," replied the gardener, "we went together, and kept together till near dark, when he said as how he'd take a deer I'd just then shot, and start for home. I 'spected to find him here when I come."

"Strange," said Mrs. Clarendon, "that he has not made his appearance. How long since you parted with him?"

"It's more'n two hours."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the dame, in alarm; "so long ago, and he not here yet! How far off was he then?"

"Not more'n half a mile jest on t'other side of the Miami."

"I fear something has happened him," said Kate.

"Maybe he gin chase arter another deer, like I did," replied Ichabod, consolingly. "'Tisn't best to be alarmed, I reckon."

"He would not be likely to do that, I think, so near night," observed Mrs. Clarendon, in some trepidation. "I fear, with Kate, that something has happened of a serious nature. Perhaps he has been killed, or captured by the savages; for I understand one or two have lately been seen prowling about the vicinity."

"God forbid!" cried Kate, covering her face with her hands; and at the moment the words of the Necromancer seemed ringing in her ears.

"But where have you been, Ichabod, since you separated from him?" inquired Mrs. Clarendon.

"Why, ye see, we both on us started out for to hunt some deer," answered the gardener, "and a long, dry chase we had on't; for some how the pesky critters seemed to know we were arter 'em, and so kept out o' the way. I reckon we went much as five miles up the Miami, and didn't see one though we seed some fresh tracks occasionally and so we concluded we'd give in and come home. When we got most home, say half a mile off, we somehow stumbled on to one that hadn't kept quite so good look-out as the rest, and him I shot straightway. This started up another, that looked liked he might be shot, if a body could get near enough; and so I told Mr. Clarendon, that if he'd see that home, I'd try my legs and ammunition for another. He said he would, and off I sot, and a confounded long chase I had, and didn't catch it at last the scamp of a critter that it was! and when I got started coming home,

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I found it gitting right dark. I 'spected he'd be here, and have some on't cooked when I got here sartin."

By this time the rain was pouring down in torrents, the wind blew a hurricane, the lightning flashed almost incessantly, and the thunder came peal upon peal, with terrific and deafening sound.

"Merciful Heaven! he could not live in such a storm as this!" exclaimed Kate. "Hark! that crash! it was like a falling tree."

"Possibly his burthen may have delayed him, and finding the shower upon him, he has taken shelter in the hollow of some old sycamore," suggested Mrs. Clarendon.

"But you forget, mother," rejoined Kate, "that two long hours have elapsed since Icha left him; and surely he would have reached home before this, unless something had happened of a serious nature."

"Soon's this storm's over, I'll start off in sarch," said Ichabod.

"Where is Bowler?" asked Kate, quickly.

"He went with him," replied the gardener.

"Ha! a happy thought strikes me!" exclaimed Kate, with animation. "The noble brute will obey me above all others; and if he hears my voice, he will come hither immediately."

Saying this, she stepped to the door and opened it; but the storm was raging so fiercely, that it was found impossible to make the proposed trial. For half an hour the wind and rain continued unabated, when the former gradually began to die away, and the latter to slacken, while the lightning less vivid, and the thunder more distant, told that the main force of the shower had passed. It was now that Kate made the trial, by elevating her voice, and uttering a clear, musical call, that could be heard echoing far away through the forest. All listened, but heard no answer. Again she called, but still deep silence followed. The third and last trial was made, when, to the gratification of each, the well known yelp of Bowler was heard far away.

"He comes! he comes!" cried Kate and her mother joyfully, in the same breath.

Another call, and another yelp succeeded but much nearer, showing that the brute was making rapid progress toward them. Presently a rattling was heard among the bushes near by, and the next moment the noble animal came bounding forward, shaking the wet from his shaggy hair, and uttering a mournful howl.

"Where is your master, Bowler?" asked Kate, stooping down to pat his head.

The dog looked up in her face, as if conscious of what she said, and then gave vent to a low, mournful whine, that ended at last in a loud, dismal howl, which made the hearts of each tremble with a strange, undefinable fear; then springing away, he took the backward track and disappeared, in spite of the calls of Kate to the contrary.

"Oh, God! I fear the worst," she exclaimed, bursting into tears.

"Don't cry, my little pet don't!" began Ichabod, consolingly. "It al'ays makes me feel age rish to hear you. I'll go straightway and hunt up your father, for he can't be far off."

"And I will accompany you," cried Kate, seizing her hood and placing it on her head. "Come, quick, get the lantern, Icha, and let us be moving!"

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"Don't go, Kate," said her mother, uneasily; for it is certainly imprudent to venture forth in such a night, and after so severe a storm. Don't go, for it can do no good, and will only delay Ichabod."

"O yes, Katy, pet, don't go now!" added Ichabod, coaxingly, "and as your mother says, 'tisn't prudent."

Kate, however, was used to having her own way, whenever she insisted on it; and as, in the present instance, she had resolved on going, so all that was said to the contrary was said in vain.

"Come, Icha, quick now, and get ready!" was her only reply; and in a few minutes she was gliding through the wood, close upon the heels of her serving man, who bore in one hand a rifle, and in the other a lighted lantern.

The course of our friends from the cottage was nearly due east; and after continuing for some time without speaking, through thick tangles of brush, that saturated them as they passed, and over large fallen trees, that had been uprooted, or broken and cast down by the storm they reached the Miami, whose now dark, swollen and turbulent waters came rushing past with a cheerless, gloomy sound, which struck upon the ear like the hollow rattling of earth upon a coffin. Luckily a small canoe, kept here for fording the stream when the water was high, was found hid among the bushes on the western bank. Placing this upon the stream, Ichabod, after vainly trying to persuade Kate to remain or return, assisted her into it, and shoved across not, however, without some risk, as the current, being strong, rapidly bore them down several yards, before they were able to effect a landing. Reaching the other bank at length in safety, Kate gave another call to Bowler, which, to her gratification, was almost immediately answered. A minute after, the dog came bounding up to her, whining piteously, and then immediately darted away, and up the hill, which here rose somewhat steep above her.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Kate, clasping her hands in an agony of mind almost unbearable, "I know the worst has happened! God give me strength to go through with it!"

"Let us forward," returned her companion, in a voice slightly faltering; and taking Kate by the hand, he began to ascend the hill at a fast gait.

They had proceeded about a hundred yards further, when they heard a deep groan, which made the blood of both run coldly through their veins; and Kate placing her hands upon her heart, to still its wild throbbings, felt a sickening dizziness come over her, that almost took away the power of motion.

"I can go no further," she gasped, faintly; "I can scarcely stand."

"Courage, darling," whispered Ichabod.

"Help!" cried a voice just above them; "for the love of mercy, if you are friends, hurry forward!"

"Who be you, and what's the matter?" exclaimed Ichabod, springing up the steep, and dragging Kate after him, more dead than alive.

"Who I am, matters not, save that I am friendly to the right," answered the strange voice; and the next moment, the light carried by Ichabod flashed upon the comely form and face of a young man of twenty-three, who was standing alone, rifle in hand, upon a huge rock, not ten feet above their heads, his handsome figure clearly set off against the dark background beyond. "There has been foul play here," he added, solemnly.

"Where? where?" cried Ichabod.

"Just above me," answered the stranger, springing into a thicket of bushes close behind him.

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Ichabod quickly gained the thicket, entered it with Kate, and the next moment he stood beside a tall, old oak, and saw the stranger upon his knees, bending over some dark object on the ground, and the dog running to and fro, and whining mournfully. Approaching with the light, Ichabod placed it in a position to reveal a horrid spectacle. As he did so, Kate uttered a loud shriek, and sank down insensible.

"A woman!" exclaimed the stranger, springing to his feet, with a look of surprise; for Kate had kept so much in the shade, that, until now, he had not been aware of the presence of one of the opposite sex. "God of Heaven! what a shock for a woman!" he added, stooping down and raising her in his arms for under the excitement of the moment, Ichabod thought of nothing, saw nothing, but the object before him.

A sight for a woman indeed! and more, a sight for an affectionate daughter! Upon the ground, his back partly supported by the tree before mentioned, lay the father of Kate, his features pale and ghastly, save where they were rendered more frightful by being spotted with blood. In his breast was a deep wound, and another in his abdomen, from both of which the red current of life was flowing freely, and his vestments were already stained to a frightful extent. Either wound was mortal, and yet Clarendon still survived; though a few gasps, a groan now and then, and a rattling, choking sound in his throat, betokened the rapid approach of death.

"May perdition seize the fiend that's done this!" cried Ichabod, bending over the prostrate form of Clarendon, and bursting into tears. "Speak to me, Mr. Clarendon, my good old friend speak to me, and tell me who did it!"

A groan was the only answer.

"It might ha' been you, sir," for all I know, cried Ichabod, abruptly, starting up and turning to the stranger, who was now engaged in restoring Kate to consciousness.

"Had I done it, think you I would be here now?" returned the other, sharply, an angry flush mantling his fine, noble countenance.

"How comes ye here at all, then?" asked Ichabod, not well pleased with the other's answer.

"That I will explain to your satisfaction some other time," was the reply. "Look you, now, and see if it be possible to save the wounded man!"

There was a certain lofty superiority in the tone and manner of the speaker, a something which spoke one accustomed to command and be obeyed, that completely over-awed Ichabod, and dispelled his doubts regarding him; and he turned at once to Clarendon, to see if it were possible to save him. As he bent down to examine his wounds and staunch the blood, his eye fell upon a piece of white paper, pinned upon his body, on which was writing in a legible hand; at the same moment the wounded man gave a groan, a gasp, and all was over. Tearing the paper from his body, Ichabod, unable to read, handed it to the stranger, saying:

"Here's something, that maybe you can tell what it means."

"By heavens! it is a clue to the mystery!" exclaimed the other, as his eye fell upon the letters; and he read:

"So shall perish all my enemies! Wo to them that bear the name of the dead!"

Rashton Moody.' "

"The damnable villain!" ejaculated Ichabod, catching up his rifle, which was leaning against the oak. "I'm his sown foe, straightway, to death; and if we ever do meet, which Heaven grant, by all my hopes of justice, I'll kill him if I can!"

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"Rightly spoken, sir, for a bold man. Henceforth I am your friend. Give me your hand!" and the next moment the hand of Ichabod was clasped in that of the stranger.

During this time, the stranger had been supporting Kate with his left arm, and chafing her temples with his right hand; and he now had the satisfaction of seeing her gradually revive. At length she opened her eyes, gazed around her with a bewildered air, and exclaimed:

"Where am I? and who are you, sir?"

"You are safe, fair lady," answered the stranger, in a mild, soothing tone, very different from the one in which he had addressed Ichabod. "You are safe, maiden, and in the hands of one who would suffer death sooner than see harm befall you."

"I do believe he says true, darling," observed the gardener.

"Ha! Icha!" cried Kate, wildly, her consciousness fairly regained; "I remember now my father where what oh, God!" and she buried her face in her hands, and her form shook convulsively.

"Be calm, fair maiden," said the stranger, tenderly; "be tranquil I pray you."

Kate made a sudden bound, sprang from his arms, and, ere she could be prevented, threw herself upon the corpse of her father.

"Oh, father," she exclaimed, in tones of anguish, "father speak to your Kate! speak to me! What! no answer! he never refused to answer me before. Great God! I have it now! he is dead! Yes, dead! dead! dead!" she shrieked, wildly. Then she burst into tears and lamentations, while Ichabod stood and gazed upon her like one stultified, and the stranger, placing his hands to his eyes, brushed away a tear.

"I have seen some hard scenes," he said, "but none that moved me like this. She must be removed," he added, touching Ichabod on the shoulder. "Gently, my worthy friend, let us remove her."

Ichabod drew a long sigh, that seemed like a gasp, and signified his assent to the stranger's proposition by simply nodding his head.

"Come, Kate, my darling pet," he said, stooping down to her, "let's return, and I'll see to having your father taken care on."

"Yes, lady, do!" urged the stranger; "and I pledge you my honor, as a gentleman, that whatever can be done, shall be done, to your satisfaction, in all that pertains to this unfortunate affair."

"You are very kind, sir," answered Kate, rising slowly to her feet, and, by a master effort, commanding her feelings so as to speak somewhat calmly; "and I feel confident, from your look and voice, that you can be trusted fully. You will pardon me, I trust, for my wild manner. The loss of a father, and one so affectionate (here the voice of Kate died away to a whisper, and she placed her hand to her throat as if to prevent strangulation), and by foul means too is no light affair."

"It is terrible!" rejoined the stranger, with emotion; "and God, who sees the hearts of all, knows that I sympathize with you and yours most deeply; and could I, by any sacrifice, ease you, fair lady, of a single pang, that sacrifice should be freely made."

"Tell me truly; he he is dead is he he not?" gasped Kate.

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The stranger bent over, felt of the corpse in several places, and answered sadly:

"I fear he is."

For a moment Kate stood with her hands to her eyes, while her whole form shook fearfully; then withdrawing them, she said:

"I will endeavor to be more calm. If you will bear the body of my father to the cottage, I will go before with the light."

A look of surprise and admiration lighted up the countenance of the stranger, and he said, as if to himself:

"She who can so command herself on an occasion like this show so much nerve can be no ordinary being. Lady," he added to Kate, respectfully, "your request shall be obeyed. Come, my friend," he continued, touching Ichabod, who was now standing with his hands locked behind him, his chin dropped upon his bosom, his eyes fastened upon the dead, and apparently heeding nothing that had been spoken since his own remarks to Kate: "Come, my friend, let us tarry here no longer. I will assist you in carrying the corpse down to the dwelling of this fair lady."

In a few minutes a rough kind of litter was prepared, on which having laid the mortal remains of George Clarendon, Ichabod and the stranger, preceded by Kate, bore it slowly forward down the descent. Reaching the Miami, the party entered the canoe, and paddled across in safety. As they were about raising the litter to proceed again, the dog, which had kept them company, uttered a low growl, and, at the same moment, a deep voice was heard chanting:

"Where the parent stem is broken,
'Neath the tree that's old and oaken
When the night-wind cool is blowing,
O'er the life-blood warmly flowing
By unchanging Fate's decree,
And Almighty Destiny,
One shall stand thou sawest never,
Yet shalt see and love forever."

"Who speaks thus?" inquired the stranger, drawing a pistol, and preparing to rush into the thicket.

"One who knows both thee and the future," answered Blind Luther the Necromancer, stepping forth from his covert.

"I know not you," returned the other, haughtily, "nor why you appear here at such a time, chanting such mystic words. A foul murder has just been done, and I feel myself called upon to arrest all suspicious persons found in the vicinity. Pardon me, sir, if I now arrest you, in the name of the general commonwealth of these United States." As he spoke, the stranger threw off an oil-skin coat, and displayed the uniform of a military officer. Then drawing a sword from his side, he laid the blade upon the shoulder of Luther, and added: "You are my prisoner."

So sudden and singular was this last proceeding, that Kate and Ichabod remained for a moment silent, when the former found her voice and exclaimed:

"Harm him not, sir, I pray you! We know him, and that he is as innocent as ourselves. Luther," she added to him, "I fear thou art a bird of evil omen. Behold!" and she pointed to the dead.

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"I am a messenger of truth," replied Luther; "and yet I deeply sympathize with you, and regret the decrees of fate. I saved your life, and might his, had it been so ordained." Then turning to the young officer, who, meantime, had sheathed his sword, he continued, in a tone of superiority: "Boy, you might as well arrest the wind! Think you I would go with you against my will? No, Ernest Clifton, you have mistaken him who addresses you."

"Ha!" ejaculated the officer "you know me then?"

"You! ay and your parents before you."

"My parents? heavens! Who are you, pray?"

"Ask your friends."

Clifton turned inquiringly to Kate.

"We know him as Blind Luther, the Necromancer," she answered.

"I know no such person," rejoined Ernest.

"Do you know yourself?" asked Luther.

A flush mantled the cheeks of the young officer as he replied:

"You ask a strange question, sir."

"Which I will answer for you in the negative," said Luther. "You know neither yourself nor your parents."

"Do you wish to insult me?" cried the other, reddening and somewhat confused.

"I wish to insult no man. But enough! you shall know more in time." Then turning to Kate, he continued: "As I told thee before, fair damsel,

"When sorrows dark do weigh thee down, Thou shalt behold this mystic crown;

[Here he touched the band around his head.]

"And in the depths of deepest woe,
The mysteries I have told thee, know;
Whate'er thy fortune, nobly bear,
And yield thee never to despair.

"Again I told thee," continued the Necromancer,

"When the new moon shall be near, One whose blood now warmly flows, Shall in death find stern repose

[Here he pointed to the corpse.]

When the earth drinks blood and rain, Some shall see this form again

[Here he smote his breast.]

Then a child can tell the tale, Over which now hangs a vail.

"Behold so much of my prophesy, and await the revealings of the great future. We shall all meet again,

"When dark storms around us lower, Or bright sunshine rules the hour.

"Farewell!" and as he concluded speaking, Luther sprang into the thicket and disappeared.

"A strange, eccentric being," observed young Clifton, as if to himself. Then motioning Ichabod to assist him, he bent down to raise the corpse. The rest of the way to the cottage of the deceased was passed in silence.

CHAPTER VII.

The blight of hope and happiness
Is felt when fond ones part,
And the bitter tear that follows, is
The life—blood of the heart.

Fitz—Green Halleok.

We thank you, friends, that you have buried our dead forever from our sight.

The Burial

It is needless for us to describe, or even attempt to describe, the scene which followed the awful announcement to Mrs. Clarendon, that her well-beloved partner for life was no more or when, too, nearly frantic with the news, she rushed to him and beheld him all gory with the generous blood that had so lately warmed his veins. And even did we describe it, what benefit would accrue to the reader? Who could realize the heart-rending agony, but such as have been placed in similar circumstances; and for such, no description is needed; for all potent and poignant memory will too forcibly recall the eventful past. Suffice, that she was nigh distracted with grief, and, for several hours, manifested strong symptoms of confirmed insanity.

The day following, nearly all the villagers, who received the news at an early hour in the morning, flocked to the house of mourning, to behold the deceased, and condole with the living.

As Clarendon came to his death in a manner so singular, it was judged expedient to hold an inquest over the body. For this purpose, a jury was speedily collected, consisting of twelve persons, among whom were two physicians, who at once proceeded to examine the body minutely, and who gave it as their opinion, that the deceased came to his death by reason of gashes made by a knife upon his breast and abdomen. Ernest Clifton, the young officer, who had remained over night at the cottage, was next called upon to state what he knew in regard to the affair, and how he came to be found with the deceased, so far from any habitation, alone, at such a time of night, and under circumstances so calculated to render him an object of suspicion.

The jury had now formed a circle around the deceased, in the adjoining apartment or cabin, and as the spokesman concluded, each turned his face toward Ernest, who, with some five or six other spectators, was standing just without the ring. On hearing the question put, he started, a deep flush mantled his features, and without ado, he stepped boldly within the circle, and with one hand gently touched the dead. He was a noble-looking young man, nearly six feet in height, with handsome proportions, that lost nothing of their beauty in being set off by his close-fitting uniform. His features were comely and very expressive; and there was a nobility in his high, broad

forehead, surmounted by dark brown curls, and in his full black eyes, which forbade the idea that he could be guilty of a mean or base action.

"Gentlemen," he said, calmly, and with dignity, moving his eyes slowly around the circle, and resting them for a moment on each member: "Gentlemen, you have heard me called upon to state what I know in regard to this unfortunate affair, in a manner calculated to leave upon your minds the impression that my knowledge was not honestly and honorably gained. What object the speaker had in addressing me in the way he did, I know not, but shall call upon him to explain hereafter; and I trust his answer will be satisfactory: otherwise (here he gracefully and lightly touched the hilt of his sword with his right hand, and fixed his eyes steadily upon the one alluded to, who quailed before his glance), there is, thank fortune! an honorable way of settling all matters of a similar nature.

"I shall now proceed," he continued, "to state the facts, briefly as possible. In the first place, as you will perceive by my uniform, I am in the service of the Government. I hold a lieutenant's commission, and am quartered at Cincinnati. Some few nights since, word was brought to my commanding officer, that a body of Indians was prowling about the vicinity, and that, unless they were seen to in time, serious results would be likely to follow. Upon this, I was immediately ordered to head a detachment of ten picked men, and scour the surrounding country, and if I found no Indians, to divide and send my men out separately as scouts. To make a long story short, my men were sent out in every direction, one after another, until I was left entirely alone. Yesterday, while scouting myself, I reached and crossed the Little Miami, and was on my return last evening to the garrison, when, finding myself belated, and that a severe storm was approaching, I ascended a tree to await the appearance of a clear sky. While in the tree, I several times fancied I heard a groan, but thought I had most probably mistaken the wailings of the storm, which was then raging with fury, for a human voice. When the storm began to die away, I descended to the ground, for the purpose of resuming my journey. Scarcely had I done so, when I heard the mournful howl of a dog near by. Thinking there must be something wrong, I hastened in the direction whence the noise proceeded. I had not gone far, when I heard a distant call. Immediately after, the dog, with a yelp, bounded away. At the same moment, a deep groan sounded in my ear; and pressing forward, I was not long in finding the cause in the person of the deceased, who was lying upon his side, under a large tree, and bleeding profusely from a couple of wounds, located as you perceive. I questioned him as to what had occurred, but he was too far gone to answer. I endeavored to staunch the blood, but did not succeed in doing much good. In a few minutes the dog returned; and shortly after, I saw a light in the distance, apparently moving toward me. Steadily the light approached, and at length I espied a couple of figures with it. From my position, I was afterward enabled to keep them in view, until near enough to make them hear my voice, when I urged them to hasten forward, while I at once sprang back to the deceased. While bending over the wounded man, I heard a shriek, and looking around, was surprised to find a beautiful female near me, on the ground, in a swooning state. I hastened to raise her in my arms, and while engaged in restoring her to consciousness, the unfortunate man breathed his last. On his breast was found this paper, which having perused, and taken the testimony of Miss Clarendon and her serving-man, I trust, gentlemen, you will fully exonerate me from even a suspicion of being in any manner concerned in the death of him now lying before you."

As Clifton concluded, he presented to the foreman of the jury the paper alluded to, which the reader will recollect as the one bearing the signature of Rashton Moody. No little excitement was created on reading this, for all knew Moody well, and also the cause of quarrel between him and Clarendon. Kate and Ichabod were called and examined separately; but as their testimony only corroborated Clifton's, the matter was soon decided, and the verdict rendered That George Clarendon came to his death by means of a knife, or some other sharp instrument, in the hands of Rashton Moody, whom the jury in consequence considers guilty of murder in the first degree.

The funeral of Clarendon took place on the following day, and was attended by a large concourse of citizens, of both sexes, all of whom appeared to sympathize deeply with the afflicted family. The funeral service was uncommonly solemn and impressive, and when the speaker concluded, scarcely a dry eye could be found in the whole assemblage. A long procession attended the corpse to its last earthly resting place, which was the quiet

little graveyard covering the knoll, where stood the sanctuary, of which mention was made in the opening chapter of this history.

As the soft earth fell with a hollow, rattling sound upon the coffin, assuring the living that the last parting between them and the dead had really taken place, not a dry eye could be found among the group that now stood around the open grave. As for Kate and her mother, their sobs and lamentations were truly heart-rending; and it almost required force to remove them from the "narrow house appointed for all living."

Ernest Clifton, from one cause or another, had not yet taken his departure; and a stranger to have seen him at the funeral, and at the grave of Clarendon, would have pronounced him one of the chief mourners so pale were his features, and so sad in expression. As Kate and her mother quitted the grave, he held their horses, assisted them to mount, and then, with Ichabod, kept them company on foot, as they slowly took their way to their now desolate home. Here, after partaking some refreshment, he said:

"Friends for I claim the privilege of calling you by that endearing term our first meeting and acquaintance has been made under strange and heart-rending circumstances such as I trust it may never be our lot to witness again. To say that I deeply, from my heart, sympathize with you in your affliction, would be to repeat in words what my actions have already spoken. Duty now calls me away; and I fear I have intruded too long already; for whatever might have been my feelings, I should have remembered that I was a stranger, and therefore had no right to press my sympathies upon your notice. And if in doing so I have, in your view of the matter, overstepped the bounds of propriety, I trust you will fully acquit me, on the ground that all was meant for the best."

"I am sorry you think it necessary to make apologies, Mr. Clifton," answered Mrs. Clarendon, while Kate looked up at the young officer with tearful eyes; "for I assure you, we feel deeply our obligations to you, for the kindness manifested in this awful, soul-rending calamity, and sincerely regret that the time has come for you to leave us. It is true we have known you only a short period; but there are times when the friendship of an hour bears with it the weight of a lifetime; and such, I assure you, is yours. That you are a stranger, comparatively speaking, I know; and yet, somehow, it seems as if I had known you for years; and I hope, sincerely, that though duty now calls you away, you will not altogether neglect the house of the widow and orphan."

"I shall be too happy in the privilege of calling upon you whenever circumstances will permit," answered Ernest, glancing toward Kate, whose eyes modestly sought the ground.

"Any thing that a poor body like me can do to sarve ye, Mr. Clifton," rejoined Ichabod, "shall ever be done straightway, if you'll only mention it."

"Thank you," returned Clifton. "And now, Miss Kate," he continued, advancing and taking her hand, which, in spite of her efforts to the contrary, trembled not a little, "I must say farewell may I hope it is not forever?"

"Certainly not forever," said Kate, looking up with a start; and then, as she saw the dark eyes of the other beaming tenderly upon her, she became embarrassed, and stammered; "That is, I I trust you will call again to see us for friendship sake, Mr. Clifton."

"I shall call again," returned Clifton, pointedly; and shaking the hand of each, he quitted the cottage and set out upon his return to the garrison.

CHAPTER VIII.

Pale care now sits enthroned upon that cheek

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

Where rosy health did erst her empire hold.

J. T. Watson.

Sickness sits cavern'd in her hollow eye.

Byron.

Strange is the power of dreams!

Mrs. Norton.

A prophecy he spake, yet so mysterious,
None knew in full its dire import.

Old Play.

It is one of the blessings of Divine Providence that the mind can be healed as well as the body otherwise what wretched creatures should we be indeed! for who, among the most heaven favored of us all, hath not lost a friend a near and dear relative and felt his soul oppressed by a weight of woe, that then seemed destined never to be removed; but which time has gradually lightened, until the heart has leaped as free and joyous as in the noon-tide of its prosperity. It is hard to part from those we love even when we expect to behold them again in life for the separation leaves an aching void, that nothing for the time can fill and of course it must be proportionately hard to part from those we love, knowing that we shall behold them no more, until we ourselves shall have put off the mortal and put on immortality. But, notwithstanding this, we should ever strive to avoid being too much cast down; should buoy ourselves up with the reflection, that all are born to die; and that they who have passed the fatal barrier have already done with a world of trouble, and entered upon a new, and, we trust, more happy existence where we, when we have played our parts on the stage of life, shall join them to separate no more forever. Let us philosophize that death is but a sleep, and eternity a delightful dream, and that the sooner our spirits leave this troublesome tenement, fitly prepared for the change, the sooner we shall be in Heaven.

Some minds are so constituted, that the least trouble seems sufficient to overthrow them, and great troubles drive them nearly distracted; and yet after a little, they gradually become tranquil, sorrow passes away, and they appear as gay and light-hearted as before: while, on the other hand, we find others, who appear calm amid the lesser ills, and amid the greater make little or no complaint, and yet are secretly borne down to the grave by the afflictions they scarce seem to lament. Something of both these natures could be found in Kate and her mother. As time wore on, the former gradually became more and more herself; while the latter appeared to pine away in secret, as though some inward disease were preying upon her vitals. From the moment she received the news of her husband's death, Mrs. Clarendon was never known to smile; and though at first she made great lamentation over him, yet this soon settled into a quiet, silent melancholy, that foreboded, ere long, either death or insanity.

Three months rolled away, and the mother of Kate was found to be in a decline of health. A cold that she had caught some two months before, had settled on her lungs, which, together with grief for the loss of her husband, was now making those rapid strides with her constitution, that always awaken fears of the most painful nature. She coughed a good deal her voice became changed more hoarse and hollow and there was, at times, a wax-like transparency about her skin, and a hectic flush on her cheek, that told, with unmistakable certainty, of the silent work of death going on within.

Kate noticed the progress of the fell destroyer with less alarm than might have been supposed. Doubtless she did not realize how much had already been done, and looked forward to years of companionship with her mother. But not so Mrs. Clarendon herself. Unlike many who have that flattering disease, consumption, fastened upon them, she saw and felt her danger; and, like the wise ones of old, deemed it expedient to have her lamps trimmed and

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burning, ready for the coming of the bridegroom. Accordingly, one bright summer's day toward the latter part of August, she bade Kate seat herself by her side, that they might converse on a subject of no little moment to both.

"It has now," observed Mrs. Clarendon, laying her thin, transparent hand on the white and plump one of Kate, thereby displaying a painful contrast between sickness and health: "It has now, daughter, been three months, since that terrible night when your father was brought home a corpse, and your acquaintance began with Ernest Clifton; and as I know I am not long destined to remain and watch over you, I wish you to tell me, truly, how you stand affected toward each other."

"Ah! mother," exclaimed Kate, turning her eyes tenderly and earnestly upon the other, "what mean you, by using such gloomy words?"

"Look here," replied Mrs. Clarendon, touching her face with her finger, "do you not behold here the effects of inward disease and certain decay?"

"But death may not come for years, yet, mother," rejoined Kate, anxiously.

Mrs. Clarendon shook her head sadly.

"You mistake, daughter," she said. "Put weeks in place of years, and perhaps you will have hit it. No, Kate, my darling, I know, by an inward monitor by this dry, hollow cough that I am not long for this world; and I am anxious to know what will become of you, when you find yourself alone, with no father nor mother to turn to for protection and advice."

"Mother, dear mother, do'nt talk so" cried Kate, bursting into tears, and burying her head upon the lap of her parent. "Oh! mother, you will, you must live years yet. I cannot, cannot part with you so soon."

"For your sake, child, I would to God I could! but He who sees the sparrow fall, has ordered otherwise."

"Oh! do not talk so, mother! You are ill now I know but you may yet be well again."

"Child," continued Mrs. Clarendon, bending over her daughter affectionately, her now somewhat sunken eyes moist with tears: "Child, do not delude yourself with any false hope. The grass that comes upward beneath the fairy-like tread of the foot of Spring, may rise, perchance, from the soil resting on the body of your mother; and that, too, ere another year has joined the great unapproachable Past. But tell me when last you saw Ernest Clifton, and how matters stand between you! I ask with no idle curiosity; I ask only as a mother; so tell me truly."

"It is a week, dearest mother, since we last met," answered Kate, looking up through her tears, a slight flush giving her comely features a beautiful glow; "but as to the matters you allude to, I scarcely know how to answer."

"Has he ever offered you his hand?"

"Not exactly," answered Kate, hesitatingly; "though perhaps he would have done so, had I always remained silent at the proper time."

"And why did you not, my daughter? Do you not love him?"

"I hardly know what love is," answered Kate, dropping her eyes to the ground; "but I certainly admire him more than any other I have ever seen."

"Do you admire him sufficiently, to desire him for a life-companion?" asked Mrs. Clarendon.

"I think I could be happy with him, mother."

"Then, daughter, understand me! From what I have seen, I think him a brave, noble, and generous young man, and worthy of you; and it is my desire to see you united before I die."

"Ah! mother, you are talking of death again," said Kate, her tears starting afresh.

"We know not, daughter, when we may be called away; and should my death be sudden, it would be a bitter pang to know I was leaving you behind without a protector, in this cold, calculating world. But of course I leave the matter with yourself, to do as you think proper. Marriage is a solemn undertaking, and should not be lightly entered into. Unless you can place your full, undivided affections upon one individual, do not marry at all; for there are, necessarily, trials in married life, that none but such as truly love can surmount with any thing like harmony of feeling. I say nothing would delight me more than to see you happily wedded; yet, understand, I do not wish to influence you against your choice, and your own sober reason; for, as I said before, marriage is a most solemn undertaking. And now that we are on the subject, pray tell me how it stands with your former suitors?"

"Why, Danvers and Danbury, I believe, have suited themselves elsewhere; and as for that villain, Moody "

"Name him not, Kate name him not!" exclaimed Mrs. Clarendon, covering her eyes, and shuddering at the images of horror which his name called up. "May he meet his deserts, is all I ask. Yet one question: Has he been found?"

"He has not, although Governor St. Clair has offered the reward of a hundred dollars for his apprehension. It is supposed, by some, that he has joined the Indians."

"Then we may fear the worst," rejoined the mother of our heroine, sadly.

"Why so, mother?"

"Have you forgotten the awful threat contained on that paper, Kate *`Wo to them that bear the name of the dead?*"

"O, that might have been done to intimidate us, you know, mother. Do not let it trouble you. I feel not the least apprehension; for Ern a Mr. Clifton assured me, that scouts were continually out in all directions, so that at present it would be impossible for a body of Indians to reach either this place or Cincinnati, before alarm of their approach would be given."

"Yet do not rely too much upon your safety, Kate," pursued Mrs. Clarendon; "for I have been informed, that the force at Fort Washington is not large, so that from there not many soldiers could be spared for scouting purposes. Now I think of it seriously, perhaps we had better give up our premises here and take up our quarters nearer some block-house!"

"But why so, mother? Has any thing new and startling transpired to alarin you?"

"Why, I had a very singular dream last night, which, I confess, troubles me not a little on your account. I thought I was standing in a beautiful arbor, surrounded by flowers of all colors and varieties from the modest pink and violet, to the large and luxuriant rose and that you and many others were seated around, arrayed in white. I thought it was some solemn occasion of rejoicing something like a wedding, and yet not a wedding either. In the center of the group stood an old, grey-headed man, that methought was our pastor; and yet, the resemblance to him was not perfect, but confused. Methought he raised his trembling hands above his venerable head, to pronounce a benediction, when suddenly, and while every eye was upon him, a dark cloud enveloped us, and

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forth with resounded shrieks and groans, the most awful I ever heard. Suddenly I felt my self growing dizzy indistinct objects whirled past me and I felt myself to be falling down down down into a horrible lake of blood when your father, pale as marble, sprang forward, clasped me in his arms, and, hurrying me away to some quiet spot, whispered in my ear, 'We have met to part no more.' With a cry of joy, tinged with the horror of the scene I had just witnessed, I awoke, and found myself lying on the floor. What augur you from the dream, my daughter?"

"Why, I do not think it best to give ourselves any uneasiness about it; people often dream as strangely, without any serious results."

"But somehow," pursued Mrs. Clarendon, "I cannot shake off the impression, that this portends evil to somebody perhaps myself."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Kate, fervently, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, and pressing a kiss upon her fading lips. "God forbid that any thing should happen you, dearest mother! But let us hope our afflictions are over at least for the present."

"It is always proper to hope, child; and God in his goodness has so ordained it, that there are but few situations, in all the changes of human life, where hope becomes extinct. By the way, have you seen any thing of Luther of late?"

"No, I have not seen him since the night of father's death, though I have heard of his being in the vicinity. He passed through the village a few days since, and I believe uttered some of his prophesies; one of which was to the effect, that Columbia would never be a city; and another, that treasures had been concealed on the banks of the Little Miami. Some have put faith in his words, and been and dug for gold; but I believe nothing unusual has been the result."

"Strange being he!" observed Mrs. Clarendon, musingly. "Can it be possible that he is gifted with what is called second sight?"

"I know not, mother, what are his gifts in that respect; but I do know, that he foretold some things which have come true; and that over me exercised a strange kind of power, beyond my comprehension. Never did I put faith in him till then. But, Heaven preserve him! for he saved my life from a villian."

"And will again," said a deep voice."

Kate and her mother turned quickly round, and, to their astonishment, beheld the tall, rough form of Luther, standing in the doorway, calmly leaning upon his long stick of witch-hazel.

"Art thou mortal?" asked Mrs. Clarendon, vainly endeavoring to shake off a superstitious feeling that came creeping over her, with a chilly sensation. "Art thou mortal, Luther?"

"I am what I am," replied the Necromancer, solemnly. "This much know: I was born of woman, and am bound to die. God save all here! for already the second trump of woe is being blown the second vial of wrath being emptied. Maiden, listen!

"To him who holds thy heart in bond,
Freely may'st thou now respond;
Yet guard thy every word and sigh,
For trysting hour with thee is nigh.

"He whom you love will soon be with you."

"Whom I love," repeated Kate, a deep flush mantling her face and neck. "And whom do I love?"

"Whom the fates decreed you should Ernest Clifton."

"Nay, I know not that I love him," responded Kate, turning away her head.

"Tell that to the winds peradventure they will believe you; but think not to deceive me, nor thyself, fair maiden. Thou knowest, Kate Clarendon, that Ernest Clifton holds thy heart else why that averted head and tell-tale blood. And, maiden, fear not that he is unworthy thee. The diamond, fresh raised from the bedded mine, is not more pure than the blood leaping with the impetuosity of youth through his veins. Sometime I will tell thee more. Adieu! and remember trysting time is near."

"Stay, Luther, and partake of some refreshment," said Mrs. Clarendon, as the Necromancer turned to depart.

"Would to God," returned Luther, solemnly, "I could bid thee stay! But I go now, and you go soon; and yet you will not follow me, for we journey different ways. Your path lies there;" and Luther pointed upward. "You ask me to take refreshment. This is kind of you, and I thank you; but I have it here;" and he pointed over his shoulder, with his thumb, to the knapsack on his back. "Thank God! it costs little to keep me; for I live plain, as becometh one of my calling. Jerk, roots and berries are my food; and my drink, the silver waters spouting from the cool, forest-shaded earth. And now, adieu! Pray often, and fast often for if the stars do not lie, you will both soon feel the need of Divine aid."

As Luther said this, he turned and disappeared. The eyes of Kate and her mother met, with expressions of superstitious bewilderment.

"It can do us no harm to pray, at all events," said Mrs. Clarendon; and suiting the action to the word, she knelt upon the ground. Kate knelt beside her and the hearts of both were poured out in supplications to the God of that Tribunal before which all nations must be judged.

CHAPTER IX.

Her time is nearly come yet mourn thou not!
No! rather bear in mind that all must die,
And that the hastening of the spirit hence,
But hastens joys eternal.

Anon.
O, there's nothing half so sweet in life,
As love's young dream.

Moore.
He told his tale of love unto a shy
But willing ear.

With thee conversing I forget all time.

Milton.

It was a bewitching night. The moon rode high in the heavens, and poured her soft, silvery flood over the luxuriant and apparently sleeping earth. No breeze rustled a leaflet no sounds were heard, save those soft, dreamy ones which are made by the night-watchers. Not a cloud marred the broad, blue canopy overhead, through which could here and there be seen the rich, golden light, shot from some bright star, itself away in the incomprehensible and boundless realms of space. The mighty forest seemed sleeping, and one could almost fancy nodding, too, in its sleep. It was a night for love. Just sufficiently calm and holy to awaken all those fine poetic chords of nature, whose gentle, musical tones are drowned and lost amid the harsher sounds of every day, active life. A night for communing with some bright being, who has gone from this vale of tears to a happier and holier sphere or with one who still lingers here, pluming her wings for an immortal and eternal flight. A night, indeed, for lovers and love.

On the banks of the Little Miami, stood an old sycamore, whose white and aged arms, thrown abroad over the murmuring stream, seemed no bad type of a prophet about to utter oracles for coming ages to define, or pronounce a benediction over the gurgling waters that rolled beneath.

In keeping with the hour and the scene, there glided beneath this old sycamore, in the checkered light which the moon made by stealing among the leaflets, two figures a youth and a maiden. At the base of the old tree they paused, and seated themselves on a crooked trunk of a smaller one, which, projecting over the waters, shot upward a growing rival to its patriarchal neighbor. They seated themselves upon the trunk of this tree in silence, and looked downward for a few moments, and listened to the song of the streamlet, as it mingled harmoniously with the quiet hum of forest life. Beautiful and sacred thoughts were in the breasts of both; for they thought of each other and of love; and who will deny that true love is a sacred theme, and has more of Heaven in it than earth!

"This," said the young man, in a low, musical voice, that accorded well with every thing around: "This is a night, and a scene that I love."

"And I," was the response of the gentle maiden by his side, in a tone that lost itself in harmony with the murmuring river at her feet. "What," she continued, "is more enchanting than Nature, when displayed in her mildest and loveliest form, to the soul that views it in a corresponding mood of quietude?"

"Ay! and to behold its beauties," answered her companion, "the soul must be in harmony with it; and what will so soon harmonize the soul to a scene like this, as love?"

The maiden drooped her head, and tapped the earth lightly with her delicate little foot, but did not answer. A moment the young man paused, and then gently stealing the hand of the maiden, and pressing it in his own, he went on.

"What feeling is there, dear Kate, more subdued and holy than the yearning of a soul toward a kindred spirit? and the intoxicating response the harmonious blending together of both? Harmony is the main spring of creation, on which depends alike the existence of a world, and the happiness of a human being. He whose soul is not in unison with nature and the things around him, must of necessity be unhappy. I did not come hither, however, to philosophize, but to speak of matters which lie nearer my heart. Months, dearest Kate, have intervened, since that never-to-be-forgotten night, when we met for the first time, under circumstances the most painful to both; and often since then have we been together, walked together, and conversed together on various subjects may I inquire if these meetings have in any wise been disagreeable to you?"

"On the contrary," answered Kate, "I will be frank to own, they have proved the happiest periods of my life."

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"On this point, then, our feelings harmonize; for the only real pleasure I have myself enjoyed, has been in your sweet company. But to change the subject, somewhat let me inquire regarding your mother?"

"She does not seem so well tonight," answered Kate, sadly.

"So I fancied, from what I saw," rejoined Clifton. "Have you tho't seriously upon her illness, Kate?"

"I do not know as I understand you."

"I do not wish to alarm you, Kate, but only to prepare your mind for a grave subject. Perhaps you are ignorant of her complaint?"

"Ha! then you think it dangerous, Ernest?" exclaimed the fair girl, grasping his arm, with a nervous motion, and endeavoring to catch the expression of his features in the darkness.

"You must prepare yourself to part with her ere long," said Ernest, solemnly.

"Oh, Heaven! you alarm me, Ernest! and yet you but repeat what she told me herself to-day. Oh, God! if she be taken from me, I shall be alone, indeed, without a protector, perhaps a friend!"

"Nay, Kate, dearest," rejoined Ernest, encircling her waist with his arm; "it is of that I wish to speak. There are none, I know, that can supply the place of a mother; and could my earnest prayers avail aught, you should never feel the want of one; but it would be little less than criminal, methinks, to disguise from you the fact, that, as regards your mother, the fatal work of death has already begun."

"Great God!" cried Kate, wildly, placing her hands to her temples; "you do not mean this! Oh! say you are jesting! say you did it to frighten me! say anything! but, for God's sake! do not tell me my dear mother is dying!"

"In this world," replied the young officer, in a tone slightly tremulous, "we must look for nothing but crosses, disappointments, and partings from those we love. That your mother is dying, in the literal sense of the term, I would not imply; she may hold out for weeks, and even months; but, painful as is the task, I cannot conscientiously conceal from you the truth, that she is in deep consumption, and that there is no hope of seeing her restored to health."

Kate bowed her head upon her hands, sobbed aloud, and groaned like one in pain.

"Yet, dearest girl, take it not so hard! Remember, we are in a world where death is ever parting friends; and that, sooner or later, we must all separate, according to the will of Him who shapes our destinies. You said, but now, that if your mother were called away, you would be without a protector, perchance a friend. It grieved me, dear girl, to hear you say thus. No, Kate Clarendon, while Ernest Clifton lives, you shall never want a friend; and and (his voice trembled and sank to a whisper) it rests with you to say, whether the friend and protector shall be one."

Kate still sat with her head bowed down, trembling and silent; and pausing for a moment, Clifton again proceeded in a low, earnest voice.

"It has been but three months, since accident first threw us together, dear Kate; and yet to me our acquaintance seems that of years. From what I have seen of you, I am perfectly confident you hold the power to make me happy or miserable; in other words, dearest Kate, I must own I love you, and did from the moment I saw displayed those heroic qualities at the death of your father."

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"Let us not talk of this now," said Kate, hurriedly.

"And why not now?" rejoined the other, with some uneasiness; "there may never be a better time and place, and we know not what may happen."

"But somehow," sighed Kate, "I feel strangely as if danger were lurking nigh."

"I see how it is," returned Clifton, in a tone of sadness; "you do not love me, and seek to avoid, as you have done on all previous occasions, any mention of a subject which I must own lies nearest my heart. Be it so, then; you will doubtless find another more worthy, and more to your liking."

"Nay," said Kate, startled at the turn matters had taken: "Nay, Ernest, I meant not that."

"And now I think of it, I know no reason why you should love me," continued Clifton, pursuing his own train of reflections. "I am only a poor officer in the army, whose duty is where danger lies, and know not at what moment I may be called away to another station or another world. 'Tis better, now I think seriously on the subject, that you do not love me, Kate; I might only be an instrument in the hands of Providence, for making your sorrows heavier."

Kate turned her eyes toward her companion for a moment with a look, which, could Ernest have seen, his heart would have smote him and then burst into tears.

"Ah! why do you weep dear Kate?" asked the other, tenderly. "Have I mistaken your meaning?"

Kate answered not; but her head gradually sunk against his breast, and her tears burst forth afresh.

"Ah! Kate," cried the other, rapturously, throwing both arms around and straining her to his heart, "what a fool have I been to mistake you! You love me, Kate you love me?"

Kate replied not, save by pressing closer to his breast.

"And you will be mine, dearest?"

A pressure of the hand was the only answer.

"Heaven bless you, mine own dear angel!" exclaimed Clifton, stealing his first kiss from the trembling lips of the lovely being reclining in his arms.

Two hours rolled away, and still the lovers were seated beneath that same old sycamore, and lost to the outer world in a sweet communion with each other.

"And when shall it be?" asked Clifton, at length, in reference to something which had gone before.

"That I shall leave to you," replied Kate.

"Then the sooner the better," rejoined the other. "Yet, stay! I have forgotten one question: Your mother, Kate will she give her consent? for I will do nothing against her will."

"It is already given," replied Kate. "It is her own desire, dear Ernest, to see us united before she dies."

"Heaven bless her! When said she this?"

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"To day. She called me to her, questioned me of you, spoke of you in the highest terms of praise, and said, if it accorded with the feelings of both, nothing would please her better than to see us duly united."

"I shall go wild with joy. A week from to-night, then, Kate will that suit you?"

"I said I should leave it to you," returned Kate, averting her face.

"Then the bond is settled, and so let us seal it," rejoined Clifton, gaily; and the next moment the lips of the lovers met in a long and rapturous kiss of love.

"There is one thing more," said Ernest again, after a pause of a few moments. "I have told you nothing of my history, Kate. Perhaps, when you come to hear that, you will change your mind in regard to this matter?"

"Then keep it ever a secret, Ernest," answered Kate, frankly. "If I wed you, it will be for your noble self alone. So that your own conduct has been upright through life, I care for nothing more."

"Noble, generous girl!" cried the other, in a transport of joy, "now I love thee more than ever, for thy unwavering confidence in me. May Heaven watch over us both, and allow me to strew thy path with flowers even to the verge of the grave!"

"Hist!" said Kate, laying her hand upon the arm of her companion. "Did you not hear a noise?"

"What was it like?"

"The cracking of some dry twig or bush."

Both now listened attentively for some moments; but all was silent, save the rippling of the stream, the chirping of the insects, and the low sighing of the forest, as a light breeze swept through it.

"I think you must have been mistaken, dear Kate," said Ernest, "for all seems still."

"Then fancy has made me timid," returned Kate, pressing closer to the other; "and so I think we had better return. Ha! what was that?"

"I hear nothing but the hooting of an owl."

"What a gloomy sound! Strange it is, dear Ernest, but I feel so nervous so much as I did on that terrible night when father died. My God! I hope I am not to pass such a night again. Come, come, let us return, quick as possible! for I cannot divest myself of the idea that we are surrounded by danger."

"O, it is nothing; you are needlessly alarmed, dear Kate, I am sure," replied Ernest, consolingly. "But we will return, at all events, for I fear it is getting late."

"Late!" echoed Kate, as they commenced retracing their steps to the cottage. "Why how long have we been away I pray you?"

"Guess."

"Half an hour, perhaps."

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"You are more complimentary than correct," returned Clifton, with a light laugh, as, by the glimmer of the moon through the trees, he was enabled to make the time from his watch. "Add two hours to the half and you will hit it exactly."

Kate was about to utter an exclamation of surprise, and insist that her lover was mistaken, when the stirring of a bush just ahead of her, caused her to start back with a suppressed cry of fear. Clifton saw the bush move also, and throwing his left arm around the waist of his fair companion, with his right he drew his sword, and put himself in an attitude of defense. For a few moments he stood, awaiting the appearance of his foe, if such the unknown should prove, while Kate clung to him with a maidenly fear, that made his arm feel strong, and raised within him a desire to meet danger for her sake.

"All is quiet there again," he said, at length, in a low tone. "Could our eyes have possibly deceived us? I will go and probe the bush with my good sword and ascertain."

"No, no, no!" rejoined Kate, clasping him more tightly; "you shall not stir a step toward it, Ernest! Here this way quick let us hurry back!" and taking an opposite direction to the bush, Kate almost dragged Ernest after her.

For a few paces Clifton hung back, as if reluctant to leave the mysterious bush: then, as if actuated by another thought, he suddenly threw an arm around the maiden's waist, and, partly raising her from the ground, hurried her forward at a fast run, and in a few minutes reached the cottage in safety. Bidding her go in and bolt the door, Ernest was about to turn back, when Kate prevented him, by declaring that if he did she would follow. After much entreaty, he abandoned the idea, and accepted her invitation to spend the night under her mother's roof.

For a few minutes after Ernest and Kate had departed, everything remained quiet; then the bush, whose movement had so startled the latter, became slightly agitated again, and at the same moment a head was thrust through, and turned from side to side, as if to ascertain that the coast was clear. Then a figure emerged from the thicket, and, as it came into the broad light of the moon, displayed the tall, but slender form of a white man, metamorphosed into an Indian. Portions of his body were bare, after the Indian fashion. He wore moccasins on his feet, had paint on his face, and his head was shaved, all but a single tuft of hair on the crown, which was ornamented with feathers. A belt around his waist contained a brace of pistols, a scalping-knife and tomahawk, and in his right hand he carried a rifle.

"'Tis well for you," he muttered, in English, through his close shut teeth, shaking his fist in the direction whence he saw the lovers disappear: "'Tis well for you, you did not probe the bush, as you were about to do, young man or you might have found a few inches of cold steel probing you. A week from to night, eh! is to consummate your desire? Ha, ha, ha! I am glad you mentioned it; for now I shall be there, though an uninvited guest; and I will invite a few of my dusky brethren to be there also. Peradventure if I cannot give the bride away, I can take her to myself. Once in my power once mine (and his features assumed a hellish look of satisfaction, and his black eyes fairly shone in the darkness) and if yon proud youth will accept her then why ha, ha! let him have her a ruined, cast off toy. Then, and not till then, will Rashton Moody think his insult canceled by a sweet revenge."

As he said this, the figure turned, plunged into the thicket and disappeared an evil spirit, bent on a devilish mission.

CHAPTER X.

The guests were ready. In sad and solemn
Silence waited each the coming

Of the bridegroom.

Old Play.

His pure thoughts were borne
Like fumes of sacred incense o'er the clouds.

Congreve.

O, treacherous night!
Thou lend'st thy vail to every treason,
And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.

Aaron Hill.

Death and destruction, and the shrieks of woe,
Were seen and heard on every hand. *The Siege.*

Time, with his scythe and hourglass, strode steadily onward, and soon bro't about the eventful night, which had been set apart for the consummation of the rite indissoluble between Ernest Clifton and Kate Clarendon. Throughout the week intervening, since we last beheld the lovers, every preparation had been made for solemnizing the nuptials of two beings whose souls beat in unison. Invitations had been sent to nearly all the young people of Columbia; and at an early hour on the evening in question, they might have been seen in pairs, riding gaily up to the door of the bride. Ichabod Longtree, arrayed in his best, busied himself in welcoming them to the wedding of his pet, and taking charge of their horses, which he led around the house and secured to the trees in the rear. Kate and her mother had robed themselves in garments of white, being relics of those days when they were rolling in luxury. What added additional joy to both, the health and spirits of Mrs. Clarendon, since the announcement to her that Ernest Clifton was soon to become her son-in-law, had revived to a wonderful degree, and she now appeared before her guests with something of the look and manner of former days. The excitement of the occasion had tinged her cheek with a flush resembling health, and added additional luster to her eyes, which now beamed with animation and joy. Kate, as might be supposed, looked paler more sad and thoughtful but, at the same time, none the less lovely. She received the greetings of her friends with an air of grace and cordiality, and sometimes, though but seldom, smiled, at their frequent sallies of wit. To her it seemed a grave, rather than light occasion, and one little suited, on her part, to hilarity. However much she might have jested on the matter once, she now felt in all its force the responsibility of the step she was about to take. She was about to give her hand, for good or ill, to one she loved, and that for life. She was about to bid adieu to the romantic visions of girlhood, and enter upon the responsible realities of a wife and womanhood. She was, in short, about to give herself away, to become another's, to be bound to him by solemn ties, that could not be broken without offense against the laws of God and man. It was a great and grave undertaking a new epoch in her life and though she wavered not, flinched not, yet she trembled and felt sad at the thought.

Among the invited guests, came two of the former suitors of Kate Danvers and Danbury each accompanied by a lass, who now had the honor of holding a place in his heart, which was once partially occupied by our fair heroine. They met her frankly, and cordially, with no show of pique or resentment, and as friends who took a deep interest in her welfare.

"I once flattered myself," said Danvers to Kate, smiling pleasantly, "that I should be a prominent actor at the wedding of Kate Clarendon, instead of a spectator; but matters have turned out otherwise."

"And none the worse for you," returned Kate, inclining her head to the maiden who now held the arm and heart of her former suitor.

"We will hope all has been for the best," was the reply of Danvers, looking fondly toward her whose arm he held.

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

"We lost the race, and should fain be content," put in Danbury, with a smile, coming up at the moment, with a pretty maiden also hanging on his arm.

"And in losing you *won*," returned Kate, pointedly, punning upon the word, and pointing to his fair companion.

"Why as to winning," rejoined Danbury, laughing, "that will depend much upon a certain monosyllable from Emma here."

"Fie! Orville," said Emma, blushing, and dragging him away, in the utmost good humor.

An hour from the setting in of night, saw all the guests assembled at the cottage, with the exception of the groom and clergyman, who were momentarily expected. As was customary at that day, each of the young men had brought with him his rifle, more from the force of habit and precaution, than from any supposed use he would have for it. It was also, as a matter of form, thought advisable to station a sentinel without, that, in case anything unusual should happen, alarm might be given. This last precaution would doubtless have been neglected, but for the report abroad, that a small body of Indians had been seen, not long since, within a few miles of the village. In consequence of this rumor, some of the more timid had repaired to the block-house; but the majority of the citizens of Columbia thought lightly of the news, and turned not aside from their usual routine of business.

The guests had now all taken their seats upon rude benches, ranged around the walls of the cabin, which had been prepared expressly for the occasion by the gardener. A rough chandelier, constructed of wood, in feeble imitation of some of a more solid material in the older settlements, and which also owed its existence to the genius and labor of Ichabod, was suspended from the ceiling by a small iron chain, near the center of the apartment, and supported several candles, whose combined gleams served to render every object distinct to the eye and display the youthful and healthy looking faces of the surrounding party, the expressions of which had grown very grave, preparatory to the coming solemn ceremony. Beneath this chandelier stood a table, on which were a Bible, a hymn-book, a vase of flowers, and two brass candlesticks supporting tapers. Beside the table was a stool, to be occupied by the clergyman on his arrival, and during the service he was expected to perform. Flowers, too, of all hues, had been liberally scattered over the white and sanded floor, whose fragrance was not the less sweet and abundant, from being crushed, occasionally, beneath the passing foot of some bright-eyed maiden or her gay gallant. Boquets and festoons decorated the walls, and added a rosy and beautiful back-ground to the picture.

At weddings of this period, a supper and dance generally succeeded; but on the present occasion, the declining health of her mother, together with the late loss of her father, had been a sufficient reason to induce Kate to dispense with the latter. The supper, however, had not been omitted. It was already laid on tables in the adjoining apartment, and was, like almost everything else about the premises, under the careful supervision of Ichabod Longtree who, in addition to the qualities of gardener and hostler, could, when occasion required, fulfill the duties of chief cook and butler.

All was ready, and waited only the coming of the groom and the clergyman, to begin the solemn and sacred rite. A deep and profound silence reigned in the apartment, where the wedding guests were seated, in stern repose, like so many wax figures.

As the first sensation to the touch of fire and ice is the same so, as a general thing, the feelings immediately preceding a wedding and a funeral are strangely alike. There steals over the spectator, on both occasions, a secret awe, an unaccountable solemnity, that he finds impossible to shake off. Such was the feeling pervading the assemblage on the occasion here described. From a lively and even gay conversation, the voices of the different speakers had gradually died away to whispers, and finally had ceased altogether. As minute after minute rolled by, and no sounds were heard indicating the approach of the expected parties, the guests began to look at each other inquiringly, with faces expressive of surprise at the delay; and then low whispers stole around the circle, of strange conjectures, giving a more gloomy turn to the whole affair.

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

As for Kate, her features had become as white, and almost as rigid, as marble; and as she sat in full light, robed in her wedding garments, clasping the thin, transparent hand of her mother, and gazing at vacancy, one could easily have fancied her a beautiful conception, chiseled from the cold, inanimate stone. The flush mentioned as surmounting the features of Mrs. Clarendon, had rather suddenly given place to a pallor almost frightful; and her now deeply sunk eyes roved around the apartment, nervously, over the whispering group, as if in quest of some object not there.

"It is strange they do not come!" she said, at last, in a grave voice.

"Hark!" exclaimed Kate, in reply, starting to her feet, and bending forward in a listening attitude. "My ears deceive me, or I hear the tramp of horses' feet;" and as she concluded, she sprang to the door, followed by most of the others.

It was a calm, beautiful night, and every thing without seemed wrapped in sweet repose. The moon, already at her full, large and bright, was just struggling over the eastern hill, and pouring her gray light down into the forest of the plain, and giving every object a twilight indistinctness. Wherever her rays fell upon the Miami and Ohio, their waters shone like burnished silver. Along the base of the eastern ridge, mentioned previously, lay a deep shadow, gradually disappearing as the moon rose on high; while across the plain, Bald Hill could be distinctly seen, looming up in the broad light not unlike some beacon of warning. A few white scuds were sailing overhead, and a mist, gradually ascending here and there, defined the course of the rivers, and gave indication of a foggy night.

As Kate and her companions turned their faces toward the west and listened, the tramp of horses became more audible, until at last the shadowy outline of two figures could be seen gliding among the trees, and nearing the spectators at a fast amble. As they drew close upon the cottage, Kate Clarendon was observed to tremble quite violently. She had recognised in them two important characters her affianced lover, and the venerable pastor that was to bind her to him by ties the most strong and holy; and the thought of this all important, irrevocable step, was sufficient to unstring her nerves, and produce the effect described. She did not wait to greet either of the new comers, but turned abruptly and entered the dwelling, at the moment when Ernest Clifton and the divine rode up to the door.

"I fear I have kept you waiting, friends," said the former, as he dismounted, and gave his horse in charge of Ichabod; "but my venerable companion here, met with a slight accident on the way, which detained me not a little."

"What happened?" asked half-a-dozen voices at once.

"He was thrown from his horse and his horse thrown down, by a rope being stretched across his path, and nearly stunned by the fall," answered Clifton.

"Foul! foul!" cried several voices, angrily.

"I am poor," said Clifton, "but I would give fifty dollars to know the author of this piece of villiany, if only to chastise him for the insult offered me and my friends."

"Never mind, my youthful friend," said the divine, in a mild, soothing tone of voice; "the accident was only trifling, I feel quite well again, and so let us trouble ourselves no more about the matter. If another wrong me, I never retaliate, save in supplicating for him at the throne of mercy. 'Tis a sweet and satisfactory revenge, and fulfills the command of Scripture, which says, 'Forgive thine enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you.' Let us in, my young friends, and return thanks to God that the affair turned out no worse."

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

There was a sweetness, earnestness and dignity, in the voice and manner of the speaker, that was not without its effect upon his youthful hearers, not one of whom ventured a reply, but turned, entered the cottage, and silently resumed their places. As the venerable pastor took his seat at the table before described, a deep silence reigned around. Every lip was motionless every eye was fixed upon him.

"Is all ready?" he asked, in a low, tremulous, solemn voice, speaking to Clifton, who had taken his place on the right of the trembling Kate. Clifton whispered to Mrs. Clarendon, then to Kate, and nodded in the affirmative.

"Then let us pray," said the pious pastor; and forthwith he knelt upon the ground, and poured forth the dictates of his heart, in a strain of eloquence seldom surpassed. He prayed for the beings before him, who were about to become one flesh, by the sacred rite of marriage, that they might always live happily together in this world, and meet in holy unison to part nevermore in the world to come. He prayed for the only parent of the bride, whom it had pleased God to afflict with disease and pain, that she might be spared many years yet, to bless and comfort those who would otherwise mourn her with tears of anguish. He prayed for the youth of both sexes here present, that they might so conduct themselves as to be ornaments to the age in which they lived, and that the generations, which, in the order of events would soon follow them, might be strict imitators of their noble examples. He prayed for those absent enemies as well as friends and, lastly, that God would prosper and preserve, spotless and pure, the liberties of the great Commonwealth, to gain which had cost the blood of thousands.

As he ended, he rose from his knees, and, opening the Bible on the stand before him, selected and read a passage applicable to the occasion. He then bade Ernest and Kate stand upon their feet, and commenced the solemn ceremony, amid a breathless silence. Every eye was fixed upon the youthful pair upon the pale, sweet features of Kate, as she stood downcast and trembling upon the noble, commanding form and face of Ernest, as he stood erect in his close-fitting uniform, the perfect picture of youthful pride. Every head was inclined forward, to catch the slightest tones of the speaker. Never did a pair look more noble and lovely; never was an occasion more solemn; never was a silence, whenever the speaker paused, more deep. Not a breath, even, could be heard, and the fall of a pin would have been audible. All felt a strange sensation of awe and fear, as if some calamity were about to befall them, yet none could give a reason for it. Even the venerable pastor himself seemed to be uncommonly affected; for once or twice he paused and glanced around the apartment, as if expecting to behold some unwelcome object.

Already had he asked the necessary questions, received the affirmative answers, and raising his eyes above, as if appealing to Heaven, the solemn words, "I pronounce you man and wife," were almost trembling on his lips, when, suddenly, the sharp report of a rifle without, succeeded immediately by a shout, a groan, and then by the most horrible yells imaginable, caused every face to blanch with terror. The next moment there arose the alarming cry of "Indians! Indians!" accompanied with appalling shrieks and the utmost confusion. Maidens threw their frail arms around their lovers for protection, and the latter strove to disengage themselves and rush to their rifles, which, unfortunately, had been left in the adjoining cabin. In the midst of this alarming state of affairs, Clifton drew his sword, sprang upon the table, and shouted, "Order! Silence!" just as some half-a-dozen hideous looking savages burst into the apartment, uttering terrific yells of fury.

Kate, surprised to bewilderment, had thrown her arms around her mother, who, completely overcome by the excitement, had sunk to the floor in a state of insensibility.

For a moment the foremost savage, who appeared to be chief of the party, looked hurriedly around him, as if in search of some victim, when his eyes falling upon Kate, he shouted, in English, "She's here," and sprang at once to her side.

Clifton saw the movement, and in his haste to punish the bold intruder, and save her he loved, he made an attempt to leap forward, when the table tilted, upset, and he was thrown heavily to the ground. Before he could recover his feet, the hellish work of the savage was completed. Tearing Kate rudely from the embrace of her mother, he drew

his knife and plunged it into the heart of the latter; then raising the former in his arms, he rushed to the door, with a laugh so fiendish it made the blood of all who heard it curdle, and, bounding into the open air, darted into a neighboring thicket with his prize.

As the captor of Kate sprang through the door, Clifton regained his feet, in time to see her disappear. With a cry of vengeance and despair, he leaped forward to her rescue, when a blow on the head, from one of the Indians, intercepted his progress, and laid him senseless on the ground.

Meantime, the onset of the savages had been terrific. With horrible yells, tomahawk in hand, they rushed upon the unarmed whites, and dealt their blows on every side. Two young men were tomahawked immediately, and their scalps torn reeking from their bleeding heads. Two others had been severely wounded, and two females made prisoners, when Ichabod, who on the first alarm had escaped into the adjoining cabin, returned with his arms loaded with rifles. With a presence of mind and dexterity worthy a hero, he managed to distribute some five or six of these weapons among his friends, ere the Indians became aware of what was taking place. In fact, the first intimation they had of the matter, was from the discharge of one which the gardener had reserved for himself, whereby a powerful savage, who was darting forward to seize upon a terrified female, was shot through the body. With a yell of rage and pain, he bounded up from the ground and fell back a corpse. This astonished the dusky warriors pressing on his rear, and they paused in their work of carnage. Perceiving at a glance that several of the whites had suddenly become armed, and were preparing to deal death among them, they gave vent to yells of fury and alarm, and simultaneously rushed out of the cottage, bearing their dead comrade with them, but leaving their prisoners behind. With yells little less frightful than their own, those of the whites who were armed, now sallied forth to give chase. As they reached the door, they saw the savages already dodging among the trees, and speeding forward with a velocity that destroyed all hope of overtaking them. Besides, should they pursue, it was more than probable they would be drawn into an ambuscade and all cut off; and acting with more wisdom and caution than is usual on such occasions, they discharged their pieces at random after the foe, and retreating into the house, instantly closed and bolted the door.

CHAPTER XI.

Onward! let us pursue, with feet that tire
Not, never, while we justice seek on them
That have done this. It is a deed to damn
The doers a deed that Heaven scorns and while
The life—blood warms our hearts, we'll falter not,
Nor pause; and peradventure Heaven will send
Us aid; if not, our lives shall perish in
A just and worthy cause. So onward! onward!
To the rescue, on!

Brinley's Rescue.

Short but bloody had been the work of that enemy whose heart is ever shut to mercy in war. When Ernest regained his senses, which happened at the moment we have chosen to close the preceeding chapter, a scene was presented to his vision, well calculated to make the stoutest heart grow sick and faint. On the ground, by his side, lay the mangled remains of Danbury, and another youth who had come hither, but an hour before, full of life, and hope, and buoyant feelings now fast growing cold in the embrace of death their once handsome features distorted and bloody, and their scalps already dangling at the girdle of some inhuman monster of the forest. A little further on, half hid in the shadow of the dim light of the apartment, he saw the form of her who had given birth to the idol of his affections, now lying at full length upon the ground her white dress frightfully stained with

the red current of life, which had spouted from her breast her features pale, and, save a slight contraction, caused by the deathspasm, looking as calm and sweet as if she had just sunk into a gentle sleep. Above and around him, all was noise and confusion. Several females were huddling together in one corner, as if striving to shrink from the foe, still shrieking for aid, and apparently not aware that the enemy had vanished. Some were groaning with pain, some were running to and fro completely bewildered, and some were shouting for silence; but all was yet Babel-like commotion.

Ernest felt a slight dizziness in his head, and the blood trickling over his face. Raising his hand to the wound, he comprehended all at once. The savage had struck him with a tomahawk, which, instead of splitting open his skull, as intended, had glanced along the bone, and made a frightful incision. The blow had stunned and felled him, and thus his life had been preserved. Notwithstanding his wound, he instantly sprang to his feet, as though it were a mere scratch, and in a voice of authority, whose tones were distinctly audible above all the tumult, commanded silence. As if each acknowledged his right to command, all at once became still, and every eye was turned inquiringly upon him. His features were pale with excitement, down which the blood was trickling in long, red streaks, and dropping upon and soiling his splendid uniform, rendering him an object painful to behold so that many gazed upon him with awe, not unlike what they would have felt on beholding one rise from the dead.

"Friends," he said, "this is a terrible scene, and must be avenged. She who was so late among you, almost a bride, has been torn away, and is now a captive to a merciless foe if, in fact, the thirsty tomahawk of her captor has not already drank of her innocent blood. Yonder, behold the gory corpse of her mother! Shall these inhuman monsters go unpunished? Shall we not start upon her trail, swearing to rescue her if living, if dead to avenge, or leave our bones to whiten the soil of the red man?"

Cries of "Yes! yes!" resounded on all sides, while those who had weapons grasped them tightly, and their eyes flashed, and their features wore expressions of the most resolute determination.

"My poor body's devoted to the rescue of my last and only friend my poor, sweet mistress," rejoined Ichabod, with a strong burst of emotion, that brought the tear to many an eye.

"I knew you were *men*!" said Ernest, in a tone of decision. "Let us do, rather than say! Prepare, those of you who are disposed to follow me, and let us depart forthwith!"

"But the women, the wounded and dead what of them?" asked one.

"Let some two or three remain here, while one mounts the fleetest horse and bears tidings of the dire calamity to the village. There is no danger here at present; for the savages, having accomplished their hellish work, are already on their homeward retreat. We must strive to overtake them on the way."

"But how shall we follow, not knowing whither they went?" asked the same voice which had spoken before, and which Clifton now became aware proceeded from the lips of Danvers.

"I know by their war-paint," answered the young officer, "that they are a detachment of Piquas, and, if my eyes did not deceive me, were led by a white man."

"By heavens! I see it all!" said Danvers, in reply. "It is that inhuman wretch, Moody."

A mingled expression of horror and loathing, with a determination to be revenged, was now visible on nearly every face.

"I have no doubt you are right," rejoined Clifton; "for the size of his person, and the shape of his features, as described to me, correspond exactly to the monster I beheld."

"He shall die a dog's death!" shouted one.

"Hung and quartered without judge or jury!" said another.

"Roasted over a slow fire!" responded a third.

"He shall chew his own heart!" added a fourth.

"Ay, but let us catch him first," timed in Clifton. "While we tarry, he is fleeing. Let us act at once."

"Ay! ay!" shouted half-a-dozen voices.

"Before you go, my friends, upon a journey that may be your last, let us unite in prayer, to that God who does all things for the best, and for our good, even when visiting us with sore afflictions," said the venerable and pious clergyman who, throughout the affray, had been left unharmed, and had remained, so far, a quiet and seemingly unmoved spectator, with his arms meekly folded on his breast, the picture of humility and resignation. "Let us call upon our Maker for aid, in this our sorest need!" and kneeling upon the ground, he extended his arms aloft, and made a most fervent and eloquent prayer, which was rendered doubly solemn by the mournfulness of the occasion.

When this was over, Clifton gave orders for those who were to accompany him, to prepare themselves and set forth immediately. Some six or eight of the party, among whom were Danvers and Ichabod, volunteered their services at once, and in a few minutes all were ready for the perilous journey. The pastor, and one or two others, remained to take charge of the nearly distracted females, until aid should arrive from the village when the wounded would be better cared for, and the dead consigned to dust, with all due ceremony.

Collecting what weapons they could, together with a good supply of ammunition, the party in a few minutes formed around Clifton as their leader, who announced to the rest, that the solemn moment of separation had arrived.

It would be impossible to describe the scene which ensued. Each seemed for a time to give himself up to his strongest feelings. Lovers rushed to each other with a freedom and wildness which nothing but a similar occasion could justify, threw themselves into each other's arms, and clung around each other's necks, as if they felt the separation to be eternal; while groans, cries and sobs of anguish resounded on all sides. For some moments all was great commotion; but gradually the tumult ceased, until nothing could be heard but a low murmur, in a choked voice, or a deep drawn sigh, or a half stifled burst of grief.

"We waste time," said Clifton, at length.

"Go, my friends, and God be with you," said the preacher, solemnly; "and Heaven send you may return with the maiden you seek the flower of the forest!"

"Amen!" responded Clifton, and two or three others; and throwing open the door, the bereaved lover rushed out, followed immediately by his companions.

"I must detain you one moment more," he added, as he felt a sharp pain in his head; and springing back into the house, he called for a bandage. This was quickly supplied and bound around his wound; then hastily washing the blood from his face, he rejoined his party.

"Let us follow the Miami," he continued, "for I know of no better plan, and it is possible that in the morning we may strike upon their trail."

"Is there none of our party that understand trailing the savage?" asked one.

"I fear not," replied Clifton. "I know of an experienced scout, but he is far away now, in another part of the country. I would to Heaven he were here!"

"And what may be his name?" inquired a strange voice, which all immediately became aware proceeded from a figure, a few paces distant, that was nearing them with long and steady strides. "What may be the scout's name you've just alluded to, lieutenant?" he asked again, as he came up, addressing himself to Clifton.

"David Grant," answered the young officer, endeavoring to make out the features of the new comer, as he paused in the shadow cast by the moon.

"I'm David Grant," was the laconic response.

"Great Heaven! David, what sent you here so opportune?" cried Clifton, grasping the hard, weather-beaten hand of the other, with a pressure of unmistakeable joy.

"May be Heaven did," was the quiet answer.

"It would seem so," rejoined Ernest; "for of all men, you are the one I most desired to see, at this momentous crisis."

"Something's gone wrong, I reckon?" said David, in reply.

Clifton now hurriedly narrated the leading features of the events we have so feebly described.

"I'spected as much," rejoined the scout, when he had concluded. "He told me I'd be wanted."

"He! whom!" cried several of the party, in astonishment.

"Don't know who," replied the other, "for he was a stranger to me. He spoke like a man, but looked like the devil."

"Was he tall, ill-dressed, rawboned and ugly?" inquired Ernest, quickly.

"Well he was all that."

"Had a long, flowing beard?"

"Powerful long beard he had."

"And seemed partly blind?"

"For the matter o' that, he looked like he might be blind altogether," was the reply.

"It was the Necromancer," returned Ernest, gravely.

"Ay! that mysterious Blind Luther, and none other," said Danvers, shaking his head with a superstitious air.

"Where did you see him, and what did he say to you?" asked the lieutenant.

"I was scouting in the forest, more'n forty miles distant," answered Grant, "when's I passed around a tree, my hair riz right up, on hearing a voice say:

"`Hold, David!"

"I tried to tree, but could'nt, for a big hand on my shoulder, that would'nt let me go.

"`Who are you?' says I.

"`A messenger of fate,' says he.

"`What d'ye want with me?"

"`Hie thee to Columbia,' he says, `and inquire for Lieutenant Clifton's wedding.'

"`I did'nt know he was going to be married,' says I.

"`Do as I bid thee, and ask no questions!' says he; `and be sure you reach there at an early hour, on such a night (this is the night), when you'll find yourself wanted, and orders will be given you what to do.'

"Short on't is, gentlemen, I'm here; though sometimes I did quarrel with David Grant thinking as how I was going on a fool's errand, or at a madman's beck."

"You could never have come at a better time, unless it had been to warn us of danger," said Clifton, solemnly.

"Now, David, I have told you the circumstances, and wait your advice on the matter."

"You say you think they're Piquas?"

"I am almost sure of it."

"And what object had they in doing's they did, 'spect you?"

"Their leader, I think, is a white man disguised, whose sole object was to get possession of the girl. Some months ago, he was a suitor to her hand, and she rejected him, and he swore revenge. Shortly after, her father was murdered by his hand. To-night he has butchered her mother in cold blood, and made her captive for some hellish end, of which I groan to think."

For a moment the scout mused, as one in deep thought, and then said:

"I'spect you're right, lieutenant, and that I know the party with him. How'd they number?"

"Not more than ten or twelve, as near as I can judge."

"It's them for a wager. I've been on their trail, not a week ago; and now I comprehend the spread moccason."

"I do not understand you," said Clifton.

"Why, there was one moccason among 'em, that toed out'ard like a white man's; and I says to myself then, `David Grant, that's ayther a pris'ner or a renegade.' I'm glad you've told me of this, for now I reckon to find 'em. Nigh's I can come to it, they don't belong to the regular tribe o' Piquas, but are a kinder o' outlawry vagabonds, that skulk about on their own hook, and are most powerful mean cowards."

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As David delivered himself of this, he strode forward into the moonlight, and displayed the lineaments of a being well calculated for a life in the woods. He was about thirty-five years of age, and above the ordinary stature. His form was shriveled and sinewy, as if dried and contracted by long exposure to the weather. His features were long, thin and bony; and his small black eyes were continually rolling about, with a nervous motion, as if eternally on the look out for danger. His long, shaggy hair was surmounted with a roughly formed cap, made from the untanned skin of some wild animal. He wore a hunting-shirt of linsey-woolsey, to which was attached a large cape, fringed with red. Around his waist was a belt, in which were a scalping-knife and tomahawk. He wore moccasins on his feet, and around his neck was suspended a large powder-horn and bullet-pouch, and in his hand he held a long rifle.

As David stepped forth, he immediately began a survey of the heavens above, and the earth beneath, with the air of one long practiced in the art of reading the sings of the forest, so necessary in determining the movements of the woodman.

"It's a going to be a foggy night," he said; "that a child could tell; for already now the clouds of mist are lifting their heads along the trail o' the rivers, and rolling out ayther way, while a thick haze's beginning to darken the moon. I see, by the ground signs, the varmints have took up the river; and so I reckon our best course is to follow that, and git as far's we can afore daylight; and it's not impossible we'll head 'em off, or come upon their camp."

"Then let us go at once," said Clifton, impatiently.

"Don't hurry, lieutenant," returned David, respectfully, bending down to examine the ground at his feet; "there's nothing made by hurrying 'specially when you've got to go by signs. Here's the trail, sure enough," he continued, "and a bloody one 'tis, too. Ha! there's been a scuffle here, I know by the ground being trod a few. Any o' your party fight outside?"

"Heavens! it is the sentinel!" exclaimed Danvers; "for it was here he was stationed."

The sentinel it proved to be; for the next moment the poor fellow was discovered, a few paces distant, lying on his breast, and his head bloody from the recent removal of his scalp. His rifle was found near him, discharged, and the breach broken, showing that he had done his best for himself and friends.

Examining the body, and finding that life was extinct, our party, with a few words of eulogy and regret, passed on, leaving his remains to be taken care of by those who remained behind. In a few minutes they were swallowed up in the great forest; and silence, deep and gloomy, reigned over the scene so lately rife with tumult and blood-shed.

CHAPTER XII.

A sounding cavern, large and dark, and full
Of terror to the shrinking, trembling captive.

Anon.
A strong adversary, an inhuman wretch,
Incapable of pity, void and empty
From every drachm of mercy.

Shakspeare
Thy suing to this man were as the bleating

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Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge.

Byron.

Some twenty-five or thirty miles above the mouth of the Little Miami, and forming the eastern boundary of a plain not unlike the one described in the opening pages of this story, is a stony ridge, to which we must now invite the readers attention. In one place, this ridge leaves the plain abruptly, by an acclivity so steep as to make ascension a matter of difficulty. Huge rocks, whose fronts are neither more nor less than precipices, here rise one above the other, to a height of many feet, and altogether present a very formidable and imposing appearance. Between these rocks, which appear to have been thrown together by some great convulsions of nature, are many deep fissures, through which has struggled upward a growth of small, craggy trees and shrubbery, that, instead of beautifying, only tend to increase the wildness and gloominess of the scene.

By a circuitous route, and careful footsteps, you can gain a point on one of these rocks, which, to the eye unaccustomed to the spot, seems one of imminent peril. The point alluded to, is elevated above the plain a hundred and fifty feet, and forms an area of not more than fifty square yards. Immediately in your front, as you face the west, the rock is perpendicular for a distance of thirty feet. Behind you rises another perpendicular rock, and on either side is a deep and gloomy chasm. Through one of these that at your right hand flows a rapid streamlet, whose waters, unseen from where you stand, gurgling over the rocks below, send upward a hollow, dismal sound, that invariably causes the spectator, who visits it for the first time, to wish himself once more safe on the plain below.

Gloomy as is the place in question, it is not without its attractions. The eye here embraces an extensive scope of country, spread before it like a map. A large and well cultivated plain, of two or three miles in breadth through the center of which winds the glassy stream so often mentioned, interspersed with here and there a tidy farm house, or a cluster of white dwellings, forming a village, with the steeple of its church overlooking it with an air of guardianship stretches away to the north and south, and contrasts delightfully with the rougher and wilder scenery at hand.

At the time of which we write, however, the plain had none of the attractions of civilization it now presents; but a mighty, unbroken forest, instead, lay on its bosom, in whose dark recesses danger everywhere lurked, and man and beast warred with themselves and each other continually.

It was late on the day succeeding the capture of Kate Clarendon, that a tall, slim figure, in the costume of an Indian, leaped, with a light bound, across the chasm on the left, and paused, for a moment, upon the platform of the rock we have described. The sun was already sinking in the west, and his rays streamed softly along the tops of the trees, tipping them with gold, throwing the figure into bold relief, and burnishing the huge erections of nature, until one could, with but little stretch of the imagination, fancy them colossal images of brass.

We have said the figure was costumed like an Indian; but that he was not of this race, was evident from the whiteness of his skin, wherever the removal of the paint, by perspiration or otherwise, permitted it to be seen. There were other signs going to prove him not a native warrior. His arms seemed tender, as if not accustomed to exposure, and were scratched in several places, by brambles and thorns, so as to render them swollen and sore. The feathers, intended as ornaments to his scalp-lock, had also become disarranged, in a manner that the pride of a native Indian would never have permitted. Around his waist he wore a wampun belt, supporting a brace of pistols, a tomahawk and scalping-knife. As he paused upon the rock, he ran his black, fiery eye over the plain, for a moment, as if to be certain no one was approaching. Then he glanced cautiously around him, and a malignant expression of triumph lighted up and gradually settled over his features.

"Ha, ha, ha! I have her safe now!" he exclaimed, with an oath; and running to the side of the rock overhanging the stream, he began to let himself down its jaggy sides, and presently disappeared altogether.

There was, on this side, a rough kind of staircase, overhanging the foaming flood; and down this the figure descended rapidly, taking hold of the bushes and projections, to prevent himself from falling, until he came to a spot where the rock jutted completely over the stream, and formed a sure foundation to his feet. Halting here for a moment, and listening the while, he turned to the right, and passing under the rocky bank, entered the mouth of a cavern, which extended back into the hill a considerable distance. Hurrying rapidly forward, through a narrow passage, he at last came to a stone, which he with difficulty removed, and emerged into a compartment of great breadth and size, dimly lighted by a small opening or fissure in the rock above, whence trickled down, or rather filtered through, just sufficient water to render the rock beneath wet and slippery.

Here the figure paused again, and endeavored to peer into the further recesses of the cave; but it was evident from his manner, and the fact that he had so recently come from the broad light of day into a place never at any time more than twilight, that he could not discern a single object. Stepping aside somewhat, to avoid the dripping water, he at once proceeded to strike a light. A half-burnt torch lay on the floor of the cavern, which re-lighting, he proceeded to search the place, holding this in his hand, elevated above his head, so as to enable him to discern each thing distinctly.

For some time it was evident by his lowering brow, angry visage and keen searching eyes, that he was unable to find the object sought. But at length he paused, uttered a wild yell, not unlike an Indian, and then sprang forward to a dark corner of the cavern, where another figure, arrayed in white, was crouched, and trembling with terror.

"Ha, ha, ha! I have thee now!" he cried, with a hoarse burst of passion, and a laugh like a fiend; and the next moment he stood over the crouching object, waving his torch from side to side, and resembling, as the ruddy light flashed upon his dark, malignant face, some infernal spirit, about to seize upon an innocent victim.

"Oh, God! to what am I destined!" exclaimed in silvery, but heart-touching tones, the voice of the unhappy object at the monster's feet. At the same moment, the ruddy, gloomy light fell upon the pale, sweet features of a terrified female, as she attempted to rise and confront her foe.

"Destined to perdition with me!" returned the savage, with another fiendish laugh, roughly grasping an arm of the maiden, and raising her to an upright posture. "Now I have thee, Kate Clarendon, and thou shalt this time feel the vengeance of Rashton Moody."

"Unhand and let me go, if thou art a man!" screamed Kate, in terror.

Moody uttered a mocking laugh.

"Talk to the wind!" he cried, furiously, "not to me! If I am a man! ha, ha! I like that! *If* I am a man! But I am not a man, sweet beauty. I *was* a man, but you, *you* made a demon of me; and now my hour has come my time of vengeance is at hand!"

"But what have I done to merit this?" said the other, in a pleading tone.

"Done? ha, ha, ha! come, I like that. Done all that a woman could, to make him hate who once loved her. Done, foolish girl! why did you not coquette with me, and lead me to believe I was loved, that I might be a laughing stock among my fellows?"

"As God is my judge, Rashton Moody, I did not."

"What then?"

"I explained the matter to you once have you forgotten it?"

"And are too proud or haughty, I suppose, to do so again. Well, well, it matters not; for *now* you are in my power, indeed; and I will teach you a lesson of humility, ere you depart, that you will remember to the latest moment of your life."

As he spoke, he grasped her arm tightly, and peered into her sweet countenance, with a look of diabolical triumph, that caused Kate to shudder and feel sick to her very soul.

"What mean you by such language?" she faintly asked.

"Hark you, Kate Clarendon! I told you once I loved you, did I not?"

"Foolish words upon a foul tongue," replied Kate, indignantly.

"Do you think so?" sneered Moody. Never mind; it is of little importance now, whether I told you true or not. I would have wedded you, but you refused me, did you not?"

"Well?"

"Well, proud beauty! I'll soon teach you well! but to my story. You refused me; you trifled first, led me to hope, and then refused me. I was wild with passion; and in an evil moment, I sought to bear you away. Had you left me to do as I pleased, no wrong would have followed; but you attempted to escape, and then I swore you should be mine, living or dead, I little cared which. I caught you, and would have executed my design upon you then would have sent your soul, unpolluted, into the presence of your Maker had I not been struck to the ground by the only being on earth I fear. Who he is, or what he is, I know not; but over me he exercises an influence beyond my skill to shake off or explain. Then came your father, and struck me (here Moody paused for some moments, during which his features worked convulsively, his hands clenched and unclenched, his teeth grated against each other, and his breath came hard thro' his expanded nostrils); he struck me! mark that! disgraced me but he he paid for it! ha, ha, ha! the blow was returned with interest, by !" and he closed with an oath, while Kate covered her eyes with her hands and groaned aloud.

"Come, look up!" resumed Moody, forcing her hands from before her eyes: "Look up, now, and hear me out! That night I returned to the village, took what things I most valued, and fled; fled for my own safety fled to lay my plan of revenge. I had been struck a blow! heavens! a blow! by him your father and I wanted revenge. Whither should I seek safety but among the Indians among the foes of my race! I knew if I came peaceably among them, and offered to join them, I should be accepted. Two years before I had been a captive among the Shawanoes, long enough to understand in part their language, and got my liberty through the influence of the Necromancer, who told me then, unless I were careful, I should come to some base end. But he's a fool! What does he know about me or my destiny?"

"I fled, I say, toward an Indian settlement; but ere I reached one, I fell in with a scouting party of Piquas. I showed them the open hand, told them my story, and they adopted me. I was taken home to their village went through the Indian ceremony was shaved, painted, and dressed in skins and was, in short, made one of them.

"Then I told them I wanted one trusty warrior, and only one, to go with me on the war path that I had a chief to kill among the pale faces, to prove my courage and fealty. They consented that I should go, but said I must go alone.

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"But why am I detailing? Enough! I went. I soon reached your dwelling, and prowled about the vicinity for several days before the opportunity I sought presented itself. It came at last. I saw your father and his serving man set out upon a hunt. I laughed, and dogged their footsteps. They killed a deer, and your father thought to bear it home, while the other set off for another. I laughed again, for I saw my hour of vengeance was at hand. He put the deer on his back, but soon grew weary with his burthen, and paused under a tree to rest. I crept up behind him and Fool! why do you tremble so? You have seen it all once, and now you are only hearing of it."

"For God's sake! do not, do not tell me more!" cried Kate, imploringly.

"O, hear it out, my dear; it will do you good, and prepare you for what is to come," sneered Moody. "I crept up behind him, I say and he was sitting so cozily, too, under that tree, wiping the perspiration from his face, and murmuring something about his wife and daughter and plunged my knife into his breast, and 'Pon my word, I believe she has fainted," added Moody, changing suddenly from his narrative to a soliloquy, as he perceived Kate sink down upon the rock at his feet.

Hastily raising her in his arms, he now bore her to the water. There was a slight hollow in the rock here, and scooping the water up in his hand, he dashed it in her face until she revived, when, like the inquisitors of old, he again proceeded with the torture.

"I knew the wounds were mortal; and so, after affixing my mark, I left him, and, climbing a tree, stationed myself where I could see the result. The result of course you know, and so I shall not detail it."

"Well, I returned to my dusky brethren and told my tale. They listened gravely, and asked me for the scalp of my white foe. This I had forgotten; and they laughed at me, and told me I had killed a deer, and thought it a warrior in disguise. I felt chagrined, and told them I would prove myself what I pretended to be. I went forth again alone, and returned with two white scalps. Then they seemed greatly pleased, and made me a sort of chief, and gave me command of a scouting party.

"Now it was, I felt my design would at last be gained, and you be in my power. To this end all my thoughts were bent; and this your presence here tells I have accomplished.

"One night, while stealing round your dwelling, I saw you and your lover issue forth together, and I kept you both in sight. You paused on the river's bank, and sighed to each other your love-sick tales. Heavens! how my blood boiled to crush you both together; but prudence restrained me. I listened to your soft words until I became tired and disgusted.

"At last they came to an end, and I heard the day set for your marriage. Then my plan was laid; I would be there with my painted friends; and in the height of your enjoyment, would make the scene a scene of wailing and woe. You I sought for my victim, and you I found in your mother's arms. It was your last embrace for she is now "

"Where you will never be," interrupted Kate, impressively "in Heaven!" Then clasping her hands together, she looked upward, and bursting into tears, cried: "Alas! my poor, dear mother! thou art indeed gone! God rest thy soul! But thou art in Heaven; and, oh! that I were with thee dear, dear, sainted mother!"

"I seized and bore you hence," continued Moody, without appearing to heed the interruption of the other; "and as the first ray of light streaked the eastern heavens this morning, I placed you here, whence you cannot depart until I will you so to do. Nay, do not shrink away! for now I tell you plainly, you are in my power, and beyond the reach of aid. Save my warriors, there is not a living soul, besides ourselves, that knows there is such a place in existence; and they have yielded you up to me, and will not betray my secret. I have just returned from their council fires, with their full consent to do with you whatsoever I please. Now you know the story."

"And what do you propose to do?" asked Kate, in trembling tones.

"Do! ha, ha! why, marry you without a priest," rejoined Moody, tauntingly. "I would not kill you, for that would be but slight revenge."

"Great God! you do not, cannot mean this!" almost shrieked Kate, endeavoring to rush past him to the mouth of the cave.

"Nay," cried Moody, seizing hold of her roughly, "not so fast."

"Oh! let me go! for God's sake, let me go! and I will forgive you all that is past."

"Forgive! ha, ha, ha! What think you I care for your forgiveness? Let you go, indeed! after plunging my soul into crime to get you here! Why, girl, are you mad, to talk thus?"

"Then kill me!" cried Kate, wildly. "Murder me, as you have murdered my parents! I would rather die than be dishonored."

"And that is the very reason why I let you live," returned Moody, with a dark smile of peculiar meaning. "No, no, Kate Clarendon, haughty, coquetting Kate live to return to your lover."

"No! if I am disgraced, I never will return alive!" rejoined the fair girl solemnly and firmly.

"Settle that matter with yourself, then," said Moody, coldly. "Mine you shall be, living or dead!"

As he spoke, the villain threw his arms boldly around the other, and, in spite of her struggles, pressed her to his loathsome breast; while the torch slipped from his hand, fell to the ground, and nearly became extinguished by the fall casting dark, flitting shadows over the gloomy cavern.

For some time Kate struggled violently, and uttered one or two piercing screams; then she suddenly became still, as though she thought it were vain to longer contend with her evident destiny. Moody, surprised at her sudden quietude, drew back to learn the cause, when the click of a pistol, with the muzzle pointed at his heart, warned him, too late, of his own imprudence. Kate had disengaged it from his belt during the soufflé, and now stood before him, erect, with flashing eyes and dishevelled hair, which came streaming down around her pale features, whereon was an expression of deep resolve, not to be mistaken.

As Moody's dark, malignant eye met hers, it involuntarily quailed before that sublime gaze of wronged innocence.

"Villain, beware!" cried Kate, in a lofty tone. "Move but a single step toward me, and your soul is with its God."

"Forbear!" cried the cowardly wretch, in a deprecating tone, fearful that she might be tempted to pull the trigger, on which her delicate finger seemed to rest heavily. "Forbear, Miss Clarendon, and you shall go free."

"Swear it!" said Kate, solemnly and loftily.

"By every thing that yields me an existence, by my hopes of salvation, I swear it!" returned Moody.

"See that you break not your oath!" rejoined Kate, retreating backward, and still keeping the pistol elevated in the same position. "Stand where you are, Rashton Moody! advance a single step, and I fire."

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Whether it was that Moody was afraid of being deprived of his own worthless life or whether, as is more probable, he thought by remaining stationary something might chance to his advantage in disarming his fair foe we do not pretend to say; but certain it is, he remained fixed as a pillar, while Kate retreated, until some fifteen yards divided them, when, unguarded as to her course, with her eyes fixed upon the other, she stepped upon a spot made slippery by the dripping water, and the next moment fell heavily upon the ground. As she went down, the pistol flew from her hand several feet, struck upon the rock, and discharged itself, with a sound that ran bellowing to the remotest corner of the cavern, and seemed the death-knell of her hopes. The sound of the pistol was succeeded by a laugh that seemed not earthly, and bounding forward, Moody stood erect over his prostrate and forlorn captive.

"So, then, I have you again, eh?" he cried, exultingly. "This time I will be more careful."

"Remember your oath," said Kate, timidly, attempting to regain her feet.

"Oath he d d!" shouted Moody, with another frightful laugh; and again his hateful arms were thrown around the half-raised and trembling form of the lovely but helpless Kate Clarendon. "Down!" he cried, hoarsely; and at the word he forced her with violence back upon the rock.

"God save me!" screamed Kate, terrified nearly out of her senses.

"He can't do it!" rejoined Moody, blasphemously, with a hellish grin of savage joy.

"Liar!" shouted a strange voice, that made him start in terror, and Kate scream with joy, as a bright light flashed in his face and revealed to his astonished eyes the ungainly, and to him terrible, form of the Necromancer, standing by his side, torch in hand, and looking downward upon him with an awful scowl, his jaws working almost convulsively, and his eyelid quivering like the leaf of the aspen; while several dim forms were seen hurrying toward him from the mouth of the cave, and voices, portending summary punishment, came to his frightened ears through the arches of the great cavern in hollow and unearthly tones, making his polluted soul almost shrink from its frail and much abused tenement of clay.

CHAPTER XIII.

And when they talk of him, they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
And he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brow, with nods, with rolling eyes.

Shakspeare.

We left Ernest Clifton and his companions, headed, or rather led, by David Grant, in pursuit of the Indians and to them we must now return. For some eight or ten miles, they pursued their course up the Miami in silence, with no event occurring worth being recorded. By this time the mist, which we saw rising on their departure, had rolled itself across the plain, and enveloped them in a cloud so dense, that not a single object about them was visible. Still the scout, who had traveled the ground frequently, moved onward, and the others, as best they could, followed the sound of his footsteps.

At length Ernest, who was next to David, struck his foot against the half-decayed trunk of a fallen tree, and fell over it whereupon the whole party came to a halt.

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"It is useless to attempt further progress to night," said the young officer, as he rose to his feet; "for nothing can be seen, and danger may be in every step we take."

"As you like, lieutenant," returned the scout. "Foolisher advice might be spoke; though I'm not afeard to lead, if you arn't to follow."

"But what good can come of it?" asked Clifton. "We might come upon the camp of the enemy before we were aware of it."

"Nothing truer though I reckon we'd stand as good a chance as they," rejoined David.

"What say you, Danvers?" inquired Ernest. "Shall we go further or not?"

"I would rather see the path I am following," answered the one addressed.

"So would I. Let us camp, then, where we are, and take daylight for it."

"Any body see a light?" inquired David, suddenly.

Each looked about him, and several answered. "No!"

"There's a sort o' dim spot away to the right, or my eyes make it," said the gardener.

"Your eyes don't make it, and that spot's fire," returned the scout, laconically.

"Ha! now I see it!" exclaimed Clifton while his heart beat quickly, with the hope that his beloved was near him. "It must be the camp—fire of the savages."

"May be," returned the scout, "though I reckons not. But silence, and let us diskiver."

Saying this, he moved slowly and softly forward, carefully feeling his way as he went, followed by the others in the same manner. In a few minutes they reached the Miami, and, as its water was now in a moderate stage, crossed it without difficulty. As they neared the spot which had attracted their attention, the pale, faint hue, as first seen, assumed a deeper and redder tinge, and convinced all that the remark of the scout was correct. Ascending the opposite bank of the Miami, they kept on their course some dozen or so of yards, when they came to a steep ascent, and saw the light but a short distance above them.

"Stand here, with rifles ready, and move not hand nor foot, while I go for'ard first to make it out," whispered David; and without more ado, and not even waiting a reply, he turned aside from the straight line, and glided away, noiselessly as a spirit or an Indian.

Some ten minutes of breathless suspense elapsed, during which each of the party behind grasped his rifle tightly, and listened eagerly for the slightest sound to decide his next movement. All was fearfully silent; for silence is fearful, when we look for the first sound to be one of danger, calculated to drive the blood back to the heart as when two armies, facing each other, are quietly preparing the first terrible volley of death and each stood fast, motionless as marble, and seemed to feel his hair fairly rising with excitement.

At length each started, on hearing the voice of David close at hand; for not a sound of his approach had been audible.

"Follow," he said, in a whisper, "and I'll show you a curious sight."

Obedying him in silence, each set forward up the ascent, and presently gained the spot whence the light proceeded. Upon a broad, flatrock, scarcely elevated above the ground, was a small, bright fire, made of dry sticks, by the side of which, with his feet partly drawn under him, a bible in his hand, on which his eyes were intently fixed, his long hair, unrestrained, flowing freely down the sides of his coarse, rough features, and over his shoulders, and swaying backward, and forward as one engaged in profound study sat Blind Luther, the Necromancer, on whom each of the party gazed, if not with a feeling of superstition, at least with something very much akin to it. And indeed the picture, considering the principal figure and the mystery connected with him, was well calculated to produce this effect. The light of the flame, as it flashed and crackled, formed a bright circle in the dense fog, threw the dark form of Luther into bold relief, and lent a ruddy tinge to his harsh, but benevolent features giving them, at the same time, an appearance of rapid change in expression, by its flickering shadows.

For a moment or two, Luther sat in silence while silently our party gazed upon him and then his voice was heard reading from the book in his hand:

"Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

"Even so," he continued, closing the book: "Even so shall it be: therefore let them that are evil doers take heed unto their ways."

He ceased, and bowed his head upon his hands.

"We meet strangely again," said Clifton, stepping forward into the circle of light, and tapping the shoulder of Luther with his hand.

Luther raised his head, without any apparent surprise, and frankly extending his large, dark hand to the other, replied:

"I am glad to behold thee, young man, safe where thou art; for a narrow chance hast thou had, in thy morning of life, of escaping that yawning gulf which awaits us all. I said, you remember, we should meet again,

"When dark storms should round us lower, Or bright sunshine puled the hour.

We meet, however, in the former in the stormy hour of fate though I trust thy sun of life may not set behind a cloud."

"God send it may not!" rejoined Clifton, earnestly.

"I perceive you are wounded," pursued Luther, pointing to the head of the other: "I hope not severely."

"Nothing alarming, I think though it does pain me a little," answered Clifton.

"A narrow escape, indeed," rejoined Luther. "It was a moment on which your life hung suspended by a thread. It is over, and yet your life is still in danger."

"What mean you?" asked our hero, in some surprise.

"God is great," replied the Necromaneer, solemnly, "and orders all things for the best. When He made the stupendous work of creation, and set the great wheels in motion, He made laws to govern each and every part; and into man's hand gave the power of reading those laws to the benefit of himself and the glorification of his Maker. Wherefore, man telleth the time of the seasons, and looketh for heat and for cold, and knoweth the motion of the planets, the moments of their revolving, and the years of their cycle; and the laws which extend to them, do also

unto all created things; so that the pebble which rolls on the beach by the wash of the tide, and the volcano which belcheth fire and causeth earth to groan in her bowels, are alike governed by the fixed and eternal laws of the universe; therefore, let not thy too hastily formed prejudice condemn the truth, that the being and deeds of man are overruled by the same laws, which by knowledge he may read and understand, but not alter."

"If I comprehend you rightly, you are alluding to astrology?" observed Clifton, interrogatively.

"Call it by what name you will, it is the tongue of Heaven, whereby is spoken the destiny of nations and individuals. Here," and the Necromancer, thrusting his hand into his knapsack, drew forth a roll of parchment: "Here is thy past and future course, signed and sealed; and that of her thou lovest best, and that of him thou hatest most."

"Oh, speak, for God's sake! if you know aught, and tell me what of her!" cried Ernest vehemently.

"She is safe for the present."

"Heaven be praised! Can you lead me to her?"

"I can, but not to-night."

"O, yes to-night delay not a moment!"

By this time the party without, eager to catch every look and tone, had leaned their heads forward into the circle of light, while their bodies remaining concealed entirely, or showing only a faint outline, gave them the supernatural appearance of specters, or spirits, peering through a cloud, as we sometimes see them represented on canvass. Without making a direct reply, Luther pointed around the circle, and observed:

"We are not alone."

"Do not fear," said Ernest; "they are all friends."

"Fear, Ernest Clifton? Nay," and he raised his hand majestically above his head, and with his fore-finger pointed upward, while he paused a moment, and then said, in a voice of great and impressive solemnity, "there is but One to fear Him always, and Him only! But see!" he added; "I told thee thy destiny was written here;" and he pointed to the scroll in his hand, which was covered with figures, letters and characters. "This is thy horoscope cast many years ago."

"But did you know me then?"

"Ay, before you knew yourself."

Heavens! explain!"

"Not now; another time and place must serve me. But you spoke of her you love."

"I did. O, tell me where to find her, and if she be living and safe!"

"For to-night she is safe tomorrow I will lead thee to her."

"Is she a prisoner?"

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"She is; but ask me no more, for I am done. To camp! to camp, all! and be ready for the morrow. I will stand sentinel. Yet stay, Ernest," added the Necromancer, as the latter turned away; "I must look to your wound. You will find a suitable spot close at hand, in this direction," he said to the others, pointing with his finger; and as they departed, he rose, and removing the bandage from the head of Clifton, proceeded to examine his wound attentively. Then taking a vial from his knapsack, he wet the cloth with the liquid contained therein, and rubbed the wound with it.

"It will trouble you but very little after this," he said, as he carefully replaced the bandage." "And now, my young friend, join your companions and get what rest you may."

Ernest would fain have questioned further, relative to her he loved; but waving his hand peremptorily, Blind Luther turned his back upon him, in a manner to cut off all conversation; and thinking it prudent not to press the matter too much, he moved away and joined his companions, who had already selected their place of encampment, and started a fire in its center.

Casting himself upon the earth, in a fit of gloomy abstraction, our hero sat some two or three hours, watching the bright flame as it eagerly devoured the dry fuel which fed it. During this time, one after another of the party gradually fell into slumber, until he alone remained awake. Turning his eyes toward the fire of Luther, he could just perceive the dim outline of that mysterious being, seated upon the rock, his elbows resting upon his nether limbs, his face upon his hands, and apparently asleep. Gazing upon him for a while, during which a thousand vague thoughts and conjectures passed through his mind, as to who or what he was, what he knew of his own history, how he knew, and what he knew regarding her he loved he at last felt his eyes grow heavy strange objects, of which he was in chase, flitted before his mind's vision he swayed from side to side nodded and partly awoke saw the light of the fire dimly nodded a few times more and then all became dark, indistinct and confused, and he rolled over upon the earth and slept.

"Up, and to thy journey!" said a deep voice that started Clifton from his slumbers; and springing to his feet, he found Blind Luther and the rest of his companions ready to depart.

It was already broad daylight, though the sun had not yet made his appearance, owing to the dense fog which still clouded the earth. There was, however, a brighter spot in the east than elsewhere, from which the mist seemed hurrying rapidly, and rolling and tumbling from side to side, as if eager to escape from the god of day, whose sharp, hot rays were troubling severely its outer borders.

"Eat!" said Luther, emphatically, to Ernest, proffering him some jerk, roots and fruit, his own humble fare.

Ernest partook lightly of the first, but declined the others; and the rest having eaten previously, the party prepared to set forward under the guidance of Luther.

"Spect I'm no more needed?" said David Grant, in a dissatisfied tone; for he was anxious to make a display of his powers as a scout in trailing the foe.

"You may as well keep us company, at all events," said Clifton.

"Your services may be needed," observed Luther.

David made no reply, and the party set forward.

Instead of descending to the valley, the Necromancer shaped his course to the top of the ridge, along which he moved in silence with rapid strides, followed by the others in the same manner. Here the fog had already begun to disappear, and presently the sun broke through, bright and glorious. Then, like some mighty avalanche, the mist

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was seen rolling down toward the plain, over which it lay like a white shroud, occasionally diversified and rendered doubly interesting by a beautiful rainbow set on its brow, as it were a beacon of hope. Gradually it began to drive and writhe and scatter, under the influence of the sun and the morning breeze, and then first one tree and another began to show its leafy top, as if rising from a beautiful lake, until at last the whole vapor was swept away, and a scene resplendant in beauty broke upon the eye.

Clifton, who had watched it intently as he proceeded on his journey, felt his spirits revive to a wonderful degree, while something within seemed to say:

"Behold in this a happy angury! As the night and the morning, so has thy soul been shrouded in a vapor of gloom, through which no eye could penetrate to see what lay beyond. As the mist has vanished before the god of day, so shall thy troubles vanish before the bright star of thy destiny; and thy path shall lead down to the grave, smooth, bright and unclouded."

For a time Clifton was buoyed up with this feeling, and then he became dejected and sad; for he remembered that she he loved was yet a prisoner.

Throughout the day, Blind Luther said little to any his mind seemingly absorbed by some gloomy meditation. When questioned as to his course, he ever replied that all was right. About noon, a fine buck was killed, and the party halted for refreshment. After a delay of some two hours, they resumed their journey, much invigorated.

Now whether it was that Luther had made a mistake in regard to the exact location of the cave where Kate Clarendon was confined or whether he desired, for somereasons of his own, to delay their arrival to a given time does not appear; but certain it is, that though the cave did not exceed a distance of twenty miles from where the party set out in the morning, and though all traveled hard throughout the day, with the exception of the delay spoken of yet, from one reason or another, they did not reach their journey's end till the last rays of the setting sun had disappeared from the highest peak of the eastern ridge.

"We are here at last," said Luther, leaping across the chasm to the platform, over which, Moody had passed but a short time before. "Follow me," he continued, "and carefully descend, or you will descend to rise no more forever."

Saying this, he approached the side next the stream, when two or three prolonged screams, seemingly issuing from the bowels of the earth, greatly accelerated his movements, and nearly cost some of his followers their lives. Hurrying down the rugged and perilous path before him, Luther soon reached the mouth of the cavern, where he halted a moment to guide Clifton, who came next, in the proper direction, and caution him to look to his weapons. He then set forward again rapidly, and, just as he reached the termination of the passage, heard the discharge of a pistol, and saw a dark object flit before his eyes, and pause over something white lying on the rock. The torch he perceived but a few paces distant, and aware of the value of light in a case of such emergency he instantly sprang to this, and thence to the rescue of Kate Clarendon, at a point of time so all important to her as we have shown in the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thank God! we meet again.

What mystery is this, that makes mine eyes
Grow full and large with wonderment? In truth
Am I in deep amaze. *Old Play.*

Go! go! and be a curse! earth needs must bring
Forth some; and none in damning deeds of villainy
Can ripen get than thou. Go! go! I loathe
Thy sight, and feel a nervous itching
In my fingers' ends to bid the stay forever. *Ibid.*

"Liar!" again shouted Luther, raising his tremendous frame to its full height, and looking ferociously down upon Moody, who stood trembling like a timid culprit before his august judge: "Liar and coward! how durst thou so blaspheme, as to say the Almighty could not save yonder dove from thy buzzard claws? Down with ye to repentance!" and with the back of his hand, Luther struck Moody a blow in the face, that started forth a stream of blood, and sent him reeling backward upon the rock.

"Is she alive is she safe? great God! is she safe?" cried the voice of Clifton at this moment coming up, followed closely by his companions.

"Ernest," screamed Kate, wildly, and she attempted to rise; but overcome with emotions of joy, she failed, and sank back upon the ground.

"Ha! that voice that voice!" almost shrieked Clifton. "My God, I thank thee! Kate, Kate! my dearest, darling Kate!" and the next moment he was by her side, and his lips were glued to hers, in the holy kiss of love. "Kate," he continued, raising her up to a sitting posture "Kate, are you safe and well?"

Kate could not speak for joy; but she nodded in the affirmative, and then her head sunk against his breast, and she wept freely.

"The happiest moment of my life," murmured Clifton, pressing her close to his heart a noble and true heart, that beat only for her, and would do so until it ceased to beat forever.

The balance of the party had by this time come up and gathered around the lovers in joyful silence, their faces expressive of the satisfaction they felt on seeing them meet again so happily. Luther stood a little apart, with folded arms and stern countenance, apparently engaged in deep thought of a nature not pleasing.

"Let me thank my deliverers, as well as you, dear Ernest," whispered Kate, at length.

"Ay, do, dearest; and first, here," and Ernest pointed to the tall, athletic form of the Necromancer, who standing, as we have said, with folded arms, from one hand of which projected the burning torch, its flickering light casting a ruddy glow upon his harsh features seemed the personification of some prophet of old, about to utter words that should cause a world to tremble.

As Kate advanced toward him, he suddenly turned in an opposite direction, and exclaimed:

"Beware, villain you have done enough!"

This was addressed to Moody, who, having been left unnoticed by all save Luther, had regained his feet, and drawn his knife, preparatory to executing some diabolical act; but the words and manner of Luther arrested and caused him to shrink back in dismay.

"By heavens!" cried Ernest, springing forward, "in the excess of my joy I had forgotten there was a renegade villain to punish;" and drawing his sword, he was rushing upon his antagonist, when Luther grasped him by the arm, and exclaimed:

"Hold, Ernest, it is not for thee `Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay.' "

"It's for me, then," cried Ichabod, who had been waiting an opportunity to greet his pet, and who now remembered his words to Clifton, on the death of Clarendon: "It's for me, for I've sworn to kill him whenever I found him;" and before any one could interfere, he bounded toward Moody, who, sullen and ferocious as a wild beast at bay, now turned upon him a look of scorn, as if he considered him beneath his notice. He had, however, mistaken the character of Ichabod entirely, as he soon found to his cost; for the next moment a bright light flashed in his eyes, and the crack of a pistol was heard echoing through the cavern.

"Ah! I am shot," exclaimed Moody, gnashing his teeth in fury, and placing his hand to his shoulder, from which a stream of blood could now be seen trickling down over his garments. "But I yet live to be revenged," he cried; and at the same moment he made a step forward, and drew from his belt his undischarged pistol. Before he could use it, however, the hand of Luther was upon his throat, and the pistol wrenched from his hand and sent bounding upon the rock to the furthestmost part of the cave. His knife and tomahawk shared the same fate, and Moody stood trembling and unarmed, while the rest looked on in silence.

"Wretch!" cried Luther, raising himself to his full height, and casting upon Moody a look of scorn: "Wretch! I am tempted to crush thee where thou standest, for thy villiany and blasphemy; but I spare thee now, and now only. Remember remember!"

"Nay," interposed Clifton, "why spare him for other deeds of villiany? Is not his base life already forfeited!"

"Ernest Clifton, methinks I have rendered thee and thine some service," answered Luther.

"You have you have, sir beyond our power to repay!" returned Clifton, vehemently.

"Then perhaps I am not wrong in asking a boon?"

"Anything in my power to grant, or that of my comrades, I pledge you my honor you shall have."

"Enough! 'tis here;" and Luther tapped Moody on the shoulder. "I ask his life, to do with him as I may see proper."

"What say you, comrades?" asked Clifton, appealing to the others.

There was some demurring, but all at length consented to the request of Luther. Then turning to Moody, the latter said:

"Villian, beware, nor further go,
Or thine shall be a doom of woe!
From all thy former thoughts relent,
For all thy deeds how down, repent,
And show all here a contrite heart,
Or thou and I must ever part:
And should I leave thee, thou shalt feel
Death and the Fates have set their seal.

"I await thy answer," added Luther, in conclusion.

"Set me free, is all I ask," growled Moody.

"And thou wilt seek my aid no more!" returned Luther.

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"I never did seek it," grumbled Moody; "and once free again, I will ask no odds of any."

"Be it so!" rejoined Luther, musingly. "Yet stay," he added, laying hold of Moody as he turned to depart. "I am ever loth to yield up human nature to the foul fiend the arch-enemy of mankind. One trial more, and perhaps thou wilt repent and be reclaimed if not, farewell forever!"

Then pausing for a few moments, as if to collect his thoughts, he resumed, in a grave voice:

"A stream there was, which long had rolled
Its waters over sands of gold,
And in the sportive sunbeams played,
And wantoned in the pleasant shade
As full of active life and glee,
It bent its course toward the sea.
At length the stream received a shock,
Its waters parted on a rock,
And so divided there by force,
Each arm sought out another course;
And miles they ran o'er sterile ground,
Ere either branch the other found;
At last they met, yet little knew
That from the self-same source they grew.

"The stream," continued the Necromancer, looking alternately at Moody and Clifton, and addressing himself to both, "is typical of your ancestors; the rock is a quarrel, by which they became estranged the meeting of the waters, the meeting of the brothers, the last of a noble line."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Clifton, as some strange thoughts flashed through his mind; "what do these words import?"

"That Ernest Clifton and Rashton Moody are twin brothers."

"'Tis false!" cried Moody. "This is some trick some device!"

"The proof is under the left arm of each," returned Luther, quietly. "Look there, and you will find my words have not been lies."

An examination was instantly made, and the result verified the words of Luther; for under the left arm of each was found, faintly traced in blue lines, a coat of arms, which being compared one with the other, proved to be exactly alike. A murmur of surprise and astonishment now ran around the excited group, while Kate clasped her hands together in a kind of dreamy bewilderment.

"This is very strange very strange!" said Clifton, fixing his eyes steadily upon Luther. "And pray, sir, who are you?"

"A man that is born of woman, whose days are short and full of trouble," answered Luther, waving his hand in his usually majestic manner, and turning his eyes from Clifton to Moody, who stood grating his teeth, with an angry frown upon his brow.

"And so he is my brother, then?" pursued Clifton, musingly, turning also toward Moody.

"Brother be d d!" roared Moody. "If I am, I'll live to triumph over you yet, Mr. Clifton."

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"Nay," interposed Luther, sternly, approaching and laying his hand upon Moody: "Nay, be not too fast! I was wrong to think that he who could so act the villian and miscreant, had any right to the ties of kindred and home. His sentence rests with me, does it not?" he added, appealing to the rest.

"It does it does," cried all.

"Hear me then," rejoined Luther, raising his hands in a menacing attitude. " `As ye sow, so shall ye reap.' I banish thee, Albert Bel lington alias, Rashton Moody forever from among the race of civilized men. I curse and send thee forth, a murderer upon the face of the earth a companion for the savage and wild beast never to hear the sweet voice of sympathy more! All trace that thou wert nobly born is hereby removed."

As Luther spoke, he took from his knapsack some thongs of deerskin, and, in spite of the resistance of Moody, bound him fast, hand and foot. Then casting him upon his side, he drew his knife, and deliberately cut the tattooed skin from under his arm.

"Now go!" he cried, releasing him: "Go! be a murderer and mendicant upon the face of the earth, and let the knowledge of thy crimes, of what thou hast lost, and thy guilty conscience be thy punishment! Cross never my path again or I will deliver thee up to justice. Farewell! Farewell! Henceforth I know thee no more no more!" and waving his hand, he turned away his face, as if to shut the other from his sight.

For a moment Moody stood like a goaded tiger, gnashing his teeth in fury; then muttering, "I will yet be revenged!" he darted swiftly away.

"He will trouble us again, I fear," said Danvers.

"Then the consequences rest with himself," rejoined Luther. "I have done, and shall not interfere again between him and justice."

"Who are you, mysterious being?" exclaimed Ernest, approaching Luther; "and whence come you? I am all amazement."

Luther drew his tall, ungainly person up to its full height, and quietly folding his arms upon his breast, replied:

"Go and ask the stars above,
Why their hours are meet for love
Go and ask the moon so bright,
Why she silvers o'er the night
Go and ask the sun on high,
Why his glories fill the sky
If they answer, so will I.

"Like vain, presumptuous mortals," continued Luther, you seek to know too much.

"Who I am, or whence I came,
What my purpose, or my name,
Matters are which Fates have sealed,
Not by me to be revealed.
When the eighth moon is in wane,
And the earth is green again,
If among the living then,
Thou shalt happiest be of men

Thou shalt clasp her by thy side,
Truly thine, thy wedded bride;
Then, I charge thee, not before,
Open this, thou shalt know more!"

As he concluded, Luther placed in the hands of Ernest a small silver box, on which were wrought some strange characters.

"This is all very mysterious," said Clifton, gazing first at the box, and then at the donor. "I cannot comprehend it."

"It is like a beautiful dream," whispered Kate, stealing up to the side of Ernest, and laying her soft, white hand on his arm, with a look of affection. "It is " She was about to continue her remarks, but stopped suddenly, uttered a frightful scream, and threw herself in front of Ernest, as if to shield him from danger.

Each started, and looked for the cause of her alarm, when crack went a pistol just in front of Clifton, the ball of which slightly grazed his cheek.

"Perdition seize ye!" cried the voice of Moody, hoarse with passion; and at the same moment his form was seen disappearing thro' the narrow passage leading out of the cave. On his former retreat, he had found the pistol discharged by Kate, had loaded it, and returned to take his last revenge.

"I 'spected as much," said Ichabod, snatching up a rifle. "If I failed afore, it's no sign I will this time;" and he darted away in pursuit of Moody, followed by most of the others, Clifton himself remaining by the side of Kate.

A short silence succeeded the tramping of feet on the floor of the cavern, and then came the report of a rifle. Presently Danvers joined the party in the cave.

"Well?" said Clifton, addressing him as he entered.

"He will never trouble us again, I think," answered Danvers.

"Is he dead?" asked Ernest, gravely.

"It is hard to say; but hear and judge for yourself. He had just reached the rock arching the stream, and was turning to ascend the rocky bank, when Ichabod, with a hasty aim, fired. For a moment Moody paused, balanced in the air, and then, with a horrible yell, disappeared over the verge of the abyss. A dull, hollow sound came up from below, and then all was still."

A brief silence succeeded this announcement, when Ernest said, solemnly:

"So perish the wicked."

"Amen!" responded a deep, heavy voice, that seemed to descend from the ceiling of the cave.

Clifton and his companions started, and looked upward, but saw nothing save the bare rock.

"Why, where is Luther?" exclaimed Kate, at this moment, looking round her in astonishment.

"Heavens! he has disappeared again!" rejoined Clifton, pointing to the burning torch, one end of which was sticking fast in a crevice of the rock: "I could have sworn he was standing here when I spoke."

"And so could I," returned Kate, shuddering, and pressing closer to the side of Clifton, who threw his arms around her slender form, and drew her to his heart, with all the fond affection of an ardent lover.

"Never fear, sweet one," he whispered, bending down and stealing a kiss: "whatever he may be in reality, he seems a being ordained by Heaven to stand between thee and harm; and for that I bless him now and ever will hereafter."

Great was the wonder and excitement of the rest of the party, when, returning into the cave, they were informed of the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Luther; for none had seen him, and all were willing to swear he had not passed out the way he entered. Ichabod declared, however, that the smoke of his rifle, when he fired at Moody, had assumed a terrible shape; and now he remembered it strangely resembled the Necromancer; though how the smoke and that singular personage could be in any wise alike, or connected, exceeded his comprehension.

The mystery now became a matter of grave discussion; some declaring that Luther was an evil spirit, whose term on earth expired with the death of Moody; and others, among whom were Clifton and Kate, contending that both were bona fide beings of flesh and blood, though the former was a very strange character, whom they could not comprehend. One observation brought another, and the discussion seemed likely to be protracted all night, when Clifton ordered a sentinel to be stationed in the passage before spoken of, and the rest to retire to rest, that they might be prepared for their return on the following day.

What took place during the night we shall now proceed to relate.

CHAPTER XV.

A fearful, gloomy place.

The hell of waters.

Byron.

When sorrows come, they come not single spies, But in battalions.

Shakspeare,
Thereat he smitten was with great affright,
And trembling terror did his heart appall,
Nor wist he what to think of that same sight,
Nor what to say, nor what to do at all.

Spenser.

Aghast he stood, Stiffened with fear.

Somerville.

The account given by Danvers, of the disappearance of Moody, was correct; but his conjecture that he had been wounded by the last fire of Ichabod was not. At the time when Moody rushed out of the cave, followed by those who sought his life, objects at a short distance had become indistinct, in the dark grey twilight which had already

settled over the earth. In consequence of this, the gardener missed his mark; but the report of the rifle, and the whizzing of its ball within an inch of his head, caused Moody to start suddenly, when his foot slipped, his balance was lost, and he plunged down the chasm, with a horrible yell, expecting of course to be dashed to pieces on the rocks below. A deep pool of water, which had been hollowed out by the fall of a cascade, saved him. Into this he fell with a force that for a moment stunned and confused him; but quickly regaining his senses, he struck out boldly, and succeeded in crawling upon a rock, that formed a partial barrier to the outlet of the pool. This, however, was not affected without difficulty and repeated trials; for the spray from the cascade, that tumbled over a precipice a short distance behind him, had coated the rock with a slimy substance, and made it slippery as an iceberg.

Seating himself at last upon the rock, with as much composure as he could assume, after having been so signally thwarted in his dark scheme, he instantly set his head to plotting the best means by which he could yet retrieve what he had lost, and revenge himself for the new indignities that had been heaped upon him.

"They think me dead of course," he muttered to himself; "and well they may, after pitching me into such a dark, dungeon-like thundering hole as this; but I'll show them I am not thus easily put out of the way. It is well as it is, for now they will think themselves safe, and thus give me the better chance to make sure plans and take them unawares. A curse on that old juggler, who has thwarted my designs so often! By ! I'll soon have his old scalp where it will not trouble *me* again that is if he is mortal," he added, in an under tone, endeavoring to peer around him into the darkness, as if fearful that he of whom he spoke might somehow mysteriously make his appearance, as he had more than once done before.

"Who and what can he be any how?" he continued, after a moment's pause. "There is something wonderful about him, I must own; and even the savages fear, and respect him, and call him Great Medicine. And what does he know of me, and how did he obtain his knowledge? By heavens! the more I think and see of him, the more mysterious he seems. Can it be that what he said was true? I would not believe it, but that I saw, with my own eyes, the mark under my left arm. There can be no denying that, at all events unless (and Moody paused and mused, as one who doubts and yet is inclined to believe) unless he by some strange magic power made it to appear there for the time. At all events," he added, fiercely, "it is gone now, and the flesh with it, as I can sorely feel; and man or devil, by ! I'll have my revenge on him yet, or die in the attempt.

"He says I am brother to Clifton twin brother," resumed the outcast, after another short pause. "May be I am, or *was* (on the last word he laid particular emphasis) or was, I say for now that the totem is removed, we are brothers no longer. Besides, he has done enough to alienate me from him without this. A curse on him," he fairly shouted, "brother or no brother, for crossing me in my love! For this for *this* I would have revenge, though his claim to the fraternal tie were never so well proven, and though I had called him brother all my life. Ah! my shoulder a curse too, on that gardener! but I'll have all settled ere long. Now to get out of this infernal place; for infernal it seems, and dark as the regions of the damned. I am wet and chilly, and my wound feels painful. Let me once get out of this place, and I trust my dusky brethren may be easily found, even if they have moved their camp."

Saying this, he slid down from the rock into the water, on the side opposite that which he had ascended on emerging from the pool. It was not deep not more than five inches at the most but a rather abrupt declivity gave it an impetus that sent it foaming and roaring over the rocks in its course to the plain below, and rendered it highly dangerous footing, even in daylight; for a slip, or on unguarded step, would in all probability plunge the adventurer down its jagged path, and dash him to pieces; and consequently it was none the less perilous now, when night and the overhanging cliffs had shrouded it in darkness, where nothing could be seen save an occasional fire-like flash from the angry, hissing, boiling, frothy surges.

Moody at once comprehended his danger, and his heart beat fast and hard against his breast, and sometimes seemed to rise in his very throat; so much was he, who under ordinary circumstances feared not death, awed by

the gloom and peril of his present situation.

"I should not boast of my escape yet," he said to himself; "for death assuredly stares me in the face, and presents his most unwelcome aspect."

Carefully feeling his way, he now moved to one side of the narrow channel, and laid his hand upon the rock, in hopes of finding some means of ascending the cliff, or keeping along upon its bank. None was found. The cliff, as high as he could reach, was perpendicular, and slippery as glass. He crossed the channel, and found the opposite cliff the same. There was nothing left for him but to go down the bed of the stream, and accordingly he began to do so, keeping hold of the rock, to steady himself as best he could over the slimy stones and treacherous ground beneath his feet.

For some time he continued his descent slowly, without meeting any difficulty worthy of notice. He had already advanced a hundred yards, and was beginning to congratulate himself on his second escape, when his ears were saluted with a faint, dull, roaring sound, like the fall of a heavy body of water. He paused in dismay, and listened. He could hear it distinctly, above the more shallow roaring, if we may so express it, of the torrent rushing past. He comprehended the fearful truth, and again his heart died within him, and he would have sunk down in despair, had he not feared the awful denouement would be hastened by quitting his hold of the rock. Ahead of him was certainly another cascade, the the brow of which he was nearing at every step, and down which he must assuredly plunge or, what was equally as terrifying, remain imprisoned where he was.

For some moments he stood irresolute what to do, during which his extreme agony of mind caused a cold perspiration to ooze from every pore of his skin. For almost the first time in his life of guilt he tried to pray; but the words stuck in his throat, and seemed to choke him. Death, now that he had felt so confident of escape, rose up before him in all its terrors. Despair at last took the place of hope and fear, and he was on the point of throwing himself flat-wise on the current, and trusting the rest to chance, when a new idea struck him, and he suddenly exclaimed:

"What a fool I am to get frightened at imaginary terrors! How do I know there is not a way to pass these falls without getting down with the water?"

Saying this, his courage revived, and he again moved forward with renewed hope. Nearer and nearer he drew to the falls, and louder and louder came up the sullen roar of the waters. At last he stood upon the verge of the precipice, and, with the utmost difficulty, prevented his feet from being drawn down into the unknown chasm, by the force of the rapids. He carefully felt of the rock to which he clung, but, to his disappointment, could find no broken or craggy places to aid him in his descent. All, as before, was upright, smooth and solid, save occasionally a little crag that made a hold for his fingers. Again hope died, and he secretly wished for that great change which his guilty soul shrunk to encounter. What was to be done? He could not long remain where he was, for his efforts to keep himself there had already tired his arms, and weakened him not a little. At last he decided to retrace his steps, until he should come to an easier footing, and there, if possible, hold out till daylight should enable him to devise some means of escape.

Accordingly, with great caution, and at the risk of his life, he moved up the stream some fifty yards, when he came to a place where the rock slightly jutted out, so that he could place his body against it, and rest somewhat comfortably. Here he determined on remaining till morning or, at all events, until the moon, which was a little past her full, had arisen sufficiently to light up his gloomy abode.

Terrible were the thoughts that now crowded the mind of this dark man. Alone, as it were in the bowels of the earth, with dangers on every hand, he was thus forced to think and feel as he had never done before; and as, unless under similar circumstances, he might never do again. It is one thing to face death in the heat of strife, when all the faculties of the mind are turned into the channel of self-defense, ambition, glory or revenge when thoughts

of the great hereafter are lost in the wild, frenzied passions of the moment and another to contemplate it in silence, alone, away from aught that can distract the mind. Men talk of heroes of courage on the field of battle where everything is calculated to excite, intoxicate, bewilder, and draw them forward to they know not what, nor have time nor power to know; but this is no more to be compared to that moral courage which can meet death calmly in solitude, than is the wild blustering of a drunken man to what one coolly and firmly asserts in sober reason. The one is the bravery of the animal merely, without the action of the mind; the other, the courage of the mind, without the action of the body.

In proof of this, how often do we hear of men, who, amid the carnage of the ensanguined field, have rushed up reckless, fearless of all danger, to the belching cannon's mouth, placing their lives as if by choice in the greatest jeopardy, and thus winning laurels of courage to bind their brows forever, and make them model heroes for future ages shrinking back in their calm, sober moments, like some timid boy, from the near approach of death.

Of this last class was Moody. Under the influence of excitement and passion, he was brave, so far as animal courage goes, as the bravest; but take these away, as in the present instance, and he became at once the veriest coward on earth.

There is ever something awful in contemplating death, when all the energies and reasoning powers of the mind are in full blast; when we see and feel that we are slowly, but surely, hastening to that dread change which all must undergo, but of which no one knoweth that hath a being in the mortal state; when we are throwing off this earthly coil, bidding a last farewell to scenes and friends of which we have a knowledge, and, it may be, "flying to other ills that we know not of."

Moody now had time for grave contemplation; and, moreover, was forced to it by surrounding circumstances. Cold and wet, he leaned against the rock and thought of the past of his life of sin and crime and something like remorse harrowed up his guilty soul. How much better, he felt, it would have been, had his course been upright and honest; had he lived a life of virtue, and, with the talents he possessed, and the advantages which had been given him, been a shining ornament to society, instead of a disgrace and curse. He thought of the awful fate which seemed to be hanging over him, and the little chance he had of escaping it; and his soul fairly shrunk at the possibility of what he might meet in the dread Beyond. He had been taught pious words in his youth he had read the Bible and, in spite of his reckless, awful career, he believed there was a Heaven for the good, and a Hell for the wicked; and it needed no argument, he felt, to prove to which he belonged. Death now had terrors, that death seemed never to have had before; and he quaked and trembled where he stood like the guilty thing he was.

Minute succeeded minute, and hours had already elapsed, ere the moon had sufficiently risen to throw her silvery rays down the steep rocks on to the foaming flood in which Moody still remained. As soon as her bright light fell upon the waters, the outcast thought best to make another trial for his life. Accordingly, he changed his position, and again descended toward the cascade. When within ten feet of the precipice, over which the water tumbled, he fancied he saw a ruggedness in the opposite rock that might enable him to climb to the summit, and thus avoid the falls altogether. His heart bounded at the thought; and, regardless of the risk he ran, he at once set out to ford the stream. When about half way across, his feet struck against a rock he stumbled fell and the next moment the boiling surge had borne him to the brow of the awful precipice. There was no help now; all hope of escape was cut off; and throwing himself as much as possible into an upright position, as he passed the verge, he uttered one prayer, "God save me!" and disappeared down down into the hell of waters below.

That man has an appointed time to die, might be strongly argued from the fact, that we every day witness, in a greater or less degree, what men undergo and live; and yet how little it requires, when their time has come, to cut the brittle thread of life, and launch them into the incomprehensible eternity. Had we time and space, we might cite numerous instances that have come to our own knowledge, where men have undergone tenfold the agonies of death have been given over by skillful physicians have been wept as dead who have recovered and lived, as it were to show a miracle to the world and yet have died at last, by the simplest of all ailments, a cold, or a scratch

of the finger. That such cases are of common occurrence, we all know; but wherefore, is one of those great mysteries by which the Creator designs to work out his own ends; and the best lesson we can draw from them is, that we should at all times be ready for the uncertainty of life.

By the common phrase, that "his time had not come," we must account for the wonderful preservation of Moody in the present instance. His chance of escape, unharmed, was in the ratio of one to a million and yet he escaped. In the exact spot where he went down, was an immense depth of water a pool, not unlike the one above, though much smaller; which, like that, too, had been hollowed out by the eternal wear of the cascade. It was small, as we have said, and on every side surrounded by rocks. The falls were some thirty feet in height; and there was only one spot which presented the possibility of escape, and but one means of reaching it. This spot, by means of which he was at the time unconscious, Moody gained. It will be recollected, as he went over the verge of the precipice, he managed to take an upright position. As luck would have it, the exertion which he made in doing so, sent him clear of the main body of the stream, and he went down just outside of the falling sheet. Standing perpendicular, his feet struck square upon the surface of the pool, while the force with which he descended instantly buried him far below. A re-action took place, and his head soon rose far above the water. With great presence of mind he grappled a rock, and the next moment was safe, and had an opportunity of perceiving how near he had been to the jaws of death.

Had he gone down *in* the current instead of *out* of it had he fallen flatwise had he varied a foot or, in fact, had he not passed over the falls exactly in the place and manner he did, he must assuredly have been dashed to pieces upon the surrounding rocks. A direct Providence, it seemed, alone save him; and, for a time, something like a feeling of gratitude to the Guardian of his destiny, held a place in his breast; and he gazed around him in silent awe. But, as generally happens with those whose hearts are hardened past redemption, no sooner did he realize that he was actually safe, than his wild, vindictive feelings gained the ascendancy, and he was fain to attribute to his own presence of mind, what should have been yielded to a Higher Power.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed, at length, rather impiously; "why should I fear death? Do I not always escape, even where escape seems impossible? I have nothing to fear my good fortune will carry me through all extremes."

With this he rose, and, ascending the bank, which was here not difficult to climb, descended to the plain. Pausing a moment in an open spot, where the moon shone full upon his dark countenance, displaying there a grim smile, he turned, and was quickly buried in the surrounding forest.

Presumptuous fool! How little did he know of what the future had in store for him!

CHAPTER XVI.

Oh, frail inconstancy of mortal state!
One hour dejected, and the next elate!
Raised by false hopes, or by false fears depress'd;
How different passions sway the human breast. Pattison.

To council now, and vengeance then?

Anos.

Some five miles higher up the Miami, and within a few yards of the stream itself, was encamped, on the night of the events detailed, a band of warriors. Their camp, however, was very simple. A small fire was burning on a smooth plat, around which, with their feet centering toward the flame, lay extended some eight or ten dark

figures, asleep apparently so, at least over which the flickering and sombre light cast wild, fantastic shadows. The party had not even taken the precaution to station sentinels—a proof that they felt themselves perfectly secure. They were in the Indian country, where all the tribes were friendly to each other, and afar, as they imagined, from the whites, their only enemies. 'Tis, true, they had been on the war-path against the latter, and some of their garments were yet stained with the blood of recent victims; while, at the girdles of two, hung fresh scalps. It was natural to suppose they would be followed, yet they seemed to have no fears fancying doubtless, that they were now either too far distant to be overtaken immediately, or that their foes were too unskillful on the trail to find them; and the more so, that they had broken it for miles by passing up the bed of the river. Thus they slept in security—not as soundly, perhaps, as they would have done in their own cabins, but sufficiently sound to answer all the purposes of nature, in refreshing their wearied bodies while the waning moon, riding high in the heavens, poured down over all her flood of mellow light, and partially dimmed the glare of the fire of their camp.

It was not far from the meridian of night when a tall figure glided among the trees, and stealthily approached them. When within ten yards, he halted, examined them at tentively, and then, as if satisfied all was right, advanced boldly toward the circle. Even this last movement seemed unheeded, tho' one or two turned and moved their limbs, as if troubled by some unpleasant dream; and one actually went through the motions of taking the scalp.

"Warriors on the war-path," said the voice of the figure, speaking in the Shawance dialect, "I am surprised to find you sleeping without a sentinel!"

At the first sound of the speaker's voice, each Indian sprang to his feet in surp rise, and laid his hand upon the rifle by his side, ready for defense.

"Ugh!" ejaculated most of the warriors, as their eyes fell upon the speaker, while the grasp upon their weapons gradually relaxed, and they stood still, as if waiting to hear further.

"Brothers," continued Moody, for he it was, "you sleep too soundly on the war-path, and might have been surprised by the pale-faces."

"Does my brother know of danger, that he thus chides us?" asked a tall, fierce looking savage, who appeared to be one possessed of authority.

"There is always danger when foes are in pursuit," replied Moody.

"Are the pale-faces then on our trail?" inquired the other, a fierce gleam of satisfaction shooting athwart his dark visage.

"They are within five miles of us?" answered Moody, "and have possessed themselves of the bird which I caught in my snare."

The hand of each was again placed upon a weapon, and each turned to the other a startled look of inquiry, but no one replied. After a silence of perhaps a minute, the one who had first addressed Moody, rejoined:

"Will my brother explain? or does danger press?"

As Moody apprehended no danger himself, he briefly narrated such of the events already known to the reader as he thought most likely to rouse the ire of his swarthy companions, and induce them to enter into his plans carefully avoiding, however, any mention of Luther, who was known personally, or by report, to all present, and feared as a Great Medicine, to contend with whom would be useless their superstitious fears magnifying him into a supernatural being, directly under the influence and guidance of the Great Spirit.

"You have heard," said Moody, in conclusion, glancing round upon his auditors, and noting with satisfaction, the involuntary tightening of their hands upon their rifles, the gleaming of their eyes, and the dilating of their nostrils, the only signs, indicative of their intense interest in his recital. No one replied; and after a silence of some moments, Moody resumed, in a rather impatient tone:

"I trust, my brothers, you are not turning squaws. That you *have* been brave, these eyes have seen, and this tongue can bear witness. Are you ready for the war-path again? or are your knives and hatchets dull, and your powder wet? Speak! for Posetha would know."

"My brother," replied Mugwa[†], the spokesman on the part of the Indians, "is hasty. Posetha should remember an Indian must always take time to consider before he adopts a new plan. We have been on the war-path toward the south, and our faces are now set to the north. Before we change our course, we must hold council."

"Then, by ! let it be speedily!" growled Moody, in English, making use of an oath. "If you don't choose to accompany me soon, I shall go alone; for be revenged I will, though it cost me my life."

As this was said in a low tone, and in a language which the best among them but imperfectly understood, it of course elicited no remark. Each, however, noted the manner of Moody, and saw that he was dissatisfied; but even this failed to bring out a single comment, so accustomed were the Indians to silence, when any important question was pending. Having seated themselves around the fire, Mugwa now slowly produced a pipe, which he filled, and lighted, smoked a short time in silence, and passed to his neighbor; who, imitating his example, smoked and passed it to the next; and thus it went around the circle, Moody merely drawing a few whiffs, to comply as briefly as possible with the Indian council custom.

When the last smoker had done, and a sufficient pause had succeeded, Mugwa rose and said:

"The ears of the Piquas are now open to the words of the pale-face chief. Let my brother lay before them his plans, that they may consider if they be wise."

"Brothers," rejoined Moody, rising as the other sat down, "my words shall be few, and to the point; for my tongue is parched and thirsty for blood, and my limbs are weary and stiff with long watching in the bowels of the earth. Brothers, I was made your chief, and we have been upon the war-path together not unsuccessfully, as yonder trophies bear witness." Here he pointed to the two scalps before mentioned, one of which was dangling from the belt of Mugwa. "Brothers," he continued, "on that war-path all were brave, and fought as became warriors, until prudence, the gift of the wise, bade them retire. On that war-path Posetha caught a dove, and had her caged, and then went and consulted his brothers, and asked, and they generously gave him, permission to do with her as he might see proper. Brothers, Posetha returned to the cage where he had left his dove, and there he found her, and was happy, until the vultures of pale-faces came and snatched her away, and set upon him, and nearly picked out his eyes. Brothers, Posetha would have revenge! he would have the bones of the pale-faces whiten in the open air, while their scalps dry in the cabins of his red friends! Brothers, if you are ambitious, now is the time to distinguish yourselves, and carry home trophies that shall please the Great Spirit, and send your names down by tradition to far posterity. The pale-faces will be unguarded; they think the "Cat" is dead; and they can be taken unawares, and conquered without a blow. Brothers, if you are willing, Posetha will lead you to a cover, where your enemies will pass unguarded, and can all be made your prisoners for the torture, or their scalps can be taken on the spot. Brothers, I have only one reserve to make: the dove must not be harmed; she is mine, and I must have her to coo in my wigwam. Brothers, I am done, and wait your answers."

Moody sat down, and a deep silence succeeded. Each savage remained as stern and motionless as marble, with his eyes fixed upon the fire, apparently in a dreamy, contemplative mood. At length Mugwa motioned for the pipe; and on its being handed him, he refilled it, smoked a little, and passed it to his neighbor; and thus it went around the circle again, in silence, not a single warrior having opened his lips. After another brief pause, whereby each

seemed determined to give his neighbor a chance, Mugwa, chief of the Indians, arose. We say chief, for although Moody was nominally so, yet Mugwa had more direct command over the savages than the other.

For a moment or two, Mugwa ran his eyes over the group before him, as we sometimes see an orator, when he desires to make an impression, and draw exclusive attention to himself. He was a tall, powerful warrior, and in his paint looked sufficiently ferocious to entitle him to his appellation of the "Bear," or please the vanity of a savage. His eyes were black and fiery, and a look of cunning and brutality formed the prevailing expression of his features.

"Brothers," he said at length, "you have heard the words of Posetha; to Mugwa they seem wise and good. There seems a chance for more trophies. A chance to take new vengeance on this hated race, that are fast usurping our own and the hunting grounds of our fathers. Soon shall we be forced toward the setting sun, unless our hands are continually died in their blood. They will over-run and cover the land we tread on as the leaves in the autumn. If a viper creep into our wigwam, do we not crush it, lest it do us harm? and yet were the ground thick with vipers, instead of pale-faces, we should have reason to rejoice. Brothers, on this war-path we have done well shall we not do better? Shall we not please our squaws and young men, by bringing them prisoners to torture? When we take the scalps of our enemies, the Great Spirit is pleased shall we not, then, please the Great Spirit? The voice of Mugwa says `Yes!' Who says `No?' Let me hear?"

Here Mugwa sat down, amid grunts of approbation from his savage auditors. Another profound silence of some minutes succeeded, when a warrior rose.

"Unkee," he said, "has heard the words of the great chiefs, and he thinks them wise. In the lodge of Unkee are a squaw and three papposes. When he returns, they will ask to see his trophies. Unkee has nothing to show. Their faces will be sad. Unkee would have them glad. The great chiefs have pointed out a way. Unkee is pleased, and he thinks the chiefs wise. He is done."

Saying this, the last speaker quietly resumed his seat. But enough had been said. There was no further need of grave deliberation. The minds of all had become fully settled. Their passions had been wrought upon, and they were ready for deeds of blood. Suddenly some two or three warriors sprang to their feet, and uttered the scalp halloo. Others followed their example. The matter was soon decided, and the council over. Water was now brought and thrown upon the fire; belts were tightened; weapons put in their proper places; and the announcement was made that all was ready.

"Follow!" said Moody; and taking his way across a small open plat, he was soon buried in a dense thicket. One after another, to the number of ten dark warriors, trod in his steps, and, disappearing, left the scene of the late council silent and deserted.

CHAPTER XVII.

Still in doubt, and still perplexed, The more we search, the more we're vexed.

Brinley's Rescue.

"Daylight!" exclaimed the voice of the sentinel, who had been stationed to keep watch in the cave; and the word was heard echoing far away to the most distant recesses.

This was the signal for the party to be astir; and Clifton, who was encamped upon the ground nearest the speaker, instantly sprang to his feet, and, without communicating with any, at once took his way to the mouth of the cave. It was a beautiful morning, and, unlike the one preceding it, the atmosphere was clear and without mist. A few

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crimson streaks in the east, and a dull, leaden gray color that had settled over the earth, announced that day was already dawning. In the west, the waning moon could still be seen; but its light appeared pale and sickly, as it mingled with that of the coming day, which was soon to supersede it altogether. All was pleasant and serene, with no cloud to mar the broad, blue canopy above. A heavy dew had fallen during the night, and was now reposing, in silvery drops, upon the rocks, and the leaves of a few bushes which grew around the entrance of the cave, and overhung the stream that roared and foamed far below. The air was cool and bracing, and a light breeze bore to the ear of our hero the songs of several warblers, which had commenced their morning's roundelay.

As Clifton stood and gazed around him in the pale light, and saw the beauties of the morning, he could not shake off a feeling of sadness that had taken possession of his soul. The events of the already departing night, now came up before him like a dream. His mind instantly reverted to the strange revelations of Luther, and he thought how mysterious were the ways of Providence. Could it be that Moody was his brother? and if so, how wonderful that they should meet as foes in the great wilderness! Could it be, too, that both were nobly born! and if so, how singular that he should be thus left to grow up in ignorance of a fact so important. It might be true, he felt for he had never known father nor mother. He had been reared and educated by a New England family, until the age of eighteen, when he had been told it rested with him to choose his occupation for life. He had chosen the army, and had been placed in a military school; since when, by the aid of some unknown friend, he had been advanced to the rank and station he now held. He had often made inquiries concerning his parents, but could never learn further, than that they were supposed to be dead, and that he was indebted for all his favors to a strange benefactor, whom he had never seen, and perhaps never would. Might not this benefactor be Luther? He had let fall words to such an effect, by stating that he knew him before he knew himself. The secret was doubtless contained in the silver box which that wonderful being had placed in his hands, and he was sorely tempted to break it open and know at once; but the request to the contrary, until Kate should have become his wife, restrained him.

Who was Luther? and how did he manage to make all fear him, and bring about his purposes so mysteriously? What did his last strange words portend? And Moody, too if he was indeed his brother, although he amply merited death, how much rather he would have had him live, perhaps to repent and reform. But it was too late now. He was gone. He had perished by the hand of another; and even now his mutilated remains might, perchance, be laying on the rocks below.

As these thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of Clifton, he approached the spot where Moody was last seen by the party at the cave, and, taking hold of some stunted bushes that grew upon the verge of the chasm, endeavored to peer down into the gloomy abyss. It was still too dark to see aught, save here and there a fire-flash of the water, as it dashed over the rocks, and sent up its hollow roar; and Clifton quickly drew back, with a shudder. As he did so, a soft hand was laid upon his arm. He turned, and beheld the idol of his heart, the lovely Kate Clarendon, standing by his side, her features pale and sad, and her eyes slightly dimmed by a pearly tear.

"Ah! dearest," exclaimed Ernest, throwing an arm around, and drawing her to his beating heart; "you are troubled; I can see it in your sweet countenance."

"I was thinking of my dear, dear mother," returned Kate, simply; and unable to control her emotion longer, she buried her head upon the breast of him she loved and wept freely.

Clifton was moved, and it was sometime ere he could command his own feelings so as to answer calmly.

"Do not weep, dearest," he said, at length; "your mother is now an angel in Heaven."

"I know it," rejoined Kate, with a fresh burst of grief. "She is better off now, than when in this cold world of sorrow; but then it is so hard to part from those we love."

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"It is, indeed," returned Clifton, sadly, gazing upon her with a look of affection, and thinking of the moment when he might be called to part from her, or she from him, by the same woful messenger, death. "It is indeed hard to part from those we love, dear Kate; and God send the time be far distant, ere it be the trial of either of us again! But, dearest Kate," he pursued, consolingly, "even had nature taken its course, you would soon have been an orphan; and you should try to be resigned, that your mother has escaped all the anguish of a lingering death of pain. Though horrible, her death was easy; and her sweet spirit winged its flight, without knowing the cause that separated it from its clayey tenement."

"I do try to be resigned," Kate replied; "but still, dear Ernest, I must grieve, and weep, for I am only a poor human being after all."

"In that, of course, you do but what is right," said Ernest, tenderly; "and tears are a great relief to the overcharged spirit." Then, musing for a moment, he resumed: "I, too, feel somewhat sad. I have been pondering over various matters, and at the moment when you touched my arm, I was peering down the chasm, expecting to behold my brother's remains but it was too dark."

"O, do not call him brother," said Kate, earnestly; do not, dear Ernest! for he was everything that is wicked and base; while you, on the contrary, are everything that is noble and good. I am sure you cannot be brothers; I will not have you so."

"I do not know," replied Clifton, musingly; "it is all very mysterious. He was a dark man, it is true a terrible man a man, in fact, of crime and blood; but, whatever his crimes, he is now most probably before that Great Tribunal, where he will have to answer for himself, and be judged accordingly. I ought not to forgive him, and yet my heart rather yearns to do so. I saw him last night in my dreams, and methought he had repented and called me brother. I awoke feeling sad, and without saying a word to any, I arose and came hither."

"I saw you," replied Kate; "for when the sentinel spoke, I had been long awake; and I rose and followed you."

"You did not rest well, then, my dearest Kate?"

"But indifferently," replied the other; "for, between my hard bed and ten thousand thoughts that came crowding one after another upon me, I was not long in the arms of Morpheus."

"I fear you will not be able to endure the journey, after such a feverish rest."

"O, I think I shall, for I am strong and well."

"By the way, dearest, tell me how you came here, what became of the savages, and what happened after I saw you?"

"I was conducted here by Moody; what became of the Indians, I do not know; and what happened, I will tell you some other time; for I see our friends are coming this way."

As she spoke, Kate pointed toward the mouth of the cave; and turning, Clifton perceived Danvers, David and Ichabod issuing therefrom

"A beautiful day, for our homeward journey," remarked Danvers, approaching the lovers.

"It is indeed," answered Clifton; "and I trust, ere night, we shall once more be safe among our friends."

"Had we not better partake of some refreshment, and set out as soon as possible?" asked Danvers, in reply.

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"There is a very heavy dew," answered the young officer, "and the bushes are very wet; so that perhaps we had better wait until the sun has well risen. I think we shall then have sufficient time; for although Luther led us a long way, I do not think we are more than twenty-five, or at most thirty, miles from the settlement, by the course of the river."

"Well, as you like," rejoined Danvers; "though, for one, I am anxious to be moving; for we do not know what may happen if we stay here."

"Have you any reason to think the place unsafe?" inquired Kate, rather anxiously.

"Why, I don't know," replied Danvers. "It is most probably known to the Indians, and they may come hither in search of Moody which result, to say the least, would be unpleasant."

"True," answered Clifton, musingly: "You are right, Danvers; I did not think of that. Upon second thoughts, perhaps we had better leave at once."

"Second thoughts is generally the wisest," put in David, coming up to the party, in company with Ichabod.

"Then you, too, think it not safe here?" said Kate, addressing the scout.

"Don't know, o' course," replied David; "but some how I can't git it out o' my head, that Moody arn't dead."

Each started, and turned to ward the speaker a look of inquiry.

"Fact!" returned David, quietly.

"What reason have you for so thinking?" queried Clifton, in a manner that showed he, too, might think it possible.

"Can't give no reason," answered David; "unless it's cause he seemed to have as many lives as a cat, and that I dreamt about 'im last night."

"And pray what did you dream?"

"That he'd got away, and had all the Injins arter us."

"I do not think that can be," rejoined Danvers; "for if not mortally wounded by the fire of Ichabod, I think his fall must have done the rest."

"May be you forgit how he's mixed up with the Necromancer," observed the scout, glancing round him cautiously, in a way to show that he at least was not devoid of a feeling of superstition common to most, particularly the uneducated, of that day. "Blind Luther, you know, wanted to save him; and I 'spect, from what I seed of him, that he could do it easy enough."

Clifton smiled.

"Do not give him more power than he would claim for himself," he said, in a tone calculated to dispel all fears on that point. "Luther has said he was nothing more than mortal, and I believe him; though I own some of his doings look a little mysterious; but doubtless they could all be accounted for very simply."

"May be you can account for 'em, then," rejoined David, somewhat testily: "I can't."

"Nor I," said the gardener.

By this time the rest of the party had joined the speakers, and learning the subject of their conversation, most of them took sides with the scout.

"At all events," said Danvers, who seemed a little staggered, and hardly knowing which side to join, though rather inclined to take part with Clifton: "At all events, if we can see his body lying on the rocks below, we may believe our eyes."

"Yes, if you can find 'im there, I'll gin in," returned David; "but take my word for't, you won't."

"I looked down a short time since," observed Clifton, "but it was then too dark it is lighter now."

In fact day had been steadily advancing, and the dull gray of morning had already given place to a clear, sober light, by which each object could be distinctly seen. The crimson of the east had gradually changed to a more bright and yellow hue, and there was conclusive evidence that the great luminary of the day would soon show his welcome visage above the eastern horizon. Each of the party, Kate excepted, now approached the verge of the abyss, and cautiously peered down into the chasm. The light here was dim, but still sufficient for the purpose required. A small pool was immediately under them, into one part of which fell the cascade before mentioned, with a sort of gloomy roar. The outlines of the rock, on which Moody had held his soliloquy, could also be traced appearing in the meagre light, to the excited imaginations of most, as the demon or evil genii of the place beyond which the water foamed, and rushed, and roared continually. Besides these nothing of importance could be noted, save that the rocks on either side were almost smooth, perpendicular, and slimy.

"He is not there, at all events," said Danvers, as, after gazing down some five minutes, he, with most of the party, drew back.

"I told ye so," returned David, triumphantly. "He's gone, and afore you know it, will have the Injins upon us, sure as cats jump for game."

"I do not think so," said Clifton. "That we cannot see his body, is no evidence he is not dead."

"But 'sposing we could see his body there, it'd be the best evidence that he arn't no where else," rejoined David who, having got the notion in his head, and being of a rather dogged disposition, was now fully determined that Moody should be alive, that he might prove himself correct in his surmises. We see a great many David Grants every day.

"You say true, David," answered Clifton, smiling, "that if the body of my brother, as Luther called him, was there, it would not be elsewhere; but I am astonished, David, that a man of your reputation as a scout, should resort to a logic so shallow, to conceal what your good sense tells you is the true state of the matter. That Moody is not there, every one can see; and that he could not be there, you know as well as I; for no dead body could long remain stationary in that rushing current. If you follow down the stream, you will doubtless find his remains somewhere, and dead enough in all conscience."

David hung his head, a little ashamed; for he saw at once that his shallow reasoning was not likely to give him any extra reputation for wisdom; yet determined not to yield the point too easy, or, in sooth, until forced from it by stubborn fact, he replied, a little sullenly:

"As I'd like to be sure he's dead, may be it 'd be no harm in looking along further down."

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

"Agreed," said Clifton; who, for two reasons, wished to find the body of his brother. First, to destroy that superstitious fear, which he now, to his regret, perceived was fast getting a hold on the minds of all, Danvers not excepted; and secondly, that he might, in a rude way, give him Christian burial.

"Kate," he continued, turning to her, "you had better go into the cave and take some refreshment."

"But, dear Ernest " began Kate, timidly.

"Have no fears, sweet one; we are only going a short distance, to search for the body of Moody, and will soon return. Besides, Ichabod, here, will stay and keep you company."

"O, most sartinly," answered the gardener, his small eyes brightening with delight; "nothing couldn't suit me better; and I'll go with my litle pet straightway."

As no further objection was preferred by Kate, Clifton now ascended the difficult path, which led up the brow of the cliff, followed by David, Danvers, and the others, in silence. Reaching the platform before noticed, the party at once leaped across the narrowchasm on the opposite side, and kept along the hill for some two hundred yards, when they came to a spot sufficiently shelving to enable them to descend to the plain below. This, however, was not their immediate design that being to approach the stream at the foot of the precipice, and continue, if possible, along its margin, so as to note distinctly every object in its bed. In a few minutes the brink of the stream was gained, at the point where the second cascade was formed, and where, it will be remembered, Moody had such a narrow escape. A large rock, which here jutted in toward the opposite bank, almost over the falls, allowed such as chose to venture out upon it, a complete view of the current from the lower to the upper cascade, and also the whole extent of the stream below the falls to the plain, where it again became lost in its serpentine course toward the Little Miami.

"Well, what do you think now?" asked Clifton of the scout, as with the latter he ventured upon the rock, and made an examination with his eyes in both directions.

"Why, I think we han't found the body yet," replied David, laconically.

"True; but don't you see there was no chance for Moody to escape with life. The rocks above here are precipitious and slippery, so that it is impossible he should have ascended them, even if he escaped with life in the first instance; and certainly no sensible man would contend that he could go over this fall and not be dashed to pieces on those frowning rocks."

It did in truth appear, viewing the spot from where our party stood, as if no being could pass the cascade and survive the fall; for the pool, into which it will be remembered Moody descended, was very small the depth they could not know and entirely surrounded by black rocks, on which much of the water fell with a force sufficient to throw a fine spray to the distance of several feet. We can only account for this small, deep pool, by supposing that, at one time, the water fell directly into it; and the earth just at that spot, not being protected by rocks, as was the case elsewhere, had gradually been hollowed out, and so remained; while the running water, wearing away the precipice over which it tumbled, had thus caused it to recede several inches.

"Don't know about passing the falls," said David, rather doggedly, in reply to Clifton, after having gazed upon the spot until he felt satisfied himself that the young officer was right: "Don't know about the falls, one way or t'other; but all I've got to say is, I'd just like to see the body."

"Do you know, David," said Clifton, smiling, "that I think you would make a good preacher."

"How so, lieutenant?"

"Because you would be bound to stick to your text. Why, man, if you had never shown any more sense in the forest, than you have in this matter, instead of being called a great scout, you would have been devoured by wolves."

Several of the party laughed, at David's expense, who merely shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say, "You will see in time who is right."

"Well," answered Clifton, "as the body is not hereabouts, we will search for it below, on the plain; and speedily, too for I see the sun is peeping over the hill yonder, and we must soon be on our journey homeward."

The party now descended to the plain, and in a few minutes were deeply engaged in searching along the banks of the stream, for the body of one, who, even at that moment, was plotting their own destruction. They had entered a swampy thicket, where the water moved sluggishly, and each was engaged with a pole in raking the bottom for the body, which they supposed must have sunk there when suddenly a faint scream was heard in the distance, and, at the same moment, ere any one had time for thought or action, fierce yells resounded on all sides, and each found himself in the grasp of a powerful savage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

There is a way, a secret one, And I will use it.

Anon.

With wild surprise, As if to marble struck, devoid of sense, A stupid moment motionless she stood.

Thomson.

Come, go with me! I'll show the road Which you perforce must travel. No choice Is yours, and no alternative. You are my prisoner.

[Old Play.]

We left the Indians, on their return to harass, murder, or capture the whites, under the guidance of Moody. As it was impossible to know what course the latter party would take, on leaving the cave though in all probability they would forthwith seek the plain Moody at once led his warriors to a dense thicket, where they might be able to watch the movements of their foes, and shape their proceedings accordingly. As chance would have it, he had selected the very thicket where we have seen our friends venture to search for his body little dreaming, at the time, that they were entering an ambuscade. This thicket, Moody and his party had reached, stealthily, some two hours before day-break, when, in company with Unkee, a renowned scout or runner, he had left the main body there, and set off to reconnoiter, and gain intelligence that should determine his future movements. Fearfullest his intended victims might have already escaped, he had, at some risk, approached the cave, and even ventured into it far enough to hear the tread of the sentinel, as he paced to and fro on his patrol of duty. Satisfied that all was working to his desire, he had then noiselessly glided away, and, with his Indian companion, had sought out a convenient cover to await daylight, and take advantage of circumstances.

Unlike the Indians, who in general have little to say, Moody knew that the whites, feeling perfectly secure, would naturally talk over their plans, before proceeding to put them in execution. Nor had he been mistaken. From his place of concealment, on the brow of the upper precipice, which the reader will remember walled the platform on the east, he had been enabled, by being exactly over the mouth of the cave, not only to see every one that came out, but also to understand every word that had been spoken outside. With infinite delight he had heard the

remarks of David, and watched the party searching for his remains in the chasm below; and when the proposition had been made to continue down the stream until his body should be found, his exultation knew no bounds.

"They shall find my body," he said to himself; "but in a different form and place from what they expect."

Then turning to Unkee, he briefly recounted, in a whisper; the substance of what he had overheard, and dispatched him to inform the Indians, and caution them to remain concealed where they were, until the whites, as he foresaw they would, should have put themselves in their power.

Just as Unkee was on the point of leaving, Moody heard Clifton request Kate to enter the cave, with only Ichabod for her companion; and turning once more to the savage, while his eyes gleamed like two balls of fire at his anticipated feast of vengeance, he gave him orders to avoid the whites, and return to the mouth of the cave, there to await a signal from him, or be guided by circumstances but do what he might, in no case to harm the pale-face maiden.

Had Moody been granted the privilege and power of arranging every thing for his premeditated vengeance to suit himself, he felt confident he would have failed in fixing matters as satisfactorily as a simple train of circumstances had now done for him. Not the least important of all, was the absence of Luther, which he had learned from the conversation, and which otherwise must have disconcerted his plans materially.

As soon as Unkee was gone, and he had seen the party of Clifton on the point of starting, he withdrew from his place of concealment, and moving along the ridge of the hill a short distance, descended on the eastern side, some seventy-five or a hundred yards, or until he came to a small cluster of bushes. Here he paused for a moment, while a grim smile played over his features and then parting the bushes with his hands, he exposed to view a hole of some two feet in diameter, that apparently led deep into the earth. Without stopping to examine this, Moody threw himself flatwise upon the ground, and soon disappeared into the aperture. The descent of the hole was just sufficient to render his movements easy, and in less than two minutes, he had penetrated the hill some fifty feet. Here the aperture gradually enlarged, and he was shortly enabled to crawl along upon his hands and knees. This he did, some ten feet further, when he came to a sort of window, that looked directly into the cavern so lately occupied by our friends.

Here, then, was an access to the cave, of which Clifton and his party knew nothing otherwise, the disappearance of Luther might have been accounted for without setting the natural laws of reason at defiance. Luther, who took advantage of every circumstance calculated to heighten the superstitious feeling which he was aware pervaded the minds of most, had doubtless visited this place before, and knowing of this outlet, had taken this means, when the attention of each was drawn in another direction, to leave his friends in his usually abrupt and mysterious manner. Had he *not* known of this outlet, it is hardly probable he would have found it so opportunely; for being in a distant and dark corner of the cave, ten chances to one but it had been completely overlooked by any one on the search for it so nicely did the aperture, which was some four feet above the floor of the cave, blend in color and appearance with the solid rocks surrounding it. How this became known to both Luther and Moody, will perhaps forever remain a mystery.

Stopping at this aperture or window as, from its shape, we have perhaps more appropriately named it the keen eyes of Moody roved around the dark vault, in search of Kate and the gardener, neither of whom had as yet made their appearance. From his position, Moody could now see everything in the cave, and yet himself remain unseen. This was owing to the feeble light, which, coming through the fissure of the cave, was sufficient to illumine somewhat its immediate vicinity, but insufficient to remove the dense vail of darkness behind which he was concealed.

Nearly half an hour elapsed, and Moody was becoming impatient, when voices were heard, and presently Kate and Ichabod appeared, entering the cave from the larger and more usual outlet.

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

"O, the torch is out," exclaimed Kate, as she came in view of the interior; "and it seems so dark and gloomy here let us go back, Icha."

"Better stay here, my little pet, until they comes back," answered the gardener; "'cause he said so, and I know as how you'd like to mind him; and besides, I reckon 't an't burnt out, and I can light it agin in a minute."

"Never mind, Icha; I can soon get used to the darkness; in fact, I can see a little now; and it is better, perhaps, that we remain concealed, in case anything should happen."

"Why, I hope you don't think there's any danger, my little pet?" rejoined Ichabod.

"Why, no, I hope there is none but then you heard what David said."

"True, replied Ichabod, who was strongly inclined to believe in the marvelous: "True, Miss Kate, I heerd what he said, and it made me feel queer at the time 'cause I remembered as how, when I fired, the smoke took the shape of Luther, and I thought maybe he was a spirit, and got away in that way, and had something to do with Moody. But since I've thought it all over, I know it could'nt ha' been so; for if ever I shot any body in my life, it was that same infernal scoundrel Moody."

"I am not superstitious, Icha," answered Kate, "and consequently do not fear the interference of Luther in any unnatural manner; though, I must own, he did leave here mysteriously; but then, in all probability, there was a way for him to get out in a very simple manner; and when dear Ernest returns (Kate did not fear to apply endearing epithets before the simple-minded gardener), I intend he shall search the cave for another outlet. All I fear is, that Moody might, somehow, have managed to escape alone and unaided, and that he will return with the Indians to murder or make us prisoners."

"I don't generally miss my mark," said Ichabod, in reply; "and if that Necromancer didn't interfere, I'm sartain I killed him just as sartain "

"Hark!" interrupted Kate, holding up her plump, snowy hand, and bending her head forward in a listening attitude; "methought I heard a noise."

"It wasn't nothing, I reckons," returned the gardener, after a short pause, during which he had listened and peered cautiously about him. "It wasn't nothing, I reckons, but your fears. I've often got skeered the same way, when I've been alone, and a thinking about danger though I never knowed anything to come on't. Well, as I's a saying 'bout that villain Moody, I know I killed him, just as sartain as "

"I kill you now," said a deep voice in his ear; and at the same moment a tremendous blow on the head laid the gardener senseless on the ground.

Kate uttered a terrible scream, and sprang back in real terror.

"Moody!" she shrieked, "can the grave give up its dead? are you really flesh and blood? or do you hold a charmed life?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Moody, triumphantly; "and so, my pretty bird, I have caught you again, have I? Well, `every dog must have his day,' you know."

As Moody said this, he walked forward, as if to take hold of Kate, who retreated, screaming, "Help! help!" in the most piteous tones imaginable.

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

"Spare your lungs, my pretty dove," said Moody, with a coarse laugh; "for you will need them to plead for your friends; besides, screaming is hard work, and can do you no good." Saying which, he darted quickly forward and grasped her by the arm.

"Villain! unhand me!" cried Kate, terrified and indignant. "Unhand me, and begone! or there will soon be those here to make you tremble."

"Never you fear for me, my pretty one; I am perfectly aware of what I am doing," replied Moody, with another coarse laugh; "and as for your friends "

"Well, well what of them?" cried Kate, breathlessly, as the other paused.

"They are by this time all dead, or prisoners," concluded Moody, with another laugh.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed poor Kate, burying her face in her hands, while her whole frame shook convulsively.

Moody now released his hold, and folding his arms upon his breast, stood, for some moments, regarding his terrified captive in stern silence during which time, many wild, dark thoughts, concerning the punishment of her and her lover, passed through his mind. These moments had nigh proved his last; for, regaining his senses, and perceiving how matters were, Ichabod had drawn his knife from its sheath, and creeping up stealthily behind Moody, was just in the act of plunging it into his back, when his arms were suddenly grasped from behind, the knife was wrenched from his hands, and he found himself the prisoner of a fierce savage.

Moody started, turned, and comprehending all at a glance, said, quietly, in Shawanoe:

"Unkee, you have saved my life, and I shall not soon forget it."

"Ugh!" returned the Indian. "Unkee always thought great chief more guarded."

"He's only a squaw," returned Moody, contemptuously, pointing to Ichabod. "I knocked him down first and then forgot him. True, he might have taken my life; and so might a squaw, with the same opportunity. I must deal with him, nevertheless; for twice has he shot at me before this, and wounded me once in the shoulder. Bind him, Unkee!"

The Indian proceeded to obey his superior, with that sort of dogged coolness, if we may so express it, which one might be supposed to exercise in fastening a rope to a log. Once, and once only, when Ichabod had nearly effected his escape, the eyes of the Indian brightened with a fierce gleam, and his hand, involuntarily as it were, sought his tomahawk; but the next moment his countenance assumed its wonted, stolid expression, and he continued his occupation as coolly as ever.

Since quitting Moody, Unkee had obeyed his orders, and returned some minutes before. On cautiously making his appearance in the vicinity of the cave, he had discovered Kate and Ichabod conversing together outside for, as the reader is aware, they did not immediately enter the cave on the departure of Clifton and as he knew that to be seen was to give the alarm, he instantly concealed himself where he could secretly watch their movements. He had seen them enter at last, and, after waiting what he conceived to be a sufficient length of time, had stealthily approached. At the moment when he gained the mouth of the cave, the scream of Kate reached his ears. The rest the reader knows.

Having crossed the arms of Ichabod on his back, secured them there with strong ligatures of deerskin, and disarmed him altogether, Unkee turned to Moody, with a grunt, as much as to say, "What next?"

So at least the latter interpreted it, and answered:

"Keep him a close prisoner, Unkee, and we will presently join our companions."

Then turning to Kate, who still stood with her face buried in her hands, regardless of what was taking place around her, he added, in English, somewhat sternly:

"Come, my fair beauty, and I will conduct you to your friends, and then I will tell you more."

Kate, who knew that resistance would be of no avail, as would neither sighs, tears nor prayers, raised her face, and exhibited features as calm, and apparently as rigid, as marble. As her eye for the first time fell upon the savage, there was a slight start, and look of alarm; but this quickly passed; and she again appeared as cold and indifferent as a bronze statue.

Moody gazed upon her with surprise, for he had expected to hear her shriek in terror; and from that moment, all his former plans of vengeance were changed to others, that would, perhaps, prove none the less agreeable to the fair being before him. Her beauty, heightened as it was by the excitement under which she was inwardly laboring, and her strong mind, as shown in her manner of concealing her feelings, revived his old passion, and he had already determined that she should grace his wigwam in the capacity of a wife or squaw. There is something in real beauty, that rarely fails to appeal to the passions, if not to the heart, of those who oppress it; and to this it is more than probable that Kate Clarendon owed her honor, if not her life.

Nothing of this, however, was told to Kate, who, in consequence, remained in terrible suspense as to what would be her doom. Turning to the Indian, Moody motioned him to follow with his prisoner; and then taking Kate by the hand, with something of more respect than he had formerly displayed, he quietly led her out of the cave she making not the least resistance. When the captors and their captives had gained the clear sunlight which now fell warmly over the earth, drying up the dew, and silvering the streams, kissing the flowers, and making the earth appear beautiful Moody motioned with one hand for Kate to ascend the rude staircase to the platform above; and still keeping his hold with the other, he assisted her up the difficult acclivity. Unkee and his prisoner followed, and in a few minutes both parties stood upon the point whence they could command a view of all below.

Gazing around him, and settling his eye at last upon a particular spot, Moody stood for a moment, and then pointing forward with his finger, as if to indicate the way, he led Kate across the chasm, accompanied by the other two, and all together descended the ridge in silence.

CHAPTER XIX.

In struggling with misfortune lies the proof Of Virtue.

[Shakspeare.

Thou shalt behold him stretch'd in all the agonies

Of a tormenting and a shameful death.

His bleeding bowels, and his broken limbs,

Insulted o'er by a vile, butchering villain. [Otway.

We left Clifton and his friends in a rather serious predicament, and to them we must now return. The attention of the whites, as the reader is aware, was solely directed to finding the body of Moody; and this will account for their being taken so wholly unguarded; though it may be questioned if they would not have been taken equally by surprise, had they been keenly on the look-out for savages so effectually had the latter secreted themselves in the thicket. Had they suspected an ambuscade, however, their hands and weapons would have been ready for the

conflict, and the result would have been widely different from what it was in the present case. There were nine savages in all, Unkee being away, and seven whites every one of whom was engaged with a pole in raking the river at the moment when he was captured. This the Indians, from the information given by Unkee, had anticipated, and had laid their plans accordingly. As the whites approached, each Indian singled out his man, leaving two of their party in readiness to close in, in case any one should meet with more than his match or fire upon and follow the fugitive, in case one of the other party made his escape. At a preconcerted signal, each sprang forward, and throwing his arms around his antagonist, secured him, with but one exception, without a single blow being struck in defense, and at the precise moment, too, when the scream of Kate announced her, as was afterward ascertained, a prisoner also.

The exception alluded to, was Clifton. Quick witted, and possessed of great presence of mind, no sooner did he hear the yells, and feel his arms grasped from behind, than, comprehending how matters were, he made a feint to yield, which threw the Indian somewhat off his guard, and then suddenly bounding forward, cleared himself of his captor. In an instant the tomahawk of the savage was gleaming before his eyes, and the next moment it would have been buried in his skull, had not his great dexterity again saved him. Drawing his knife, bending his head forward, and springing to the Indian all at the same time, he avoided the weapon of the latter, which struck beyond him, and buried his own in the heart of his foe. The Indian uttered a groan, and sunk down a corpse. Turning as quick as lightning, our hero saw the two others rushing toward him, weapons in hand. The foremost was two paces in advance of his companion; and hastily drawing his pistol, he shot him through the breast. There was only one left to contend with for the rest were engaged in mastering the whites, who, perceiving his successful resistance, had become very refractory and taking a hasty aim with his other pistol, the young officer pulled the trigger. A flash in the pan saved the life of his adversary; and the next moment the long war-club carried by Mugwa laid him prostrate on the earth.

"Ugh!" grunted the chief, as he bent over Clifton to secure his hands, speaking in tolerable English; "great warrior make good Indian;" and instead of a cloud of anger, the face of this savage displayed an expression of admiration, at the successful daring and firmness of his captive.

For a minute or two, Clifton lay stunned by the blow; and then regained his senses, only to find himself and friends disarmed and bound, with their hideous captors standing around, and gazing upon them with looks of savage exultation. At this moment he thought of Kate, and his anguish may be better imagined than described.

The Indians now conducted their prisoners out of the thicket, and selecting a spot in the woods, a few yards distant, where there chanced to be but little underbush, made them fast, each to a separate tree, and then collected together by themselves, apparently to take council regarding their next proceedings. Presently four of the party repaired to the thicket, and returned with the two dead bodies the Indian shot by Clifton having just breathed his last.

Placing the dead upon the ground, side by side, the whole company formed a circle round them, and taking hold of hands, commenced chanting words wholly unintelligible to our friends, who gazed upon them with a sort of painful curiosity.

In this manner some five minutes passed, without a word being spoken on the part of the whites, when suddenly David called out:

"I say, Lieutenant!"

"Well?" answered Clifton.

"What d' ye think 'bout the business now?"

"Why, what should I think?"

"Do n't know know best yourself; but have ye concluded that Moody's living yet?"

"Of course not. It is impossible he should have escaped the peril I pointed out to you."

"Well, then, all I've got to say is, that his ghost's got a powerful flesh and blood look."

"Good heavens! what do you mean, David?" cried Clifton, quickly, while every one turned his head the only part of his person now at liberty toward the scout, anxious for an explanation of his startling words.

David replied only by nodding his head mysteriously, in a certain direction; and following that direction with their eyes, the faces of all suddenly blanched, and each tongue uttered an exclamation of surprise and alarm.

Within full view appeared Moody, approaching the Indians, leading Kate by the hand, and followed by Unkee and the gardener.

"Good God!" groaned Clifton, "can it be possible that my eyes do not deceive me that Moody is still living and Kate, sweet Kate, again in his power!"

"Spect if you don't believe your eyes, you'll soon have some other sense that'll give you a powerful inclination that way," remarked David, rather drily.

"I do not understand the affair," said Danvers. "There is something very mysterious in his escape."

"I jest believe it's the devil's work," observed another; "and that's the reason Icha's balls wouldn't kill. If ever I git a chance at him, I'll put in some silver slugs, and try the virtue of them."

While such and similar remarks were passing among the whites, Moody and his party approached the Indians. As he came up, they made a halt in their ceremony, and uttering grunts of approbation at his success, opened the ring for him to enter. As Kate, whom he still held by the hand, came suddenly upon the dead and bloody bodies of the Indians, slain by the hand of her lover, she gave an involuntary start, and uttered a slight exclamation of horror. Moody seemed taken equally by surprise, for his features slightly paled, and he turned his face quickly toward the chief with a look of inquiry.

With Unkee, however, it was different. He was an Indian out and out, and had been taught to school his feelings and passions, so as not to betray surprise at any thing a custom which is held by the savages to be a great virtue. As he came up to his dead companions, therefore, he looked down upon them calmly, without changing a muscle, as though it were the most common-place sight in the world, and one he had expected to behold.

"Who has done this?" asked Moody, in the Indian dialect, after waiting a sufficient time for Mugwa to make an opening remark.

"The chief of the pale-faces," replied the latter.

A sudden gleam of ferocity now shot athwart the dark features of the questioner, and laying his hand upon a weapon in his belt, he rejoined, quickly:

"Then he must die."

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"Let my brother be not hasty," returned Mugwa; "for the fates of all must be decided by council. If the pale-face chief be doomed to die, it must not be by the tomahawk."

"True, chief," answered Moody, with a grim smile, "I had nigh forgotten your pleasant Indian customs of the stake and torture."

"Mugwa deems him worthy of them all," pursued the chief; "for he is a great brave, and no Indian warrior could have done more. The chief of the Piquas could almost call him brother, too."

This was alluding in a rather obscure manner to the design which had previously entered the head of the "Bear," of making an Indian of Clifton, and was thus thrown out as a sort of feeler, to learn the impression it would produce upon Moody. As he heard it, the outcast started, and exclaimed vehemently:

"No, Mugwa, he must die!" The next moment a new idea took possession of his brain, and he added, immediately, in a lower tone "That is, perhaps; I will see; I will consider, Mugwa. But go on with your ceremony. I would join you, only that I have important matters to which I must attend; and turning away abruptly, he led Kate out of the circle, and some distance apart from all.

"You have seen," he began, addressing himself to our heroine, and nodding his head in the direction of the circle of savages.

"I have," answered Kate calmly.

"And you still see," pursued Moody, pointing his finger in the opposite direction, and toward the captives.

Kate followed the motion with her eyes, and, for the first time, became aware of the capture of her friends of the complete triumph of her foes and in a moment her heart sunk, her features grew deadly pale, a sudden nervous weakness seized her, and, but for the support of Moody, she would have fallen to the earth.

Finding the Indians by themselves, around the dead bodies of their late comrades, and no new scalps at their belts, Kate had believed that a skirmish had ensued in which her friends had been victorious, and that she might look for a rescue at any moment. But now the case was different; the horrible reality had broken upon her like a thunder-bolt; they were all prisoners reserved perhaps for the torture and all in the power of the archdemon by her side, from whom she could hope for no mercy. Moody watched the painful expression of her lovely countenance with a grim smile of satisfaction; and after waiting till she had somewhat recovered her composure, he resumed:

"You see I am now master of all. Were you in the infernal regions of the damned, you would not be more fully in the power of the arch-fiend, than you and your friends are now in mine."

"I am aware of that," replied Kate. "and more I think the comparison aptly made."

"That may or may not be, as matters turn out," rejoined Moody, drily. "I have led you hither, away from the others, to tell you something of importance, regarding yourself and friends, and from your replies to take my cue of conduct."

"Say on," returned Kate.

"You noticed those dead bodies?"

"I did."

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"They were slain by the hand of your lover, Lieutenant Clifton, and, according to old Luther's story, my once brother."

Again Kate trembled, her features grew deadly pale, and she fairly gasped for breath.

"Well, I see you comprehend," resumed Moody, after another short pause; "and I am glad you do, as it will save me much circumlocution in my remarks. Now mark my words. As soon as your ceremony of the Indians is over and their dead are buried from their sight, they will proceed to hold council, regarding the disposal of their prisoners. Now you know something of Indian nature or ought to, at least and are doubtless well aware that, when they are angry, they are not altogether the most mild and placid creatures which the world has ever produced. On the contrary, their customs are somewhat rough particularly when they decide on putting a captive through the interesting ceremony of being roasted alive by a slow fire, with various little et ceteras, in the way of amusement such as shooting powder into his naked body filling the flesh with resinous splinters and setting fire to them cutting off his ears and tongue punching out his eyes, and "

"For God's sake, hold!" cried Kate, covering her face, and shuddering with horror, at the terrible picture of torture drawn by the outcast.

"I merely wished you to comprehend the matter in full force," pursued Moody; "and as I perceive you do why, I will sketch no further. Now, as your lover has been guilty of a certain breach of etiquette (Moody spoke in an ironical tone), namely, killing two Indians, after being seized as a prisoner himself, it is more than probable that they, on trial, will sentence him to the interesting little proceeding I just mentioned, and at which you thought proper to turn away your face in holy horror."

"In the name of that God before whom you must soon be judged! tell me what you ask what you seek that you thus mentally torture me?" cried Kate.

"Ah! now you speak to the point," replied Moody, with a grim smile; "and I will answer you. In the first place, know that your lover will assuredly be condemned to the torture; and that I, and I alone can save him."

"Well?" ejaculated Kate, breathlessly, fixing her eyes intently upon the other.

"I say," pursued Moody, "I can save him, and, on one condition, I will."

"Name it!" gasped the maiden.

"That you will swear to become my wife. Remember, now, I make a distinction: *wife*, not *mistress*, I ask. Remember, too, before you decide, that not only Clifton, but all your friends here are in my power as well as yourself; and that if I choose, I can have them put to the torture before your eyes, and you dishonored before theirs. Remember, the alternative before you is terrible. I will say further. If you become my wife, by your own free consent, you shall always be treated with respect, and shall be provided for comfortably during my life, and at my death shall have the privilege to go whither, and marry whom, you please. To-day I make you this proposal, which yesterday I would have scorned; and the whole secret lies in the revival of my love, or my passion (call it which you will), for you. Do not decide hastily. I will give you a few minutes, alone, to think upon it; but if you decide in my favor, one thing you must bear in mind: You will have to swear, by all your hopes of salvation hereafter by all you love and hold sacred by everything, in fact, that can make your oath binding that you will be mine, rescue or no rescue; that, in short, come what will, you will follow me and my fortunes through life, and that, in the event of your breaking this oath, you solemnly pray the Ruler of the universe to condemn you to eternal torments in the world to come."

Saying this, Moody turned abruptly away, leaving Kate standing alone, stupified with horror at the words she had just heard him utter.

CHAPTER XX.

Sneer on, and show your scorn! for any fool May sneer, that is withal a coward.

By heavens! the die is east; I will no more but to the torture Instantly.

Purcell

"I give you a most hearty welcome. my old comrades, to your new abode in the forest of my red brethren," said Moody, with mock cordiality, as he approached the captives, waving his hand in a salutary manner, and smiling hypocritically.

"Ah, my dear brother, how fare you?" he continued, coming up to Clifton, and extending his hand, apparently unmindful that the other could not return the compliment. "I am so delighted to see you upon my word I am. What! won't you shake hands with your brother?" he added, in pretended reproach, stepping back a pace, and sighing sorrowfully. "Well, well, such is the way of the world this wicked world. Ah, me! ah, me!" and he shook his head, and sighed again.

"Taunt on taunt on!" replied Clifton. "I know I am in your power, and of course I expect no mercy at the hands of so base a coward."

"Now you wrong me, dear brother upon my word you do," rejoined Moody, laying his hand in mock humility upon his heart. "I mean you well, I assure you."

"Cut these cords, then, and let me go," said the other.

"Ah! now you touch a tender point. Really, nothing would delight me more but, pardon me, you see I have to consult my friends yonder (here he pointed toward the Indians), whom I am sorry to say you have injured doubtless unintentionally to quite an alarming extent."

"Two of them. I doubt not, have been *slightly* injured by my hand," returned Clifton, pointedly, with a curl of his lip.

"Ah! yes true. Really, I am delighted to perceive you comprehend my meaning indeed I am," pursued Moody, with the gravity of a parson.

"You're a devil in human shape, if ever there was one," called out David, from a neighboring tree, where he had overheard the taunts of Moody.

"Better keep us safe while you've got us," put in another: "for if ever we get clear agin, with you in *our* power, I swear to you the nearest tree shall serve you for a gallows."

"Really, gentleman," replied the outcast, turning to them, smiling maliciously, but continuing his hypocritical cant; "you do me too much honor indeed you do. All I fear is, that you will not be able to carry your sage plans into execution. It is true, I will assist you all I can; but then, you know, I am only a poor, weak, human being after

all, and am liable to fail."

A few muttered maledictions was the only response to these taunting gibes; and turning again to Clifton, Moody resumed:

"Time wears, my dear brother, and I have come to speak with you on matters of the most grave importance, touching your welfare."

"Say on," replied Clifton.

"There stands one yonder," continued Moody, pointing to Kate, who still remained where he had left her, motionless as if rooted to the spot; "whom, I doubt not, you highly esteem. There, there, dear brother, do n't contradict me I may say, I know you prize her highly. Well, in that you are certainly right, for she is worthy of much esteem, and I assure you she has mine to the full. Now life, I have been led to believe, is sweet to every one; and I venture to say you are not an exception to this rule. In consideration of this, I have been making some proposals to yonder fair maiden, which, if she accept, I trust, by my influence, to save yours although, as you are well aware, it has been forfeited by your imprudent conduct, in killing two of my friends."

"Ha! well, what did you propose?" asked Clifton, quickly.

"Why, dear brother and in consideration that you are my brother which I verily believe, otherwise you could not be so good and amiable as I wish to have no secrets that you cannot share with me, I will tell you. Know then, and therefore, that my former passion for yonder fair maiden which I believe is antecedent to yours, and consequently righteous by priority has again revived in a wonderful degree, and I am extremely anxious to call her mine by marriage. Now as an inducement for her to take this step to yield her consent freely, and espouse me through life as her lawful husband I have promised to save your life, and set you free."

"Villain!" cried Clifton, his features glowing with proud indignation; "base, cowardly, doubly damned villain! Sooner would I suffer death a thousand times, than have her united, or even *think* of uniting herself with such as you!"

As Clifton uttered these words, in a fierce, loud tone which distinctly reached Kate, roused her from her reverie, and decided her course of action Moody started, a terrible expression passed over his countenance, his eyes gleamed like an angry serpent's, and instinctively his hand sought a weapon in his belt. The next moment, by a sudden and powerful effort, he partially succeeded in suppressing this show of passion, and resuming his former hypocritical look and cant. We say partially; for so much of passion was mingled with the effort to appear perfectly serene and unmoved, as to render his appearance somewhat ridiculous.

"You forget, dear brother," he said, with something between a sneer and a smile, "that the death you so nobly speak of suffering, will be attended with considerable inconvenience, not to say pain; for the death at the stake, which I assure you will be yours, is not the easiest imaginable, as doubtless you are well aware. Besides, it is a dreadful thing to die so young, and with such brilliant prospects before you; for I see, by your glittering uniform, you are already on the road to fame. If the words of Blind Luther be true, fortune, and some great name, are perhaps within your grasp also; and is it not a pity to exchange all these for the burning stake to have your ashes scattered to the winds simply for a trifling matter of will, or because you cannot deny yourself the charms of one simple maiden? as though the world could not substitute thousands more fair and lovely."

"What is it you aim at? what would you have?" asked Clifton, angrily. "Have you not the girl, as well as myself, in your power?"

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"True, but I wish your consent. I know, by force, I can do with you both whatsoever I please; but I do not wish to resort to compulsion. A few words from you can persuade Kate to become my wife; and I swear to you the marriage shall be solemnized by a priest."

"I thought," said Clifton, fastening his eye sternly upon Moody, "I thought, at first, that you were simply trying to taunt me with the words you have uttered; but I feel convinced now, that you are in earnest. Therefore, listen! I have weighed the matter fully, while you have been speaking, and this is my decision: Sooner than ask, or allow Kate Clarendon to become your wife, I would suffer patiently all the tortures you, or the red heathen yonder, can inflict so help and support me God! Go! you are answered, and your presence offends my sight."

"Ernest, dear Ernest," now cried the sweet voice of Kate, who had silently approached the party, unseen by either Moody or Clifton; and rushing forward as she spoke, she threw her arms around the neck of her lover, and burst into tears.

"God bless you, dearest!" said the young officer, with emotion, pressing his lips to her brow, and making a bold but vain attempt to free his arms. "God bless you, dear Kate, for this! though I am pained to meet you here."

The face of Moody, who now stood glaring upon the two, grew black with passion. At length he spoke, in a husky voice.

"I have yet to hear your decision," he said, striding up to the grief-stricken maiden, and laying his hand somewhat roughly upon her shoulder.

Kate started, looked around, trembled, grew deadly pale, and then turned her eyes inquiringly upon Clifton.

"You will not yield to his base proposal?" said the latter, eagerly.

"It is to save your life, dear Ernest."

"Not if I had ten thousand lives to lay down in such a cause," exclaimed Clifton, vehemently. "I should hold life as utterly worthless, gained at such a sacrifice, dear Kate. For God's sake! do not yield to such a monster!"

"But the torture, dear, dearest Ernest?"

"The torture the rack any thing every thing I would bear all a thousand times, rather than hear you answer so base a villain in the affirmative."

"Then my decision is made."

"Your answer!" cried Moody, almost fiercely.

"I refuse, sir! I never will be yours! God shield the right, and help me through!"

"God bless you for those cheering words, Kate!" exclaimed Clifton, joyfully. "Now let the monsters do their worst; I can die content."

The countenance of Moody now assumed the look of a foiled demon. No hypocritical smile was there now no cant upon his lips.

"Away!" he shouted, fiercely, his eyes gleaming with rage, stamping his foot upon the ground, and fairly foaming at the mouth. "Away! and meet the doom you seek!"

As he spoke, he rudely tore the arms of Kate from around the neck of Clifton, and half dragged her to a neighboring tree, to which he hurriedly bound her delicate limbs she uttering no scream, nor a single word of complaint. When done, Moody turned abruptly around, and strode directly toward the Indians, who, their ceremony being over, were now engaged in the solemn rite of burying their dead forever from their sight.

CHAPTER XXI.

Berrango. I tell thee, Vernardi, I am for death. He must not live! Death and hell's tortures Must be his doom. Vernardi. Then he it so! I yield reluctantly.

Old Play.

Fetch hither cords, and knives, and sulphurous flames! He shall be bound, and gashed, his skin fleeced, burnt alive; He shall be hours, days years, a-dying.

Nat Lee.

A quarter of an hour elapsed, and still the captives, each to his tree, stood fast bound, in awful suspense regarding their fate, undergoing a mental torture second only to that of the stake when the whole party of savages, Moody on the lead, was seen approaching them.

As the Indians neared the prisoners, the latter could discover by the dark, angry, sinister looks of all that mercy, that diviner attribute of the brave and good, formed no part of their rude and barbarous creed. When they had attained a close vicinity to their captives, they came to a halt, and for a moment gazed around with savage ferocity. Without going nearer, or saying a word to any of the whites, who stood regarding them in gloomy silence, they began to collect some dry sticks, which they threw into a pile and set on fire. Then seating themselves around it, the pipe, the unfailing accompaniment of an Indian council, was produced and lighted, and passed around the circle as on the occasion previously described.

When this part of the ceremony was over, Moody arose and said:

"Brothers, when last we met in council, it was at the request of him who now addresses you. He then told you a good tale, which you yourselves have proved to be true. He told you, that many scalps or many prisoners were on the southern path. You believed him, and you turned back; for the rest, look around you."

Here he paused, and slowly pointed to each of the prisoners, individually, beginning with Clifton, and ending with the gardener, who now stood bound to a tree, some distance from the others, his Indian captor having joined the council. When done, Moody resumed:

"Brothers, behold your triumph! There they stand, bound captives. In all, Posetha counts nine heads, or nine scalps. He looks around this circle, and, including himself, can only count nine warriors. There were two more when his red brothers turned back. Where are they now? In the Indian's Heaven. Who sent them there before their time? Yonder pale-face chief. Posetha thinks this enough. He should die. He has been long enough upon the war-path, and he should die. The shoulder of Posetha pains him. He has been wounded. Who did it? Yonder miscreant (pointing to the gardener). Three times has yonder wretch sought Posetha's life. He still lives to boast it. Posetha thinks he should die also. This will make his party the strongest. Otherwise, there will be a pale-face to every red-man. There will still be left enough to amuse the young men, the squaws and papposes of the Indians. Posetha gives his voice for the speedy torture of the two he has named. His ears are open to hear their cries for mercy. His heart is shut to that mercy. It will please him. It will please the Great Spirit. Brothers, Posetha has spoken."

By a ready tact, peculiar to his nature Moody had learned to adapt himself to the manners and mode of speaking of the Indians. When harranguing in council unlike his usual method in English, he made his sentences simple and short, and spoke directly to the point. His Indian dialect was not spoken with ease, nor very fluently; but, with short sentences, he always managed to make himself distinctly understood.

As he took his seat upon the ground he ran his eye around the circle, and perceived, by their looks of ferocity, their flashing eyes, that his sentiments were echoed in the breasts of nearly every savage. We say nearly we might say all with the exception of Mugwa, the chief. It will be recollected, that the bravery of Clifton, even in slaying a part of his band, had won his admiration; and a design of saving his life, of transforming him into an Indian, had then entered his head, and had not yet been eradicated. With regard to the others, he was ready to give his voice for death; but Clifton, from some strange fancy, he wished spared.

Moody saw at a glance, that on this point he would meet with decided opposition; but he trusted to a majority in his favor to carry the day.

Mugwa was the next to speak. Slowly, with dignity, he rose, and gazing round upon the circle of warriors, whom he saw were all attention, at length began.

"Brothers," he said, "you have heard the words of Posetha. To Mugwa they seem wise, and not wise. Wise, when they tell us we must make our party the strongest not wise when they bid us sacrifice the pale-face chief."

Here Mugwa, although no one interrupted him, saw by the change in the countenances of his hearers, that he had touched upon an unpopular theme; but nothing daunted, he went on.

"True, he continued, "he has slain two of my braves, and menaced the life of Mugwa himself But was not this done in his own defense? Who can blame him? What warrior among you does not admire bravery? It is a great virtue. It comes directly from the Great Spirit. Had he turned like a coward to fly, Mugwa would have sent a ball to bid him tarry. Mugwa would ere this have had his scalp drying on his belt and the wolves should have fattened on his carcass. He did not do this, though surrounded by enemies he knew he could not conquer. He acted the hero and the man. Mugwa admires heroism. He has been a great many moons upon the war-path. His own hand has slain a great many pale-faces. He is brave. He is their enemy. The proof of both is in his lodge. Who thinks Mugwa boasts without cause that his tongue is forked can go there and see. Mugwa loves a hero, be he redman or pale-face. It is a great thing to be brave. Yonder pale-face chief is brave. Mugwa would not see him bound to the stake, and die like a dog. There is no squaw in. There is squaw in his follower. Take them. There are enough and to spare. Mugwa is willing. But why select the bravest? Why select him who fears not death? Mugwa does not ask to set him free. He would take him home to his nation, and let them decide. He would in short make him an Indian. *He is worthy to be an Indian.* He would teach our young men courage our warriors wisdom. Spare him, and Mugwa sanctions all the rest. He has spoken."

Here the chief gravely took his seat, amid a profound silence. It was evident to Moody, who watched the faces of all attentively, that the arguments of the Bear had made a deep impression upon their minds, and that the scale would assuredly turn against him, unless the weight of the next speaker's argument was thrown in his favor. With some anxiety, therefore, he waited the rising of the next orator. On him, doubtless, would depend the triumph of himself or Mugwa. At length Unkee started to his feet, and Moody at once felt satisfied by the gleam of his eye, that he would side with him, and thus his triumph would be complete. Nor was he mistaken.

"Brothers," began Unkee, "you have heard. The words of the great chiefs have found your ears open. They have entered your brains, and, not being alike, have become confused. You do not know which has spoken most wise. You wish to hear the opinion of another before you decide. Unkee will give you his. Unkee is not an orator. He is not of many words. He is more for action. Hear his counsel. The pale-face is many the red-man is few. Unless the red-man destroy the pale-face, he will over-run him. All should die. The voice of Unkee joins Posetha's. The

pale-face chief should die now. First, because he is brave, and the more to be feared. Secondly, because the spirits of our friends call for his blood. *They cannot rest in peace, knowing their murderer fills their wigwam.*"

This last was an argument so forcible, so conclusive to an Indian mind, that nothing but the mighty force of habit, restrained the dark warriors from interrupting the speaker with fierce yells of contradicting opinions. As it was, their faces instantly grew savagely ferocious; their eyes gleamed like balls of fire; their nostrils expanded, and their hands nervously clutched their weapons.

It was a complete triumph. A thousand words could not add to or destroy the force of that single, simple sentence. Even Mugwa seemed astonished and taken aback, as though the idea were new, and had struck him, too, with force. Moody, with a thrill of savage joy, now saw that his end was gained. A direct Providence could alone save the victims of his hate from their impending doom. Unkee, too, saw that the effect he sought was wrought, and he was cunning enough to pause and give it full sway.

Simply adding, "Unkee has spoken," he resumed his seat.

No sooner did the savages perceive that he was done, than springing to their feet, they uttered the most terrific yells imaginable yells which went to the hearts of the prisoners, and told them, alas! to fear the worst. As for Moody, he fairly shouted with ferocious delight, and danced around in a wild ecstasy of joy. Revenge he felt was in his grasp.

At length the yells and rapid gesticulations of the savages subsided, after which several minutes were occupied in settling the time and place where the horrid rite should come off, and the manner in which it should be conducted. After some discussion in the Indian fashion, it was finally agreed that Clifton and Ichabod should be put to the tortures on the very ground where the council had been held which had decreed them to death, and in full view of all the prisoners, who would thereby be witnesses of what, sooner or later, they would have to undergo themselves.

This suited the purpose of Moody exactly; and while the Indians set about preparing for the work of death, he repaired to Clifton, to let him know the result, taunt him all he could, and, in fact, enjoy to the full his own hellish triumph.

"I have come, my dear brother," he said, ironically, "to inform you what my friends propose to do for your benefit. Perhaps, however, you can judge for yourself, by simply watching their motions."

"I suppose I am to be tortured," answered Clifton, compressing his lips, and slightly turning pale.

"Well, you have made a very good guess, for the first one," replied Moody, with a laugh. "You are about to reap the benefit of your obstinacy, I assure you."

"Do your worst," rejoined Clifton; "for sooner would I die, than sacrifice the happiness of yonder maiden."

"And what, think you, you save her by this? Strange fancy you have got in your head, and one which I will now remove, for your especial benefit. In the first place, is not the girl in my power?"

"I suppose she is."

"Well, then, what think you it will matter with me, or with her, whether she refuse to be my lawful wife or not? I cannot compel her to marry me, it is true; but I *can* compel her to do worse."

"Good God! Moody, what do you mean?" cried Clifton, as a vague suspicion of something terrible crossed his mind.

"I leave you to judge what I mean, for the present, as I see a warrior coming to prepare you for the trial that awaits you," answered Moody. "When you are burning at the stake, and your flesh cracking with the heat, I will come, and hiss my meaning in your ear, that your spirit may have a knowledge in the world beyond, of what she you love is bound to suffer in this."

Saying this Moody turned upon his heel and strode away toward Kate, while the savage approached, and simply giving a grunt, drew his knife and cut the thongs which bound Ernest to the tree, but without cutting those which bound his hands. He then took hold of his arm, and pointing in a significant manner toward the main body of his companions, conducted him away. All this was noted by the friends of Clifton, with feelings peculiar to each, but which it would be impossible for us to describe.

Meantime Moody approached Kate, who stood bound to the tree, her features pale as death, and a look of alarmed inquiry upon her sweet countenance.

"Well," said the outcast, coming up, a dark smile playing over his sinister features, "you are now about to experience the result of your decision. Look yonder, and yon," and he pointed first toward Clifton, and then toward the savages, who were in the act of driving a large stake deep into the earth.

"What mean these fearful signs?" asked Kate, breathlessly.

"Their meaning, methinks, is very apparent," answered Moody. "Your lover is about to pass the ordeal of fire, on a journey from which he will never return."

"Oh, God! Moody, you cannot be so base so cruel!" cried Kate, in terrible agony, little heeding that she might as well have attempted to move a savage to tears, as him she addressed to mercy. "Oh, save him! save him! he is your brother!"

"Not if he were ten times my brother, and it were in my power," returned Moody, fiercely. "You plead too late, Kate Clarendon. Once I sought to save him, on the easy condition that you became my wife. I told you of the consequences, if you refused, and yet refuse you did. His doom is now past recall. He must die. And you," added Moody, tauntingly, "And you, pretty Miss Kate do not think by this that *you* will escape me! No! I swear to you your doom shall be no better than his!"

Kate shut her eyes and groaned.

"One thing," she cried, suddenly, "do me one favor, and I will ask no more! Do not let him writhe at the stake! In mercy take your rifle, and and (she paused, and shuddered, and her voice sunk to an almost inaudible whisper) and end his misery," she gasped, at last with a groan.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Moody, "you must have a very poor opinion of me, to think I would condescend to save him from his red friends yonder;" and again he pointed toward the savages.

"Farewell, dearest!" said a deep, solemn voice at this moment, that made the blood retreat to the heart of Kate, leaving her pale, agonized features bloodless; and looking round, she saw her lover being led to his place of torture. "Farewell, dearest!" again spoke Ernest, in solemn tones. "On earth we may never meet again; but in God put your trust, and meet me soon in the land of spirits!"

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Kate could hear no more, but uttered one fearful scream of anguish, that penetrated the hearts of all her friends, and made the brave young officer tremble as a child.

"You see!" said Moody, coolly, pointing toward the already retreating form of Clifton, as his Indian conductor hurried him forward: "You see!"

But he was mistaken; Kate did not see; she had fainted; and with a deep malediction on her tender heart, Moody turned away, and strode on after his intended victim.

By the time that he had come up to the Indians, the driving of the stake was completed, and the savages were already placing sticks around it. These were put end-wise to the stake, some three feet distant, so as to form a complete circle, and give the condemned the benefit of a slow fire. To the stake the prisoner was to be bound, so as to leave him a little freedom, and then the sticks were to be fired.

Clifton, as he neared the spot, noticed all these preparations with a shudder, and with a sinking spirit; but nerving himself with as much stoicism as he could assume, he in wardly called upon his Maker to aid him, and prepared himself to undergo the trial before him with manly fortitude.

And a terrible trial it was to one like him, in the very prime of life, with every inducement to live just, too, on the verge of happiness to be thus snatched away from all he loved and held dear, and slowly tortured out of existence into the dread, unknown Beyond. But most terrible of all, was the maddening thought of the dear one he loved, who would be left behind in the power of the most inhuman monster on earth. Were Kate at liberty and safe, he felt he could die comparatively happy. The suffering of the body alone, he fancied, could be borne; but the suffering of body and mind together, was a something to sap his courage, and make the man a child. Nor was his feeling of despair lessened, as he turned his gaze upward toward the glorious sun, (that now ascending the heavens, poured his light and warmth upon the great earth) then around upon the beauties of nature everywhere displayed before him felt the soft, balmy breeze upon his cheek, and remembered that he was about to bid adieu to all these bright things forever.

It had been decided by the Indians, that Clifton should suffer first, and therefore only one place of torture had been prepared, which was afterward to serve for the gardener, who, in consequence, still remained bound to his tree. The spot chosen for the horrid rite, was a little open patch of ground, near which grew a cluster of bushes, forming part of a thicket that stretched away to the Little Miami, but not so as to obstruct the view of the other prisoners it being the policy of the Indians to have them spectators of the awful spectacle.

The appearance of Clifton upon the ground, was the signal for the savages to set up a series of horrid yells, to dance around him in brutal triumph, and pinch, beat and otherwise maltreat him with their hands and fists. This lasted some ten or fifteen minutes, and was borne by the prisoner without a word of complaint. In this savage custom, in justice be it said, Moody did not join; but folding his arms upon his breast, he stood a little apart, regarding his brother in stern silence.

When they had amused themselves sufficiently in this way, the Indians began stripping their victim of his apparel, preparatory to binding him to the stake. First his coat, then his vest, and then piece after piece of his other garments, they tore rudely from him, and with some of them decorated their own hideous persons. As they rent the bosom of his shirt, the silver box presented him by Luther, which had been placed there for safe keeping, rolled out and fell to the ground. In an instant, Moody, who had so far been only a spectator, sprang forward, and seized it with avidity.

"What is this?" he asked, turning it over and over, and noting with wonder the strange characters upon it. "Speak, sirrah! what is this?" he pursued, addressing himself to Clifton. But the latter deigned him no answer; and muttering, "Take that for your silence," Moody struck him with his fist a violent blow upon the side of his head,

and coolly hid the box under his vestments to be examined at some future time.

Having at length stripped Clifton entirely, the Indians proceeded to attach him to the stake, by means of a rope made of deer-skin, and in such a manner as to leave him a little play round the circle, but not enough to reach the fire. They then had another dance around him, accompanied with horrible yells, when a warrior suddenly appeared with a burning brand, and applied it to the combustible pile. The sticks, many of them being small and dry, were very ignitable, and in a moment the red flames shot upward, and flashed, and crackled and crept around the circle, until the prisoner, to those at a little distance, appeared enveloped in fire and smoke. Gradually the heat became more and more intense, until the position of Clifton, who kept himself close to the stake, was rendered not a little painful, and already a few blisters began to make their appearance on his tender skin.

"Now for the burnt powder," cried Moody, with a horrid laugh; and pointing his rifle toward the naked body of Clifton, he was already in the act of pulling the trigger, when suddenly the muzzle dropped to the ground, and its owner, turning ghastly pale, stood, with mouth distended, and eyes half starting from their sockets, gazing in the direction of the thicket, and trembling with very fear. The Indians, too, suddenly halted in their savage rite, and uttering the single word "Kitcho-chobeka," shrank cowering back, with looks expressive of surprise and dismay.

The next moment a powerful figure rushed through the flames, and cutting the bonds of the prisoner, raised and bore him to a safe distance beyond the fatal circle. Turning with a look of unspeakable gratitude to his deliverer, Clifton, to his amazement and joy, beheld in him the tall, ungainly, but commanding form of Blind Luther, the Necromancer.

CHAPTER XXII.

They spake not a word, But like dumb statues, or breathless stones, Stared on each other, and looked deadly pale.

[Shakspeare.

His hand did quake,
And tremble like a leaf of aspen green,
And troubled blood through his pale face was seen
To come and go, with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been. [Shakspeare.

O! how glorious 't is To right the oppressed, and bring the felon vile To just disgrace!

[Somerville.

Yes, let the traitor die, For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

[Shakspeare.

Without waiting to receive his thanks, and in fact scarcely noticing Clifton at all, Luther made a single bound forward, and seizing the trembling Moody by the throat, bore him violently to the earth. Then hastily disarming him, he set his foot upon his heaving breast and shouted:

"Villain, thy hour has come!"

By this time the Indians had recovered somewhat from their astonishment, and seeing their victim at liberty, and one of their own party in such imminent danger, began to rally and collect around the Necromancer, with menacing gestures.

"Sons of the forest," cried Luther, addressing them in their own dialect, "away, and leave the misereant to his fate!"

"Kitcho—chobeka is great," answered Mugwa; "but why does he interfere here?"

"The Great Spirit is offended," rejoined Luther solemnly, pointing upward.

"You have aided Watchemenetoc in his hellish work," and he pointed downward to Moody. "Begone! ere you behold the Great Spirit's anger!"

The Indians, judging by their looks, were now evidently alarmed, but not satisfied, and loth to depart without further proof of the Great Spirit's anger, through His instrument, as they superstitiously believed Luther to be.

"Let us have our prisoner and our chief," grumbled Mugwa, "and we will go."

"Touch one of them," replied Luther, fiercely, straightening his ugly form to its full height, and rolling his restless eye from one to the other with an angry expression: "Touch one of them again, and perdition go with you! Watchemenetoc is not your chief; he is a devil in human form. Away! begone!" and he waved his hand majestically.

But still the Indians lingered; and fearful they might, in spite, of their fears, veriture upon a rescue, Luther suddenly thrust his hand into his bosom, and drew forth a ball, some three inches in diameter, which he had previously prepared for such an emergency.

This proceeding was noted by the savages with deep interest, and they would instantly have crowded around him, had not their fours restrained them. As it was, however, they approached within a few feet, and got between Luther and the fire, their eyes the while fixed intently on the ball, which the Necromancer, to puzzle them, now commenced turning rapidly over and over in his hands. This was exactly what he desired; and muttering some unintelligible words, and looking upward, as if appealing to Heaven, he suddenly, and by a dexterous movement, cast it beyond them, into the flames, at the same time shouting:

"Behold and tremble, ye sons of the forest, and revere the tongue of the Great Spirit!"

The Indians, all amazement, followed the ball with their eyes, and, as it touched the fire, beheld first a red and then a blue flame shoot upward with a hissing sound. The words of the Necromancer now fell with startling effect upon their ears, and were scarcely concluded, ere a tremend explosion took place, which shook the ground beneath their feet, and scattered the burning brands in every direction, leaving the space lately occupied by the fire black and smoking. The brands, too, many of them, striking against the almost naked bodies of the Indians, increased their terror and confusion. Mugwa and another savage were knocked down, and all were more or less bruised and injured by the explosion. Springing to his feet, the chief of the Piquas uttered a frightful yell of terror, and darted toward the thicket, followed closely by his yelling and no less terrified companions, leaving the Necromancer master of the ground.

Clifton, who had been an inactive spectator of the whole, now sprang to Luther, and grasping him by the hand, while tears of joy filled his eyes, said, with emotion:

"My more than friend, my kind benefactor, how can I ever sufficiently thank you for this timely interference and preservation of my life?"

"Ernest Bellington," answered Luther, warmly pressing the hand of the young officer, "you owe me no thanks, nor do I need them. When I do a good deed, I know it is registered there," and he slowly and impressively pointed

upward; "there there beyond that sky of blue, where I humbly hope and pray my spirit will one day wing its flight, and find more good than evil recorded of my doings while a tenant here below. Here," added Luther, pointing downward to Moody, who as yet had made no effort to rise; "Here is a painful task for me to perform. I must yield him up to justice. I have said, and I will do it, for I always keep my word."

"And he deserves it," returned Clifton; "for if ever there was a black-hearted villain on earth, he is one. But Kate, and my friends I "

Here he was interrupted by the report of firearms; and wheeling suddenly in the direction of his fettered comrades, whom he expected to behold sinking under the weapons of the savages, judge of his astonishment, on seeing *them* already in pursuit of the latter, armed to the teeth.

"Good Heaven! what magic is this?" he cried, turning to Luther, all amazement.

"Simply that before I liberated you, I took all means of precaution to render my work sure," replied the other modestly.

Such was the fact; and an unusual negligence on the part of the Indians, had aided him most essentially. Feeling perfectly secure, and not wishing uselessly to encumber themselves, they had placed most of the weapons taken from the whites in a pile by themselves, near the thicket. While they were intently occupied in council, Luther had managed to get possession of these, and afterward distribute them among their owners, cautioning them, ere he cut their cords, not to stir, unless they were attacked, or heard a signal from him. Then approaching Kate in a noiseless manner, just as she, regaining consciousness, was looking about her in alarm, he whispered a few words of hope and consolation in her ear, and freed her also, with the same injunction as to remaining stationary. This done, he had regained the thicket, and appeared before the savages in the manner already shown.

Terrified at the feats of the Necromancer, but maddened at the release of their prisoner, no sooner had the Indians fairly hid themselves in the thicket, than thoughts of vengeance took possession of their half crazy brains, and they paused for consultation. Under the excitement they were laboring, this was very short, and resulted in their decision to steal upon the bound prisoners, tomahawk and scalp them, and return to their homes. Led by the now infuriated Mugwa, they made a sally for the purpose, and were bearing kown upon their supposed victims, when, suddenly, to their unbounded astonishment, dismay, and terror, each captive sprang behind his tree, and sent the contents of his rifle among them. This, to the Indians, was a work of magic indeed; and overpowered by amazement and terror, they paused for a moment irresolute. The next they turned and darted away, uttering horrible yells, followed by the whites. Three of their number had been wounded, but not so as to prevent their flight, and in a few seconds all had gained the cover of the thicket. Into this the whites were prudent enough not to venture, but turned back, congratulating themselves upon their fortunate and timely escape. Their first move was to reload their rifles, and thus be prepared for a second attack, in case the savages should desire to renew the contest a proceeding, however, which was looked upon as highly improbable. They then repaired to where Kate was standing, and all in a body proceeded toward the Necromancer.

In their flight, the Indians had thrown away most of the garments taken from Clifton, who hastily recovering these meantime, was now enabled to appear before his friends, decently clad. Seeing Kate approaching, he made one bound forward, caught her in his arms, and pressed her to his heart in silence. The emotion of both was too deep for words. His friends now crowded around him, and seizing his hand, one after another, they allowed their tearful eyes to say what their tongues had not power to utter. It was a solemn, but joyful meeting.

"Now," exclaimed Danvers, who was the first to break the silence, "let us attempt to express our gratitude to this noble being;" and he pointed toward Luther, who was quietly standing a few paces distant, holding the outcast Moody by a firm grasp upon his arm.

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

"Ay, a thousand times bless him!" cried Kate, rushing forward and kneeling at the feet of the Necromancer.

"Up, girl!" said Luther, solemnly. "Kneel to thy God, and not to frail mortality like me."

"But we must bless you, nevertheless," returned Danvers, grasping the hand unoccupied, "as the instrument of the Almighty, used in the preservation of our lives."

"Ay, ay!" cried several voices; and each proceeded to express his thanks in his own peculiar way.

"God bless you!" said one.

"May you live a thousand years!" said another.

"Forever!" put in a third.

"May flowers ever lie in your path, and the hand of innocence and virtue, and the blessings of all who know you, smooth the passage of your noble spirit to the vale of eternal Eden!" added Kate, enthusiastically.

"Enough! enough!" rejoined Luther, waving his hand and turning away his head:

As he did this, his eye fell upon Moody, who, pale as a corpse, stood trembling and abashed, although not one of the party had as yet appeared to notice his presence. "Here," he added, quickly, "take him, or peradventure I repent and set him free."

A howl of indignation escaped two or three of the party, as they sprang forward and seized him roughly.

"Mercy!" cried the now terrified outcast, who, since the appearance of Luther, seemed to have become changed entirely, from a reckless, boasting bully, to the veriest poltroon on earth. "Mercy! I will repent."

"Yes, such mercy's you gave, you'll git," replied one.

"And that'll be a high tree and short prayers," said another.

"Hist! d'ye see anything?" whispered David, at this moment, pointing toward Ichabod, who, from some oversight, had been neglected, and was still bound to his tree, patiently waiting to be set at liberty.

"Why, good heavens! there is the gardener, quite forgotten," rejoined Clifton, taking a step forward to release him.

"Hist!" said David again, detaining Clifton with his hand.

The next instant his rifle was to his eye, and before any one could comprehend what it meant, the piece belched forth its deadly contents. A cry of mortal agony now rang upon the air, proceeding from a cluster of bushes near which Ichabod stood bound.

"You'll find him there all right," said David, coolly, as some two or three of the party set off to learn the result of his shot.

On coming up to the place, they were astonished at seeing an Indian lying lifeless upon his face. Turning him over, they recognised the grim features of Unkee. More bloodthirsty and daring than his companions, he had stealthily ventured hither to take the scalp of his prisoner; but the quick ears and keen eyes of David had been too much for him, and he had met his fate in the manner shown.

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

Releasing Ichabod, the party now returned, leaving the dead Indian to be devoured by the beasts of the wilderness. The manner of Luther, as they came up to the others, arrested the attention of all. He had turned his face toward the west, placed his hands over his eyes, and now stood swaying to and fro like some strong oak shaken by the blast or, like one whose mind is racked by some powerful thought. No one ventured to address him, and all stood regarding him with awe and silence. At length he removed his hands slowly, and turned his face toward the group. Each started as they saw that countenance, over which, in so short a time, had come a fearful change. His dark features were pale, and seemed bloodless; his eye rolled more rapidly than usual in its socket; the lid quivered more nervously, and the whole face was uncommonly agitated, as if by some inward struggle.

"It is over," he said, at length, in a deep, guttural voice, recovering himself, and assuming his wonted composure. "I see you are surprised, my friends, to behold me thus. There is a cause for it but that cause you will never know. My time has now come to bid you farewell. Many of you perhaps all will never behold me more."

"Nay, nay," cried Ernest and Kate, both in a breath, springing forward, and each grasping a hand of the Necromancer. "Nay, do not leave us! why should you not go with us, and be provided for the remainder of your days?"

"Ay, do accept their offer," added Danvers.

Luther shook his head sadly.

"My friends," he said, "it cannot be. I thank you none the less, however, for your kind offer but it cannot be. My road lies yonder;" and he waved his hand toward the west, as if to comprehend the whole great forest, which then stretched over a vast and unexplored territory. "My task here, peradventure, is ended. A restless something within, tells me I must go go go till I come to my last haven of rest the grave. Will you forget me when I am gone?" he asked, with some emotion.

"Never! never!" cried all together.

Luther remained mute a moment, and then turning to Clifton, resumed:

"Remember what I told you concerning the box! It is all important. When she is thy wife (motioning his hand toward Kate), then, and not before, know its contents."

"Ha!" exclaimed Clifton, "I had forgotten; it is in the possession of Moody;" and advancing at once to the outcast, who was still held by the three young men, he took it from him, adding, as he returned to the side of Luther, "I shall remember."

"Let it not pass from you again with life," said the Necromancer. "Now, my friends, let me bid you a long adieu;" and beginning with Danvers, he shook each warmly by the hand leaving Ernest and Kate to the last giving each a warm "God bless you!" and receiving a similar blessing from lips that trembled, and eyes that grew moist, in return.

When he had done, he strode up to Moody, and said, in a deep, solemn voice:

"`The way of the transgressor is hard.' I had hoped this to be otherwise but a Higher Power has willed it so, and overruled me. It is enough. With a sad heart I consign thee to the fate thou deservest. I have warned thee, and spared thee, and given thee chances to repent but all in vain. Farewell! we may never meet again neither in this world, nor that which lies beyond the tomb."

Kate Clarendon; or, Necromancy in the Wilderness. A Tale of the Little Miami

"Oh! save me this time this once," cried the cowardly villian, imploringly, "and, by all I hold sacred, I swear to you I will repent and reform."

"Too late," returned Luther, sternly. "When last I saved thy life, I said I would never interfere again. My word I never break. Farewell, forever!" and he turned away abruptly.

Approaching Ernest and Kate, he once more grasped them by the hand, and said:

" 'T is hard to leave you, but I must do it.

"The sun of hope Is In the sky,
The angry clouds have floated by;
Whate'er the past, remember this,
The future has its store of bliss.

"Farewell, till you behold me again, either in time, or (he paused, and concluded impressively) eternity."

Without looking round, or saying more, he now strode steadily to the thicket, paused a moment, and then parting the bushes with his hands, disappeared, from many there present for the last time.

For something like a minute, the silence was unbroken. All were mute and sad, and stood like statues, with their eyes fixed upon the spot where the Necromancer was last seen.

"Come," said Clifton, "time wears, and we have a long journey before us. We must, God willing, reach the settlement to-night."

"D'ye hear?" said one addressing Moody. "We've got a short job with you first."

"What are you going to do?" asked Clifton.

"Keep our oath," replied one. "We've sworn to hang this villian, if ever we got him in our power agin. We've got him now, and won't be apt to forget it."

"Had you not better take him to some settlement to Cincinnati and have him tried legally? I cannot favor the movement of taking vengeance into our own hands."

"It's no use for you to trouble yourself 'bout the matter, lieutenant, axing your pardon!" replied David. "He's got to die, that's the short on't; and sooner nor he 'scapes agin, I'll give him the contents o this;" and he held up his long rifle.

"Come, dearest," said Clifton, who saw it would be useless to parley longer with men who had been so deeply wronged: "Come, Kate, let us away; we must leave him to his fate;" and taking her hand, he set forward, followed by Danvers only, the others remaining with Moody.

As soon as the young officer and his party were fairly out of sight, Grant turned to Moody and said:

"Come, wretch, down and say your prayers if you've got any to say and make 'em short; for the rope's ready, and the tree's waiting to blossom with your carcass. We'll see you dead this time, anyhow, whether you come to life agin or not."

Moody, instead of complying, began to remonstrate and beg for his life, which so enraged the party, that without waiting to listen, they began to drag him for ward to the thicket, where lay his dead Indian companion.

"Here's company for you," said Ichabod; "and as you plotted together in this world, it'll be as well for ye to jine him straightway, and keep him company in the next."

It so chanced that a strong sapling was growing exactly over the body of the savage; and laying hold of this, three of of the party without ceremony pulled the top down to the ground, while the rest employed themselves in putting one end of a rope round the neck of the outcast, and fastening the other to it. Then seeing that all was fast and ready, one of the party said to Moody, whose very teeth were chattering with terror:

"Now you're about to reap the reward of your crimes."

"Mercy!" gasped the guilty one.

"Git it after death, then," was the bitter reply.

"Ready all! Let her go!"

At the word, the sapling sprang upward nearly to its former place, jerking Moody up with it by the neck, and there holding him, choking and struggling in mid air. For a few minutes the party remained, watching the struggles and awful contortions of visage of the victim to Lynch law, until they gradually subsided, and one long, violent spasm, succeeded by a straightening of the limbs, and perfect quiet announced that the erring and criminal Moody was still in death.

"Let's go!" said David, briefly, turning away with a shudder of disgust.

No answer was returned; but as he left the thicket, he found each of his companions at his heels, eager to quit the place of a sight so horrible.

In a short time the party overtook the one in advance, when all pushed forward in a body together. No questions were asked concerning the fate of Moody, and no remarks made each satisfied, apparently, to leave the outcast to his fate.

Without incident worthy of note, the whole company reached the settlement that night, and joined their anxious friends.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mount on contemplation's wings,
And mark the causes and the ends of things;
Learn what we are, and for what purpose born.
What station here 'tis given us to adorn.

Gifford.
Within the deep,
Still chambers of the heart, a specter dim,
Whose tones are like the wizzard voice of Time,
Heard from the tombs of ages, points its cold

And solemn finger to the beautiful
And holy visions that have passed away,
And left no shadow of their loveliness. Geo. D. Prentice.

How still the morning of the hallowed day Mute is the voice of rural labor.

Graham.
To love, to bliss, their blended souls were given,
And each, too happy, asked no other heaven, Dr. Dwight.

What a mighty contrast a few years presents, in a country just merging from a state of barbarism to one of civilization and refinement! What a vast change from the old primeval forest, where the native hunters of the wood roamed unmolested by civilized man, to the busy city with its thousand workshops, or the quiet hamlet of peace and plenty, or the well cultivated, open farm of the industrious denizen of agriculture! What wonderful change, by the mighty wand of the wizzard of Oriental tales, could be more grand and imposing than the change which here, in this bright land of the West, has been effected by the arch-enchanter Time, in his steady progress of eternal revolution! Where is now the Indian with his terrible war-cry, his deadly rifle, his murderous tomahawk, and his mutilating scalping-knife which so troubled the peace of our fathers, and made wailing, and wo, and terror among the pale-faces of the frontiers? Where are now those tenants of the wood the panther, the bear, the catamount, the buffalo, the deer, the copper-head and rattlesnake which held their lairs in the great forest at the opening of our story? Where, too, are those great forests themselves, which stretched far away, from east to west, from north to south? Gone all gone; vanished as a dream; fled from before the steps of the white man, as mists flee from the strides of the great luminary of day.

Who that now sits in the heart of this great city, where thousands are passing to and fro hears the rumbling sound of many wheels as they roll over the stony pavements, the voices of the venders, the noise of industry, and beholds the display of fashion from all quarters of the habitable globe can realize that barely sixty years ago only sixty years in the memory of many now living on this very ground swayed the inter locking branches of a great forest, unseen by the eye, untouched by the hand of an Anglo Saxon? Who that now sees the bright river winding like a belt of silver around our pleasant banks, mirroring hundreds of houses in its tranquil bosom, and parting its waters to the gliding motion of hundreds of magnificent steamers, and a thousand smaller craft of all descriptions can realize that sixty years ago, the tall old trees of the wilderness threw their cool shadows far over its glassy tide, then disturbed only by the fairy-like movements of the Indian canoe? Who, say we, living here now, can realize all this? and yet it is but the letter of truth itself.

Strangely have the predictions of Blind Luther, the Necromancer, been verified. The fifty years opening of the nineteenth century have been pregnant with events that have caused a world to wonder, until wonder has ceased altogether, and man now looks upon things beyond his first comprehension as things which are to be. The city which Luther beheld in his vision, with the eye of the mind, we behold with the naked eye of corporeal substance. The great beast that was to be formed from the dust of the earth, by the mechanism of man, with rolling legs, with speed beyond the speed of the deer, and with strength exceeding an hundred horse we now behold daily. The great leviathans that were to plow foaming channels in the mighty deep, rush against wind and tide, and carry the sons of earth in their great bosoms are already upon our waters. The red lightning from the thunder-car of heaven has already been drawn and sent courier throughout the civilized earth; and tho' ships do not yet sail in the blue ether above us, and though tyranny still exists, and liberty is not every where triumphant yet we must remember the prediction was made for the nineteenth century, of which more than half is yet to appear, and we little know what is written in the yet unopened book of time. Well may we of the present day exclaim, in the language of Scripture: "What shall be the end of these things, and what the sign of their coming."

In the opening chapter of this history, we presented a contrast between the ancient and modern appearance of Columbia which, in itself, has altered less, perhaps, than in the improvements that environ it. In place of the

rough and serpentine horse-path, that connected it with its sister village, Cincinnati, with here and there a solitary traveler upon it we have now a broad, smooth and beautiful turnpike, shooting away from a thronged city, through the pleasant hamlet of Fulton since sprung into existence and winding round the base of Bald-Hill, at a height sufficient to overlook the quiet dwellings reposing below, as also the broad plain so often mentioned over which roll teams of burden, stages and omnibuses for travelers and citizens, and carriages for pleasure; while along its side can be traced the dark lines of a railway, on which to and fro rush the "iron horses" with great velocity, dragging their weighty burdens over three hundred miles of territory, and connecting this point with the great lakes of the north by a journey of only a few hours.

At the precise spot where the turnpike, winding around the base of Bald-Hill, takes a more northern course, you have a delightful view of the little knoll so frequently mentioned in these pages, as the ground on which stood the first building erected solely to the worship of God by the pioneers of the Miami Valley.

This knoll is only a few yards from the base of the hill on which you stand, and is a spot well calculated to arrest the gaze of the observant traveler. In appearance, it much resembles an Indian mound, being somewhat oval and smooth. No building now adorns its summit; but the ruins of one can there be seen, around which, covered with green sward, are scattered the graves of many who worshiped within its walls in times gone by, whose names, half obliterated from the crumbling stones above them, speak the vanity and decay of earthly things, and the dirge to whose memories is now only sung by the wailing wind, as it sighs through the branches of the willow, the beach and the locust, waving above and shadowing their last remains.

To this knoll, then not as it appears now, but as it appeared at the time of which we write, with its neat, but humble, building of worship peeping through the grove that covered it we must once more call the readers attention; and if he like, he may stand and view it from the self-same spot where but now he viewed the tombs of many who were then in their rosy prime of life.

It was a beautiful Sabbath morning in the spring of 1792. All nature seemed rejoicing and full of happiness. The icy hand of winter had been lifted from the seemingly desolate earth, and everything appeared as joyous as on the departure of a tyrannical ruler. The trees had put, or were putting, forth their buds, their blossoms and leaves, and checkering the forest with that beautiful variety of color, which renders it so enchanting; while the earth had sent up her blade and her flowers of all hues, until her surface seemed a carpet too rich almost to be pressed by the foot of man. The warblers of the forest had already returned from their journey to the sunny south, and now thronged the trees, and made "earth vocal with their melody." Already had the husbandman put his seed into the teeming earth, and the result was now visible in broad, green squares of corn and wheat, destined, by the process of a few short months, to be greeted as the golden harvest of plenty.

We have said it was a beautiful Sabbath morning. The sun, slowly ascending to the zenith of his glory, rolled over an ocean of ethereal blue, wherein not a cloud floated to mar its beauty, or check for an instant his warmth, or cast a single shadow over the scene before us. A gentle southern breeze swept down the hills of old Kentucky, rippled the bosom of the Ohio, and came up the valley, freighted with the sweets of a thousand flowers bearing to the ear the hum of ten thousand insects, and the songs of a thousand warblers. Save these, all sounds were hushed.

It was Sabbath the day set apart by Him who made the world, for rest and the weekly toil of the husbandman had ceased. Toward the little sanctuary so often mentioned, a long line of villagers, male and female, were taking their way, dressed in the simple costume of the time, with no ostentatious display of fashion to rank one superior in point of wealth to another. No solemn bell was sending its vibrations upon the balmy air, to call them to the church of God. They knew it was the hour bordering upon worship, and they set forth from their peaceful dwelling places accordingly. Among them were all classes from the youth to the grey-beard from the maiden of a few summers, to the hoary matron whose feet already pressed the verge of the grave. Some were grave, and some were gay for all of course did not feel the solemnity of the day yet none behaved with indecorum.

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In the front and rear of the church were stationed sentinels, with their rifles upon their shoulders, past which the male portion of the villagers bore their own arms, and, ascending the little knoll, disappeared one after another, within the rude walls consecrated to the worship of the Most High.

Around the door of the church, however, a small group of youths and maidens lingered, with their eyes mostly bent in one direction, as if expecting some person or persons from that quarter. At length one exclaimed, "They come;" and the speaker pointed with his finger to a man of venerable appearance, some fifty rods distant, who was seen coming up the valley, accompanied by two couple of both sexes. As this party ascended the knoll, the sentinels they passed, paused, touched their hats respectfully, and resumed their patrol, while the group at the door disappeared within.

In a short time, the last party crossed the threshold of the church, amid a profound silence, and were met on all sides by an artillery of eager eyes, from those already there assembled. A rude altar at the farther end of the church, overlooked the rough benches in front, on which the congregation was seated and toward this the venerable pastor and his young companions directed their steps. At the place mentioned, the man of God paused, and facing the assemblage, raised his hands aloft. Simultaneously all rose to their feet, and, after a short silence, his tremulous voice was heard in solemn prayer. This ended, the assemblage, with the exception of the pious pastor and the group which had accompanied him to the altar, resumed their seats. Glancing round him for a moment, the divine said:

"Friends, it now becomes my pleasant but solemn duty, to unite in the holy rite of marriage, Ernest Clifton and Kate Clarendon, Albert Danvers and Mary Argate."

Saying this, he addressed himself to the party before him, and in a few minutes the hands which were clasped together, clasped those of partners for life. The ceremony over, the newly married took seats arranged behind them, while the pastor, ascending the pulpit, read a text suitable to the occasion, from which he delivered a most eloquent and able discourse.

On the return of Kate from captivity, she, at the earnest solicitation of young Danvers and his sister, had taken up her abode in their father's dwelling, where for many weeks she labored under a strong nervous affection, caused by the many exciting events which we have chronicled, among the most prominent of which was the horrible death of her mother. Grief, violent, and some feared fatal, for a long time rankled deeply in her affectionate breast, and hours, and days, and weeks of anguish had been apportioned her. But Time, the great healer or destroyer of hearts diseased, had gradually softened and soothed her feelings, and taught her the vanity of mourning so severely an earthly loss, which a few short years, at the most, would repay in the gain of a never ending eternity, and a meeting with those she loved, to part no more forever.

Moreover, *all* she loved were not gone. Around, on every side, she felt she had kind, sympathizing friends, for whose sakes it was her duty to appear somewhat resigned and cheerful; but, above all others, for the sake of one, dear and beloved, whose happiness depended upon her own, and to whom she now felt her own, drawn with a peculiar, sublime and almost idolatrous affection, which she had never before known for earthly being. She still had something to live for; an object to love, and feel that in turn she was loved; and the thought of the living gradually took the place of the dead. Spring came, and she was happy in the embrace of one she could call her own forever.

Throughout the winter, Ernest had remained in the fort at Cincinnati, though his visits to Columbia, on one pretense or another, had not been like angels' visits, "few and far between;" but, on the contrary, had been almost of daily occurrence. The many mysterious words of Luther had made a deep impression upon his mind. He had thought of them by day, and dreamed of them by night. Could they have any meaning? were they true? A thousand times had he been tempted to open the mysterious box in his possession, and know for a certainty; but as often a moral sense of obligation to the commands of one who had so befriended, restrained him.

"I will not," he said to himself, "until the time set for the purpose has expired, and then I will know all."

It was late on the evening succeeding the marriage of Clifton, and in a rude apartment of a dwelling, in the village so often named, sat the young officer, by the side of a table on which stood a light, throwing its gleams upon his noble and manly countenance, as, with the chin resting on his hand, he contemplated in silence several manuscript papers lying before him. The door opened, and a bright, fairy-like being glided up to his side, and a soft, white hand was laid upon his shoulder.

Ernest started, and looking up, exclaimed, in rapture:

"Bless you, my own, dearest Kate my wife! *now* I can make you happy;" and as he pressed his lips to hers, a tear of joy stood in his eye.

"Ah! dear Ernest," answered Kate in a silvery voice, gazing tenderly upon him, and parting the hair from his forehead; "why do you say *now*? Could you not always make me happy? Could I be otherwise with you?"

"But now more than ever! You remember the words and the gift of Luther, dearest?"

"I do: the latter a silver box."

"Aye, and the contents of that box are now before you. First, here," continued Ernest, taking up a scroll; "on this are my horoscope and destiny written. It looks old, and bears date 1770. In it I am styled Ernest Bellington, son of Arthur Lord Bellington, twin brother of Albert Bellington, and grandson of Edgar, Earl of Killingworth. The next, in like manner, is the horoscope of my brother, since my foe, in the person of Rashton Moody. The third is your own, and your destiny is marked to run parallel to mine. But most important of all," pursued Ernest, with sparkling eyes, "is this;" and he held aloft a parchment; "this, which proves to my satisfaction my birthright."

"O, read it!" exclaimed Kate, with interest, seating herself by his side, and looking fondly upon him.

"A kiss first, my little wife. There, now listen!" and Ernest began the unraveling of a tale of mystery.

The story purported to be written by Luther Boreancy, otherwise Blind Luther. It was long, sometimes so metaphorical as to render the sense almost obscure, and was altogether a remarkable document. We shall not follow it in detail, but will give the contents in brief, in our own language.

It stated that Arthur Lord Bellington, son of Edgar Earl of Killingworth, being an only son, married, contrary to his father's desire, an accomplished lady of small fortune and inferior birth. A quarrel ensued, father and son became estranged, and finally, after the birth of twin sons, the latter determined to embark for America. Before he quitted the country, however, he took his infants to a magistrate, and had tattooed in his presence, and in the presence of many witnesses, under the left arm of each, the armorial bearings of his house, and the initial letters of their names. Papers, stating the whole affair, were then drawn up, and signed by all present, of which a copy was taken and deposited in the archives of the capital. This accomplished, he embarked for America with his family. On board the same vessel which carried him out, was one who had made the tour of the world, and learned astrology and the occult sciences of the Egyptians. He was consulted, and he in turn consulted the stars, and predicted the sudden death of the young lord and his lady. It came. Ship fever broke out, and Lady Bellington sickened and died. Lord Bellington was attacked, and on his death-bed he called the astrologer to him, and gave his infants into his charge, with all the proofs concerning them, together with a large purse of money, and begged that he would have them educated and brought up separately, neither to know of his birthright until the Earl of Killingworth should be no more. The astrologer promised, Lord Bellington died, and the former kept his word. By a train of circumstances useless for us to mention, all came to the West, and the rest the reader knows.

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Such, in short, was the substance of the document which Ernest now read to his bride; and accompanying it were all the proofs, and a statement that the old peer was now deceased.

"And so, I suppose, the astrologer here mentioned is none other than our Necromancer?" said Kate inquiringly.

"I infer, from what I have read," answered Ernest, "they are one and the same; but further than that, the mystery seems as dark as ever. God bless him, though, whoever he is! I should like to behold him once again, whether mortal or spirit!"

"Behold, then! for he is mortal and here," said a deep voice, close at hand.

Ernest sprang to his feet, with an exclamation of surprise, while Kate uttered a cry of terror. Behind them stood Luther, quietly leaning on his stick of witchhazel, and the door, through which he had softly entered, was partly ajar.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Ernest, fastening his eyes steadily upon Luther, with an expression of awe, "are you really flesh and blood?"

"Feel and have faith!" said Luther, advancing and extending his dark hand to the young officer.

Ernest touched, pressed it in his own, and replied:

"There is no doubting that. But tell me, mysterious being, who art thou?"

"All thou knowest is thine," replied Luther, gravely. "What thou knowest not, is shut from thee forever. Question no further. I perceive thou didst obey my request;" and he pointed to the papers on the table. "How like you your destiny?"

"It is better than I ever hoped for in my dreams," replied Clifton rapturously.

"Wear well thy honors, and when thou art rich, forget not the poor. Whatever the past may have been, the future promises everything. With thy new fortunes and bride, thou must become the envied of mortals. Farewell! I bid thee farewell, and go forever from thy sight. Sweet lady (turning to Kate), we shall meet no more on earth. I need not tell thee to be true and loyal to thy husband, nor him to do the like by thee. I make one prediction more. The world shall yet praise the wealth, the bounty, the beauty and virtue of the Earl and the Countess of Killingworth. Farewell!"

As he spoke he turned and strode out of the apartment.

"Stay!" cried Clifton, who had yet many questions to ask but Luther paused not.

Ernest and Kate sprang to the door. The moon, already on the wane, faintly traced the outline of a tall figure, gliding toward the wood. One moment, and it disappeared, and blind Luther was seen nevermore by those who looked upon him as a guardian angel and benefactor.

Many long years after these events, however, a strange figure, answering his description, was discovered in the wood by an old hunter. He was lying on his side, his head resting upon an old knapsack. On examination, it was found that he had been a long time dead. On the spot where he ceased to breathe, a little rise of earth, and two rough stones at his head and feet, mark out the last earthly resting place of a once mysterious being. About his person were found some old papers, so worn and soiled by time, that the writing thereof was mostly illegible. From what little could be deciphered, it was conjectured by some that he was once a nobleman of distinction,

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whom one cause or another had driven to this country, and that, becoming partially deranged, he had conducted himself in the manner we have shown. Others believed him possessed of supernatural powers, and there were various opinions and conjectures; but all amounted to surmises only; for none ever knew who he was, or whence he came.

Soon after his marriage, Ernest threw up his commission in the army, and, with his lovely wife, and her faithful serving man, Ichabod Longtree, set out for Ireland, his ancestral home. The old peer was dead, and the young lord had but little difficulty in proving his identity, and taking his place among the proudest of the realm. A long rent-roll secured him a vast income, and he lived in lordly splendor, the happiest of mortals. The Countess of Killingsworth proved a dutiful and loving wife; and the old Earl was heard in after years to tell his grandchildren, he blessed the hour when first his eyes beheld the fainting form of the lovely Kate Clarendon.