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Volume 4

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The Complete Writings of Charles Dudley Warner Volume 4

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BEING A BOY
ON HORSEBACK

BEING A BOY

One of the best things in the world to be is a boy; it requires no experience, though it needs some practice to be a good one. The disadvantage of the position is that it does not last long enough; it is soon over; just as you get used to being a boy, you have to be something else, with a good deal more work to do and not half so much fun. And yet every boy is anxious to be a man, and is very uneasy with the restrictions that are put upon him as a boy. Good fun as it is to yoke up the calves and play work, there is not a boy on a farm but would rather drive a yoke of oxen at real work. What a glorious feeling it is, indeed, when a boy is for the first time given the

long whip and permitted to drive the oxen, walking by their side, swinging the long lash, and shouting "Gee, Buck!" "Haw, Golden!" "Whoa, Bright!" and all the rest of that remarkable language, until he is red in the face, and all the neighbors for half a mile are aware that something unusual is going on. If I were a boy, I am not sure but I would rather drive the oxen than have a birthday. The proudest day of my life was one day when I rode on the neap of the cart, and drove the oxen, all alone, with a load of apples to the cider-mill. I was so little that it was a wonder that I did n't fall off, and get under the broad wheels. Nothing could make a boy, who cared anything for his appearance, feel flatter than to be run over by the broad tire of a cart-wheel. But I never heard of one who was, and I don't believe one ever will be. As I said, it was a great day for me, but I don't remember that the oxen cared much about it. They sagged along in their great clumsy way, switching their tails in my face occasionally, and now and then giving a lurch to this or that side of the road, attracted by a choice tuft of grass. And then I "came the Julius Caesar" over them, if you will allow me to use such a slang expression, a liberty I never should permit you. I don't know that Julius Caesar ever drove cattle, though he must often have seen the peasants from the Campagna "haw" and "gee" them round the Forum (of course in Latin, a language that those cattle understood as well as ours do English); but what I mean is, that I stood up and "hollered" with all my might, as everybody does with oxen, as if they were born deaf, and whacked them with the long lash over the head, just as the big folks did when they drove. I think now that it was a cowardly thing to crack the patient old fellows over the face and eyes, and make them wink in their meek manner. If I am ever a boy again on a farm, I shall speak gently to the oxen, and not go screaming round the farm like a crazy man; and I shall not hit them a cruel cut with the lash every few minutes, because it looks big to do so and I cannot think of anything else to do. I never liked lickings myself, and I don't know why an ox should like them, especially as he cannot reason about the moral improvement he is to get out of them.

Speaking of Latin reminds me that I once taught my cows Latin. I don't mean that I taught them to read it, for it is very difficult to teach a cow to read Latin or any of the dead languages,--a cow cares more for her cud than she does for all the classics put together. But if you begin early, you can teach a cow, or a calf (if you can teach a calf anything, which I doubt), Latin as well as English. There were ten cows, which I had to escort to and from pasture night and morning. To these cows I gave the names of the Roman numerals, beginning with Unus and Duo, and going up to Decem. Decem was, of course, the biggest cow of the party, or at least she was the ruler of the others, and had the place of honor in the stable and everywhere else. I admire cows, and especially the exactness with which they define their social position. In this case, Decem could "lick" Novem, and Novem could "lick" Octo, and so on down to Unus, who could n't lick anybody, except her own calf. I suppose I ought to have called the weakest cow Una instead of Unus, considering her sex; but I did n't care much to teach the cows the declensions of adjectives, in which I was not very well up myself; and, besides, it

would be of little use to a cow. People who devote themselves too severely to study of the classics are apt to become dried up; and you should never do anything to dry up a cow. Well, these ten cows knew their names after a while, at least they appeared to, and would take their places as I called them. At least, if Octo attempted to get before Novem in going through the bars (I have heard people speak of a "pair of bars" when there were six or eight of them), or into the stable, the matter of precedence was settled then and there, and, once settled, there was no dispute about it afterwards. Novem either put her horns into Octo's ribs, and Octo shambled to one side, or else the two locked horns and tried the game of push and gore until one gave up. Nothing is stricter than the etiquette of a party of cows. There is nothing in royal courts equal to it; rank is exactly settled, and the same individuals always have the precedence. You know that at Windsor Castle, if the Royal Three-Ply Silver Stick should happen to get in front of the Most Royal Double-and-Twisted Golden Rod, when the court is going in to dinner, something so dreadful would happen that we don't dare to think of it. It is certain that the soup would get cold while the Golden Rod was pitching the Silver Stick out of the Castle window into the moat, and perhaps the island of Great Britain itself would split in two. But the people are very careful that it never shall happen, so we shall probably never know what the effect would be. Among cows, as I say, the question is settled in short order, and in a different manner from what it sometimes is in other society. It is said that in other society there is sometimes a great scramble for the first place, for the leadership, as it is called, and that women, and men too, fight for what is called position; and in order to be first they will injure their neighbors by telling stories about them and by backbiting, which is the meanest kind of biting there is, not excepting the bite of fleas. But in cow society there is nothing of this detraction in order to get the first place at the crib, or the farther stall in the stable. If the question arises, the cows turn in, horns and all, and settle it with one square fight, and that ends it. I have often admired this trait in COWS.

Besides Latin, I used to try to teach the cows a little poetry, and it is a very good plan. It does not do the cows much good, but it is very good exercise for a boy farmer. I used to commit to memory as good short poems as I could find (the cows liked to listen to "Thanatopsis" about as well as anything), and repeat them when I went to the pasture, and as I drove the cows home through the sweet ferns and down the rocky slopes. It improves a boy's elocution a great deal more than driving oxen.

It is a fact, also, that if a boy repeats "Thanatopsis" while he is milking, that operation acquires a certain dignity.

THE BOY AS A FARMER

Boys in general would be very good farmers if the current notions about farming were not so very different from those they entertain. What passes for laziness is very often an unwillingness to farm in a particular way. For instance, some morning in early summer John is told to catch the sorrel mare, harness her into the spring wagon, and put in the buffalo and the best whip, for father is obliged to drive over to the "Corners, to see a man" about some cattle, to talk with the road commissioner, to go to the store for the "women folks," and to attend to other important business; and very likely he will not be back till sundown. It must be very pressing business, for the old gentleman drives off in this way somewhere almost every pleasant day, and appears to have a great deal on his mind.

Meantime, he tells John that he can play ball after he has done up the chores. As if the chores could ever be "done up" on a farm. He is first to clean out the horse-stable; then to take a bill-hook and cut down the thistles and weeds from the fence corners in the home mowing-lot and along the road towards the village; to dig up the docks round the garden patch; to weed out the beet-bed; to hoe the early potatoes; to rake the sticks and leaves out of the front yard; in short, there is work enough laid out for John to keep him busy, it seems to him, till he comes of age; and at half an hour to sundown he is to go for the cows "and mind he don't run 'em!"

"Yes, sir," says John, "is that all?"

"Well, if you get through in good season, you might pick over those potatoes in the cellar; they are sprouting; they ain't fit to eat."

John is obliged to his father, for if there is any sort of chore more cheerful to a boy than another, on a pleasant day, it is rubbing the sprouts off potatoes in a dark cellar. And the old gentleman mounts his wagon and drives away down the enticing road, with the dog bounding along beside the wagon, and refusing to come back at John's call. John half wishes he were the dog. The dog knows the part of farming that suits him. He likes to run along the road and see all the dogs and other people, and he likes best of all to lie on the store steps at the Corners--while his master's horse is dozing at the post and his master is talking politics in the store--with the other dogs of his acquaintance, snapping at mutually annoying flies, and indulging in that delightful dog gossip which is expressed by a wag of the tail and a sniff of the nose. Nobody knows how many dogs' characters are destroyed in this gossip, or how a dog may be able to insinuate suspicion by a wag of the tail as a man can by a shrug of the shoulders, or sniff a slander as a man can suggest one by raising his eyebrows.

John looks after the old gentleman driving off in state, with the odorous buffalo-robe and the new whip, and he thinks that is the sort of farming he would like to do. And he cries after his departing parent,

"Say, father, can't I go over to the farther pasture and salt the cattle?" John knows that he could spend half a day very pleasantly in going over to that pasture, looking for bird's nests and shying at red squirrels on the way, and who knows but he might "see" a sucker in the meadow brook, and perhaps get a "jab" at him with a sharp stick. He knows a hole where there is a whopper; and one of his plans in life is to go some day and snare him, and bring him home in triumph. It is therefore strongly impressed upon his mind that the cattle want salting. But his father, without turning his head, replies,

"No, they don't need salting any more 'n you do!" And the old equipage goes rattling down the road, and John whistles his disappointment. When I was a boy on a farm, and I suppose it is so now, cattle were never salted half enough!

John goes to his chores, and gets through the stable as soon as he can, for that must be done; but when it comes to the out-door work, that rather drags. There are so many things to distract the attention--a chipmunk in the fence, a bird on a near-tree, and a hen-hawk circling high in the air over the barnyard. John loses a little time in stoning the chipmunk, which rather likes the sport, and in watching the bird, to find where its nest is; and he convinces himself that he ought to watch the hawk, lest it pounce upon the chickens, and therefore, with an easy conscience, he spends fifteen minutes in hallooing to that distant bird, and follows it away out of sight over the woods, and then wishes it would come back again. And then a carriage with two horses, and a trunk on behind, goes along the road; and there is a girl in the carriage who looks out at John, who is suddenly aware that his trousers are patched on each knee and in two places behind; and he wonders if she is rich, and whose name is on the trunk, and how much the horses cost, and whether that nice-looking man is the girl's father, and if that boy on the seat with the driver is her brother, and if he has to do chores; and as the gay sight disappears, John falls to thinking about the great world beyond the farm, of cities, and people who are always dressed up, and a great many other things of which he has a very dim notion. And then a boy, whom John knows, rides by in a wagon with his father, and the boy makes a face at John, and John returns the greeting with a twist of his own visage and some symbolic gestures. All these things take time. The work of cutting down the big weeds gets on slowly, although it is not very disagreeable, or would not be if it were play. John imagines that yonder big thistle is some whiskered villain, of whom he has read in a fairy book, and he advances on him with "Die, ruffian!" and slashes off his head with the bill-hook; or he charges upon the rows of mullein-stalks as if they were rebels in regimental ranks, and hews them down without mercy. What fun it might be if there were only another boy there to help. But even war, single handed, gets to be tiresome. It is dinner-time before John finishes the weeds, and it is cow-time before John has made much impression on the garden.

This garden John has no fondness for. He would rather hoe corn all day than work in it. Father seems to think that it is easy work that John can do, because it is near the house! John's continual plan in this life is to go fishing. When there comes a rainy day, he attempts to carry it out. But ten chances to one his father has different views. As it rains so that work cannot be done out-doors, it is a good time to work in the garden. He can run into the house between the heavy showers. John accordingly detests the garden; and the only time he works briskly in it is when he has a stent set, to do so much weeding before the Fourth of July. If he is spry, he can make an extra holiday the Fourth and the day after. Two days of gunpowder and ball-playing! When I was a boy, I supposed there was some connection between such and such an amount of work done on the farm and our national freedom. I doubted if there could be any Fourth of July if my stent was not done. I, at least, worked for my Independence.

III

THE DELIGHTS OF FARMING

There are so many bright spots in the life of a farm-boy, that I sometimes think I should like to live the life over again; I should almost be willing to be a girl if it were not for the chores. There is a great comfort to a boy in the amount of work he can get rid of doing. It is sometimes astonishing how slow he can go on an errand, --he who leads the school in a race. The world is new and interesting to him, and there is so much to take his attention off, when he is sent to do anything. Perhaps he himself couldn't explain why, when he is sent to the neighbor's after yeast, he stops to stone the frogs; he is not exactly cruel, but he wants to see if he can hit 'em. No other living thing can go so slow as a boy sent on an errand. His legs seem to be lead, unless he happens to espy a woodchuck in an adjoining lot, when he gives chase to it like a deer; and it is a curious fact about boys, that two will be a great deal slower in doing anything than one, and that the more you have to help on a piece of work the less is accomplished. Boys have a great power of helping each other to do nothing; and they are so innocent about it, and unconscious. "I went as quick as ever I could," says the boy: his father asks him why he did n't stay all night, when he has been absent three hours on a ten-minute errand. The sarcasm has no effect on the boy.

Going after the cows was a serious thing in my day. I had to climb a hill, which was covered with wild strawberries in the season. Could any boy pass by those ripe berries? And then in the fragrant hill pasture there were beds of wintergreen with red berries, tufts of columbine, roots of sassafras to be dug, and dozens of things good to eat or to smell, that I could not resist. It sometimes even lay in my way to climb a tree to look for a crow's nest, or to swing in the

top, and to try if I could see the steeple of the village church. It became very important sometimes for me to see that steeple; and in the midst of my investigations the tin horn would blow a great blast from the farmhouse, which would send a cold chill down my back in the hottest days. I knew what it meant. It had a frightfully impatient quaver in it, not at all like the sweet note that called us to dinner from the hay-field. It said, "Why on earth does n't that boy come home? It is almost dark, and the cows ain't milked!" And that was the time the cows had to start into a brisk pace and make up for lost time. I wonder if any boy ever drove the cows home late, who did not say that the cows were at the very farther end of the pasture, and that "Old Brindle" was hidden in the woods, and he couldn't find her for ever so long! The brindle cow is the boy's scapegoat, many a time.

No other boy knows how to appreciate a holiday as the farm-boy does; and his best ones are of a peculiar kind. Going fishing is of course one sort. The excitement of rigging up the tackle, digging the bait, and the anticipation of great luck! These are pure pleasures, enjoyed because they are rare. Boys who can go a-fishing any time care but little for it. Tramping all day through bush and brier, fighting flies and mosquitoes, and branches that tangle the line, and snags that break the hook, and returning home late and hungry, with wet feet and a string of speckled trout on a willow twig, and having the family crowd out at the kitchen door to look at 'em, and say, "Pretty well done for you, bub; did you catch that big one yourself?" --this is also pure happiness, the like of which the boy will never have again, not if he comes to be selectman and deacon and to "keep store."

But the holidays I recall with delight were the two days in spring and fall, when we went to the distant pasture-land, in a neighboring town, maybe, to drive thither the young cattle and colts, and to bring them back again. It was a wild and rocky upland where our great pasture was, many miles from home, the road to it running by a brawling river, and up a dashing brook-side among great hills. What a day's adventure it was! It was like a journey to Europe. The night before, I could scarcely sleep for thinking of it! and there was no trouble about getting me up at sunrise that morning. The breakfast was eaten, the luncheon was packed in a large basket, with bottles of root beer and a jug of switchel, which packing I superintended with the greatest interest; and then the cattle were to be collected for the march, and the horses hitched up. Did I shirk any duty? Was I slow? I think not. I was willing to run my legs off after the frisky steers, who seemed to have an idea they were going on a lark, and frolicked about, dashing into all gates, and through all bars except the right ones; and how cheerfully I did yell at them.

It was a glorious chance to "holler," and I have never since heard any public speaker on the stump or at camp-meeting who could make more noise. I have often thought it fortunate that the amount of noise in a boy does not increase in proportion to his size; if it

did, the world could not contain it.

The whole day was full of excitement and of freedom. We were away from the farm, which to a boy is one of the best parts of farming; we saw other farms and other people at work; I had the pleasure of marching along, and swinging my whip, past boys whom I knew, who were picking up stones. Every turn of the road, every bend and rapid of the river, the great boulders by the wayside, the watering-troughs, the giant pine that had been struck by lightning, the mysterious covered bridge over the river where it was, most swift and rocky and foamy, the chance eagle in the blue sky, the sense of going somewhere,--why, as I recall all these things I feel that even the Prince Imperial, as he used to dash on horseback through the Bois de Boulogne, with fifty mounted hussars clattering at his heels, and crowds of people cheering, could not have been as happy as was I, a boy in short jacket and shorter pantaloons, trudging in the dust that day behind the steers and colts, cracking my black-stock whip.

I wish the journey would never end; but at last, by noon, we reach the pastures and turn in the herd; and after making the tour of the lots to make sure there are no breaks in the fences, we take our luncheon from the wagon and eat it under the trees by the spring. This is the supreme moment of the day. This is the way to live; this is like the Swiss Family Robinson, and all the rest of my delightful acquaintances in romance. Baked beans, rye-and-indian bread (moist, remember), doughnuts and cheese, pie, and root beer. What richness! You may live to dine at Delmonico's, or, if those Frenchmen do not eat each other up, at Philippe's, in Rue Montorgueil in Paris, where the dear old Thackeray used to eat as good a dinner as anybody; but you will get there neither doughnuts, nor pie, nor root beer, nor anything so good as that luncheon at noon in the old pasture, high among the Massachusetts hills! Nor will you ever, if you live to be the oldest boy in the world, have any holiday equal to the one I have described. But I always regretted that I did not take along a fishline, just to "throw in" the brook we passed. I know there were trout there.

IV

NO FARMING WITHOUT A BOY

Say what you will about the general usefulness of boys, it is my impression that a farm without a boy would very soon come to grief. What the boy does is the life of the farm. He is the factotum, always in demand, always expected to do the thousand indispensable things that nobody else will do. Upon him fall all the odds and ends, the most difficult things. After everybody else is through, he has to finish up. His work is like a woman's,--perpetual waiting on others. Everybody knows how much easier it is to eat a good dinner than it is to wash the dishes afterwards. Consider what a boy on a

farm is required to do; things that must be done, or life would actually stop.

It is understood, in the first place, that he is to do all the errands, to go to the store, to the post office, and to carry all sorts of messages. If he had as many legs as a centipede, they would tire before night. His two short limbs seem to him entirely inadequate to the task. He would like to have as many legs as a wheel has spokes, and rotate about in the same way. This he sometimes tries to do; and people who have seen him "turning cart-wheels" along the side of the road have supposed that he was amusing himself, and idling his time; he was only trying to invent a new mode of locomotion, so that he could economize his legs and do his errands with greater dispatch. He practices standing on his head, in order to accustom himself to any position. Leapfrog is one of his methods of getting over the ground quickly. He would willingly go an errand any distance if he could leap-frog it with a few other boys. He has a natural genius for combining pleasure with business. This is the reason why, when he is sent to the spring for a pitcher of water, and the family are waiting at the dinner-table, he is absent so long; for he stops to poke the frog that sits on the stone, or, if there is a penstock, to put his hand over the spout and squirt the water a little while. He is the one who spreads the grass when the men have cut it; he mows it away in the barn; he rides the horse to cultivate the corn, up and down the hot, weary rows; he picks up the potatoes when they are dug; he drives the cows night and morning; he brings wood and water and splits kindling; he gets up the horse and puts out the horse; whether he is in the house or out of it, there is always something for him to do. Just before school in winter he shovels paths; in summer he turns the grindstone. He knows where there are lots of winter-greens and sweet flag-root, but instead of going for them, he is to stay in-doors and pare apples and stone raisins and pound something in a mortar. And yet, with his mind full of schemes of what he would like to do, and his hands full of occupations, he is an idle boy who has nothing to busy himself with but school and chores! He would gladly do all the work if somebody else would do the chores, he thinks, and yet I doubt if any boy ever amounted to anything in the world, or was of much use as a man, who did not enjoy the advantages of a liberal education in the way of chores.

A boy on a farm is nothing without his pets; at least a dog, and probably rabbits, chickens, ducks, and guinea-hens. A guinea-hen suits a boy. It is entirely useless, and makes a more disagreeable noise than a Chinese gong. I once domesticated a young fox which a neighbor had caught. It is a mistake to suppose the fox cannot be tamed. Jacko was a very clever little animal, and behaved, in all respects, with propriety. He kept Sunday as well as any day, and all the ten commandments that he could understand. He was a very graceful playfellow, and seemed to have an affection for me. He lived in a wood-pile in the dooryard, and when I lay down at the entrance to his house and called him, he would come out and sit on his tail and lick my face just like a grown person. I taught him a great many tricks and all the virtues. That year I had a large

number of hens, and Jacko went about among them with the most perfect indifference, never looking on them to lust after them, as I could see, and never touching an egg or a feather. So excellent was his reputation that I would have trusted him in the hen-roost in the dark without counting the hens. In short, he was domesticated, and I was fond of him and very proud of him, exhibiting him to all our visitors as an example of what affectionate treatment would do in subduing the brute instincts. I preferred him to my dog, whom I had, with much patience, taught to go up a long hill alone and surround the cows, and drive them home from the remote pasture. He liked the fun of it at first, but by and by he seemed to get the notion that it was a "chore," and when I whistled for him to go for the cows, he would turn tail and run the other way, and the more I whistled and threw stones at him, the faster he would run. His name was Turk, and I should have sold him if he had not been the kind of dog that nobody will buy. I suppose he was not a cow-dog, but what they call a sheep-dog. At least, when he got big enough, he used to get into the pasture and chase the sheep to death. That was the way he got into trouble, and lost his valuable life. A dog is of great use on a farm, and that is the reason a boy likes him. He is good to bite peddlers and small children, and run out and yelp at wagons that pass by, and to howl all night when the moon shines. And yet, if I were a boy again, the first thing I would have should be a dog; for dogs are great companions, and as active and spry as a boy at doing nothing. They are also good to bark at woodchuck-holes.

A good dog will bark at a woodchuck-hole long after the animal has retired to a remote part of his residence, and escaped by another hole. This deceives the woodchuck. Some of the most delightful hours of my life have been spent in hiding and watching the hole where the dog was not. What an exquisite thrill ran through my frame when the timid nose appeared, was withdrawn, poked out again, and finally followed by the entire animal, who looked cautiously about, and then hopped away to feed on the clover. At that moment I rushed in, occupied the "home base," yelled to Turk, and then danced with delight at the combat between the spunky woodchuck and the dog. They were about the same size, but science and civilization won the day. I did not reflect then that it would have been more in the interest of civilization if the woodchuck had killed the dog. I do not know why it is that boys so like to hunt and kill animals; but the excuse that I gave in this case for the murder was, that the woodchuck ate the clover and trod it down, and, in fact, was a woodchuck. It was not till long after that I learned with surprise, that he is a rodent mammal, of the species *Arctomys monax*, is called at the West a ground-hog, and is eaten by people of color with great relish.

But I have forgotten my beautiful fox. Jacko continued to deport himself well until the young chickens came; he was actually cured of the fox vice of chicken-stealing. He used to go with me about the coops, pricking up his ears in an intelligent manner, and with a demure eye and the most virtuous droop of the tail. Charming fox! If he had held out a little while longer, I should have put him into a Sunday-school book. But I began to miss chickens. They

disappeared mysteriously in the night. I would not suspect Jacko at first, for he looked so honest, and in the daytime seemed to be as much interested in the chickens as I was. But one morning, when I went to call him, I found feathers at the entrance of his hole,-- chicken feathers. He couldn't deny it. He was a thief. His fox nature had come out under severe temptation. And he died an unnatural death. He had a thousand virtues and one crime. But that crime struck at the foundation of society. He deceived and stole; he was a liar and a thief, and no pretty ways could hide the fact. His intelligent, bright face couldn't save him. If he had been honest, he might have grown up to be a large, ornamental fox.

V

THE BOY'S SUNDAY

Sunday in the New England hill towns used to begin Saturday night at sundown; and the sun is lost to sight behind the hills there before it has set by the almanac. I remember that we used to go by the almanac Saturday night and by the visible disappearance Sunday night. On Saturday night we very slowly yielded to the influences of the holy time, which were settling down upon us, and submitted to the ablutions which were as inevitable as Sunday; but when the sun (and it never moved so slow) slid behind the hills Sunday night, the effect upon the watching boy was like a shock from a galvanic battery; something flashed through all his limbs and set them in motion, and no "play" ever seemed so sweet to him as that between sundown and dark Sunday night. This, however, was on the supposition that he had conscientiously kept Sunday, and had not gone in swimming and got drowned. This keeping of Saturday night instead of Sunday night we did not very well understand; but it seemed, on the whole, a good thing that we should rest Saturday night when we were tired, and play Sunday night when we were rested. I supposed, however, that it was an arrangement made to suit the big boys who wanted to go "courting" Sunday night. Certainly they were not to be blamed, for Sunday was the day when pretty girls were most fascinating, and I have never since seen any so lovely as those who used to sit in the gallery and in the singers' seats in the bare old meeting-houses.

Sunday to the country farmer-boy was hardly the relief that it was to the other members of the family; for the same chores must be done that day as on others, and he could not divert his mind with whistling, hand-springs, or sending the dog into the river after sticks. He had to submit, in the first place, to the restraint of shoes and stockings. He read in the Old Testament that when Moses came to holy ground, he put off his shoes; but the boy was obliged to put his on, upon the holy day, not only to go to meeting, but while he sat at home. Only the emancipated country-boy, who is as agile on his bare feet as a young kid, and rejoices in the pressure of the warm soft earth, knows what a hardship it is to tie on stiff shoes.

The monks who put peas in their shoes as a penance do not suffer more than the country-boy in his penitential Sunday shoes. I recall the celerity with which he used to kick them off at sundown.

Sunday morning was not an idle one for the farmer-boy. He must rise tolerably early, for the cows were to be milked and driven to pasture; family prayers were a little longer than on other days; there were the Sunday-school verses to be relearned, for they did not stay in mind over night; perhaps the wagon was to be greased before the neighbors began to drive by; and the horse was to be caught out of the pasture, ridden home bareback, and harnessed.

This catching the horse, perhaps two of them, was very good fun usually, and would have broken the Sunday if the horse had not been wanted for taking the family to meeting. It was so peaceful and still in the pasture on Sunday morning; but the horses were never so playful, the colts never so frisky. Round and round the lot the boy went calling, in an entreating Sunday voice, "Jock, jock, jock, jock," and shaking his salt-dish, while the horses, with heads erect, and shaking tails and flashing heels, dashed from corner to corner, and gave the boy a pretty good race before he could coax the nose of one of them into his dish. The boy got angry, and came very near saying "dum it," but he rather enjoyed the fun, after all.

The boy remembers how his mother's anxiety was divided between the set of his turn-over collar, the parting of his hair, and his memory of the Sunday-school verses; and what a wild confusion there was through the house in getting off for meeting, and how he was kept running hither and thither, to get the hymn-book, or a palm-leaf fan, or the best whip, or to pick from the Sunday part of the garden the bunch of caraway-seed. Already the deacon's mare, with a wagon-load of the deacon's folks, had gone shambling past, head and tail drooping, clumsy hoofs kicking up clouds of dust, while the good deacon sat jerking the reins, in an automatic way, and the "womenfolks" patiently saw the dust settle upon their best summer finery. Wagon after wagon went along the sandy road, and when our boy's family started, they became part of a long procession, which sent up a mile of dust and a pungent, if not pious smell of buffalobobes. There were fiery horses in the trail which had to be held in, for it was neither etiquette nor decent to pass anybody on Sunday. It was a great delight to the farmer-boy to see all this procession of horses, and to exchange sly winks with the other boys, who leaned over the wagon-seats for that purpose. Occasionally a boy rode behind, with his back to the family, and his pantomime was always some thing wonderful to see, and was considered very daring and wicked.

The meeting-house which our boy remembers was a high, square building, without a steeple. Within it had a lofty pulpit, with doors underneath and closets where sacred things were kept, and where the tithing-men were supposed to imprison bad boys. The pews were square, with seats facing each other, those on one side low for the children, and all with hinges, so that they could be raised when the

congregation stood up for prayers and leaned over the backs of the pews, as horses meet each other across a pasture fence. After prayers these seats used to be slammed down with a long-continued clatter, which seemed to the boys about the best part of the exercises. The galleries were very high, and the singers' seats, where the pretty girls sat, were the most conspicuous of all. To sit in the gallery away from the family, was a privilege not often granted to the boy. The tithing-man, who carried a long rod and kept order in the house, and out-doors at noontime, sat in the gallery, and visited any boy who whispered or found curious passages in the Bible and showed them to another boy. It was an awful moment when the bushy-headed tithing-man approached a boy in sermon-time. The eyes of the whole congregation were on him, and he could feel the guilt ooze out of his burning face.

At noon was Sunday-school, and after that, before the afternoon service, in summer, the boys had a little time to eat their luncheon together at the watering-trough, where some of the elders were likely to be gathered, talking very solemnly about cattle; or they went over to a neighboring barn to see the calves; or they slipped off down the roadside to a place where they could dig sassafras or the root of the sweet-flag, roots very fragrant in the mind of many a boy with religious associations to this day. There was often an odor of sassafras in the afternoon service. It used to stand in my mind as a substitute for the Old Testament incense of the Jews. Something in the same way the big bass-viol in the choir took the place of "David's harp of solemn sound."

The going home from meeting was more cheerful and lively than the coming to it. There was all the bustle of getting the horses out of the sheds and bringing them round to the meeting-house steps. At noon the boys sometimes sat in the wagons and swung the whips without cracking them: now it was permitted to give them a little snap in order to bring the horses up in good style; and the boy was rather proud of the horse if it pranced a little while the timid "women-folks" were trying to get in. The boy had an eye for whatever life and stir there was in a New England Sunday. He liked to drive home fast. The old house and the farm looked pleasant to him. There was an extra dinner when they reached home, and a cheerful consciousness of duty performed made it a pleasant dinner. Long before sundown the Sunday-school book had been read, and the boy sat waiting in the house with great impatience the signal that the "day of rest" was over. A boy may not be very wicked, and yet not see the need of "rest." Neither his idea of rest nor work is that of older farmers.

VI

THE GRINDSTONE OF LIFE

If there is one thing more than another that hardens the lot of the

farmer-boy, it is the grindstone. Turning grindstones to grind scythes is one of those heroic but unobtrusive occupations for which one gets no credit. It is a hopeless kind of task, and, however faithfully the crank is turned, it is one that brings little reputation. There is a great deal of poetry about haying--I mean for those not engaged in it. One likes to hear the whetting of the scythes on a fresh morning and the response of the noisy bobolink, who always sits upon the fence and superintends the cutting of the dew-laden grass. There is a sort of music in the "swish" and a rhythm in the swing of the scythes in concert. The boy has not much time to attend to it, for it is lively business "spreading" after half a dozen men who have only to walk along and lay the grass low, while the boy has the whole hay-field on his hands. He has little time for the poetry of haying, as he struggles along, filling the air with the wet mass which he shakes over his head, and picking his way with short legs and bare feet amid the short and freshly cut stubble.

But if the scythes cut well and swing merrily, it is due to the boy who turned the grindstone. Oh, it was nothing to do, just turn the grindstone a few minutes for this and that one before breakfast; any "hired man" was authorized to order the boy to turn the grindstone. How they did bear on, those great strapping fellows! Turn, turn, turn, what a weary go it was. For my part, I used to like a grindstone that "wobbled" a good deal on its axis, for when I turned it fast, it put the grinder on a lively lookout for cutting his hands, and entirely satisfied his desire that I should "turn faster." It was some sport to make the water fly and wet the grinder, suddenly starting up quickly and surprising him when I was turning very slowly. I used to wish sometimes that I could turn fast enough to make the stone fly into a dozen pieces. Steady turning is what the grinders like, and any boy who turns steadily, so as to give an even motion to the stone, will be much praised, and will be in demand. I advise any boy who desires to do this sort of work to turn steadily. If he does it by jerks and in a fitful manner, the "hired men" will be very apt to dispense with his services and turn the grindstone for each other.

This is one of the most disagreeable tasks of the boy farmer, and, hard as it is, I do, not know why it is supposed to belong especially to childhood. But it is, and one of the certain marks that second childhood has come to a man on a farm is, that he is asked to turn the grindstone as if he were a boy again. When the old man is good for nothing else, when he can neither mow nor pitch, and scarcely "rake after," he can turn grindstone, and it is in this way that he renews his youth. "Ain't you ashamed to have your granther turn the grindstone?" asks the hired man of the boy. So the boy takes hold and turns himself, till his little back aches. When he gets older, he wishes he had replied, "Ain't you ashamed to make either an old man or a little boy do such hard grinding work?"

Doing the regular work of this world is not much, the boy thinks, but the wearisome part is the waiting on the people who do the work. And the boy is not far wrong. This is what women and boys have to do on

a farm, wait upon everybody who--works." The trouble with the boy's life is, that he has no time that he can call his own. He is, like a barrel of beer, always on draft. The men-folks, having worked in the regular hours, lie down and rest, stretch themselves idly in the shade at noon, or lounge about after supper. Then the boy, who has done nothing all day but turn grindstone, and spread hay, and rake after, and run his little legs off at everybody's beck and call, is sent on some errand or some household chore, in order that time shall not hang heavy on his hands. The boy comes nearer to perpetual motion than anything else in nature, only it is not altogether a voluntary motion. The time that the farm-boy gets for his own is usually at the end of a stint. We used to be given a certain piece of corn to hoe, or a certain quantity of corn to husk in so many days. If we finished the task before the time set, we had the remainder to ourselves. In my day it used to take very sharp work to gain anything, but we were always anxious to take the chance. I think we enjoyed the holiday in anticipation quite as much as we did when we had won it. Unless it was training-day, or Fourth of July, or the circus was coming, it was a little difficult to find anything big enough to fill our anticipations of the fun we would have in the day or the two or three days we had earned. We did not want to waste the time on any common thing. Even going fishing in one of the wild mountain brooks was hardly up to the mark, for we could sometimes do that on a rainy day. Going down to the village store was not very exciting, and was, on the whole, a waste of our precious time. Unless we could get out our military company, life was apt to be a little blank, even on the holidays for which we had worked so hard. If you went to see another boy, he was probably at work in the hay-field or the potato-patch, and his father looked at you askance. You sometimes took hold and helped him, so that he could go and play with you; but it was usually time to go for the cows before the task was done. The fact is, or used to be, that the amusements of a boy in the country are not many. Snaring "suckers" out of the deep meadow brook used to be about as good as any that I had. The North American sucker is not an engaging animal in all respects; his body is comely enough, but his mouth is puckered up like that of a purse. The mouth is not formed for the gentle angle-worm nor the delusive fly of the fishermen. It is necessary, therefore, to snare the fish if you want him. In the sunny days he lies in the deep pools, by some big stone or near the bank, poisoning himself quite still, or only stirring his fins a little now and then, as an elephant moves his ears. He will lie so for hours, or rather float, in perfect idleness and apparent bliss. The boy who also has a holiday, but cannot keep still, comes along and peeps over the bank. "Golly, ain't he a big one!" Perhaps he is eighteen inches long, and weighs two or three pounds. He lies there among his friends, little fish and big ones, quite a school of them, perhaps a district school, that only keeps in warm days in the summer. The pupils seem to have little to learn, except to balance themselves and to turn gracefully with a flirt of the tail. Not much is taught but "deportment," and some of the old suckers are perfect Turveydrops in that. The boy is armed with a pole and a stout line, and on the end of it a brass wire bent into a hoop, which is a slipnoose, and slides together when anything is caught in it. The

boy approaches the bank and looks over. There he lies, calm as a whale. The boy devours him with his eyes. He is almost too much excited to drop the snare into the water without making a noise. A puff of wind comes and ruffles the surface, so that he cannot see the fish. It is calm again, and there he still is, moving his fins in peaceful security. The boy lowers his snare behind the fish and slips it along. He intends to get it around him just back of the gills and then elevate him with a sudden jerk. It is a delicate operation, for the snare will turn a little, and if it hits the fish, he is off. However, it goes well; the wire is almost in place, when suddenly the fish, as if he had a warning in a dream, for he appears to see nothing, moves his tail just a little, glides out of the loop, and with no seeming appearance of frustrating any one's plans, lounges over to the other side of the pool; and there he reposes just as if he was not spoiling the boy's holiday. This slight change of base on the part of the fish requires the boy to reorganize his whole campaign, get a new position on the bank, a new line of approach, and patiently wait for the wind and sun before he can lower his line. This time, cunning and patience are rewarded. The hoop encircles the unsuspecting fish. The boy's eyes almost start from his head as he gives a tremendous jerk, and feels by the dead-weight that he has got him fast. Out he comes, up he goes in the air, and the boy runs to look at him. In this transaction, however, no one can be more surprised than the sucker.

VII

FICTION AND SENTIMENT

The boy farmer does not appreciate school vacations as highly as his city cousin. When school keeps, he has only to "do chores and go to school," but between terms there are a thousand things on the farm that have been left for the boy to do. Picking up stones in the pastures and piling them in heaps used to be one of them. Some lots appeared to grow stones, or else the sun every year drew them to the surface, as it coaxes the round cantelopes out of the soft garden soil; it is certain that there were fields that always gave the boys this sort of fall work. And very lively work it was on frosty mornings for the barefooted boys, who were continually turning up the larger stones in order to stand for a moment in the warm place that had been covered from the frost. A boy can stand on one leg as well as a Holland stork; and the boy who found a warm spot for the sole of his foot was likely to stand in it until the words, "Come, stir your stumps," broke in discordantly upon his meditations. For the boy is very much given to meditations. If he had his way, he would do nothing in a hurry; he likes to stop and think about things, and enjoy his work as he goes along. He picks up potatoes as if each one were a lump of gold just turned out of the dirt, and requiring careful examination.

Although the country-boy feels a little joy when school breaks up (as he does when anything breaks up, or any change takes place), since he is released from the discipline and restraint of it, yet the school is his opening into the world,--his romance. Its opportunities for enjoyment are numberless. He does not exactly know what he is set at books for; he takes spelling rather as an exercise for his lungs, standing up and shouting out the words with entire recklessness of consequences; he grapples doggedly with arithmetic and geography as something that must be cleared out of his way before recess, but not at all with the zest he would dig a woodchuck out of his hole. But recess! Was ever any enjoyment so keen as that with which a boy rushes out of the schoolhouse door for the ten minutes of recess? He is like to burst with animal spirits; he runs like a deer; he can nearly fly; and he throws himself into play with entire self-forgetfulness, and an energy that would overturn the world if his strength were proportioned to it. For ten minutes the world is absolutely his; the weights are taken off, restraints are loosed, and he is his own master for that brief time,--as he never again will be if he lives to be as old as the king of Thule,--and nobody knows how old he was. And there is the nooning, a solid hour, in which vast projects can be carried out which have been slyly matured during the school-hours: expeditions are undertaken; wars are begun between the Indians on one side and the settlers on the other; the military company is drilled (without uniforms or arms), or games are carried on which involve miles of running, and an expenditure of wind sufficient to spell the spelling-book through at the highest pitch.

Friendships are formed, too, which are fervent, if not enduring, and enmities contracted which are frequently "taken out" on the spot, after a rough fashion boys have of settling as they go along; cases of long credit, either in words or trade, are not frequent with boys; boot on jack-knives must be paid on the nail; and it is considered much more honorable to out with a personal grievance at once, even if the explanation is made with the fists, than to pretend fair, and then take a sneaking revenge on some concealed opportunity. The country-boy at the district school is introduced into a wider world than he knew at home, in many ways. Some big boy brings to school a copy of the Arabian Nights, a dog-eared copy, with cover, title-page, and the last leaves missing, which is passed around, and slyly read under the desk, and perhaps comes to the little boy whose parents disapprove of novel-reading, and have no work of fiction in the house except a pious fraud called "Six Months in a Convent," and the latest comic almanac. The boy's eyes dilate as he steals some of the treasures out of the wondrous pages, and he longs to lose himself in the land of enchantment open before him. He tells at home that he has seen the most wonderful book that ever was, and a big boy has promised to lend it to him. "Is it a true book, John?" asks the grandmother; because, if it is n't true, it is the worst thing that a boy can read." (This happened years ago.) John cannot answer as to the truth of the book, and so does not bring it home; but he borrows it, nevertheless, and conceals it in the barn and, lying in the hay-mow, is lost in its enchantments many an odd hour when he is supposed to be doing chores. There were no chores in the Arabian Nights; the

boy there had but to rub the ring and summon a genius, who would feed the calves and pick up chips and bring in wood in a minute. It was through this emblazoned portal that the boy walked into the world of books, which he soon found was larger than his own, and filled with people he longed to know.

And the farmer-boy is not without his sentiment and his secrets, though he has never been at a children's party in his life, and, in fact, never has heard that children go into society when they are seven, and give regular wine-parties when they reach the ripe age of nine. But one of his regrets at having the summer school close is dimly connected with a little girl, whom he does not care much for, would a great deal rather play with a boy than with her at recess, - but whom he will not see again for some time,--a sweet little thing, who is very friendly with John, and with whom he has been known to exchange bits of candy wrapped up in paper, and for whom he cut in two his lead-pencil, and gave her half. At the last day of school she goes part way with John, and then he turns and goes a longer distance towards her home, so that it is late when he reaches his own. Is he late? He did n't know he was late; he came straight home when school was dismissed, only going a little way home with Alice Linton to help her carry her books. In a box in his chamber, which he has lately put a padlock on, among fishhooks and lines and baitboxes, odd pieces of brass, twine, early sweet apples, pop-corn, beechnuts, and other articles of value, are some little billets-doux, fancifully folded, three-cornered or otherwise, and written, I will warrant, in red or beautifully blue ink. These little notes are parting gifts at the close of school, and John, no doubt, gave his own in exchange for them, though the writing was an immense labor, and the folding was a secret bought of another boy for a big piece of sweet flag-root baked in sugar, a delicacy which John used to carry in his pantaloons-pocket until his pocket was in such a state that putting his fingers into it was about as good as dipping them into the sugar-bowl at home. Each precious note contained a lock or curl of girl's hair,--a rare collection of all colors, after John had been in school many terms, and had passed through a great many parting scenes,--black, brown, red, tow-color, and some that looked like spun gold and felt like silk. The sentiment contained in the notes was that which was common in the school, and expressed a melancholy foreboding of early death, and a touching desire to leave hair enough this side the grave to constitute a sort of strand of remembrance. With little variation, the poetry that made the hair precious was in the words, and, as a Cockney would say, set to the hair, following:

"This lock of hair,
Which I did wear,
Was taken from my head;
When this you see,
Remember me,
Long after I am dead."

John liked to read these verses, which always made a new and fresh impression with each lock of hair, and he was not critical; they were

for him vehicles of true sentiment, and indeed they were what he used when he inclosed a clip of his own sandy hair to a friend. And it did not occur to him) until he was a great deal older and less innocent, to smile at them. John felt that he would sacredly keep every lock of hair intrusted to him, though death should come on the wings of cholera and take away every one of these sad, red-ink correspondents. When John's big brother one day caught sight of these treasures, and brutally told him that he "had hair enough to stuff a horse-collar," John was so outraged and shocked, as he should have been, at this rude invasion of his heart, this coarse suggestion, this profiination of his most delicate feeling, that he was kept from crying only by the resolution to "lick" his brother as soon as ever he got big enough.

VIII

THE COMING OF THANKSGIVING

One of the best things in farming is gathering the chestnuts, hickory-nuts, butternuts, and even beechnuts, in the late fall, after the frosts have cracked the husks and the high winds have shaken them, and the colored leaves have strewn the ground. On a bright October day, when the air is full of golden sunshine, there is nothing quite so exhilarating as going nutting. Nor is the pleasure of it altogether destroyed for the boy by the consideration that he is making himself useful in obtaining supplies for the winter household. The getting-in of potatoes and corn is a different thing; that is the prose, but nutting is the poetry, of farm life. I am not sure but the boy would find it very irksome, though, if he were obliged to work at nut-gathering in order to procure food for the family. He is willing to make himself useful in his own way. The Italian boy, who works day after day at a huge pile of pine-cones, pounding and cracking them and taking out the long seeds, which are sold and eaten as we eat nuts (and which are almost as good as pumpkin-seeds, another favorite with the Italians), probably does not see the fun of nutting. Indeed, if the farmer-boy here were set at pounding off the walnut-shucks and opening the prickly chestnut-burs as a task, he would think himself an ill-used boy. What a hardship the prickles in his fingers would be! But now he digs them out with his jack-knife, and enjoys the process, on the whole. The boy is willing to do any amount of work if it is called play.

In nutting, the squirrel is not more nimble and industrious than the boy. I like to see a crowd of boys swarm over a chestnut-grove; they leave a desert behind them like the seventeen-year locusts. To climb a tree and shake it, to club it, to strip it of its fruit, and pass to the next, is the sport of a brief time. I have seen a legion of boys scamper over our grass-plot under the chestnut-trees, each one as active as if he were a new patent picking-machine, sweeping the ground clean of nuts, and disappear over the hill before I could go

to the door and speak to them about it. Indeed, I have noticed that boys don't care much for conversation with the owners of fruit-trees. They could speedily make their fortunes if they would work as rapidly in cotton-fields. I have never seen anything like it, except a flock of turkeys removing the grasshoppers from a piece of pasture.

Perhaps it is not generally known that we get the idea of some of our best military maneuvers from the turkey. The deploying of the skirmish-line in advance of an army is one of them. The drum-major of our holiday militia companies is copied exactly from the turkey gobbler; he has the same splendid appearance, the same proud step, and the same martial aspect. The gobbler does not lead his forces in the field, but goes behind them, like the colonel of a regiment, so that he can see every part of the line and direct its movements. This resemblance is one of the most singular things in natural history. I like to watch the gobbler maneuvering his forces in a grasshopper-field. He throws out his company of two dozen turkeys in a crescent-shaped skirmish-line, the number disposed at equal distances, while he walks majestically in the rear. They advance rapidly, picking right and left, with military precision, killing the foe and disposing of the dead bodies with the same peck. Nobody has yet discovered how many grasshoppers a turkey will hold; but he is very much like a boy at a Thanksgiving dinner,--he keeps on eating as long as the supplies last. The gobbler, in one of these raids, does not condescend to grab a single grasshopper,--at least, not while anybody is watching him. But I suppose he makes up for it when his dignity cannot be injured by having spectators of his voracity; perhaps he falls upon the grasshoppers when they are driven into a corner of the field. But he is only fattening himself for destruction; like all greedy persons, he comes to a bad end. And if the turkeys had any Sunday-school, they would be taught this.

The New England boy used to look forward to Thanksgiving as the great event of the year. He was apt to get stents set him,--so much corn to husk, for instance, before that day, so that he could have an extra play-spell; and in order to gain a day or two, he would work at his task with the rapidity of half a dozen boys. He always had the day after Thanksgiving as a holiday, and this was the day he counted on. Thanksgiving itself was rather an awful festival,--very much like Sunday, except for the enormous dinner, which filled his imagination for months before as completely as it did his stomach for that day and a week after. There was an impression in the house that that dinner was the most important event since the landing from the Mayflower. Heliogabalus, who did not resemble a Pilgrim Father at all, but who had prepared for himself in his day some very sumptuous banquets in Rome, and ate a great deal of the best he could get (and liked peacocks stuffed with asafetida, for one thing), never had anything like a Thanksgiving dinner; for do you suppose that he, or Sardanapalus either, ever had twenty-four different kinds of pie at one dinner? Therein many a New England boy is greater than the Roman emperor or the Assyrian king, and these were among the most luxurious eaters of their day and generation. But something more is necessary to make good men than plenty to eat, as Heliogabalus no doubt found

when his head was cut off. Cutting off the head was a mode the people had of expressing disapproval of their conspicuous men. Nowadays they elect them to a higher office, or give them a mission to some foreign country, if they do not do well where they are.

For days and days before Thanksgiving the boy was kept at work evenings, pounding and paring and cutting up and mixing (not being allowed to taste much), until the world seemed to him to be made of fragrant spices, green fruit, raisins, and pastry,--a world that he was only yet allowed to enjoy through his nose. How filled the house was with the most delicious smells! The mince-pies that were made! If John had been shut in solid walls with them piled about him, he could n't have eaten his way out in four weeks. There were dainties enough cooked in those two weeks to have made the entire year luscious with good living, if they had been scattered along in it. But people were probably all the better for scrimping themselves a little in order to make this a great feast. And it was not by any means over in a day. There were weeks deep of chicken-pie and other pastry. The cold buttery was a cave of Aladdin, and it took a long time to excavate all its riches.

Thanksgiving Day itself was a heavy day, the hilarity of it being so subdued by going to meeting, and the universal wearing of the Sunday clothes, that the boy could n't see it. But if he felt little exhilaration, he ate a great deal. The next day was the real holiday. Then were the merry-making parties, and perhaps the skatings and sleigh-rides, for the freezing weather came before the governor's proclamation in many parts of New England. The night after Thanksgiving occurred, perhaps, the first real party that the boy had ever attended, with live girls in it, dressed so bewitchingly. And there he heard those philandering songs, and played those sweet games of forfeits, which put him quite beside himself, and kept him awake that night till the rooster crowed at the end of his first chicken-nap. What a new world did that party open to him! I think it likely that he saw there, and probably did not dare say ten words to, some tall, graceful girl, much older than himself, who seemed to him like a new order of being. He could see her face just as plainly in the darkness of his chamber. He wondered if she noticed how awkward he was, and how short his trousers-legs were. He blushed as he thought of his rather ill-fitting shoes; and determined, then and there, that he wouldn't be put off with a ribbon any longer, but would have a young man's necktie. It was somewhat painful, thinking the party over, but it was delicious, too. He did not think, probably, that he would die for that tall, handsome girl; he did not put it exactly in that way. But he rather resolved to live for her, which might in the end amount to the same thing. At least, he thought that nobody would live to speak twice disrespectfully of her in his presence.

THE SEASON OF PUMPKIN-PIE

What John said was, that he did n't care much for pumpkin-pie; but that was after he had eaten a whole one. It seemed to him then that mince would be better.

The feeling of a boy towards pumpkin-pie has never been properly considered. There is an air of festivity about its approach in the fall. The boy is willing to help pare and cut up the pumpkin, and he watches with the greatest interest the stirring-up process and the pouring into the scalloped crust. When the sweet savor of the baking reaches his nostrils, he is filled with the most delightful anticipations. Why should he not be? He knows that for months to come the buttery will contain golden treasures, and that it will require only a slight ingenuity to get at them.

The fact is, that the boy is as good in the buttery as in any part of farming. His elders say that the boy is always hungry; but that is a very coarse way to put it. He has only recently come into a world that is full of good things to eat, and there is, on the whole, a very short time in which to eat them; at least, he is told, among the first information he receives, that life is short. Life being brief, and pie and the like fleeting, he very soon decides upon an active campaign. It may be an old story to people who have been eating for forty or fifty years, but it is different with a beginner. He takes the thick and thin as it comes, as to pie, for instance. Some people do make them very thin. I knew a place where they were not thicker than the poor man's plaster; they were spread so thin upon the crust that they were better fitted to draw out hunger than to satisfy it. They used to be made up by the great oven-full and kept in the dry cellar, where they hardened and dried to a toughness you would hardly believe. This was a long time ago, and they make the pumpkin-pie in the country better now, or the race of boys would have been so discouraged that I think they would have stopped coming into the world.

The truth is, that boys have always been so plenty that they are not half appreciated. We have shown that a farm could not get along without them, and yet their rights are seldom recognized. One of the most amusing things is their effort to acquire personal property. The boy has the care of the calves; they always need feeding, or shutting up, or letting out; when the boy wants to play, there are those calves to be looked after,--until he gets to hate the name of calf. But in consideration of his faithfulness, two of them are given to him. There is no doubt that they are his: he has the entire charge of them. When they get to be steers he spends all his holidays in breaking them in to a yoke. He gets them so broken in that they will run like a pair of deer all over the farm, turning the yoke, and kicking their heels, while he follows in full chase, shouting the ox language till he is red in the face. When the steers grow up to be cattle, a drover one day comes along and takes them away, and the boy is told that he can have another pair of calves;

and so, with undiminished faith, he goes back and begins over again to make his fortune. He owns lambs and young colts in the same way, and makes just as much out of them.

There are ways in which the farmer-boy can earn money, as by gathering the early chestnuts and taking them to the corner store, or by finding turkeys' eggs and selling them to his mother; and another way is to go without butter at the table--but the money thus made is for the heathen. John read in Dr. Livingstone that some of the tribes in Central Africa (which is represented by a blank spot in the atlas) use the butter to grease their hair, putting on pounds of it at a time; and he said he had rather eat his butter than have it put to that use, especially as it melted away so fast in that hot climate.

Of course it was explained to John that the missionaries do not actually carry butter to Africa, and that they must usually go without it themselves there, it being almost impossible to make it good from the milk in the cocoanuts. And it was further explained to him that even if the heathen never received his butter or the money for it, it was an excellent thing for a boy to cultivate the habit of self-denial and of benevolence, and if the heathen never heard of him, he would be blessed for his generosity. This was all true.

But John said that he was tired of supporting the heathen out of his butter, and he wished the rest of the family would also stop eating butter and save the money for missions; and he wanted to know where the other members of the family got their money to send to the heathen; and his mother said that he was about half right, and that self-denial was just as good for grown people as it was for little boys and girls.

The boy is not always slow to take what he considers his rights. Speaking of those thin pumpkin-pies kept in the cellar cupboard. I used to know a boy, who afterwards grew to be a selectman, and brushed his hair straight up like General Jackson, and went to the legislature, where he always voted against every measure that was proposed, in the most honest manner, and got the reputation of being the "watch-dog of the treasury." Rats in the cellar were nothing to be compared to this boy for destructiveness in pies. He used to go down whenever he could make an excuse, to get apples for the family, or draw a mug of cider for his dear old grandfather (who was a famous story-teller about the Revolutionary War, and would no doubt have been wounded in battle if he had not been as prudent as he was patriotic), and come upstairs with a tallow candle in one hand and the apples or cider in the other, looking as innocent and as unconscious as if he had never done anything in his life except deny himself butter for the sake of the heathen. And yet this boy would have buttoned under his jacket an entire round pumpkin-pie. And the pie was so well made and so dry that it was not injured in the least, and it never hurt the boy's clothes a bit more than if it had been inside of him instead of outside; and this boy would retire to a secluded place and eat it with another boy, being never suspected

because he was not in the cellar long enough to eat a pie, and he never appeared to have one about him. But he did something worse than this. When his mother saw that pie after pie departed, she told the family that she suspected the hired man; and the boy never said a word, which was the meanest kind of lying. That hired man was probably regarded with suspicion by the family to the end of his days, and if he had been accused of robbing, they would have believed him guilty.

I shouldn't wonder if that selectman occasionally has remorse now about that pie; dreams, perhaps, that it is buttoned up under his jacket and sticking to him like a breastplate; that it lies upon his stomach like a round and red-hot nightmare, eating into his vitals. Perhaps not. It is difficult to say exactly what was the sin of stealing that kind of pie, especially if the one who stole it ate it. It could have been used for the game of pitching quoits, and a pair of them would have made very fair wheels for the dog-cart. And yet it is probably as wrong to steal a thin pie as a thick one; and it made no difference because it was easy to steal this sort. Easy stealing is no better than easy lying, where detection of the lie is difficult. The boy who steals his mother's pies has no right to be surprised when some other boy steals his watermelons. Stealing is like charity in one respect,--it is apt to begin at home.

X

FIRST EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD

If I were forced to be a boy, and a boy in the country,--the best kind of boy to be in the summer,--I would be about ten years of age. As soon as I got any older, I would quit it. The trouble with a boy is, that just as he begins to enjoy himself he is too old, and has to be set to doing something else. If a country boy were wise, he would stay at just that age when he could enjoy himself most, and have the least expected of him in the way of work.

Of course the perfectly good boy will always prefer to work and to do "chores" for his father and errands for his mother and sisters, rather than enjoy himself in his own way. I never saw but one such boy. He lived in the town of Goshen,--not the place where the butter is made, but a much better Goshen than that. And I never saw him, but I heard of him; and being about the same age, as I supposed, I was taken once from Zoah, where I lived, to Goshen to see him. But he was dead. He had been dead almost a year, so that it was impossible to see him. He died of the most singular disease: it was from not eating green apples in the season of them. This boy, whose name was Solomon, before he died, would rather split up kindling-wood for his mother than go a-fishing,--the consequence was, that he was kept at splitting kindling-wood and such work most of the time, and grew a better and more useful boy day by day. Solomon would not

disobey his parents and eat green apples,--not even when they were ripe enough to knock off with a stick, but he had such a longing for them, that he pined, and passed away. If he had eaten the green apples, he would have died of them, probably; so that his example is a difficult one to follow. In fact, a boy is a hard subject to get a moral from. All his little playmates who ate green apples came to Solomon's funeral, and were very sorry for what they had done.

John was a very different boy from Solomon, not half so good, nor half so dead. He was a farmer's boy, as Solomon was, but he did not take so much interest in the farm. If John could have had his way, he would have discovered a cave full of diamonds, and lots of nail-kegs full of gold-pieces and Spanish dollars, with a pretty little girl living in the cave, and two beautifully caparisoned horses, upon which, taking the jewels and money, they would have ridden off together, he did not know where. John had got thus far in his studies, which were apparently arithmetic and geography, but were in reality the Arabian Nights, and other books of high and mighty adventure. He was a simple country-boy, and did not know much about the world as it is, but he had one of his own imagination, in which he lived a good deal. I daresay he found out soon enough what the world is, and he had a lesson or two when he was quite young, in two incidents, which I may as well relate.

If you had seen John at this time, you might have thought he was only a shabbily dressed country lad, and you never would have guessed what beautiful thoughts he sometimes had as he went stubbing his toes along the dusty road, nor what a chivalrous little fellow he was. You would have seen a short boy, barefooted, with trousers at once too big and too short, held up perhaps by one suspender only, a checked cotton shirt, and a hat of braided palm-leaf, frayed at the edges and bulged up in the crown. It is impossible to keep a hat neat if you use it to catch bumblebees and whisk 'em; to bail the water from a leaky boat; to catch minnows in; to put over honey-bees' nests, and to transport pebbles, strawberries, and hens' eggs. John usually carried a sling in his hand, or a bow, or a limber stick, sharp at one end, from which he could sling apples a great distance. If he walked in the road, he walked in the middle of it, shuffling up the dust; or if he went elsewhere, he was likely to be running on the top of the fence or the stone wall, and chasing chipmunks.

John knew the best place to dig sweet-flag in all the farm; it was in a meadow by the river, where the bobolinks sang so gayly. He never liked to hear the bobolink sing, however, for he said it always reminded him of the whetting of a scythe, and that reminded him of spreading hay; and if there was anything he hated, it was spreading hay after the mowers. "I guess you would n't like it yourself," said John, "with the stubbs getting into your feet, and the hot sun, and the men getting ahead of you, all you could do."

Towards evening, once, John was coming along the road home with some stalks of the sweet-flag in his hand; there is a succulent pith in the end of the stalk which is very good to eat,--tender, and not so

strong as the root; and John liked to pull it, and carry home what he did not eat on the way. As he was walking along he met a carriage, which stopped opposite to him; he also stopped and bowed, as country boys used to bow in John's day. A lady leaned from the carriage, and said:

"What have you got, little boy?"

She seemed to be the most beautiful woman John had ever seen; with light hair, dark, tender eyes, and the sweetest smile. There was that in her gracious mien and in her dress which reminded John of the beautiful castle ladies, with whom he was well acquainted in books. He felt that he knew her at once, and he also seemed to be a sort of young prince himself. I fancy he did n't look much like one. But of his own appearance he thought not at all, as he replied to the lady's question, without the least embarrassment:

"It's sweet-flag stalk; would you like some?"

"Indeed, I should like to taste it," said the lady, with a most winning smile. "I used to be very fond of it when I was a little girl."

John was delighted that the lady should like sweet-flag, and that she was pleased to accept it from him. He thought himself that it was about the best thing to eat he knew. He handed up a large bunch of it. The lady took two or three stalks, and was about to return the rest, when John said:

"Please keep it all, ma'am. I can get lots more."

"I know where it's ever so thick."

"Thank you, thank you," said the lady; and as the carriage started, she reached out her hand to John. He did not understand the motion, until he saw a cent drop in the road at his feet. Instantly all his illusion and his pleasure vanished. Something like tears were in his eyes as he shouted:

"I don't want your cent. I don't sell flag!"

John was intensely mortified. "I suppose," he said, "she thought I was a sort of beggar-boy. To think of selling flag!"

At any rate, he walked away and left the cent in the road, a humiliated boy. The next day he told Jim Gates about it. Jim said he was green not to take the money; he'd go and look for it now, if he would tell him about where it dropped. And Jim did spend an hour poking about in the dirt, but he did not find the cent. Jim, however, had an idea; he said he was going to dig sweet-flag, and see if another carriage wouldn't come along.

John's next rebuff and knowledge of the world was of another sort.

He was again walking the road at twilight, when he was overtaken by a wagon with one seat, upon which were two pretty girls, and a young gentleman sat between them, driving. It was a merry party, and John could hear them laughing and singing as they approached him. The wagon stopped when it overtook him, and one of the sweet-faced girls leaned from the seat and said, quite seriously and pleasantly:

"Little boy, how's your mar?"

John was surprised and puzzled for a moment. He had never seen the young lady, but he thought that she perhaps knew his mother; at any rate, his instinct of politeness made him say:

"She's pretty well, I thank you."

"Does she know you are out?"

And thereupon all three in the wagon burst into a roar of laughter, and dashed on.

It flashed upon John in a moment that he had been imposed on, and it hurt him dreadfully. His self-respect was injured somehow, and he felt as if his lovely, gentle mother had been insulted. He would like to have thrown a stone at the wagon, and in a rage he cried:

"You're a nice..." but he could n't think of any hard, bitter words quick enough.

Probably the young lady, who might have been almost any young lady, never knew what a cruel thing she had done.

XI

HOME INVENTIONS

The winter season is not all sliding downhill for the farmer-boy, by any means; yet he contrives to get as much fun out of it as from any part of the year. There is a difference in boys: some are always jolly, and some go scowling always through life as if they had a stone-bruise on each heel. I like a jolly boy.

I used to know one who came round every morning to sell molasses candy, offering two sticks for a cent apiece; it was worth fifty cents a day to see his cheery face. That boy rose in the world. He is now the owner of a large town at the West. To be sure, there are no houses in it except his own; but there is a map of it, and roads and streets are laid out on it, with dwellings and churches and academies and a college and an opera-house, and you could scarcely tell it from Springfield or Hartford,--on paper. He and all his family have the fever and ague, and shake worse than the people at

Lebanon; but they do not mind it; it makes them lively, in fact. Ed May is just as jolly as he used to be. He calls his town Mayopolis, and expects to be mayor of it; his wife, however, calls the town Maybe.

The farmer-boy likes to have winter come for one thing, because it freezes up the ground so that he can't dig in it; and it is covered with snow so that there is no picking up stones, nor driving the cows to pasture. He would have a very easy time if it were not for the getting up before daylight to build the fires and do the "chores." Nature intended the long winter nights for the farmer-boy to sleep; but in my day he was expected to open his sleepy eyes when the cock crew, get out of the warm bed and light a candle, struggle into his cold pantaloons, and pull on boots in which the thermometer would have gone down to zero, rake open the coals on the hearth and start the morning fire, and then go to the barn to "fodder." The frost was thick on the kitchen windows, the snow was drifted against the door, and the journey to the barn, in the pale light of dawn, over the creaking snow, was like an exile's trip to Siberia. The boy was not half awake when he stumbled into the cold barn, and was greeted by the lowing and bleating and neighing of cattle waiting for their breakfast. How their breath steamed up from the mangers, and hung in frosty spears from their noses. Through the great lofts above the hay, where the swallows nested, the winter wind whistled, and the snow sifted. Those old barns were well ventilated.

I used to spend much valuable time in planning a barn that should be tight and warm, with a fire in it, if necessary, in order to keep the temperature somewhere near the freezing-point. I could n't see how the cattle could live in a place where a lively boy, full of young blood, would freeze to death in a short time if he did not swing his arms and slap his hands, and jump about like a goat. I thought I would have a sort of perpetual manger that should shake down the hay when it was wanted, and a self-acting machine that should cut up the turnips and pass them into the mangers, and water always flowing for the cattle and horses to drink. With these simple arrangements I could lie in bed, and know that the "chores" were doing themselves. It would also be necessary, in order that I should not be disturbed, that the crow should be taken out of the roosters, but I could think of no process to do it. It seems to me that the hen-breeders, if they know as much as they say they do, might raise a breed of crowless roosters for the benefit of boys, quiet neighborhoods, and sleepy families.

There was another notion that I had about kindling the kitchen fire, that I never carried out. It was to have a spring at the head of my bed, connecting with a wire, which should run to a torpedo which I would plant over night in the ashes of the fireplace. By touching the spring I could explode the torpedo, which would scatter the ashes and cover the live coals, and at the same time shake down the sticks of wood which were standing by the side of the ashes in the chimney, and the fire would kindle itself. This ingenious plan was frowned on by the whole family, who said they did not want to be waked up every

morning by an explosion. And yet they expected me to wake up without an explosion! A boy's plans for making life agreeable are hardly ever heeded.

I never knew a boy farmer who was not eager to go to the district school in the winter. There is such a chance for learning, that he must be a dull boy who does not come out in the spring a fair skater, an accurate snow-baller, and an accomplished slider-down-hill, with or without a board, on his seat, on his stomach, or on his feet. Take a moderate hill, with a foot-slide down it worn to icy smoothness, and a "go-round" of boys on it, and there is nothing like it for whittling away boot-leather. The boy is the shoemaker's friend. An active lad can wear down a pair of cowhide soles in a week so that the ice will scrape his toes. Sledding or coasting is also slow fun compared to the "bareback" sliding down a steep hill over a hard, glistening crust. It is not only dangerous, but it is destructive to jacket and pantaloons to a degree to make a tailor laugh. If any other animal wore out his skin as fast as a schoolboy wears out his clothes in winter, it would need a new one once a month. In a country district-school patches were not by any means a sign of poverty, but of the boy's courage and adventurous disposition. Our elders used to threaten to dress us in leather and put sheet-iron seats in our trousers. The boy said that he wore out his trousers on the hard seats in the schoolhouse ciphering hard sums. For that extraordinary statement he received two castigations,--one at home, that was mild, and one from the schoolmaster, who was careful to lay the rod upon the boy's sliding-place, punishing him, as he jocosely called it, on a sliding scale, according to the thinness of his pantaloons.

What I liked best at school, however, was the study of history,--early history,--the Indian wars. We studied it mostly at noontime, and we had it illustrated as the children nowadays have "object-lessons," though our object was not so much to have lessons as it was to revive real history.

Back of the schoolhouse rose a round hill, upon which, tradition said, had stood in colonial times a block-house, built by the settlers for defense against the Indians. For the Indians had the idea that the whites were not settled enough, and used to come nights to settle--them with a tomahawk. It was called Fort Hill. It was very steep on each side, and the river ran close by. It was a charming place in summer, where one could find laurel, and checkerberries, and sassafras roots, and sit in the cool breeze, looking at the mountains across the river, and listening to the murmur of the Deerfield. The Methodists built a meeting-house there afterwards, but the hill was so slippery in winter that the aged could not climb it and the wind raged so fiercely that it blew nearly all the young Methodists away (many of whom were afterwards heard of in the West), and finally the meeting-house itself came down into the valley, and grew a steeple, and enjoyed itself ever afterwards. It used to be a notion in New England that a meeting-house ought to stand as near heaven as possible.

The boys at our school divided themselves into two parties: one was the Early Settlers and the other the Pequots, the latter the most numerous. The Early Settlers built a snow fort on the hill, and a strong fortress it was, constructed of snowballs, rolled up to a vast size (larger than the cyclopean blocks of stone which form the ancient Etruscan walls in Italy), piled one upon another, and the whole cemented by pouring on water which froze and made the walls solid. The Pequots helped the whites build it. It had a covered way under the snow, through which only could it be entered, and it had bastions and towers and openings to fire from, and a great many other things for which there are no names in military books. And it had a glacis and a ditch outside.

When it was completed, the Early Settlers, leaving the women in the schoolhouse, a prey to the Indians, used to retire into it, and await the attack of the Pequots. There was only a handful of the garrison, while the Indians were many, and also barbarous. It was agreed that they should be barbarous. And it was in this light that the great question was settled whether a boy might snowball with balls that he had soaked over night in water and let freeze. They were as hard as cobble-stones, and if a boy should be hit in the head by one of them, he could not tell whether he was a Pequot or an Early Settler. It was considered as unfair to use these ice-balls in open fight, as it is to use poisoned ammunition in real war. But as the whites were protected by the fort, and the Indians were treacherous by nature, it was decided that the latter might use the hard missiles.

The Pequots used to come swarming up the hill, with hideous war-whoops, attacking the fort on all sides with great noise and a shower of balls. The garrison replied with yells of defiance and well-directed shots, hurling back the invaders when they attempted to scale the walls. The Settlers had the advantage of position, but they were sometimes overpowered by numbers, and would often have had to surrender but for the ringing of the school-bell. The Pequots were in great fear of the school-bell.

I do not remember that the whites ever hauled down their flag and surrendered voluntarily; but once or twice the fort was carried by storm and the garrison were massacred to a boy, and thrown out of the fortress, having been first scalped. To take a boy's cap was to scalp him, and after that he was dead, if he played fair. There were a great many hard hits given and taken, but always cheerfully, for it was in the cause of our early history. The history of Greece and Rome was stuff compared to this. And we had many boys in our school who could imitate the Indian war whoop enough better than they could scan arma, virumque cano.

THE LONELY FARMHOUSE

The winter evenings of the farmer-boy in New England used not to be so gay as to tire him of the pleasures of life before he became of age. A remote farmhouse, standing a little off the road, banked up with sawdust and earth to keep the frost out of the cellar, blockaded with snow, and flying a blue flag of smoke from its chimney, looks like a besieged fort. On cold and stormy winter nights, to the traveler wearily dragging along in his creaking sleigh, the light from its windows suggests a house of refuge and the cheer of a blazing fire. But it is no less a fort, into which the family retire when the New England winter on the hills really sets in.

The boy is an important part of the garrison. He is not only one of the best means of communicating with the outer world, but he furnishes half the entertainment and takes two thirds of the scolding of the family circle. A farm would come to grief without a boy-on it, but it is impossible to think of a farmhouse without a boy in it.

"That boy" brings life into the house; his tracks are to be seen everywhere; he leaves all the doors open; he has n't half filled the wood-box; he makes noise enough to wake the dead; or he is in a brown-study by the fire and cannot be stirred, or he has fastened a grip into some Crusoe book which cannot easily be shaken off. I suppose that the farmer-boy's evenings are not now what they used to be; that he has more books, and less to do, and is not half so good a boy as formerly, when he used to think the almanac was pretty lively reading, and the comic almanac, if he could get hold of that, was a supreme delight.

Of course he had the evenings to himself, after he had done the "chores" at the barn, brought in the wood and piled it high in the box, ready to be heaped upon the great open fire. It was nearly dark when he came from school (with its continuation of snowballing and sliding), and he always had an agreeable time stumbling and fumbling around in barn and wood-house, in the waning light.

John used to say that he supposed nobody would do his "chores" if he did not get home till midnight; and he was never contradicted. Whatever happened to him, and whatever length of days or sort of weather was produced by the almanac, the cardinal rule was that he should be at home before dark.

John used to imagine what people did in the dark ages, and wonder sometimes whether he was n't still in them.

Of course, John had nothing to do all the evening, after his "chores,"--except little things. While he drew his chair up to the table in order to get the full radiance of the tallow candle on his slate or his book, the women of the house also sat by the table knitting and sewing. The head of the house sat in his chair, tipped back against the chimney; the hired man was in danger of burning his boots in the fire. John might be deep in the excitement of a bear

story, or be hard at writing a "composition" on his greasy slate; but whatever he was doing, he was the only one who could always be interrupted. It was he who must snuff the candles, and put on a stick of wood, and toast the cheese, and turn the apples, and crack the nuts. He knew where the fox-and-geese board was, and he could find the twelve-men-Morris. Considering that he was expected to go to bed at eight o'clock, one would say that the opportunity for study was not great, and that his reading was rather interrupted. There seemed to be always something for him to do, even when all the rest of the family came as near being idle as is ever possible in a New England household.

No wonder that John was not sleepy at eight o'clock; he had been flying about while the others had been yawning before the fire. He would like to sit up just to see how much more solemn and stupid it would become as the night went on; he wanted to tinker his skates, to mend his sled, to finish that chapter. Why should he go away from that bright blaze, and the company that sat in its radiance, to the cold and solitude of his chamber? Why did n't the people who were sleepy go to bed?

How lonesome the old house was; how cold it was, away from that great central fire in the heart of it; how its timbers creaked as if in the contracting pinch of the frost; what a rattling there was of windows, what a concerted attack upon the clapboards; how the floors squeaked, and what gusts from round corners came to snatch the feeble flame of the candle from the boy's hand. How he shivered, as he paused at the staircase window to look out upon the great fields of snow, upon the stripped forest, through which he could hear the wind raving in a kind of fury, and up at the black flying clouds, amid which the young moon was dashing and driven on like a frail shallop at sea. And his teeth chattered more than ever when he got into the icy sheets, and drew himself up into a ball in his flannel nightgown, like a fox in his hole.

For a little time he could hear the noises downstairs, and an occasional laugh; he could guess that now they were having cider, and now apples were going round; and he could feel the wind tugging at the house, even sometimes shaking the bed. But this did not last long. He soon went away into a country he always delighted to be in: a calm place where the wind never blew, and no one dictated the time of going to bed to any one else. I like to think of him sleeping there, in such rude surroundings, ingenious, innocent, mischievous, with no thought of the buffeting he is to get from a world that has a good many worse places for a boy than the hearth of an old farmhouse, and the sweet, though undemonstrative, affection of its family life.

But there were other evenings in the boy's life, that were different from these at home, and one of them he will never forget. It opened a new world to John, and set him into a great flutter. It produced a revolution in his mind in regard to neckties; it made him wonder if greased boots were quite the thing compared with blacked boots; and he wished he had a long looking-glass, so that he could see, as he

walked away from it, what was the effect of round patches on the portion of his trousers he could not see, except in a mirror; and if patches were quite stylish, even on everyday trousers. And he began to be very much troubled about the parting of his hair, and how to find out on which side was the natural part.

The evening to which I refer was that of John's first party. He knew the girls at school, and he was interested in some of them with a different interest from that he took in the boys. He never wanted to "take it out" with one of them, for an insult, in a stand-up fight, and he instinctively softened a boy's natural rudeness when he was with them. He would help a timid little girl to stand erect and slide; he would draw her on his sled, till his hands were stiff with cold, without a murmur; he would generously give her red apples into which he longed to set his own sharp teeth; and he would cut in two his lead-pencil for a girl, when he would not for a boy. Had he not some of the beautiful auburn tresses of Cynthia Rudd in his skate, spruce-gum, and wintergreen box at home? And yet the grand sentiment of life was little awakened in John. He liked best to be with boys, and their rough play suited him better than the amusements of the shrinking, fluttering, timid, and sensitive little girls. John had not learned then that a spider-web is stronger than a cable; or that a pretty little girl could turn him round her finger a great deal easier than a big bully of a boy could make him cry "enough."

John had indeed been at spelling-schools, and had accomplished the feat of "going home with a girl" afterwards; and he had been growing into the habit of looking around in meeting on Sunday, and noticing how Cynthia was dressed, and not enjoying the service quite as much if Cynthia was absent as when she was present. But there was very little sentiment in all this, and nothing whatever to make John blush at hearing her name.

But now John was invited to a regular party. There was the invitation., in a three-cornered billet, sealed with a transparent wafer: "Miss C. Rudd requests the pleasure of the company of," etc., all in blue ink, and the finest kind of pin-scratching writing. What a precious document it was to John! It even exhaled a faint sort of perfume, whether of lavender or caraway-seed he could not tell. He read it over a hundred times, and showed it confidentially to his favorite cousin, who had beaux of her own and had even "sat up" with them in the parlor. And from this sympathetic cousin John got advice as to what he should wear and how he should conduct himself at the party.

XIII

JOHN'S FIRST PARTY

It turned out that John did not go after all to Cynthia Rudd's party,

having broken through the ice on the river when he was skating that day, and, as the boy who pulled him out said, "come within an inch of his life." But he took care not to tumble into anything that should keep him from the next party, which was given with due formality by Melinda Mayhew.

John had been many a time to the house of Deacon Mayhew, and never with any hesitation, even if he knew that both the deacon's daughters--Melinda and Sophronia were at home. The only fear he had felt was of the deacon's big dog, who always surlily watched him as he came up the tan-bark walk, and made a rush at him if he showed the least sign of wavering. But upon the night of the party his courage vanished, and he thought he would rather face all the dogs in town than knock at the front door.

The parlor was lighted up, and as John stood on the broad flagging before the front door, by the lilac-bush, he could hear the sound of voices--girls' voices--which set his heart in a flutter. He could face the whole district school of girls without flinching,--he didn't mind 'em in the meeting-house in their Sunday best; but he began to be conscious that now he was passing to a new sphere, where the girls are supreme and superior, and he began to feel for the first time that he was an awkward boy. The girl takes to society as naturally as a duckling does to the placid pond, but with a semblance of shy timidity; the boy plunges in with a great splash, and hides his shy awkwardness in noise and commotion.

When John entered, the company had nearly all come. He knew them every one, and yet there was something about them strange and unfamiliar. They were all a little afraid of each other, as people are apt to be when they are well dressed and met together for social purposes in the country. To be at a real party was a novel thing for most of them, and put a constraint upon them which they could not at once overcome. Perhaps it was because they were in the awful parlor,--that carpeted room of haircloth furniture, which was so seldom opened. Upon the wall hung two certificates framed in black,--one certifying that, by the payment of fifty dollars, Deacon Mayhew was a life member of the American Tract Society, and the other that, by a like outlay of bread cast upon the waters, his wife was a life member of the A. B. C. F. M., a portion of the alphabet which has an awful significance to all New England childhood. These certificates are a sort of receipt in full for charity, and are a constant and consoling reminder to the farmer that he has discharged his religious duties.

There was a fire on the broad hearth, and that, with the tallow candles on the mantelpiece, made quite an illumination in the room, and enabled the boys, who were mostly on one side of the room, to see the girls, who were on the other, quite plainly. How sweet and demure the girls looked, to be sure! Every boy was thinking if his hair was slick, and feeling the full embarrassment of his entrance into fashionable life. It was queer that these children, who were so free everywhere else, should be so constrained now, and not know what

to do with themselves. The shooting of a spark out upon the carpet was a great relief, and was accompanied by a deal of scrambling to throw it back into the fire, and caused much giggling. It was only gradually that the formality was at all broken, and the young people got together and found their tongues.

John at length found himself with Cynthia Rudd, to his great delight and considerable embarrassment, for Cynthia, who was older than John, never looked so pretty. To his surprise he had nothing to say to her. They had always found plenty to talk about before--but now nothing that he could think of seemed worth saying at a party.

"It is a pleasant evening," said John.

"It is quite so," replied Cynthia.

"Did you come in a cutter?" asked John anxiously.

"No; I walked on the crust, and it was perfectly lovely walking," said Cynthia, in a burst of confidence.

"Was it slippery?" continued John.

"Not very."

John hoped it would be slippery--very--when he walked home with Cynthia, as he determined to do, but he did not dare to say so, and the conversation ran aground again. John thought about his dog and his sled and his yoke of steers, but he didn't see any way to bring them into conversation. Had she read the "Swiss Family Robinson"? Only a little ways. John said it was splendid, and he would lend it to her, for which she thanked him, and said, with such a sweet expression, she should be so glad to have it from him. That was encouraging.

And then John asked Cynthia if she had seen Sally Hawkes since the husking at their house, when Sally found so many red ears; and didn't she think she was a real pretty girl.

"Yes, she was right pretty;" and Cynthia guessed that Sally knew it pretty well. But did John like the color of her eyes?

No; John didn't like the color of her eyes exactly.

"Her mouth would be well enough if she did n't laugh so much and show her teeth."

John said her mouth was her worst feature.

"Oh, no," said Cynthia warmly; "her mouth is better than her nose."

John did n't know but it was better than her nose, and he should like her looks better if her hair was n't so dreadful black.

But Cynthia, who could afford to be generous now, said she liked black hair, and she wished hers was dark. Whereupon John protested that he liked light hair--auburn hair--of all things.

And Cynthia said that Sally was a dear, good girl, and she did n't believe one word of the story that she only really found one red ear at the husking that night, and hid that and kept pulling it out as if it were a new one.

And so the conversation, once started, went on as briskly as possible about the paring-bee, and the spelling-school, and the new singing-master who was coming, and how Jack Thompson had gone to Northampton to be a clerk in a store, and how Elvira Reddington, in the geography class at school, was asked what was the capital of Massachusetts, and had answered "Northampton," and all the school laughed. John enjoyed the conversation amazingly, and he half wished that he and Cynthia were the whole of the party.

But the party had meantime got into operation, and the formality was broken up when the boys and girls had ventured out of the parlor into the more comfortable living-room, with its easy-chairs and everyday things, and even gone so far as to penetrate the kitchen in their frolic. As soon as they forgot they were a party, they began to enjoy themselves.

But the real pleasure only began with the games. The party was nothing without the games, and, indeed, it was made for the games. Very likely it was one of the timid girls who proposed to play something, and when the ice was once broken, the whole company went into the business enthusiastically. There was no dancing. We should hope not. Not in the deacon's house; not with the deacon's daughters, nor anywhere in this good Puritanic society. Dancing was a sin in itself, and no one could tell what it would lead to. But there was no reason why the boys and girls shouldn't come together and kiss each other during a whole evening occasionally. Kissing was a sign of peace, and was not at all like taking hold of hands and skipping about to the scraping of a wicked fiddle.

In the games there was a great deal of clasping hands, of going round in a circle, of passing under each other's elevated arms, of singing about my true love, and the end was kisses distributed with more or less partiality, according to the rules of the play; but, thank Heaven, there was no fiddler. John liked it all, and was quite brave about paying all the forfeits imposed on him, even to the kissing all the girls in the room; but he thought he could have amended that by kissing a few of them a good many times instead of kissing them all once.

But John was destined to have a damper put upon his enjoyment. They were playing a most fascinating game, in which they all stand in a circle and sing a philandering song, except one who is in the center of the ring, and holds a cushion. At a certain word in the song, the

one in the center throws the cushion at the feet of some one in the ring, indicating thereby the choice of a "mate" and then the two sweetly kneel upon the cushion, like two meek angels, and--and so forth. Then the chosen one takes the cushion and the delightful play goes on. It is very easy, as it will be seen, to learn how to play it. Cynthia was holding the cushion, and at the fatal word she threw it down, not before John, but in front of Ephraim Leggett. And they two kneeled, and so forth. John was astounded. He had never conceived of such perfidy in the female heart. He felt like wiping Ephraim off the face of the earth, only Ephraim was older and bigger than he. When it came his turn at length,--thanks to a plain little girl for whose admiration he did n't care a straw,--he threw the cushion down before Melinda Mayhew with all the devotion he could muster, and a dagger look at Cynthia. And Cynthia's perfidious smile only enraged him the more. John felt wronged, and worked himself up to pass a wretched evening.

When supper came, he never went near Cynthia, and busied himself in carrying different kinds of pie and cake, and red apples and cider, to the girls he liked the least. He shunned Cynthia, and when he was accidentally near her, and she asked him if he would get her a glass of cider, he rudely told her--like a goose as he was--that she had better ask Ephraim. That seemed to him very smart; but he got more and more miserable, and began to feel that he was making himself ridiculous.

Girls have a great deal more good sense in such matters than boys. Cynthia went to John, at length, and asked him simply what the matter was. John blushed, and said that nothing was the matter. Cynthia said that it wouldn't do for two people always to be together at a party; and so they made up, and John obtained permission to "see" Cynthia home.

It was after half-past nine when the great festivities at the Deacon's broke up, and John walked home with Cynthia over the shining crust and under the stars. It was mostly a silent walk, for this was also an occasion when it is difficult to find anything fit to say. And John was thinking all the way how he should bid Cynthia good-night; whether it would do and whether it wouldn't do, this not being a game, and no forfeits attaching to it. When they reached the gate, there was an awkward little pause. John said the stars were uncommonly bright. Cynthia did not deny it, but waited a minute and then turned abruptly away, with "Good-night, John!"

"Good-night, Cynthia!"

And the party was over, and Cynthia was gone, and John went home in a kind of dissatisfaction with himself.

It was long before he could go to sleep for thinking of the new world opened to him, and imagining how he would act under a hundred different circumstances, and what he would say, and what Cynthia would say; but a dream at length came, and led him away to a great

city and a brilliant house; and while he was there, he heard a loud rapping on the under floor, and saw that it was daylight.

XIV

THE SUGAR CAMP

I think there is no part of farming the boy enjoys more than the making of maple sugar; it is better than "blackberrying," and nearly as good as fishing. And one reason he likes this work is, that somebody else does the most of it. It is a sort of work in which he can appear to be very active, and yet not do much.

And it exactly suits the temperament of a real boy to be very busy about nothing. If the power, for instance, that is expended in play by a boy between the ages of eight and fourteen could be applied to some industry, we should see wonderful results. But a boy is like a galvanic battery that is not in connection with anything; he generates electricity and plays it off into the air with the most reckless prodigality. And I, for one, would n't have it otherwise. It is as much a boy's business to play off his energies into space as it is for a flower to blow, or a catbird to sing snatches of the tunes of all the other birds.

In my day maple-sugar-making used to be something between picnicking and being shipwrecked on a fertile island, where one should save from the wreck tubs and augers, and great kettles and pork, and hen's eggs and rye-and-indian bread, and begin at once to lead the sweetest life in the world. I am told that it is something different nowadays, and that there is more desire to save the sap, and make good, pure sugar, and sell it for a large price, than there used to be, and that the old fun and picturesqueness of the business are pretty much gone. I am told that it is the custom to carefully collect the sap and bring it to the house, where there are built brick arches, over which it is evaporated in shallow pans, and that pains is taken to keep the leaves, sticks, and ashes and coals out of it, and that the sugar is clarified; and that, in short, it is a money-making business, in which there is very little fun, and that the boy is not allowed to dip his paddle into the kettle of boiling sugar and lick off the delicious sirup. The prohibition may improve the sugar, but it is cruel to the boy.

As I remember the New England boy (and I am very intimate with one), he used to be on the qui vive in the spring for the sap to begin running. I think he discovered it as soon as anybody. Perhaps he knew it by a feeling of something starting in his own veins,--a sort of spring stir in his legs and arms, which tempted him to stand on his head, or throw a handspring, if he could find a spot of ground from which the snow had melted. The sap stirs early in the legs of a country-boy, and shows itself in uneasiness in the toes, which get

tired of boots, and want to come out and touch the soil just as soon as the sun has warmed it a little. The country-boy goes barefoot just as naturally as the trees burst their buds, which were packed and varnished over in the fall to keep the water and the frost out. Perhaps the boy has been out digging into the maple-trees with his jack-knife; at any rate, he is pretty sure to announce the discovery as he comes running into the house in a great state of excitement--as if he had heard a hen cackle in the barn--with "Sap's runnin'!"

And then, indeed, the stir and excitement begin. The sap-buckets, which have been stored in the garret over the wood-house, and which the boy has occasionally climbed up to look at with another boy, for they are full of sweet suggestions of the annual spring frolic--the sap-buckets are brought down and set out on the south side of the house and scalded. The snow is still a foot or two deep in the woods, and the ox-sled is got out to make a road to the sugar camp, and the campaign begins. The boy is everywhere present, superintending everything, asking questions, and filled with a desire to help the excitement.

It is a great day when the cart is loaded with the buckets and the procession starts into the woods. The sun shines almost unobstructedly into the forest, for there are only naked branches to bar it; the snow is soft and beginning to sink down, leaving the young bushes spindling up everywhere; the snowbirds are twittering about, and the noise of shouting and of the blows of the axe echoes far and wide. This is spring, and the boy can scarcely contain his delight that his out-door life is about to begin again.

In the first place, the men go about and tap the trees, drive in the spouts, and hang the buckets under. The boy watches all these operations with the greatest interest. He wishes that sometime, when a hole is bored in a tree, the sap would spout out in a stream as it does when a cider-barrel is tapped; but it never does, it only drops, sometimes almost in a stream, but on the whole slowly, and the boy learns that the sweet things of the world have to be patiently waited for, and do not usually come otherwise than drop by drop.

Then the camp is to be cleared of snow. The shanty is re-covered with boughs. In front of it two enormous logs are rolled nearly together, and a fire is built between them. Forked sticks are set at each end, and a long pole is laid on them, and on this are hung the great caldron kettles. The huge hogsheads are turned right side up, and cleaned out to receive the sap that is gathered. And now, if there is a good "sap run," the establishment is under full headway.

The great fire that is kindled up is never let out, night or day, as long as the season lasts. Somebody is always cutting wood to feed it; somebody is busy most of the time gathering in the sap; somebody is required to watch the kettles that they do not boil over, and to fill them. It is not the boy, however; he is too busy with things in general to be of any use in details. He has his own little sap-yoke and small pails, with which he gathers the sweet liquid. He has a

little boiling-place of his own, with small logs and a tiny kettle. In the great kettles the boiling goes on slowly, and the liquid, as it thickens, is dipped from one to another, until in the end kettle it is reduced to sirup, and is taken out to cool and settle, until enough is made to "sugar off." To "sugar off" is to boil the sirup until it is thick enough to crystallize into sugar. This is the grand event, and is done only once in two or three days.

But the boy's desire is to "sugar off" perpetually. He boils his kettle down as rapidly as possible; he is not particular about chips, scum, or ashes; he is apt to burn his sugar; but if he can get enough to make a little wax on the snow, or to scrape from the bottom of the kettle with his wooden paddle, he is happy. A good deal is wasted on his hands, and the outside of his face, and on his clothes, but he does not care; he is not stingy.

To watch the operations of the big fire gives him constant pleasure. Sometimes he is left to watch the boiling kettles, with a piece of pork tied on the end of a stick, which he dips into the boiling mass when it threatens to go over. He is constantly tasting of it, however, to see if it is not almost sirup. He has a long round stick, whittled smooth at one end, which he uses for this purpose, at the constant risk of burning his tongue. The smoke blows in his face; he is grimy with ashes; he is altogether such a mass of dirt, stickiness, and sweetness, that his own mother would n't know him.

He likes to boil eggs in the hot sap with the hired man; he likes to roast potatoes in the ashes, and he would live in the camp day and night if he were permitted. Some of the hired men sleep in the bough shanty and keep the fire blazing all night. To sleep there with them, and awake in the night and hear the wind in the trees, and see the sparks fly up to the sky, is a perfect realization of all the stories of adventures he has ever read. He tells the other boys afterwards that he heard something in the night that sounded very much like a bear. The hired man says that he was very much scared by the hooting of an owl.

The great occasions for the boy, though, are the times of "sugaring-off." Sometimes this used to be done in the evening, and it was made the excuse for a frolic in the camp. The neighbors were invited; sometimes even the pretty girls from the village, who filled all the woods with their sweet voices and merry laughter and little affectations of fright. The white snow still lies on all the ground except the warm spot about the camp. The tree branches all show distinctly in the light of the fire, which sends its ruddy glare far into the darkness, and lights up the bough shanty, the hogsheads, the buckets on the trees, and the group about the boiling kettles, until the scene is like something taken out of a fairy play. If Rembrandt could have seen a sugar party in a New England wood, he would have made out of its strong contrasts of light and shade one of the finest pictures in the world. But Rembrandt was not born in Massachusetts; people hardly ever do know where to be born until it is too late. Being born in the right place is a thing that has been very much

neglected.

At these sugar parties every one was expected to eat as much sugar as possible; and those who are practiced in it can eat a great deal. It is a peculiarity about eating warm maple sugar, that though you may eat so much of it one day as to be sick and loathe the thought of it, you will want it the next day more than ever. At the "sugaring-off " they used to pour the hot sugar upon the snow, where it congealed, without crystallizing, into a sort of wax, which I do suppose is the most delicious substance that was ever invented. And it takes a great while to eat it. If one should close his teeth firmly on a ball of it, he would be unable to open his mouth until it dissolved. The sensation while it is melting is very pleasant, but one cannot converse.

The boy used to make a big lump of it and give it to the dog, who seized it with great avidity, and closed his jaws on it, as dogs will on anything. It was funny the next moment to see the expression of perfect surprise on the dog's face when he found that he could not open his jaws. He shook his head; he sat down in despair; he ran round in a circle; he dashed into the woods and back again. He did everything except climb a tree, and howl. It would have been such a relief to him if he could have howled. But that was the one thing he could not do.

XV

THE HEART OF NEW ENGLAND

It is a wonder that every New England boy does not turn out a poet, or a missionary, or a peddler. Most of them used to. There is everything in the heart of the New England hills to feed the imagination of the boy, and excite his longing for strange countries. I scarcely know what the subtle influence is that forms him and attracts him in the most fascinating and aromatic of all lands, and yet urges him away from all the sweet delights of his home to become a roamer in literature and in the world, a poet and a wanderer. There is something in the soil and the pure air, I suspect, that promises more romance than is forthcoming, that excites the imagination without satisfying it, and begets the desire of adventure. And the prosaic life of the sweet home does not at all correspond to the boy's dreams of the world. In the good old days, I am told, the boys on the coast ran away and became sailors; the countryboys waited till they grew big enough to be missionaries, and then they sailed away, and met the coast boys in foreign ports. John used to spend hours in the top of a slender hickory-tree that a little detached itself from the forest which crowned the brow of the steep and lofty pasture behind his house. He was sent to make war on the bushes that constantly encroached upon the pastureland; but John had no hostility to any growing thing, and a very little bushwhacking

satisfied him. When he had grubbed up a few laurels and young tree-sprouts, he was wont to retire into his favorite post of observation and meditation. Perhaps he fancied that the wide-swaying stem to which he clung was the mast of a ship; that the tossing forest behind him was the heaving waves of the sea; and that the wind which moaned over the woods and murmured in the leaves, and now and then sent him a wide circuit in the air, as if he had been a blackbird on the tip-top of a spruce, was an ocean gale. What life, and action, and heroism there was to him in the multitudinous roar of the forest, and what an eternity of existence in the monologue of the river, which brawled far, far below him over its wide stony bed! How the river sparkled and danced and went on, now in a smooth amber current, now fretted by the pebbles, but always with that continuous busy song! John never knew that noise to cease, and he doubted not, if he stayed here a thousand years, that same loud murmur would fill the air.

On it went, under the wide spans of the old wooden, covered bridge, swirling around the great rocks on which the piers stood, spreading away below in shallows, and taking the shadows of a row of maples that lined the green shore. Save this roar, no sound reached him, except now and then the rumble of a wagon on the bridge, or the muffled far-off voices of some chance passers on the road. Seen from this high perch, the familiar village, sending its brown roofs and white spires up through the green foliage, had a strange aspect, and was like some town in a book, say a village nestled in the Swiss mountains, or something in Bohemia. And there, beyond the purple hills of Bozrah, and not so far as the stony pastures of Zoah, whither John had helped drive the colts and young stock in the spring, might be, perhaps, Jerusalem itself. John had himself once been to the land of Canaan with his grandfather, when he was a very small boy; and he had once seen an actual, no-mistake Jew, a mysterious person, with uncut beard and long hair, who sold scythe-snaths in that region, and about whom there was a rumor that he was once caught and shaved by the indignant farmers, who apprehended in his long locks a contempt of the Christian religion. Oh, the world had vast possibilities for John. Away to the south, up a vast basin of forest, there was a notch in the horizon and an opening in the line of woods, where the road ran. Through this opening John imagined an army might appear, perhaps British, perhaps Turks, and banners of red and of yellow advance, and a cannon wheel about and point its long nose, and open on the valley. He fancied the army, after this salute, winding down the mountain road, deploying in the meadows, and giving the valley to pillage and to flame. In which event his position would be an excellent one for observation and for safety. While he was in the height of this engagement, perhaps the horn would be blown from the back porch, reminding him that it was time to quit cutting brush and go for the cows. As if there were no better use for a warrior and a poet in New England than to send him for the cows!

John knew a boy--a bad enough boy I daresay--who afterwards became a general in the war, and went to Congress, and got to be a real governor, who also used to be sent to cut brush in the back pastures,

and hated it in his very soul; and by his wrong conduct forecast what kind of a man he would be. This boy, as soon as he had cut about one brush, would seek for one of several holes in the ground (and he was familiar with several), in which lived a white-and-black animal that must always be nameless in a book, but an animal quite capable of the most pungent defense of himself. This young aspirant to Congress would cut a long stick, with a little crotch in the end of it, and run it into the hole; and when the crotch was punched into the fur and skin of the animal, he would twist the stick round till it got a good grip on the skin., and then he would pull the beast out; and when he got the white-and-black just out of the hole so that his dog could seize him, the boy would take to his heels, and leave the two to fight it out, content to scent the battle afar off. And this boy, who was in training for public life, would do this sort of thing all the afternoon, and when the sun told him that he had spent long enough time cutting brush, he would industriously go home as innocent as anybody. There are few such boys as this nowadays; and that is the reason why the New England pastures are so much overgrown with brush.

John himself preferred to hunt the pugnacious woodchuck. He bore a special grudge against this clover-eater, beyond the usual hostility that boys feel for any wild animal. One day on his way to school a woodchuck crossed the road before him, and John gave chase. The woodchuck scrambled into an orchard and climbed a small apple-tree. John thought this a most cowardly and unfair retreat, and stood under the tree and taunted the animal and stoned it. Thereupon the woodchuck dropped down on John and seized him by the leg of his trousers. John was both enraged and scared by this dastardly attack; the teeth of the enemy went through the cloth and met; and there he hung. John then made a pivot of one leg and whirled himself around, swinging the woodchuck in the air, until he shook him off; but in his departure the woodchuck carried away a large piece of John's summer trousers-leg. The boy never forgot it. And whenever he had a holiday, he used to expend an amount of labor and ingenuity in the pursuit of woodchucks that would have made his for tune in any useful pursuit. There was a hill pasture, down on one side of which ran a small brook, and this pasture was full of woodchuck-holes. It required the assistance of several boys to capture a woodchuck. It was first necessary by patient watching to ascertain that the woodchuck was at home. When one was seen to enter his burrow, then all the entries to it except one--there are usually three--were plugged up with stones. A boy and a dog were then left to watch the open hole, while John and his comrades went to the brook and began to dig a canal, to turn the water into the residence of the woodchuck. This was often a difficult feat of engineering, and a long job. Often it took more than half a day of hard labor with shovel and hoe to dig the canal. But when the canal was finished and the water began to pour into the hole, the excitement began. How long would it take to fill the hole and drown out the woodchuck? Sometimes it seemed as if the hole was a bottomless 1pit. But sooner or later the water would rise in it, and then there was sure to be seen the nose of the woodchuck, keeping itself on a level with the rising flood.

It was piteous to see the anxious look of the hunted, half-drowned creature as--it came to the surface and caught sight of the dog. There the dog stood, at the mouth of the hole, quivering with excitement from his nose to the tip of his tail, and behind him were the cruel boys dancing with joy and setting the dog on. The poor creature would disappear in the water in terror; but he must breathe, and out would come his nose again, nearer the dog each time. At last the water ran out of the hole as well as in, and the soaked beast came with it, and made a desperate rush. But in a trice the dog had him, and the boys stood off in a circle, with stones in their hands, to see what they called "fair play." They maintained perfect "neutrality" so long as the dog was getting the best of the woodchuck; but if the latter was likely to escape, they "interfered" in the interest of peace and the "balance of power," and killed the woodchuck. This is a boy's notion of justice; of course, he'd no business to be a woodchuck,--an--unspeakable woodchuck."

I used the word "aromatic" in relation to the New England soil. John knew very well all its sweet, aromatic, pungent, and medicinal products, and liked to search for the scented herbs and the wild fruits and exquisite flowers; but he did not then know, and few do know, that there is no part of the globe where the subtle chemistry of the earth produces more that is agreeable to the senses than a New England hill-pasture and the green meadow at its foot. The poets have succeeded in turning our attention from it to the comparatively barren Orient as the land of sweet-smelling spices and odorous gums. And it is indeed a constant surprise that this poor and stony soil elaborates and grows so many delicate and aromatic products.

John, it is true, did not care much for anything that did not appeal to his taste and smell and delight in brilliant color; and he trod down the exquisite ferns and the wonderful mosses--without compunction. But he gathered from the crevices of the rocks the columbine and the eglantine and the blue harebell; he picked the high-flavored alpine strawberry, the blueberry, the boxberry, wild currants and gooseberries, and fox-grapes; he brought home armfuls of the pink-and-white laurel and the wild honeysuckle; he dug the roots of the fragrant sassafras and of the sweet-flag; he ate the tender leaves of the wintergreen and its red berries; he gathered the peppermint and the spearmint; he gnawed the twigs of the black birch; there was a stout fern which he called "brake," which he pulled up, and found that the soft end "tasted good;" he dug the amber gum from the spruce-tree, and liked to smell, though he could not chew, the gum of the wild cherry; it was his melancholy duty to bring home such medicinal herbs for the garret as the gold-thread, the tansy, and the loathsome "boneset;" and he laid in for the winter, like a squirrel, stores of beechnuts, hazel-nuts, hickory-nuts, chestnuts, and butternuts. But that which lives most vividly in his memory and most strongly draws him back to the New England hills is the aromatic sweet-fern; he likes to eat its spicy seeds, and to crush in his hands its fragrant leaves; their odor is the unique essence of New England.

JOHN'S REVIVAL

The New England country-boy of the last generation never heard of Christmas. There was no such day in his calendar. If John ever came across it in his reading, he attached no meaning to the word.

If his curiosity had been aroused, and he had asked his elders about it, he might have got the dim impression that it was a kind of Popish holiday, the celebration of which was about as wicked as "card-playing," or being a "Democrat." John knew a couple of desperately bad boys who were reported to play "seven-up" in a barn, on the haymow, and the enormity of this practice made him shudder. He had once seen a pack of greasy "playing-cards," and it seemed to him to contain the quintessence of sin. If he had desired to defy all Divine law and outrage all human society, he felt that he could do it by shuffling them. And he was quite right. The two bad boys enjoyed in stealth their scandalous pastime, because they knew it was the most wicked thing they could do. If it had been as sinless as playing marbles, they would n't have cared for it. John sometimes drove past a brown, tumble-down farmhouse, whose shiftless inhabitants, it was said, were card-playing people; and it is impossible to describe how wicked that house appeared to John. He almost expected to see its shingles stand on end. In the old New England one could not in any other way so express his contempt of all holy and orderly life as by playing cards for amusement.

There was no element of Christmas in John's life, any more than there was of Easter; and probably nobody about him could have explained Easter; and he escaped all the demoralization attending Christmas gifts. Indeed, he never had any presents of any kind, either on his birthday or any other day. He expected nothing that he did not earn, or make in the way of "trade" with another boy. He was taught to work for what he received. He even earned, as I said, the extra holidays of the day after the Fourth and the day after Thanksgiving. Of the free grace and gifts of Christmas he had no conception. The single and melancholy association he had with it was the quaking hymn which his grandfather used to sing in a cracked and quavering voice:

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground."

The "glory" that "shone around" at the end of it--the doleful voice always repeating, "and glory shone around"--made John as miserable as "Hark! from the tombs." It was all one dreary expectation of something uncomfortable. It was, in short, "religion." You'd got to have it some time; that John believed. But it lay in his unthinking mind to put off the "Hark! from the tombs" enjoyment as long as possible. He experienced a kind of delightful wickedness in

indulging his dislike of hymns and of Sunday.

John was not a model boy, but I cannot exactly define in what his wickedness consisted. He had no inclination to steal, nor much to lie; and he despised "meanness" and stinginess, and had a chivalrous feeling toward little girls. Probably it never occurred to him that there was any virtue in not stealing and lying, for honesty and veracity were in the atmosphere about him. He hated work, and he "got mad" easily; but he did work, and he was always ashamed when he was over his fit of passion. In short, you couldn't find a much better wicked boy than John.

When the "revival" came, therefore, one summer, John was in a quandary. Sunday meeting and Sunday-school he did n't mind; they were a part of regular life, and only temporarily interrupted a boy's pleasures. But when there began to be evening meetings at the different houses, a new element came into affairs. There was a kind of solemnity over the community, and a seriousness in all faces. At first these twilight assemblies offered a little relief to the monotony of farm life; and John liked to meet the boys and girls, and to watch the older people coming in, dressed in their second best. I think John's imagination was worked upon by the sweet and mournful hymns that were discordantly sung in the stiff old parlors. There was a suggestion of Sunday, and sanctity too, in the odor of caraway-seed that pervaded the room. The windows were wide open also, and the scent of June roses came in, with all the languishing sounds of a summer night. All the little boys had a scared look, but the little girls were never so pretty and demure as in this their susceptible seriousness. If John saw a boy who did not come to the evening meeting, but was wandering off with his sling down the meadow, looking for frogs, maybe, that boy seemed to him a monster of wickedness.

After a time, as the meetings continued, John fell also under the general impression of fright and seriousness. All the talk was of "getting religion," and he heard over and over again that the probability was if he did not get it now, he never would. The chance did not come often, and if this offer was not improved, John would be given over to hardness of heart. His obstinacy would show that he was not one of the elect. John fancied that he could feel his heart hardening, and he began to look with a wistful anxiety into the faces of the Christians to see what were the visible signs of being one of the elect. John put on a good deal of a manner that he "did n't care," and he never admitted his disquiet by asking any questions or standing up in meeting to be prayed for. But he did care. He heard all the time that all he had to do was to repent and believe. But there was nothing that he doubted, and he was perfectly willing to repent if he could think of anything to repent of.

It was essential he learned, that he should have a "conviction of sin." This he earnestly tried to have. Other people, no better than he, had it, and he wondered why he could n't have it. Boys and girls whom he knew were "under conviction," and John began to feel not only

panicky, but lonesome. Cynthia Rudd had been anxious for days and days, and not able to sleep at night, but now she had given herself up and found peace. There was a kind of radiance in her face that struck John with awe, and he felt that now there was a great gulf between him and Cynthia. Everybody was going away from him, and his heart was getting harder than ever. He could n't feel wicked, all he could do. And there was Ed Bates) his intimate friend, though older than he, a "whaling," noisy kind of boy, who was under conviction and sure he was going to be lost. How John envied him! And pretty soon Ed "experienced religion." John anxiously watched the change in Ed's face when he became one of the elect. And a change there was. And John wondered about another thing. Ed Bates used to go trout-fishing, with a tremendously long pole, in a meadow brook near the river; and when the trout didn't bite right off, Ed would--get mad," and as soon as one took hold he would give an awful jerk, sending the fish more than three hundred feet into the air and landing it in the bushes the other side of the meadow, crying out, "Gul darn ye, I'll learn ye." And John wondered if Ed would take the little trout out any more gently now.

John felt more and more lonesome as one after another of his playmates came out and made a profession. Cynthia (she too was older than John) sat on Sunday in the singers' seat; her voice, which was going to be a contralto, had a wonderful pathos in it for him, and he heard it with a heartache. "There she is," thought John, "singing away like an angel in heaven, and I am left out." During all his after life a contralto voice was to John one of his most bitter and heart-wringing pleasures. It suggested the immaculate scornful, the melancholy unattainable.

If ever a boy honestly tried to work himself into a conviction of sin, John tried. And what made him miserable was, that he couldn't feel miserable when everybody else was miserable. He even began to pretend to be so. He put on a serious and anxious look like the others. He pretended he did n't care for play; he refrained from chasing chipmunks and snaring suckers; the songs of birds and the bright vivacity of the summer--time that used to make him turn hand-springs smote him as a discordant levity. He was not a hypocrite at all, and he was getting to be alarmed that he was not alarmed at himself. Every day and night he heard that the spirit of the Lord would probably soon quit striving with him, and leave him out. The phrase was that he would "grieve away the Holy Spirit." John wondered if he was not doing it. He did everything to put himself in the way of conviction, was constant at the evening meetings, wore a grave face, refrained from play, and tried to feel anxious. At length he concluded that he must do something.

One night as he walked home from a solemn meeting, at which several of his little playmates had "come forward," he felt that he could force the crisis. He was alone on the sandy road; it was an enchanting summer night; the stars danced overhead, and by his side the broad and shallow river ran over its stony bed with a loud but soothing murmur that filled all the air with entreaty. John did not

then know that it sang, "But I go on forever," yet there was in it for him something of the solemn flow of the eternal world. When he came in sight of the house, he knelt down in the dust by a pile of rails and prayed. He prayed that he might feel bad, and be distressed about himself. As he prayed he heard distinctly, and yet not as a disturbance, the multitudinous croaking of the frogs by the meadow spring. It was not discordant with his thoughts; it had in it a melancholy pathos, as if it were a kind of call to the unconverted. What is there in this sound that suggests the tenderness of spring, the despair of a summer night, the desolateness of young love? Years after it happened to John to be at twilight at a railway station on the edge of the Ravenna marshes. A little way over the purple plain he saw the darkening towers and heard "the sweet bells of Imola." The Holy Pontiff Pius IX. was born at Imola, and passed his boyhood in that serene and moist region. As the train waited, John heard from miles of marshes round about the evening song of millions of frogs, louder and more melancholy and entreating than the vesper call of the bells. And instantly his mind went back for the association of sound is as subtle as that of odor--to the prayer, years ago, by the roadside and the plaintive appeal of the unheeded frogs, and he wondered if the little Pope had not heard the like importunity, and perhaps, when he thought of himself as a little Pope, associated his conversion with this plaintive sound.

John prayed, but without feeling any worse, and then went desperately into the house, and told the family that he was in an anxious state of mind. This was joyful news to the sweet and pious household, and the little boy was urged to feel that he was a sinner, to repent, and to become that night a Christian; he was prayed over, and told to read the Bible, and put to bed with the injunction to repeat all the texts of Scripture and hymns he could think of. John did this, and said over and over the few texts he was master of, and tossed about in a real discontent now, for he had a dim notion that he was playing the hypocrite a little. But he was sincere enough in wanting to feel, as the other boys and girls felt, that he was a wicked sinner. He tried to think of his evil deeds; and one occurred to him; indeed, it often came to his mind. It was a lie; a deliberate, awful lie, that never injured anybody but himself John knew he was not wicked enough to tell a lie to injure anybody else.

This was the lie. One afternoon at school, just before John's class was to recite in geography, his pretty cousin, a young lady he held in great love and respect, came in to visit the school. John was a favorite with her, and she had come to hear him recite. As it happened, John felt shaky in the geographical lesson of that day, and he feared to be humiliated in the presence of his cousin; he felt embarrassed to that degree that he could n't have "bounded " Massachusetts. So he stood up and raised his hand, and said to the schoolma'am, "Please, ma'am, I 've got the stomach-ache; may I go home?" And John's character for truthfulness was so high (and even this was ever a reproach to him), that his word was instantly believed, and he was dismissed without any medical examination. For a moment John was delighted to get out of school so early; but soon

his guilt took all the light out of the summer sky and the pleasantness out of nature. He had to walk slowly, without a single hop or jump, as became a diseased boy. The sight of a woodchuck at a distance from his well-known hole tempted John, but he restrained himself, lest somebody should see him, and know that chasing a woodchuck was inconsistent with the stomach-ache. He was acting a miserable part, but it had to be gone through with. He went home and told his mother the reason he had left school, but he added that he felt "some" better now. The "some" did n't save him. Genuine sympathy was lavished on him. He had to swallow a stiff dose of nasty "picra,"--the horror of all childhood, and he was put in bed immediately. The world never looked so pleasant to John, but to bed he was forced to go. He was excused from all chores; he was not even to go after the cows. John said he thought he ought to go after the cows,--much as he hated the business usually, he would now willingly have wandered over the world after cows,--and for this heroic offer, in the condition he was, he got credit for a desire to do his duty; and this unjust confidence in him added to his torture. And he had intended to set his hooks that night for eels. His cousin came home, and sat by his bedside and condoled with him; his schoolma'am had sent word how sorry she was for him, John was Such a good boy. All this was dreadful.

He groaned in agony. Besides, he was not to have any supper; it would be very dangerous to eat a morsel. The prospect was appalling. Never was there such a long twilight; never before did he hear so many sounds outdoors that he wanted to investigate. Being ill without any illness was a horrible condition. And he began to have real stomach-ache now; and it ached because it was empty. John was hungry enough to have eaten the New England Primer. But by and by sleep came, and John forgot his woes in dreaming that he knew where Madagascar was just as easy as anything.

It was this lie that came back to John the night he was trying to be affected by the revival. And he was very much ashamed of it, and believed he would never tell another. But then he fell thinking whether, with the "picra," and the going to bed in the afternoon, and the loss of his supper, he had not been sufficiently paid for it. And in this unhopeful frame of mind he dropped off in sleep.

And the truth must be told, that in the morning John was no nearer to realizing the terrors he desired to feel. But he was a conscientious boy, and would do nothing to interfere with the influences of the season. He not only put himself away from them all, but he refrained from doing almost everything that he wanted to do. There came at that time a newspaper, a secular newspaper, which had in it a long account of the Long Island races, in which the famous horse "Lexington" was a runner. John was fond of horses, he knew about Lexington, and he had looked forward to the result of this race with keen interest. But to read the account of it how he felt might destroy his seriousness of mind, and in all reverence and simplicity he felt it--be a means of "grieving away the Holy Spirit." He therefore hid away the paper in a table-drawer, intending to read it

when the revival should be over. Weeks after, when he looked for the newspaper, it was not to be found, and John never knew what "time " Lexington made nor anything about the race. This was to him a serious loss, but by no means so deep as another feeling that remained with him; for when his little world returned to its ordinary course, and long after, John had an uneasy apprehension of his own separateness from other people, in his insensibility to the revival. Perhaps the experience was a damage to him; and it is a pity that there was no one to explain that religion for a little fellow like him is not a "scheme."

XVII

WAR

Every boy who is good for anything is a natural savage. The scientists who want to study the primitive man, and have so much difficulty in finding one anywhere in this sophisticated age, couldn't do better than to devote their attention to the common country-boy. He has the primal, vigorous instincts and impulses of the African savage, without any of the vices inherited from a civilization long ago decayed or developed in an unrestrained barbaric society. You want to catch your boy young, and study him before he has either virtues or vices, in order to understand the primitive man.

Every New England boy desires (or did desire a generation ago, before children were born sophisticated, with a large library, and with the word "culture" written on their brows) to live by hunting, fishing, and war. The military instinct, which is the special mark of barbarism, is strong in him. It arises not alone from his love of fighting, for the boy is naturally as cowardly as the savage, but from his fondness for display,--the same that a corporal or a general feels in decking himself in tinsel and tawdry colors and strutting about in view of the female sex. Half the pleasure in going out to murder another man with a gun would be wanting if one did not wear feathers and gold-lace and stripes on his pantaloons. The law also takes this view of it, and will not permit men to shoot each other in plain clothes. And the world also makes some curious distinctions in the art of killing. To kill people with arrows is barbarous; to kill them with smooth-bores and flintlock muskets is semi-civilized; to kill them with breech-loading rifles is civilized. That nation is the most civilized which has the appliances to kill the most of another nation in the shortest time. This is the result of six thousand years of constant civilization. By and by, when the nations cease to be boys, perhaps they will not want to kill each other at all. Some people think the world is very old; but here is an evidence that it is very young, and, in fact, has scarcely yet begun to be a world. When the volcanoes have done spouting, and the earthquakes are quaked out, and you can tell what land is going to be

solid and keep its level twenty-four hours, and the swamps are filled up, and the deltas of the great rivers, like the Mississippi and the Nile, become terra firma, and men stop killing their fellows in order to get their land and other property, then perhaps there will be a world that an angel would n't weep over. Now one half the world are employed in getting ready to kill the other half, some of them by marching about in uniform, and the others by hard work to earn money to pay taxes to buy uniforms and guns.

John was not naturally very cruel, and it was probably the love of display quite as much as of fighting that led him into a military life; for he, in common with all his comrades, had other traits of the savage. One of them was the same passion for ornament that induces the African to wear anklets and bracelets of hide and of metal, and to decorate himself with tufts of hair, and to tattoo his body. In John's day there was a rage at school among the boys for wearing bracelets woven of the hair of the little girls. Some of them were wonderful specimens of braiding and twist. These were not captured in war, but were sentimental tokens of friendship given by the young maidens themselves. John's own hair was kept so short (as became a warrior) that you couldn't have made a bracelet out of it, or anything except a paintbrush; but the little girls were not under military law, and they willingly sacrificed their tresses to decorate the soldiers they esteemed. As the Indian is honored in proportion to the scalps he can display, at John's school the boy was held in highest respect who could show the most hair trophies on his wrist. John himself had a variety that would have pleased a Mohawk, fine and coarse and of all colors. There were the flaxen, the faded straw, the glossy black, the lustrous brown, the dirty yellow, the undecided auburn, and the fiery red. Perhaps his pulse beat more quickly under the red hair of Cynthia Rudd than on account of all the other wristlets put together; it was a sort of gold-tried-in-the-fire-color to John, and burned there with a steady flame. Now that Cynthia had become a Christian, this band of hair seemed a more sacred if less glowing possession (for all detached hair will fade in time), and if he had known anything about saints, he would have imagined that it was a part of the aureole that always goes with a saint. But I am bound to say that while John had a tender feeling for this red string, his sentiment was not that of the man who becomes entangled in the meshes of a woman's hair; and he valued rather the number than the quality of these elastic wristlets.

John burned with as real a military ardor as ever inflamed the breast of any slaughterer of his fellows. He liked to read of war, of encounters with the Indians, of any kind of wholesale killing in glittering uniform, to the noise of the terribly exciting fife and drum, which maddened the combatants and drowned the cries of the wounded. In his future he saw himself a soldier with plume and sword and snug-fitting, decorated clothes,--very different from his somewhat roomy trousers and country-cut roundabout, made by Aunt Ellis, the village tailor, who cut out clothes, not according to the shape of the boy, but to what he was expected to grow to,--going where glory awaited him. In his observation of pictures, it was the

common soldier who was always falling and dying, while the officer stood unharmed in the storm of bullets and waved his sword in a heroic attitude. John determined to be an officer.

It is needless to say that he was an ardent member of the military company of his village. He had risen from the grade of corporal to that of first lieutenant; the captain was a boy whose father was captain of the grown militia company, and consequently had inherited military aptness and knowledge. The old captain was a flaming son of Mars, whose nose militia, war, general training, and New England rum had painted with the color of glory and disaster. He was one of the gallant old soldiers of the peaceful days of our country, splendid in uniform, a martinet in drill, terrible in oaths, a glorious object when he marched at the head of his company of flintlock muskets, with the American banner full high advanced, and the clamorous drum defying the world. In this he fulfilled his duties of citizen, faithfully teaching his uniformed companions how to march by the left leg, and to get reeling drunk by sundown; otherwise he did n't amount to much in the community; his house was unpainted, his fences were tumbled down, his farm was a waste, his wife wore an old gown to meeting, to which the captain never went; but he was a good trout-fisher, and there was no man in town who spent more time at the country store and made more shrewd observations upon the affairs of his neighbors. Although he had never been in an asylum any more than he had been in war, he was almost as perfect a drunkard as he was soldier. He hated the British, whom he had never seen, as much as he loved rum, from which he was never separated.

The company which his son commanded, wearing his father's belt and sword, was about as effective as the old company, and more orderly. It contained from thirty to fifty boys, according to the pressure of "chores" at home, and it had its great days of parade and its autumn maneuvers, like the general training. It was an artillery company, which gave every boy a chance to wear a sword, and it possessed a small mounted cannon, which was dragged about and limbered and unlimbered and fired, to the imminent danger of everybody, especially of the company. In point of marching, with all the legs going together, and twisting itself up and untwisting breaking into single-file (for Indian fighting), and forming platoons, turning a sharp corner, and getting out of the way of a wagon, circling the town pump, frightening horses, stopping short in front of the tavern, with ranks dressed and eyes right and left, it was the equal of any military organization I ever saw. It could train better than the big company, and I think it did more good in keeping alive the spirit of patriotism and desire to fight. Its discipline was strict. If a boy left the ranks to jab a spectator, or make faces at a window, or "go for" a striped snake, he was "hollered" at no end.

It was altogether a very serious business; there was no levity about the hot and hard marching, and as boys have no humor, nothing ludicrous occurred. John was very proud of his office, and of his ability to keep the rear ranks closed up and ready to execute any maneuver when the captain "hollered," which he did continually. He

carried a real sword, which his grandfather had worn in many a militia campaign on the village green, the rust upon which John fancied was Indian blood; he had various red and yellow insignia of military rank sewed upon different parts of his clothes, and though his cocked hat was of pasteboard, it was decorated with gilding and bright rosettes, and floated a red feather that made his heart beat with martial fury whenever he looked at it. The effect of this uniform upon the girls was not a matter of conjecture. I think they really cared nothing about it, but they pretended to think it fine, and they fed the poor boy's vanity, the weakness by which women govern the world.

The exalted happiness of John in this military service I daresay was never equaled in any subsequent occupation. The display of the company in the village filled him with the loftiest heroism. There was nothing wanting but an enemy to fight, but this could only be had by half the company staining themselves with elderberry juice and going into the woods as Indians, to fight the artillery from behind trees with bows and arrows, or to ambush it and tomahawk the gunners. This, however, was made to seem very like real war. Traditions of Indian cruelty were still fresh in western Massachusetts. Behind John's house in the orchard were some old slate tombstones, sunken and leaning, which recorded the names of Captain Moses Rice and Phineas Arms, who had been killed by Indians in the last century while at work in the meadow by the river, and who slept there in the hope of the glorious resurrection. Phineas Arms martial name--was long since dust, and even the mortal part of the great Captain Moses Rice had been absorbed in the soil and passed perhaps with the sap up into the old but still blooming apple-trees. It was a quiet place where they lay, but they might have heard--if hear they could--the loud, continuous roar of the Deerfield, and the stirring of the long grass on that sunny slope. There was a tradition that years ago an Indian, probably the last of his race, had been seen moving along the crest of the mountain, and gazing down into the lovely valley which had been the favorite home of his tribe, upon the fields where he grew his corn, and the sparkling stream whence he drew his fish. John used to fancy at times, as he sat there, that he could see that red specter gliding among the trees on the hill; and if the tombstone suggested to him the trump of judgment, he could not separate it from the war-whoop that had been the last sound in the ear of Phineas Arms. The Indian always preceded murder by the war-whoop; and this was an advantage that the artillery had in the fight with the elderberry Indians. It was warned in time. If there was no war-whoop, the killing did n't count; the artillery man got up and killed the Indian. The Indian usually had the worst of it; he not only got killed by the regulars, but he got whipped by the home guard at night for staining himself and his clothes with the elderberry.

But once a year the company had a superlative parade. This was when the military company from the north part of the town joined the villagers in a general muster. This was an infantry company, and not to be compared with that of the village in point of evolutions. There was a great and natural hatred between the north town boys and

the center. I don't know why, but no contiguous African tribes could be more hostile. It was all right for one of either section to "lick" the other if he could, or for half a dozen to "lick" one of the enemy if they caught him alone. The notion of honor, as of mercy, comes into the boy only when he is pretty well grown; to some neither ever comes. And yet there was an artificial military courtesy (something like that existing in the feudal age, no doubt) which put the meeting of these two rival and mutually detested companies on a high plane of behavior. It was beautiful to see the seriousness of this lofty and studied condescension on both sides. For the time everything was under martial law. The village company being the senior, its captain commanded the united battalion in the march, and this put John temporarily into the position of captain, with the right to march at the head and "holler;" a responsibility which realized all his hopes of glory. I suppose there has yet been discovered by man no gratification like that of marching at the head of a column in uniform on parade, unless, perhaps, it is marching at their head when they are leaving a field of battle. John experienced all the thrill of this conspicuous authority, and I daresay that nothing in his later life has so exalted him in his own esteem; certainly nothing has since happened that was so important as the events of that parade day seemed. He satiated himself with all the delights of war.

XVIII

COUNTRY SCENES

It is impossible to say at what age a New England country-boy becomes conscious that his trousers-legs are too short, and is anxious about the part of his hair and the fit of his woman-made roundabout. These harrowing thoughts come to him later than to the city lad. At least, a generation ago he served a long apprenticeship with nature only for a master, absolutely unconscious of the artificialities of life.

But I do not think his early education was neglected. And yet it is easy to underestimate the influences that, unconsciously to him, were expanding his mind and nursing in him heroic purposes. There was the lovely but narrow valley, with its rapid mountain stream; there were the great hills which he climbed, only to see other hills stretching away to a broken and tempting horizon; there were the rocky pastures, and the wide sweeps of forest through which the winter tempests howled, upon which hung the haze of summer heat, over which the great shadows of summer clouds traveled; there were the clouds themselves, shouldering up above the peaks, hurrying across the narrow sky,--the clouds out of which the wind came, and the lightning and the sudden dashes of rain; and there were days when the sky was ineffably blue and distant, a fathomless vault of heaven where the hen-hawk and the eagle poised on outstretched wings and watched for their prey. Can you say how these things fed the imagination of the boy, who had few

books and no contact with the great world? Do you think any city lad could have written "Thanatopsis" at eighteen?

If you had seen John, in his short and roomy trousers and ill-used straw hat, picking his barefooted way over the rocks along the river-bank of a cool morning to see if an eel had "got on," you would not have fancied that he lived in an ideal world. Nor did he consciously. So far as he knew, he had no more sentiment than a jack-knife. Although he loved Cynthia Rudd devotedly, and blushed scarlet one day when his cousin found a lock of Cynthia's flaming hair in the box where John kept his fishhooks, spruce gum, flag-root, tickets of standing at the head, gimlet, billets-doux in blue ink, a vile liquid in a bottle to make fish bite, and other precious possessions, yet Cynthia's society had no attractions for him comparable to a day's trout-fishing. She was, after all, only a single and a very undefined item in his general ideal world, and there was no harm in letting his imagination play about her illumined head. Since Cynthia had "got religion" and John had got nothing, his love was tempered with a little awe and a feeling of distance. He was not fickle, and yet I cannot say that he was not ready to construct a new romance, in which Cynthia should be eliminated. Nothing was easier. Perhaps it was a luxurious traveling carriage, drawn by two splendid horses in plated harness, driven along the sandy road. There were a gentleman and a young lad on the front seat, and on the back seat a handsome pale lady with a little girl beside her. Behind, on the rack with the trunk, was a colored boy, an imp out of a story-book. John was told that the black boy was a slave, and that the carriage was from Baltimore. Here was a chance for a romance. Slavery, beauty, wealth, haughtiness, especially on the part of the slender boy on the front seat,--here was an opening into a vast realm. The high-stepping horses and the shining harness were enough to excite John's admiration, but these were nothing to the little girl. His eyes had never before fallen upon that kind of girl; he had hardly imagined that such a lovely creature could exist. Was it the soft and dainty toilet, was it the brown curls, or the large laughing eyes, or the delicate, finely cut features, or the charming little figure of this fairy-like person? Was this expression on her mobile face merely that of amusement at seeing a country-boy? Then John hated her. On the contrary, did she see in him what John felt himself to be? Then he would go the world over to serve her. In a moment he was self-conscious. His trousers seemed to creep higher up his legs, and he could feel his very ankles blush. He hoped that she had not seen the other side of him, for, in fact, the patches were not of the exact shade of the rest of the cloth. The vision flashed by him in a moment, but it left him with a resentful feeling. Perhaps that proud little girl would be sorry some day, when he had become a general, or written a book, or kept a store, to see him go away and marry another. He almost made up his cruel mind on the instant that he would never marry her, however bad she might feel. And yet he could not get her out of his mind for days and days, and when her image was present, even Cynthia in the singers' seat on Sunday looked a little cheap and common. Poor Cynthia! Long before John became a general or had his revenge on the

Baltimore girl, she married a farmer and was the mother of children, red-headed; and when John saw her years after, she looked tired and discouraged, as one who has carried into womanhood none of the romance of her youth.

Fishing and dreaming, I think, were the best amusements John had. The middle pier of the long covered bridge over the river stood upon a great rock, and this rock (which was known as the swimming-rock, whence the boys on summer evenings dove into the deep pool by its side) was a favorite spot with John when he could get an hour or two from the everlasting "chores." Making his way out to it over the rocks at low water with his fish-pole, there he was content to sit and observe the world; and there he saw a great deal of life. He always expected to catch the legendary trout which weighed two pounds and was believed to inhabit that pool. He always did catch horned dace and shiners, which he despised, and sometimes he snared a monstrous sucker a foot and a half long. But in the summer the sucker is a flabby fish, and John was not thanked for bringing him home. He liked, however, to lie with his face close to the water and watch the long fishes panting in the clear depths, and occasionally he would drop a pebble near one to see how gracefully he would scud away with one wave of the tail into deeper water. Nothing fears the little brown boy. The yellow-bird slants his wings, almost touches the deep water before him, and then escapes away under the bridge to the east with a glint of sunshine on his back; the fish-hawk comes down with a swoop, dips one wing, and, his prey having darted under a stone, is away again over the still hill, high soaring on even-poised pinions, keeping an eye perhaps upon the great eagle which is sweeping the sky in widening circles.

But there is other life. A wagon rumbles over the bridge, and the farmer and his wife, jogging along, do not know that they have startled a lazy boy into a momentary fancy that a thunder-shower is coming up. John can see as he lies there on a still summer day, with the fishes and the birds for company, the road that comes down the left bank of the river,--a hot, sandy, well-traveled road, hidden from view here and there by trees and bushes. The chief point of interest, however, is an enormous sycamore-tree by the roadside and in front of John's house. The house is more than a century old, and its timbers were hewed and squared by Captain Moses Rice (who lies in his grave on the hillside above it), in the presence of the Red Man who killed him with arrow and tomahawk some time after his house was set in order. The gigantic tree, struck with a sort of leprosy, like all its species, appears much older, and of course has its tradition. They say that it grew from a green stake which the first land-surveyor planted there for one of his points of sight. John was reminded of it years after when he sat under the shade of the decrepit lime-tree in Freiburg and was told that it was originally a twig which the breathless and bloody messenger carried in his hand when he dropped exhausted in the square with the word "Victory!" on his lips, announcing thus the result of the glorious battle of Morat, where the Swiss in 1476 defeated Charles the Bold. Under the broad but scanty shade of the great button-ball tree (as it was called)

stood an old watering-trough, with its half-decayed penstock and well-worn spout pouring forever cold, sparkling water into the overflowing trough. It is fed by a spring near by, and the water is sweeter and colder than any in the known world, unless it be the well Zem-zem, as generations of people and horses which have drunk of it would testify, if they could come back. And if they could file along this road again, what a procession there would be riding down the valley!--antiquated vehicles, rusty wagons adorned with the invariable buffalo-robe even in the hottest days, lean and long-favored horses, frisky colts, drawing, generation after generation, the sober and pious saints, that passed this way to meeting and to mill.

What a refreshment is that water-spout! All day long there are pilgrims to it, and John likes nothing better than to watch them. Here comes a gray horse drawing a buggy with two men,--cattle

buyers, probably. Out jumps a man, down goes the check-rein. What a good draught the nag takes! Here comes a long-stepping trotter in a sulky; man in a brown linen coat and wide-awake hat,--dissolute, horsey-looking man. They turn up, of course. Ah, there is an establishment he knows well: a sorrel horse and an old chaise. The sorrel horse scents the water afar off, and begins to turn up long before he reaches the trough, thrusting out his nose in anticipation of the coot sensation. No check to let down; he plunges his nose in nearly to his eyes. In his haste to get at it. Two maiden ladies--unmistakably such, though they appear neither "anxious nor aimless"--within the scoop-top smile benevolently on the sorrel back. It is the deacon's horse, a meeting-going nag, with a sedate, leisurely jog as he goes; and these are two of the "salt of the earth,"--the brevet rank of the women who stand and wait,--going down to the village store to dicker. There come two men in a hurry, horse driven up smartly and pulled up short; but as it is rising ground, and the horse does not easily reach the water with the wagon pulling back, the nervous man in the buggy hitches forward on his seat, as if that would carry the wagon a little ahead! Next, lumber-wagon with load of boards; horse wants to turn up, and driver switches him and cries "G'lang," and the horse reluctantly goes by, turning his head wistfully towards the flowing spout. Ah, here comes an equipage strange to these parts, and John stands up to look; an elegant carriage and two horses; trunks strapped on behind; gentleman and boy on front seat and two ladies on back seat,--city people. The gentleman descends, unchecks the horses, wipes his brow, takes a drink at the spout and looks around, evidently remarking upon the lovely view, as he swings his handkerchief in an explanatory manner. Judicious travelers. John would like to know who they are. Perhaps they are from Boston, whence come all the wonderfully painted peddlers' wagons drawn by six stalwart horses, which the driver, using no rein, controls with his long whip and cheery voice. If so, great is the condescension of Boston; and John follows them with an undefined longing as they drive away toward the mountains of Zoar. Here is a footman, dusty and tired, who comes with lagging steps. He stops, removes his hat, as he should to such a tree, puts his mouth

to the spout, and takes a long pull at the lively water. And then he goes on, perhaps to Zoar, perhaps to a worse place.

So they come and go all the summer afternoon; but the great event of the day is the passing down the valley of the majestic stage-coach,-- the vast yellow-bodied, rattling vehicle. John can hear a mile off the shaking of chains, traces, and whiffle-trees, and the creaking of its leathern braces, as the great bulk swings along piled high with trunks. It represents to John, somehow, authority, government, the right of way; the driver is an autocrat, everybody must make way for the stage-coach. It almost satisfies the imagination, this royal vehicle; one can go in it to the confines of the world,--to Boston and to Albany.

There were other influences that I daresay contributed to the boy's education. I think his imagination was stimulated by a band of gypsies who used to come every summer and pitch a tent on a little roadside patch of green turf by the river-bank not far from his house. It was shaded by elms and butternut-trees, and a long spit of sand and pebbles ran out from it into the brawling stream. Probably they were not a very good kind of gypsy, although the story was that the men drank and beat the women. John didn't know much about drinking; his experience of it was confined to sweet cider; yet he had already set himself up as a reformer, and joined the Cold Water Band. The object of this Band was to walk in a procession under a banner that declared,

"So here we pledge perpetual hate
To all that can intoxicate; "

and wear a badge with this legend, and above it the device of a well-curb with a long sweep. It kept John and all the little boys and girls from being drunkards till they were ten or eleven years of age; though perhaps a few of them died meantime from eating loaf-cake and pie and drinking ice-cold water at the celebrations of the Band.

The gypsy camp had a strange fascination for John, mingled of curiosity and fear. Nothing more alien could come into the New England life than this tatterdemalion band. It was hardly credible that here were actually people who lived out-doors, who slept in their covered wagon or under their tent, and cooked in the open air; it was a visible romance transferred from foreign lands and the remote times of the story-books; and John took these city thieves, who were on their annual foray into the country, trading and stealing horses and robbing hen-roosts and cornfields, for the mysterious race who for thousands of years have done these same things in all lands, by right of their pure blood and ancient lineage. John was afraid to approach the camp when any of the scowling and villainous men were lounging about, pipes in mouth; but he took more courage when only women and children were visible. The swarthy, black-haired women in dirty calico frocks were anything but attractive, but they spoke softly to the boy, and told his fortune, and wheedled him into bringing them any amount of cucumbers and green corn in the course of

the season. In front of the tent were planted in the ground three poles that met together at the top, whence depended a kettle. This was the kitchen, and it was sufficient. The fuel for the fire was the driftwood of the stream. John noted that it did not require to be sawed into stove-lengths; and, in short, that the "chores" about this establishment were reduced to the minimum. And an older person than John might envy the free life of these wanderers, who paid neither rent nor taxes, and yet enjoyed all the delights of nature. It seemed to the boy that affairs would go more smoothly in the world if everybody would live in this simple manner. Nor did he then know, or ever after find out, why it is that the world permits only wicked people to be Bohemians.

XIX

A CONTRAST TO THE NEW ENGLAND BOY

One evening at vespers in Genoa, attracted by a burst of music from the swinging curtain of the doorway, I entered a little church much frequented by the common people. An unexpected and exceedingly pretty sight rewarded me.

It was All Souls' Day. In Italy almost every day is set apart for some festival, or belongs to some saint or another, and I suppose that when leap year brings around the extra day, there is a saint ready to claim the 29th of February. Whatever the day was to the elders, the evening was devoted to the children. The first thing I noticed was, that the quaint old church was lighted up with innumerable wax tapers,--an uncommon sight, for the darkness of a Catholic church in the evening is usually relieved only by a candle here and there, and by a blazing pyramid of them on the high altar. The use of gas is held to be a vulgar thing all over Europe, and especially unfit for a church or an aristocratic palace.

Then I saw that each taper belonged to a little boy or girl, and the groups of children were scattered all about the church. There was a group by every side altar and chapel, all the benches were occupied by knots of them, and there were so many circles of them seated on the pavement that I could with difficulty make my way among them. There were hundreds of children in the church, all dressed in their holiday apparel, and all intent upon the illumination, which seemed to be a private affair to each one of them.

And not much effect had their tapers upon the darkness of the vast vaults above them. The tapers were little spiral coils of wax, which the children unrolled as fast as they burned, and when they were tired of holding them, they rested them on the ground and watched the burning. I stood some time by a group of a dozen seated in a corner of the church. They had massed all the tapers in the center and formed a ring about the spectacle, sitting with their legs straight

out before them and their toes turned up. The light shone full in their happy faces, and made the group, enveloped otherwise in darkness, like one of Correggio's pictures of children or angels. Correggio was a famous Italian artist of the sixteenth century, who painted cherubs like children who were just going to heaven, and children like cherubs who had just come out of it. But then, he had the Italian children for models, and they get the knack of being lovely very young. An Italian child finds it as easy to be pretty as an American child to be good.

One could not but be struck with the patience these little people exhibited in their occupation, and the enjoyment they got out of it. There was no noise; all conversed in subdued whispers and behaved in the most gentle manner to each other, especially to the smallest, and there were many of them so small that they could only toddle about by the most judicious exercise of their equilibrium. I do not say this by way of reproof to any other kind of children.

These little groups, as I have said, were scattered all about the church; and they made with their tapers little spots of light, which looked in the distance very much like Correggio's picture which is at Dresden,--the Holy Family at Night, and the light from the Divine Child blazing in the faces of all the attendants. Some of the children were infants in the nurses' arms, but no one was too small to have a taper, and to run the risk of burning its fingers.

There is nothing that a baby likes more than a lighted candle, and the church has understood this longing in human nature, and found means to gratify it by this festival of tapers.

The groups do not all remain long in place, you may imagine; there is a good deal of shifting about, and I see little stragglers wandering over the church, like fairies lighted by fireflies. Occasionally they form a little procession and march from one altar to another, their lights twinkling as they go.

But all this time there is music pouring out of the organ-loft at the end of the church, and flooding all its spaces with its volume. In front of the organ is a choir of boys, led by a round-faced and jolly monk, who rolls about as he sings, and lets the deep bass noise rumble about a long time in his stomach before he pours it out of his mouth. I can see the faces of all of them quite well, for each singer has a candle to light his music-book.

And next to the monk stands the boy,--the handsomest boy in the whole world probably at this moment. I can see now his great, liquid, dark eyes, and his exquisite face, and the way he tossed back his long waving hair when he struck into his part. He resembled the portraits of Raphael, when that artist was a boy; only I think he looked better than Raphael, and without trying, for he seemed to be a spontaneous sort of boy. And how that boy did sing! He was the soprano of the choir, and he had a voice of heavenly sweetness. When he opened his mouth and tossed back his head, he filled the church with exquisite

melody.

He sang like a lark, or like an angel. As we never heard an angel sing, that comparison is not worth much. I have seen pictures of angels singing, there is one by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck in the gallery at Berlin,--and they open their mouths like this boy, but I can't say as much for their singing. The lark, which you very likely never heard either) for larks are as scarce in America as angels,--is a bird that springs up from the meadow and begins to sing as he rises in a spiral flight, and the higher he mounts, the sweeter he sings, until you think the notes are dropping out of heaven itself, and you hear him when he is gone from sight, and you think you hear him long after all sound has ceased.

And yet this boy sang better than a lark, because he had more notes and a greater compass and more volume, although he shook out his voice in the same gleesome abundance.

I am sorry that I cannot add that this ravishingly beautiful boy was a good boy. He was probably one of the most mischievous boys that was ever in an organ-loft. All the time that he was singing the vespers he was skylarking like an imp. While he was pouring out the most divine melody, he would take the opportunity of kicking the shins of the boy next to him, and while he was waiting for his part, he would kick out behind at any one who was incautious enough to approach him. There never was such a vicious boy; he kept the whole loft in a ferment. When the monk rumbled his bass in his stomach, the boy cut up monkey-shines that set every other boy into a laugh, or he stirred up a row that set them all at fisticuffs.

And yet this boy was a great favorite. The jolly monk loved him best of all and bore with his wildest pranks. When he was wanted to sing his part and was skylarking in the rear, the fat monk took him by the ear and brought him forward; and when he gave the boy's ear a twist, the boy opened his lovely mouth and poured forth such a flood of melody as you never heard. And he did n't mind his notes; he seemed to know his notes by heart, and could sing and look off like a nightingale on a bough. He knew his power, that boy; and he stepped forward to his stand when he pleased, certain that he would be forgiven as soon as he began to sing. And such spirit and life as he threw into the performance, rollicking through the Vespers with a perfect abandon of carriage, as if he could sing himself out of his skin if he liked.

While the little angels down below were pattering about with their wax tapers, keeping the holy fire burning, suddenly the organ stopped, the monk shut his book with a bang, the boys blew out the candles, and I heard them all tumbling down-stairs in a gale of noise and laughter. The beautiful boy I saw no more.

About him plays the light of tender memory; but were he twice as lovely, I could never think of him as having either the simple manliness or the good fortune of the New England boy.

ON HORSEBACK

I

"The way to mount a horse"- said the Professor.

"If you have no ladder--put in the Friend of Humanity.

The Professor had ridden through the war for the Union on the right side, enjoying a much better view of it than if he had walked, and knew as much about a horse as a person ought to know for the sake of his character. The man who can recite the tales of the Canterbury Pilgrims, on horseback, giving the contemporary pronunciation, never missing an accent by reason of the trot, and at the same time witch North Carolina and a strip of East Tennessee with his noble horsemanship, is a kind of Literary Centaur of whose double instruction any Friend of Humanity may be glad to avail himself.

"The way to mount a horse is to grasp the mane with the left hand holding the bridle-rein, put your left foot in the stirrup, with the right hand on the back of the saddle, and---"

Just then the horse stepped quickly around on his hind feet, and looked the Professor in the face. The Superintendents of Affairs, who occupy the flagging in front of the hotel, seated in cane-bottomed chairs tilted back, smiled. These useful persons appear to have a life-lease of this portion of the city pavement, and pretty effectually block it up nearly all day and evening. When a lady wishes to make her way through the blockade, it is the habit of these observers of life to rise and make room, touching their hats, while she picks her way through, and goes down the street with a pretty consciousness of the flutter she has caused. The war has not changed the Southern habit of sitting out-of-doors, but has added a new element of street picturesqueness in groups of colored people lounging about the corners. There appears to be more leisure than ever.

The scene of this little lesson in horsemanship was the old town of Abingdon, in southwest Virginia, on the Virginia and East Tennessee railway; a town of ancient respectability, which gave birth to the Johnstons and Floyds and other notable people; a town, that still preserves the flavor of excellent tobacco and, something of the easy-going habits of the days of slavery, and is a sort of educational center, where the young ladies of the region add the final graces of intellectual life in moral philosophy and the use of the globes to their natural gifts. The mansion of the late and left Floyd is now a

seminary, and not far from it is the Stonewall Jackson Institute, in the midst of a grove of splendid oaks, whose stately boles and wide-spreading branches give a dignity to educational life. The distinction of the region is its superb oak-trees. As it was vacation in these institutions of learning, the travelers did not see any of the vines that traditionally cling to the oak.

The Professor and the Friend of Humanity were about starting on a journey, across country southward, through regions about which the people of Abingdon could give little useful information. If the travelers had known the capacities and resources of the country, they would not have started without a supply train, or the establishment of bases of provisions in advance. But, as the Professor remarked, knowledge is something that one acquires when he has no use for it. The horses were saddled; the riders were equipped with flannel shirts and leather leggings; the saddle-bags were stuffed with clean linen, and novels, and sonnets of Shakespeare, and other baggage, it would have been well if they had been stuffed with hard-tack, for in real life meat is more than raiment.

The hotel, in front of which there is cultivated so much of what the Germans call *sitzfleisch*, is a fair type of the majority of Southern hotels, and differs from the same class in the North in being left a little more to run itself. The only information we obtained about it was from its porter at the station, who replied to the question, "Is it the best?" "We warrant you perfect satisfaction in every respect." This seems to be only a formula of expression, for we found that the statement was highly colored. It was left to our imagination to conjecture how the big chambers of the old house, with their gaping fireplaces, might have looked when furnished and filled with gay company, and we got what satisfaction we could out of a bygone bustle and mint-julep hilarity. In our struggles with the porter to obtain the little items of soap, water, and towels, we were convinced that we had arrived too late, and that for perfect satisfaction we should have been here before the war. It was not always as now. In colonial days the accommodations and prices at inns were regulated by law. In the old records in the court-house we read that if we had been here in 1777, we could have had a gallon of good rum for sixteen shillings; a quart bowl of rum toddy made with loaf sugar for two shillings, or with brown sugar for one shilling and sixpence. In 1779 prices had risen. Good rum sold for four pounds a gallon. It was ordered that a warm dinner should cost twelve shillings, a cold dinner nine shillings, and a good breakfast twelve shillings. But the item that pleased us most, and made us regret our late advent, was that for two shillings we could have had a "good lodging, with clean sheets." The colonists were fastidious people.

Abingdon, prettily situated on rolling hills, and a couple of thousand feet above the sea, with views of mountain peaks to the south, is a cheerful and not too exciting place for a brief sojourn, and hospitable and helpful to the stranger. We had dined--so much, at least, the public would expect of us--with a descendant of

Pocahontas; we had assisted on Sunday morning at the dedication of a new brick Methodist church, the finest edifice in the region-- a dedication that took a long time, since the bishop would not proceed with it until money enough was raised in open meeting to pay the balance due on it: a religious act, though it did give a business aspect to the place at the time; and we had been the light spots in the evening service at the most aristocratic church of color. The irresponsibility of this amiable race was exhibited in the tardiness with which they assembled: at the appointed time nobody was there except the sexton; it was three quarters of an hour before the congregation began to saunter in, and the sermon was nearly over before the pews were at all filled. Perhaps the sermon was not new, but it was fervid, and at times the able preacher roared so that articulate sounds were lost in the general effect. It was precisely these passages of cataracts of sound and hard breathing which excited the liveliest responses,--"Yes, Lord," and "Glory to God." Most of these responses came from the "Amen corner." The sermon contained the usual vivid description of the last judgment--ah, and I fancied that the congregation did not get the ordinary satisfaction out of it. Fashion had entered the fold, and the singing was mostly executed by a choir in the dusky gallery, who thinly and harshly warbled the emotional hymns. It occupied the minister a long time to give out the notices of the week, and there was not an evening or afternoon that had not its meetings, its literary or social gathering, its picnic or fair for the benefit of the church, its Dorcas society, or some occasion of religious sociability. The raising of funds appeared to be the burden on the preacher's mind. Two collections were taken up. At the first, the boxes appeared to get no supply except from the two white trash present. But the second was more successful. After the sermon was over, an elder took his place at a table within the rails, and the real business of the evening began. Somebody in the Amen corner struck up a tune that had no end, but a mighty power of setting the congregation in motion. The leader had a voice like the pleasant droning of a bag-pipe, and the faculty of emitting a continuous note like that instrument, without stopping to breathe. It went on and on like a Bach fugue, winding and whining its way, turning the corners of the lines of the catch without a break. The effect was soon visible in the emotional crowd: feet began to move in a regular cadence and voices to join in, with spurts of ejaculation; and soon, with an air of martyrdom, the members began to leave their seats and pass before the table and deposit their contributions. It was a cent contribution, and we found it very difficult, under the contagious influence of the hum from the Amen corner, not to rise and go forward and deposit a cent. If anything could extract the pennies from a reluctant worldling, it would be the buzzing of this tune. It went on and on, until the house appeared to be drained dry of its cash; and we inferred by the stopping of the melody that the preacher's salary was secure for the time being. On inquiring, we ascertained that the pecuniary flood that evening had risen to the height of a dollar and sixty cents.

All was ready for the start. It should have been early in the morning, but it was not; for Virginia is not only one of the blessed

regions where one can get a late breakfast, but where it is almost impossible to get an early one. At ten A. M. the two horsemen rode away out of sight of the Abingdon spectators, down the eastern turnpike. The day was warm, but the air was full of vitality and the spirit of adventure. It was the 22d of July. The horses were not ambitious, but went on at an easy fox-trot that permits observation and encourages conversation. It had been stipulated that the horses should be good walkers, the one essential thing in a horseback journey. Few horses, even in a country where riding is general, are trained to walk fast. We hear much of horses that can walk five miles an hour, but they are as rare as white elephants. Our horses were only fair walkers. We realized how necessary this accomplishment is, for between the Tennessee line and Asheville, North Carolina, there is scarcely a mile of trotting-ground.

We soon turned southward and descended into the Holston River Valley. Beyond lay the Tennessee hills and conspicuous White-Top Mountain (5530 feet), which has a good deal of local celebrity (standing where the States of Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina corner), and had been pointed out to us at Abingdon. We had been urged, personally and by letter, to ascend this mountain, without fail. People recommend mountains to their friends as they do patent medicines. As we leisurely jogged along we discussed this, and endeavored to arrive at some rule of conduct for the journey. The Professor expressed at once a feeling about mountain-climbing that amounted to hostility,--he would go nowhere that he could not ride. Climbing was the most unsatisfactory use to which a mountain could be put. As to White-Top, it was a small mountain, and not worth ascending. The Friend of Humanity, who believes in mountain-climbing as a theory, and for other people, and knows the value of being able to say, without detection, that he has ascended any high mountain about which he is questioned,--since this question is the first one asked about an exploration in a new country,--saw that he should have to use a good deal of diplomacy to get the Professor over any considerable elevation on the trip. And he had to confess also that a view from a mountain is never so satisfactory as a view of a mountain, from a moderate height. The Professor, however, did not argue the matter on any such reasonable ground, but took his stand on his right as a man not to ascend a mountain. With this appeal to first principles,--a position that could not be confuted on account of its vagueness (although it might probably be demonstrated that in society man has no such right), there was no way of agreement except by a compromise. It was accordingly agreed that no mountain under six thousand feet is worth ascending; that disposed of White-Top. It was further agreed that any mountain that is over six thousand feet high is too high to ascend on foot.

With this amicable adjustment we forded the Holston, crossing it twice within a few miles. This upper branch of the Tennessee is a noble stream, broad, with a rocky bed and a swift current. Fording it is ticklish business except at comparatively low water, and as it is subject to sudden rises, there must be times when it seriously interrupts travel. This whole region, full of swift streams, is

without a bridge, and, as a consequence, getting over rivers and brooks and the dangers of ferries occupy a prominent place in the thoughts of the inhabitants. The life necessarily had the "frontier" quality all through, for there can be little solid advance in civilization in the uncertainties of a bridgeless condition. An open, pleasant valley, the Holston, but cultivation is more and more negligent and houses are few and poorer as we advance.

We had left behind the hotels of "perfect satisfaction," and expected to live on the country, trusting to the infrequent but remunerated hospitality of the widely scattered inhabitants. We were to dine at Ramsey's. Ramsey's had been recommended to us as a royal place of entertainment the best in all that region; and as the sun grew hot in the sandy valley, and the weariness of noon fell upon us, we magnified Ramsey's in our imagination,--the nobility of its situation, its cuisine, its inviting restfulness,--and half decided to pass the night there in the true abandon of plantation life. Long before we reached it, the Holston River which we followed had become the Laurel, a most lovely, rocky, winding stream, which we forded continually, for the valley became too narrow much of the way to accommodate a road and a river. Eagerly as we were looking out for it, we passed the great Ramsey's without knowing it, for it was the first of a little settlement of two houses and a saw-mill and barn. It was a neat log house of two lower rooms and a summer kitchen, quite the best of the class that we saw, and the pleasant mistress of it made us welcome. Across the road and close, to the Laurel was the spring-house, the invariable adjunct to every well-to-do house in the region, and on the stony margin of the stream was set up the big caldron for the family washing; and here, paddling in the shallow stream, while dinner was preparing, we established an intimacy with the children and exchanged philosophical observations on life with the old negress who was dabbling the clothes. What impressed this woman was the inequality in life. She jumped to the unwarranted conclusion that the Professor and the Friend were very rich, and spoke with asperity of the difficulty she experienced in getting shoes and tobacco. It was useless to point out to her that her alfresco life was singularly blessed and free from care, and the happy lot of any one who could loiter all day by this laughing stream, undisturbed by debt or ambition. Everybody about the place was barefooted, except the mistress, including the comely daughter of eighteen, who served our dinner in the kitchen. The dinner was abundant, and though it seemed to us incongruous at the time, we were not twelve hours older when we looked back upon it with longing. On the table were hot biscuit, ham, pork, and green beans, apple-sauce, blackberry preserves, cucumbers, coffee, plenty of milk, honey, and apple and blackberry pie. Here we had our first experience, and I may say new sensation, of "honey on pie." It has a cloying sound as it is written, but the handmaiden recommended it with enthusiasm, and we evidently fell in her esteem, as persons from an uncultivated society, when we declared our inexperience of "honey on pie." "Where be you from?" It turned out to be very good, and we have tried to introduce it in families since our return, with indifferent success. There did not seem to be in this family much curiosity about the

world at large, nor much stir of social life. The gayety of madame appeared to consist in an occasional visit to paw and maw and grandmaw, up the river a few miles, where she was raised.

Refreshed by the honey and fodder at Ramsey's, the pilgrims went gayly along the musical Laurel, in the slanting rays of the afternoon sun, which played upon the rapids and illumined all the woody way. Inspired by the misapprehension of the colored philosopher and the dainties of the dinner, the Professor soliloquized:

"So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of wealth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet."

Five miles beyond Ramsey's the Tennessee line was crossed. The Laurel became more rocky, swift, full of rapids, and the valley narrowed down to the riverway, with standing room, however, for stately trees along the banks. The oaks, both black and white, were, as they had been all day, gigantic in size and splendid in foliage. There is a certain dignity in riding in such stately company, and the travelers clattered along over the stony road under the impression of possible high adventure in a new world of such freshness. Nor was beauty wanting. The rhododendrons had, perhaps, a week ago reached their climax, and now began to strew the water and the ground with their brilliant petals, dashing all the way with color; but they were still matchlessly beautiful. Great banks of pink and white covered the steep hillsides; the bending stems, ten to twenty feet high, hung their rich clusters over the river; avenues of glory opened away in the glade of the stream; and at every turn of the winding way vistas glowing with the hues of romance wrenched exclamations of delight and wonder from the Shakespearean sonneteer and his humble Friend. In the deep recesses of the forest suddenly flamed to the view, like the splashes of splendor on the somber canvas of an old Venetian, these wonders of color,--the glowing summer-heart of the woods.

It was difficult to say, meantime, whether the road was laid out in the river, or the river in the road. In the few miles to Egger's (this was the destination of our great expectations for the night) the stream was crossed twenty-seven times,--or perhaps it would be more proper to say that the road was crossed twenty-seven times. Where the road did not run in the river, its bed was washed out and as stony as the bed of the stream. This is a general and accurate description of all the roads in this region, which wind along and in the streams, through narrow valleys, shut in by low and steep hills. The country is full of springs and streams, and between Abingdon and Egger's is only one (small) bridge. In a region with scarcely any level land or intervale, farmers are at a disadvantage. All along the road we saw nothing but mean shanties, generally of logs, with

now and then a decent one-story frame, and the people looked miserably poor.

As we picked our way along up the Laurel, obliged for the most part to ride single-file, or as the Professor expressed it,

"Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one,"

we gathered information about Egger's from the infrequent hovels on the road, which inflamed our imaginations. Egger was the thriving man of the region, and lived in style in a big brick house. We began to feel a doubt that Egger would take us in, and so much did his brick magnificence impress us that we regretted we had not brought apparel fit for the society we were about to enter.

It was half-past six, and we were tired and hungry, when the domain of Egger towered in sight,--a gaunt, two-story structure of raw brick, unfinished, standing in a narrow interval. We rode up to the gate, and asked a man who sat in the front-door porch if this was Egger's, and if we could be accommodated for the night. The man, without moving, allowed that it was Egger's, and that we could probably stay there. This person, however, exhibited so much indifference to our company, he was such a hairy, unkempt man, and carried on face, hands, and clothes so much more of the soil of the region than a prudent proprietor would divert from raising corn, that we set him aside as a poor relation, and asked for Mr. Egger. But the man, still without the least hospitable stir, admitted that that was the name he went by, and at length advised us to "lite" and hitch our horses, and sit on the porch with him and enjoy the cool of the evening. The horses would be put up by and by, and in fact things generally would come round some time. This turned out to be the easy way of the country. Mr. Egger was far from being inhospitable, but was in no hurry, and never had been in a hurry. He was not exactly a gentleman of the old school. He dated from the time when there were no schools at all, and he lived in that placid world which is without information and ideas. Mr. Egger showed his superiority by a total lack of curiosity about any other world.

This brick house, magnificent by comparison with other dwellings in this country, seemed to us, on nearer acquaintance, only a thin, crude shell of a house, half unfinished, with bare rooms, the plastering already discolored. In point of furnishing it had not yet reached the "God bless our Home" stage in crewel. In the narrow meadow, a strip of vivid green south of the house, ran a little stream, fed by a copious spring, and over it was built the inevitable spring-house. A post, driven into the bank by the stream, supported a tin wash-basin, and here we performed our ablutions. The traveler gets to like this freedom and primitive luxury.

The farm of Egger produces corn, wheat, grass, and sheep; it is a good enough farm, but most of it lies at an angle of thirty-five to

forty degrees. The ridge back of the house, planted in corn, was as steep as the roof of his dwelling. It seemed incredible that it ever could have been plowed, but the proprietor assured us that it was plowed with mules, and I judged that the harvesting must be done by squirrels. The soil is good enough, if it would stay in place, but all the hillsides are seamed with gullies. The discolored state of the streams was accounted for as soon as we saw this cultivated land. No sooner is the land cleared of trees and broken up than it begins to wash. We saw more of this later, especially in North Carolina, where we encountered no stream of water that was not muddy, and saw no cultivated ground that was not washed. The process of denudation is going on rapidly wherever the original forests are girdled (a common way of preparing for crops), or cut away.

As the time passed and there was no sign of supper, the question became a burning one, and we went to explore the kitchen. No sign of it there. No fire in the stove, nothing cooked in the house, of course. Mrs. Egger and her comely young barefooted daughter had still the milking to attend to, and supper must wait for the other chores. It seemed easier to be Mr. Egger, in this state of existence, and sit on the front porch and meditate on the price of mules and the prospect of a crop, than to be Mrs. Egger, whose work was not limited from sun to sun; who had, in fact, a day's work to do after the men-folks had knocked off; whose chances of neighborhood gossip were scanty, whose amusements were confined to a religious meeting once a fortnight. Good, honest people these, not unduly puffed up by the brick house, grubbing away year in and year out. Yes, the young girl said, there was a neighborhood party, now and then, in the winter. What a price to pay for mere life!

Long before supper was ready, nearly nine o'clock, we had almost lost interest in it. Meantime two other guests had arrived, a couple of drovers from North Carolina, who brought into the circle--by this time a wood-fire had been kindled in the sitting-room, which contained a bed, an almanac, and some old copies of a newspaper--a rich flavor of cattle, and talk of the price of steers. As to politics, although a presidential campaign was raging, there was scarcely an echo of it here. This was Johnson County, Tennessee, a strong Republican county but dog-gone it, says Mr. Egger, it's no use to vote; our votes are overborne by the rest of the State. Yes, they'd got a Republican member of Congress,--he'd heard his name, but he'd forgotten it. The drover said he'd heard it also, but he didn't take much interest in such things, though he wasn't any Republican. Parties is pretty much all for office, both agreed. Even the Professor, who was traveling in the interest of Reform, couldn't wake up a discussion out of such a state of mind.

Alas! the supper, served in a room dimly lighted with a smoky lamp, on a long table covered with oilcloth, was not of the sort to arouse the delayed and now gone appetite of a Reformer, and yet it did not lack variety: cornpone (Indian meal stirred up with water and heated through), hot biscuit, slack-baked and livid, fried salt-pork swimming in grease, apple-butter, pickled beets, onions and cucumbers

raw, coffee (so-called), buttermilk, and sweet milk when specially asked for (the correct taste, however, is for buttermilk), and pie. This was not the pie of commerce, but the pie of the country,--two thick slabs of dough, with a squeezing of apple between. The profusion of this supper staggered the novices, but the drovers attacked it as if such cooking were a common occurrence) and did justice to the weary labors of Mrs. Egger.

Egger is well prepared to entertain strangers, having several rooms and several beds in each room. Upon consultation with the drovers, they said they'd just as soon occupy an apartment by themselves, and we gave up their society for the night. The beds in our chamber had each one sheet, and the room otherwise gave evidence of the modern spirit; for in one corner stood the fashionable aesthetic decoration of our Queen Anne drawing-rooms,--the spinning-wheel. Soothed by this concession to taste, we crowded in between the straw and the home-made blanket and sheet, and soon ceased to hear the barking of dogs and the horned encounters of the drovers' herd.

We parted with Mr. Egger after breakfast (which was a close copy of the supper) with more respect than regret. His total charge for the entertainment of two men and two horses--supper, lodging, and breakfast--was high or low, as the traveler chose to estimate it. It was \$1.20: that is, thirty cents for each individual, or ten cents for each meal and lodging.

Our road was a sort of by-way up Gentry Creek and over the Cut Laurel Gap to Worth's, at Creston Post Office, in North Carolina,--the next available halting place, said to be fifteen miles distant, and turning out to be twenty-two, and a rough road. There is a little settlement about Egger's, and the first half mile of our way we had the company of the schoolmistress, a modest, pleasant-spoken girl. Neither she nor any other people we encountered had any dialect or local peculiarity of speech. Indeed, those we encountered that morning had nothing in manner or accent to distinguish them. The novelists had led us to expect something different; and the modest and pretty young lady with frank and open blue eyes, who wore gloves and used the common English speech, had never figured in the fiction of the region. Cherished illusions vanish often on near approach. The day gave no peculiarity of speech to note, except the occasional use of "hit" for "it."

The road over Cut Laurel Gap was very steep and stony, the thermometer mounted up to 80 deg., and, notwithstanding the beauty of the way, the ride became tedious before we reached the summit. On the summit is the dwelling and distillery of a colonel famous in these parts. We stopped at the house for a glass of milk; the colonel was absent, and while the woman in charge went after it, we sat on the veranda and conversed with a young lady, tall, gent, well favored, and communicative, who leaned in the doorway.

"Yes, this house stands on the line. Where you sit, you are in Tennessee; I'm in North Carolina."

"Do you live here?"

"Law, no; I'm just staying a little while at the colonel's. I live over the mountain here, three miles from Taylorsville. I thought I'd be where I could step into North Carolina easy."

"How's that?"

"Well, they wanted me to go before the grand jury and testify about some pistol-shooting down by our house, some friends of mine got into a little difficulty,--and I did n't want to. I never has no difficulty with nobody, never says nothing about nobody, has nothing against nobody, and I reckon nobody has nothing against me."

"Did you come alone?"

"Why, of course. I come across the mountain by a path through the woods. That's nothing."

A discreet, pleasant, pretty girl. This surely must be the Esmeralda who lives in these mountains, and adorns low life by her virgin purity and sentiment. As she talked on, she turned from time to time to the fireplace behind her, and discharged a dark fluid from her pretty lips, with accuracy of aim, and with a nonchalance that was not assumed, but belongs to our free-born American girls. I cannot tell why this habit of hers (which is no worse than the sister habit of "dipping") should take her out of the romantic setting that her face and figure had placed her in; but somehow we felt inclined to ride on farther for our heroine.

"And yet," said the Professor, as we left the site of the colonel's thriving distillery, and by a winding, picturesque road through a rough farming country descended into the valley,--"and yet, why fling aside so readily a character and situation so full of romance, on account of a habit of this mountain Helen, which one of our best poets has almost made poetical, in the case of the pioneer taking his westward way, with ox-goad pointing to the sky:

"'He's leaving on the pictured rock
His fresh tobacco stain.'

"To my mind the incident has Homeric elements. The Greeks would have looked at it in a large, legendary way. Here is Helen, strong and lithe of limb, ox-eyed, courageous, but woman-hearted and love-inspiring, contended for by all the braves and daring moonshiners of Cut Laurel Gap, pursued by the gallants of two States, the prize of a border warfare of bowie knives and revolvers. This Helen, magnanimous as attractive, is the witness of a pistol difficulty on her behalf, and when wanted by the areopagus, that she may neither implicate a lover nor punish an enemy (having nothing, this noble type of her sex) against nobody), skips away to Mount Ida, and there, under the aegis of the flag of her country, in a Licensed Distillery,

stands with one slender foot in Tennessee and the other in North Carolina"

"Like the figure of the Republic itself, superior to state sovereignty," interposed the Friend.

"I beg your pardon," said the Professor, urging up Laura Matilda (for so he called the nervous mare, who fretted herself into a fever in the stony path), "I was quite able to get the woman out of that position without the aid of a metaphor. It is a large and Greek idea, that of standing in two mighty States, superior to the law, looking east and looking west, ready to transfer her agile body to either State on the approach of messengers of the court; and I'll be hanged if I didn't think that her nonchalant rumination of the weed, combined with her lofty moral attitude, added something to the picture."

The Friend said that he was quite willing to join in the extremest defense of the privileges of beauty,--that he even held in abeyance judgment on the practice of dipping; but when it came to chewing, gum was as far as he could go as an allowance for the fair sex.

"When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment..."

The rest of the stanza was lost, for the Professor was splashing through the stream. No sooner had we descended than the fording of streams began again. The Friend had been obliged to stipulate that the Professor should go ahead at these crossings, to keep the impetuous nag of the latter from throwing half the contents of the stream upon his slower and uncomplaining companion.

What a lovely country, but for the heat of noon and the long wearisomeness of the way!--not that the distance was great, but miles and miles more than expected. How charming the open glades of the river, how refreshing the great forests of oak and chestnut, and what a panorama of beauty the banks of rhododendrons, now intermingled with the lighter pink and white of the laurel! In this region the rhododendron is called laurel) and the laurel (the sheep-laurel of New England) is called ivy.

At Worth's, well on in the afternoon, we emerged into a wide, open farming interval, a pleasant place of meadows and streams and decent dwellings. Worth's is the trading center of the region, has a post office and a saw-mill and a big country store; and the dwelling of the proprietor is not unlike a roomy New England country house. Worth's has been immemorially a stopping-place in a region where places of accommodation are few. The proprietor, now an elderly man, whose reminiscences are long ante bellum, has seen the world grow up about him, he the honored, just center of it, and a family come up into the modern notions of life, with a boarding-school education and glimpses of city life and foreign travel. I fancy that nothing but tradition and a remaining Southern hospitality could induce this

private family to suffer the incursions of this wayfaring man. Our travelers are not apt to be surprised at anything in American life, but they did not expect to find a house in this region with two pianos and a bevy of young ladies, whose clothes were certainly not made on Cut Laurel Gap, and to read in the books scattered about the house the evidences of the finishing schools with which our country is blessed, nor to find here pupils of the Stonewall Jackson Institute at Abingdon. With a flush of local pride, the Professor took up, in the roomy, pleasant chamber set apart for the guests, a copy of Porter's "Elements of Moral Science."

"Where you see the 'Elements of Moral Science,'" the Friend generalized, "there'll be plenty of water and towels;" and the sign did not fail. The friends intended to read this book in the cool of the day; but as they sat on the long veranda, the voice of a maiden reading the latest novel to a sewing group behind the blinds in the drawing-room; and the antics of a mule and a boy in front of the store opposite; and the arrival of a spruce young man, who had just ridden over from somewhere, a matter of ten miles' gallop, to get a medicinal potion for his sick mother, and lingered chatting with the young ladies until we began to fear that his mother would recover before his return; the coming and going of lean women in shakily wagons to trade at the store; the coming home of the cows, splashing through the stream, hooking right and left, and lowing for the hand of the milker,--all these interruptions, together with the generally drowsy quiet of the approach of evening, interfered with the study of the Elements. And when the travelers, after a refreshing rest, went on their way next morning, considering the Elements and the pianos and the refinement, to say nothing of the cuisine, which is not treated of in the text-book referred to, they were content with a bill double that of brother Egger, in his brick magnificence.

The simple truth is, that the traveler in this region must be content to feed on natural beauties. And it is an unfortunate truth in natural history that the appetite for this sort of diet fails after a time, if the inner man is not supplied with other sort of food. There is no landscape in the world that is agreeable after two days of rusty-bacon and slack biscuit.

"How lovely this would be," exclaimed the Professor, if it had a background of beefsteak and coffee!

We were riding along the west fork of the Laurel, distinguished locally as Three Top Creek,--or, rather, we were riding in it, crossing it thirty-one times within six miles; a charming wood (and water) road, under the shade of fine trees with the rhododendron illuminating the way, gleaming in the forest and reflected in the stream, all the ten miles to Elk Cross Roads, our next destination. We had heard a great deal about Elk Cross Roads; it was on the map, it was down in the itinerary furnished by a member of the Coast Survey. We looked forward to it as a sweet place of repose from the noontide heat. Alas! Elk Cross Roads is a dirty grocery store, encumbered with dry-goods boxes, fly-blown goods, flies, loafers. In

reply to our inquiry we were told that they had nothing to eat, for us, and not a grain of feed for the horses. But there was a man a mile farther on, who was well to do and had stores of food,--old man Tatern would treat us in bang-up style. The difficulty of getting feed for the horses was chronic all through the journey. The last corn crop had failed, the new oats and corn had not come in, and the country was literally barren. We had noticed all along that the hens were taking a vacation, and that chickens were not put forward as an article of diet.

We were unable, when we reached the residence of old man Tatern, to imagine how the local superstition of his wealth arose. His house is of logs, with two rooms, a kitchen and a spare room, with a low loft accessible by a ladder at the side of the chimney. The chimney is a huge construction of stone, separating the two parts of the house; in fact, the chimney was built first, apparently, and the two rooms were then built against it. The proprietor sat in a little railed veranda. These Southern verandas give an air to the meanest dwelling, and they are much used; the family sit here, and here are the washbasin and pail (which is filled from the neighboring spring-house), and the row of milk-pans. The old man Tatern did not welcome us with enthusiasm; he had no corn,--these were hard times. He looked like hard times, grizzled times, dirty times. It seemed time out of mind since he had seen comb or razor, and although the lovely New River, along which we had ridden to his house,--a broad, inviting stream,--was in sight across the meadow, there was no evidence that he had ever made acquaintance with its cleansing waters. As to corn, the necessities of the case and pay being dwelt on, perhaps he could find a dozen ears. A dozen small cars he did find, and we trust that the horses found them.

We took a family dinner with old man Tatern in the kitchen, where there was a bed and a stove,--a meal that the host seemed to enjoy, but which we could not make much of, except the milk; that was good. A painful meal, on the whole, owing to the presence in the room of a grown-up daughter with a graveyard cough, without physician or medicine, or comforts. Poor girl! just dying of "a misery."

In the spare room were two beds; the walls were decorated with the gay-colored pictures of patent-medicine advertisements--a favorite art adornment of the region; and a pile of ancient illustrated papers with the usual patent-office report, the thoughtful gift of the member for the district. The old man takes in the "Blue Ridge Baptist," a journal which we found largely taken up with the experiences of its editor on his journeys roundabout in search of subscribers. This newspaper was the sole communication of the family with the world at large, but the old man thought he should stop it,--he did n't seem to get the worth of his money out of it. And old man Tatern was a thrifty and provident man. On the hearth in this best room--as ornaments or memento mori were a couple of marble gravestones, a short headstone and foot-stone, mounted on bases and ready for use, except the lettering. These may not have been so mournful and significant as they looked, nor the evidence of simple,

humble faith; they may have been taken for debt. But as parlor ornaments they had a fascination which we could not escape.

It was while we were bathing in the New River, that afternoon, and meditating on the grim, unrelieved sort of life of our host, that the Professor said, "judging by the face of the 'Blue Ridge Baptist,' he will charge us smartly for the few nubbins of corn and the milk." The face did not deceive us; the charge was one dollar. At this rate it would have broken us to have tarried with old man Tatem (perhaps he is not old, but that is the name he goes by) over night.

It was a hot afternoon, and it needed some courage to mount and climb the sandy hill leading us away from the corn-crib of Tatem. But we entered almost immediately into fine stretches of forest, and rode under the shade of great oaks. The way, which began by the New River, soon led us over the hills to the higher levels of Watauga County. So far on our journey we had been hemmed in by low hills, and without any distant or mountain outlooks. The excessive heat seemed out of place at the elevation of over two thousand feet, on which we were traveling. Boone, the county seat of Watauga County, was our destination, and, ever since morning, the guideboards and the trend of the roads had notified us that everything in this region tends towards Boone as a center of interest. The simple ingenuity of some of the guide-boards impressed us. If, on coming to a fork, the traveler was to turn to the right, the sign read,

To BOONE 10 M.

If he was to go to the left, it read,

.M 01 ENOOB oT

A short ride of nine miles, on an ascending road, through an open, unfenced forest region, brought us long before sundown to this capital. When we had ridden into its single street, which wanders over gentle hills, and landed at the most promising of the taverns, the Friend informed his comrade that Boone was 3250 feet above Albemarle Sound, and believed by its inhabitants to be the highest village east of the Rocky Mountains. The Professor said that it might be so, but it was a God-forsaken place. Its inhabitants numbered perhaps two hundred and fifty, a few of them colored. It had a gaunt, shaky court-house and jail, a store or two, and two taverns. The two taverns are needed to accommodate the judges and lawyers and their clients during the session of the court. The court is the only excitement and the only amusement. It is the event from which other events date. Everybody in the county knows exactly when court sits, and when court breaks. During the session the whole county is practically in Boone, men, women, and children. They camp there, they attend the trials, they take sides; half of them, perhaps, are witnesses, for the region is litigious, and the neighborhood quarrels are entered into with spirit. To be fond of lawsuits seems a characteristic of an isolated people in new conditions. The early settlers of New England were.

Notwithstanding the elevation of Boone, which insured a pure air, the

thermometer that afternoon stood at from 85 to 89 deg. The flies enjoyed it. How they swarmed in this tavern! They would have carried off all the food from the dining-room table (for flies do not mind eating off oilcloth, and are not particular how food is cooked), but for the machine with hanging flappers that swept the length of it; and they destroy all possibility of sleep except in the dark. The mountain regions of North Carolina are free from mosquitoes, but the fly has settled there, and is the universal scourge. This tavern, one end of which was a store, had a veranda in front, and a back gallery, where there were evidences of female refinement in pots of plants and flowers. The landlord himself kept tavern very much as a hostler would, but we had to make a note in his favor that he had never heard of a milk punch. And it might as well be said here, for it will have to be insisted on later, that the traveler, who has read about the illicit stills till his imagination dwells upon the indulgence of his vitiated tastes in the mountains of North Carolina, is doomed to disappointment. If he wants to make himself an exception to the sober people whose cooking will make him long for the maddening bowl, he must bring his poison with him. We had found no bread since we left Virginia; we had seen cornmeal and water, slack-baked; we had seen potatoes fried in grease, and bacon incrustated with salt (all thirst-provokers), but nothing to drink stronger than buttermilk. And we can say that, so far as our example is concerned, we left the country as temperate as we found it. How can there be mint juleps (to go into details) without ice? and in the summer there is probably not a pound of ice in all the State north of Buncombe County.

There is nothing special to be said about Boone. We were anxious to reach it, we were glad to leave it; we note as to all these places that our joy at departing always exceeds that on arriving, which is a merciful provision of nature for people who must keep moving. This country is settled by genuine Americans, who have the aboriginal primitive traits of the universal Yankee nation. The front porch in the morning resembled a carpenter's shop; it was literally covered with the whittlings of the row of natives who had spent the evening there in the sedative occupation of whittling.

We took that morning a forest road to Valle Crusis, seven miles, through noble growths of oaks, chestnuts, hemlocks, rhododendrons,--a charming wood road, leading to a place that, as usual, did not keep the promise of its name. Valle Crusis has a blacksmith shop and a dirty, flyblown store. While the Professor consulted the blacksmith about a loose shoe, the Friend carried his weariness of life without provisions up to a white house on the hill, and negotiated for boiled milk. This house was occupied by flies. They must have numbered millions, settled in black swarms, covering tables, beds, walls, the veranda; the kitchen was simply a hive of them. The only book in sight, Whewell's--"Elements of Morality," seemed to attract flies. Query, Why should this have such a different effect from Porter's? A white house,--a pleasant-looking house at a distance,--amiable, kindly people in it,--why should we have arrived there on its dirty day? Alas! if we had been starving, Valle Crusis had nothing to

offer us.

So we rode away, in the blazing heat, no poetry exuding from the Professor, eight miles to Banner's Elk, crossing a mountain and passing under Hanging Rock, a conspicuous feature in the landscape, and the only outcropping of rock we had seen: the face of a ledge, rounded up into the sky, with a green hood on it. From the summit we had the first extensive prospect during our journey. The road can be described as awful,--steep, stony, the horses unable to make two miles an hour on it. Now and then we encountered a rude log cabin without barns or outhouses, and a little patch of feeble corn. The women who regarded the passers from their cabin doors were frowzy and looked tired. What with the heat and the road and this discouraged appearance of humanity, we reached the residence of Dugger, at Banner's Elk, to which we had been directed, nearly exhausted. It is no use to represent this as a dash across country on impatient steeds. It was not so. The love of truth is stronger than the desire of display. And for this reason it is impossible to say that Mr. Dugger, who is an excellent man, lives in a clean and attractive house, or that he offers much that the pampered child of civilization can eat. But we shall not forget the two eggs, fresh from the hens, whose temperature must have been above the normal, nor the spring-house in the glen, where we found a refuge from the flies and the heat. The higher we go, the hotter it is. Banner's Elk boasts an elevation of thirty-five to thirty-seven hundred feet.

We were not sorry, towards sunset, to descend along the Elk River towards Cranberry Forge. The Elk is a lovely stream, and, though not very clear, has a reputation for trout; but all this region was under operation of a three-years game law, to give the trout a chance to multiply, and we had no opportunity to test the value of its reputation. Yet a boy whom we encountered had a good string of quarter-pound trout, which he had taken out with a hook and a feather rudely tied on it, to resemble a fly. The road, though not to be commended, was much better than that of the morning, the forests grew charming in the cool of the evening, the whippoorwill sang, and as night fell the wanderers, in want of nearly everything that makes life desirable, stopped at the Iron Company's hotel, under the impression that it was the only comfortable hotel in North Carolina.

II

Cranberry Forge is the first wedge of civilization fairly driven into the northwest mountains of North Carolina. A narrow-gauge railway, starting from Johnson City, follows up the narrow gorge of the Doe River, and pushes into the heart of the iron mines at Cranberry, where there is a blast furnace; and where a big company store, rows of tenement houses, heaps of slag and refuse ore, interlacing tracks, raw embankments, denuded hillsides, and a blackened landscape, are the signs of a great devastating American enterprise. The Cranberry

iron is in great esteem, as it has the peculiar quality of the Swedish iron. There are remains of old furnaces lower down the stream, which we passed on our way. The present "plant" is that of a Philadelphia company, whose enterprise has infused new life into all this region, made it accessible, and spoiled some pretty scenery.

When we alighted, weary, at the gate of the pretty hotel, which crowns a gentle hill and commands a pleasing, evergreen prospect of many gentle hills, a mile or so below the works, and wholly removed from all sordid associations, we were at the point of willingness that the whole country should be devastated by civilization. In the local imagination this hotel of the company is a palace of unequalled magnificence, but probably its good taste, comfort, and quiet elegance are not appreciated after all. There is this to be said about Philadelphia,--and it will go far in pleading for it in the Last Day against its monotonous rectangularity and the babel-like ambition of its Public Building,--that wherever its influence extends, there will be found comfortable lodgings and the luxury of an undeniably excellent cuisine. The visible seal that Philadelphia sets on its enterprise all through the South is a good hotel.

This Cottage Beautiful has on two sides a wide veranda, set about with easy chairs; cheerful parlors and pretty chambers, finished in native woods, among which are conspicuous the satin stripes of the cucumber-tree; luxurious beds, and an inviting table ordered by a Philadelphia landlady, who knows a beefsteak from a boot-tap. Is it "low" to dwell upon these things of the senses, when one is on a tour in search of the picturesque? Let the reader ride from Abingdon through a wilderness of cornpone and rusty bacon, and then judge. There were, to be sure, novels lying about, and newspapers, and fragments of information to be picked up about a world into which the travelers seemed to emerge. They, at least, were satisfied, and went off to their rooms with the restful feeling that they had arrived somewhere) and no unquiet spirit at morn would say "to horse." To sleep, perchance to dream of Tatem and his household cemetery; and the Professor was heard muttering in his chamber,

"Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind, when body's work's expir'd."

The morning was warm (the elevation of the hotel must be between twenty-five hundred and three thousand feet), rainy, mildly rainy; and the travelers had nothing better to do than lounge upon the veranda, read feeble ten-cent fictions, and admire the stems of the white birches, glistening in the moisture, and the rhododendron-trees, twenty feet high, which were shaking off their last pink blossoms, and look down into the valley of the Doe. It is not an exciting landscape, nothing bold or specially wild in it, but restful with the monotony of some of the wooded Pennsylvania hills.

Sunday came up smiling, a lovely day, but offering no church

privileges, for the ordinance of preaching is only occasional in this region. The ladies of the hotel have, however, gathered in the valley a Sunday-school of fifty children from the mountain cabins. A couple of rainy days, with the thermometer rising to 80 deg., combined with natural laziness to detain the travelers in this cottage of ease. They enjoyed this the more because it was on their consciences that they should visit Linville Falls, some twenty-five miles eastward, long held up before them as the most magnificent feature of this region, and on no account to be omitted. Hence, naturally, a strong desire to omit it. The Professor takes bold ground against these abnormal freaks of nature, and it was nothing to him that the public would demand that we should see Linville Falls. In the first place, we could find no one who had ever seen them, and we spent two days in catechizing natives and strangers. The nearest we came to information was from a workman at the furnace, who was born and raised within three miles of the Falls. He had heard of people going there. He had never seen them himself. It was a good twenty-five miles there, over the worst road in the State we'd think it thirty before we got there. Fifty miles of such travel to see a little water run down-hill! The travelers reflected. Every country has a local waterfall of which it boasts; they had seen a great many. One more would add little to the experience of life. The vagueness of information, to be sure, lured the travelers to undertake the journey; but the temptation was resisted--something ought to be left for the next explorer--and so Linville remains a thing of the imagination.

Towards evening, July 29, between showers, the Professor and the Friend rode along the narrow-gauge road, down Johnson's Creek, to Roan Station, the point of departure for ascending Roan Mountain. It was a ride of an hour and a half over a fair road, fringed with rhododendrons, nearly blossomless; but at a point on the stream this sturdy shrub had formed a long bower where under a table might have been set for a temperance picnic, completely overgrown with wild grape, and still gay with bloom. The habitations on the way are mostly board shanties and mean frame cabins, but the railway is introducing ambitious architecture here and there in the form of ornamental filigree work on flimsy houses; ornamentation is apt to precede comfort in our civilization.

Roan Station is on the Doe River (which flows down from Roan Mountain), and is marked at 1265 feet above the sea. The visitor will find here a good hotel, with open wood fires (not ungrateful in a July evening), and obliging people. This railway from Johnson City, hanging on the edge of the precipices that wall the gorge of the Doe, is counted in this region by the inhabitants one of the engineering wonders of the world. The tourist is urged by all means to see both it and Linville Falls.

The tourist on horseback, in search of exercise and recreation, is not probably expected to take stock of moral conditions. But this Mitchell County, although it was a Union county during the war and is Republican in politics (the Southern reader will perhaps prefer

another adverb to "although"), has had the worst possible reputation. The mountains were hiding-places of illicit distilleries; the woods were full of grog-shanties, where the inflaming fluid was sold as "native brandy," quarrels and neighborhood difficulties were frequent, and the knife and pistol were used on the slightest provocation. Fights arose about boundaries and the title to mica mines, and with the revenue officers; and force was the arbiter of all disputes. Within the year four murders were committed in the sparsely settled county. Travel on any of the roads was unsafe. The tone of morals was what might be expected with such lawlessness. A lady who came up on the road on the 4th of July, when an excursion party of country people took possession of the cars, witnessed a scene and heard language past belief. Men, women, and children drank from whisky bottles that continually circulated, and a wild orgy resulted. Profanity, indecent talk on topics that even the license of the sixteenth century would not have tolerated, and freedom of manners that even Teniers would have shrunk from putting on canvas, made the journey horrible.

The unrestrained license of whisky and assault and murder had produced a reaction a few months previous to our visit. The people had risen up in their indignation and broken up the groggeries. So far as we observed temperance prevailed, backed by public-opinion. In our whole ride through the mountain region we saw only one or two places where liquor was sold.

It is called twelve miles from Roan Station to Roan Summit. The distance is probably nearer fourteen, and our horses were five hours in walking it. For six miles the road runs by Doe River, here a pretty brook shaded with laurel and rhododendron, and a few cultivated patches of ground, and infrequent houses. It was a blithe morning, and the horsemen would have given full indulgence to the spirit of adventure but for the attitude of the Professor towards mountains. It was not with him a matter of feeling, but of principle, not to ascend them. But here lay Roan, a long, sprawling ridge, lifting itself 6250 feet up into the sky. Impossible to go around it, and the other side must be reached. The Professor was obliged to surrender, and surmount a difficulty which he could not philosophize out of his mind.

>From the base of the mountain a road is very well engineered, in easy grades for carriages, to the top; but it was in poor repair and stony. We mounted slowly through splendid forests, specially of fine chestnuts and hemlocks. This big timber continues till within a mile and a half of the summit by the winding road, really within a short distance of the top. Then there is a narrow belt of scrubby hardwood, moss-grown, and then large balsams, which crown the mountain. As soon as we came out upon the southern slope we found great open spaces, covered with succulent grass, and giving excellent pasturage to cattle. These rich mountain meadows are found on all the heights of this region. The surface of Roan is uneven, and has no one culminating peak that commands the country, like the peak of Mount Washington, but several eminences within its range of probably

a mile and a half, where various views can be had. Near the highest point, sheltered from the north by balsams, stands a house of entertainment, with a detached cottage, looking across the great valley to the Black Mountain range. The surface of the mountain is pebbly, but few rocks crop out; no ledges of any size are seen except at a distance from the hotel, on the north side, and the mountain consequently lacks that savage, unsubduable aspect which the White Hills of New Hampshire have. It would, in fact, have been difficult to realize that we were over six thousand feet above the sea, except for that pallor in the sunlight, that atmospheric thinness and want of color which is an unpleasant characteristic of high altitudes. To be sure, there is a certain brilliancy in the high air,--it is apt to be foggy on Roan,--and objects appear in sharp outline, but I have often experienced on such places that feeling of melancholy, which would, of course, deepen upon us all if we were sensible that the sun was gradually withdrawing its power of warmth and light. The black balsam is neither a cheerful nor a picturesque tree; the frequent rains and mists on Roan keep the grass and mosses green, but the ground damp. Doubtless a high mountain covered with vegetation has its compensation, but for me the naked granite rocks in sun and shower are more cheerful.

The advantage of Roan is that one can live there and be occupied for a long time in mineral and botanical study. Its mild climate, moisture, and great elevation make it unique in this country for the botanist. The variety of plants assembled there is very large, and there are many, we were told, never or rarely found elsewhere in the United States. At any rate, the botanists rave about Roan Mountain, and spend weeks at a time on it. We found there ladies who could draw for us Grey's lily (then passed), and had kept specimens of the rhododendron (not growing elsewhere in this region) which has a deep red, almost purple color.

The hotel (since replaced by a good house) was a rude mountain structure, with a couple of comfortable rooms for office and sitting-room, in which big wood fires were blazing; for though the thermometer might record 60 deg., as it did when we arrived, fire was welcome. Sleeping-places partitioned off in the loft above gave the occupants a feeling of camping out, all the conveniences being primitive; and when the wind rose in the night and darkness, and the loose boards rattled and the timbers creaked, the sensation was not unlike that of being at sea. The hotel was satisfactorily kept, and Southern guests, from as far south as New Orleans, were spending the season there, and not finding time hang heavy on their hands. This statement is perhaps worth more than pages of description as to the character of Roan, and its contrast to Mount Washington.

The summer weather is exceedingly uncertain on all these North Carolina mountains; they are apt at any moment to be enveloped in mist; and it would rather rain on them than not. On the afternoon of our arrival there was fine air and fair weather, but not a clear sky. The distance was hazy, but the outlines were preserved. We could see White Top, in Virginia; Grandfather Mountain, a long serrated range;

the twin towers of Linville; and the entire range of the Black Mountains, rising from the valley, and apparently lower than we were. They get the name of Black from the balsams which cover the summits.

The rain on Roan was of less annoyance by reason of the delightful company assembled at the hotel, which was in a manner at home there, and, thrown upon its own resources, came out uncommonly strong in agreeableness. There was a fiddle in the house, which had some of the virtues of that celebrated in the history of old Mark Langston; the Professor was enabled to produce anything desired out of the literature of the eighteenth century; and what with the repartee of bright women, big wood fires, reading, and chat, there was no dull day or evening on Roan. I can fancy, however, that it might tire in time, if one were not a botanist, without the resource of women's society. The ladies staying here were probably all accomplished botanists, and the writer is indebted to one of them for a list of plants found on Roan, among which is an interesting weed, catalogued as *Humana, perplexia negligens*. The species is, however, common elsewhere.

The second morning opened, after a night of high wind, with a thunder-shower. After it passed, the visitors tried to reach Eagle Cliff, two miles off, whence an extensive western prospect is had, but were driven back by a tempest, and rain practically occupied the day. Now and then through the parted clouds we got a glimpse of a mountain-side, or the gleam of a valley. On the lower mountains, at wide intervals apart, were isolated settlements, commonly a wretched cabin and a spot of girdled trees. A clergyman here, not long ago, undertook to visit some of these cabins and carry his message to them. In one wretched hut of logs he found a poor woman, with whom, after conversation on serious subjects, he desired to pray. She offered no objection, and he kneeled down and prayed. The woman heard him, and watched him for some moments with curiosity, in an effort to ascertain what he was doing, and then said :

"Why, a man did that when he put my girl in a hole."

Towards night the wind hauled round from the south to the northwest, and we went to High Bluff, a point on the north edge, where some rocks are piled up above the evergreens, to get a view of the sunset. In every direction the mountains were clear, and a view was obtained of the vast horizon and the hills and lowlands of several States--a continental prospect, scarcely anywhere else equaled for variety or distance. The grandeur of mountains depends mostly on the state of the atmosphere. Grandfather loomed up much more loftily than the day before, the giant range of the Blacks asserted itself in grim inaccessibility, and we could see, a small pyramid on the southwest horizon, King's Mountain in South Carolina, estimated to be distant one hundred and fifty miles. To the north Roan falls from this point abruptly, and we had, like a map below us, the low country all the way into Virginia. The clouds lay like lakes in the valleys of the lower hills, and in every direction were ranges of mountains wooded to the summits. Off to the west by south lay the Great Smoky

Mountains, disputing eminence with the Blacks.

Magnificent and impressive as the spectacle was, we were obliged to contrast it unfavorably with that of the White Hills. The rock here is a sort of sand or pudding stone; there is no limestone or granite. And all the hills are tree-covered. To many this clothing of verdure is most restful and pleasing. I missed the sharp outlines, the delicate artistic sky lines, sharply defined in uplifted bare granite peaks and ridges, with the purple and violet color of the northern mountains, and which it seems to me that limestone and granite formations give. There are none of the great gorges and awful abysses of the White Mountains, both valleys and mountains here being more uniform in outline. There are few precipices and jutting crags, and less is visible of the giant ribs and bones of the planet.

Yet Roan is a noble mountain. A lady from Tennessee asked me if I had ever seen anything to compare with it--she thought there could be nothing in the world. One has to dodge this sort of question in the South occasionally, not to offend a just local pride. It is certainly one of the most habitable of big mountains. It is roomy on top, there is space to move about without too great fatigue, and one might pleasantly spend a season there, if he had agreeable company and natural tastes.

Getting down from Roan on the south side is not as easy as ascending on the north; the road for five miles to the foot of the mountain is merely a river of pebbles, gullied by the heavy rains, down which the horses picked their way painfully. The travelers endeavored to present a dashing and cavalier appearance to the group of ladies who waved good-by from the hotel, as they took their way over the waste and wind-blown declivities, but it was only a show, for the horses would neither caracole nor champ the bit (at a dollar a day) downhill over the slippery stones, and, truth to tell, the wanderers turned with regret from the society of leisure and persiflage to face the wilderness of Mitchell County.

"How heavy," exclaimed the Professor, pricking Laura Matilda to call her attention sharply to her footing

"How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek--my weary travel's end
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend!
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed, being made from thee:
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side;
For that same groan doth put this in my mind;
My grief lies onward and my joy behind."

This was not spoken to the group who fluttered their farewells, but poured out to the uncomplaining forest, which rose up in ever statelier--and grander ranks to greet the travelers as they descended--the silent, vast forest, without note of bird or chip of squirrel, only the wind tossing the great branches high overhead in response to the sonnet. Is there any region or circumstance of life that the poet did not forecast and provide for? But what would have been his feelings if he could have known that almost three centuries after these lines were penned, they would be used to express the emotion of an unsentimental traveler in the primeval forests of the New World? At any rate, he peopled the New World with the children of his imagination. And, thought the Friend, whose attention to his horse did not permit him to drop into poetry, Shakespeare might have had a vision of this vast continent, though he did not refer to it, when he exclaimed:

"What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?"

Bakersville, the capital of Mitchell County, is eight miles from the top of Roan, and the last three miles of the way the horsemen found tolerable going, over which the horses could show their paces. The valley looked fairly thrifty and bright, and was a pleasing introduction to Bakersville, a pretty place in the hills, of some six hundred inhabitants, with two churches, three indifferent hotels, and a court-house. This mountain town, 2550 feet above the sea, is said to have a decent winter climate, with little snow, favorable to fruit-growing, and, by contrast with New England, encouraging to people with weak lungs.

This is the center of the mica mining, and of considerable excitement about minerals. All around, the hills are spotted with "diggings." Most of the mines which yield well show signs of having been worked before, a very long time ago, no doubt by the occupants before the Indians. The mica is of excellent quality and easily mined. It is got out in large irregular-shaped blocks and transported to the factories, where it is carefully split by hand, and the laminae, of as large size as can be obtained, are trimmed with shears and tied up in packages for market. The quantity of refuse, broken, and rotten mica piled up about the factories is immense, and all the roads round about glisten with its scales. Garnets are often found imbedded in the laminae, flattened by the extreme pressure to which the mass was subjected. It is fascinating material, this mica, to handle, and we amused ourselves by experimenting on the thinness to which its scales could be reduced by splitting. It was at Bakersville that we saw specimens of mica that resembled the delicate tracery in the moss-agate and had the iridescent sheen of the rainbow colors--the most delicate greens, reds, blues, purples, and gold, changing from one to the other in the reflected light. In the texture were the tracings of fossil forms of ferns and the most exquisite and delicate vegetable beauty of the coal age. But the magnet shows this tracery to be iron. We were shown also emeralds and "diamonds," picked up in

this region, and there is a mild expectation in all the inhabitants of great mineral treasure. A singular product of the region is the flexible sandstone. It is a most uncanny stone. A slip of it a couple of feet long and an inch in diameter each way bends in the hand like a half-frozen snake. This conduct of a substance that we have been taught to regard as inflexible impairs one's confidence in the stability of nature and affects him as an earthquake does.

This excitement over mica and other minerals has the usual effect of starting up business and creating bad blood. Fortunes have been made, and lost in riotous living; scores of visionary men have been disappointed; lawsuits about titles and claims have multiplied, and quarrels ending in murder have been frequent in the past few years. The mica and the illicit whisky have worked together to make this region one of lawlessness and violence. The travelers were told stories of the lack of common morality and decency in the region, but they made no note of them. And, perhaps fortunately, they were not there during court week to witness the scenes of license that were described. This court week, which draws hither the whole population, is a sort of Saturnalia. Perhaps the worst of this is already a thing of the past; for the outrages a year before had reached such a pass that by a common movement the sale of whisky was stopped (not interdicted, but stopped), and not a drop of liquor could be bought in Bakersville nor within three miles of it.

The jail at Bakersville is a very simple residence. The main building is brick, two stories high and about twelve feet square. The walls are so loosely laid up that it seems as if a colored prisoner might butt his head through. Attached to this is a room for the jailer. In the lower room is a wooden cage, made of logs bolted together and filled with spikes, nine feet by ten feet square and perhaps seven or eight feet high. Between this cage and the wall is a space of eighteen inches in width. It has a narrow door, and an opening through which the food is passed to the prisoners, and a conduit leading out of it. Of course it soon becomes foul, and in warm weather somewhat warm. A recent prisoner, who wanted more ventilation than the State allowed him, found some means, by a loose plank, I think, to batter a hole in the outer wall opposite the window in the cage, and this ragged opening, seeming to the jailer a good sanitary arrangement, remains. Two murderers occupied this apartment at the time of our visit. During the recent session of court, ten men had been confined in this narrow space, without room enough for them to lie down together. The cage in the room above, a little larger, had for tenant a person who was jailed for some misunderstanding about an account, and who was probably innocent--from the jailer's statement. This box is a wretched residence, month after month, while awaiting trial.

We learned on inquiry that it is practically impossible to get a jury to convict of murder in this region, and that these admitted felons would undoubtedly escape. We even heard that juries were purchasable here, and that a man's success in court depended upon the length of his purse. This is such an unheard-of thing that we refused to

credit it. When the Friend attempted to arouse the indignation of the Professor about the barbarity of this jail, the latter defended it on the ground that as confinement was the only punishment that murderers were likely to receive in this region, it was well to make their detention disagreeable to them. But the Friend did not like this wild-beast cage for men, and could only exclaim,

"Oh, murder! what crimes are done in thy name."

If the comrades wished an adventure, they had a small one, more interesting to them than to the public, the morning they left Bakersville to ride to Burnsville, which sets itself up as the capital of Yancey. The way for the first three miles lay down a small creek and in a valley fairly settled, the houses, a store, and a grist-mill giving evidence of the new enterprise of the region. When Toe River was reached, there was a choice of routes. We might ford the Toe at that point, where the river was wide, but shallow, and the crossing safe, and climb over the mountain by a rough but slightly road, or descend the stream by a better road and ford the river at a place rather dangerous to those unfamiliar with it. The danger attracted us, but we promptly chose the hill road on account of the views, for we were weary of the limited valley prospects.

The Toe River, even here, where it bears westward, is a very respectable stream in size, and not to be trifled with after a shower. It gradually turns northward, and, joining the Nollechucky, becomes part of the Tennessee system. We crossed it by a long, diagonal ford, slipping and sliding about on the round stones, and began the ascent of a steep hill. The sun beat down unmercifully, the way was stony, and the horses did not relish the weary climbing. The Professor, who led the way, not for the sake of leadership, but to be the discoverer of laden blackberry bushes, which began to offer occasional refreshment, discouraged by the inhospitable road and perhaps oppressed by the moral backwardness of things in general, cried out:

"Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,--
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily foresworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone."

In the midst of a lively discussion of this pessimistic view of the inequalities of life, in which desert and capacity are so often put

at disadvantage by birth in beggarly conditions, and brazen assumption raises the dust from its chariot wheels for modest merit to plod along in, the Professor swung himself off his horse to attack a blackberry bush, and the Friend, representing simple truth, and desirous of getting a wider prospect, urged his horse up the hill. At the top he encountered a stranger, on a sorrel horse, with whom he entered into conversation and extracted all the discouragement the man had as to the road to Burnsville.

Nevertheless, the view opened finely and extensively. There are few exhilarations comparable to that of riding or walking along a high ridge, and the spirits of the traveler rose many degrees above the point of restful death, for which the Professor was crying when he encountered the blackberry bushes. Luckily the Friend soon fell in with a like temptation, and dismounted. He discovered something that spoiled his appetite for berries. His coat, strapped on behind the saddle, had worked loose, the pocket was open, and the pocket-book was gone. This was serious business. For while the Professor was the cashier, and traveled like a Rothschild, with large drafts, the Friend represented the sub-treasury. That very morning, in response to inquiry as to the sinews of travel, the Friend had displayed, without counting, a roll of bills. These bills had now disappeared, and when the Friend turned back to communicate his loss, in the character of needy nothing not trimm'd in jollity, he had a sympathetic listener to the tale of woe.

Going back on such a journey is the woefulest experience, but retrace our steps we must. Perhaps the pocket-book lay in the road not half a mile back. But not in half a mile, or a mile, was it found. Probably, then, the man on the sorrel horse had picked it up. But who was the man on the sorrel horse, and where had he gone? Probably the coat worked loose in crossing Toe River and the pocket-book had gone down-stream. The number of probabilities was infinite, and each more plausible than the others as it occurred to us. We inquired at every house we had passed on the way, we questioned every one we met. At length it began to seem improbable that any one would remember if he had picked up a pocketbook that morning. This is just the sort of thing that slips an untrained memory.

At a post office or doctor's shop, or inn for drovers, it might be either or neither, where several horses were tied to the fence,, and a group of men were tilted back in cane chairs on the veranda, we unfolded our misfortune and made particular inquiries for a man on a sorrel horse. Yes, such a man, David Thomas by name, had just ridden towards Bakersville. If he had found the pocket-book, we would recover it. He was an honest man. It might, however, fall into hands that would freeze to it.

Upon consultation, it was the general verdict that there were men in the county who would keep it if they had picked it up. But the assembly manifested the liveliest interest in the incident. One suggested Toe River. Another thought it risky to drop a purse on any road. But there was a chorus of desire expressed that we should find

it, and in this anxiety was exhibited a decided sensitiveness about the honor of Mitchell County. It seemed too bad that a stranger should go away with the impression that it was not safe to leave money anywhere in it. We felt very much obliged for this genuine sympathy, and we told them that if a pocket-book were lost in this way on a Connecticut road, there would be felt no neighborhood responsibility for it, and that nobody would take any interest in the incident except the man who lost, and the man who found.

By the time the travelers pulled up at a store in Bakersville they had lost all expectation of recovering the missing article, and were discussing the investment of more money in an advertisement in the weekly newspaper of the capital. The Professor, whose reform sentiments agreed with those of the newspaper, advised it. There was a group of idlers, mica acquaintances of the morning, and philosophers in front of the store, and the Friend opened the colloquy by asking if a man named David Thomas had been seen in town. He was in town, had ridden in within an hour, and his brother, who was in the group, would go in search of him. The information was then given of the loss, and that the rider had met David Thomas just before it was discovered, on the mountain beyond the Toe. The news made a sensation, and by the time David Thomas appeared a crowd of a hundred had drawn around the horsemen eager for further developments. Mr. Thomas was the least excited of the group as he took his position on the sidewalk, conscious of the dignity of the occasion and that he was about to begin a duel in which both reputation and profit were concerned. He recollected meeting the travelers in the morning.

The Friend said, "I discovered that I had lost my purse just after meeting you; it may have been dropped in Toe River, but I was told back here that if David Thomas had picked it up, it was as safe as if it were in the bank."

"What sort of a pocket-book was it?" asked Mr. Thomas.

"It was of crocodile skin, or what is sold for that, very likely it is an imitation, and about so large indicating the size."

"What had it in it?"

"Various things. Some specimens of mica; some bank checks, some money."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, a photograph. And, oh, something that I presume is not in another pocket-book in North Carolina,--in an envelope, a lock of the hair of George Washington, the Father of his Country." Sensation mixed with incredulity. Washington's hair did seem such an odd part of an outfit for a journey of this kind.

"How much money was in it?"

"That I cannot say, exactly. I happen to remember four twenty-dollar United States notes, and a roll of small bills, perhaps something over a hundred dollars."

"Is that the pocket-book?" asked David Thomas, slowly pulling the loved and lost out of his trousers pocket.

"It is."

"You'd be willing to take your oath on it?"

"I should be delighted to."

"Well, I guess there ain't so much money in it. You can count it [handing it over]; there hain't been nothing taken out. I can't read, but my friend here counted it over, and he says there ain't as much as that."

Intense interest in the result of the counting. One hundred and ten dollars! The Friend selected one of the best engraved of the notes, and appealed to the crowd if they thought that was the square thing to do. They did so think, and David Thomas said it was abundant. And then said the Friend :

"I'm exceedingly grateful to you besides. Washington's hair is getting scarce, and I did not want to lose these few hairs, gray as they are. You've done the honest thing, Mr. Thomas, as was expected of you. You might have kept the whole. But I reckon if there had been five hundred dollars in the book and you had kept it, it wouldn't have done you half as much good as giving it up has done; and your reputation as an honest man is worth a good deal more than this pocket-book. [The Professor was delighted with this sentiment, because it reminded him of a Sunday-school.] I shall go away with a high opinion of the honesty of Mitchell County."

"Oh, he lives in Yancey," cried two or three voices. At which there was a great laugh.

"Well, I wondered where he came from." And the Mitchell County people laughed again at their own expense, and the levee broke up. It was exceedingly gratifying, as we spread the news of the recovered property that afternoon at every house on our way to the Toe, to see what pleasure it gave. Every man appeared to feel that the honor of the region had been on trial--and had stood the test.

The eighteen miles to Burnsville had now to be added to the morning excursion, but the travelers were in high spirits, feeling the truth of the adage that it is better to have loved and lost, than never to have lost at all. They decided, on reflection, to join company with the mail-rider, who was going to Burnsville by the shorter route, and could pilot them over the dangerous ford of the Toe.

The mail-rider was a lean, sallow, sinewy man, mounted on a sorry

sorrel nag, who proved, however, to have blood in her, and to be a fast walker and full of endurance. The mail-rider was taciturn, a natural habit for a man who rides alone the year round, over a lonely road, and has nothing whatever to think of. He had been in the war sixteen months, in Hugh White's regiment,--reckon you've heard of him?

"Confederate?"

"Which?"

"Was he on the Union or Confederate side?"

"Oh, Union."

"Were you in any engagements?"

"Which?"

"Did you have any fighting?"

"Not reg'lar."

"What did you do?"

"Which?"

"What did you do in Hugh White's regiment?"

"Oh, just cavorted round the mountains."

"You lived on the country?"

"Which?"

"Picked up what you could find, corn, bacon, horses?"

"That's about so. Did n't make much difference which side was round, the country got cleaned out."

"Plunder seems to have been the object?"

"Which?"

"You got a living out of the farmers?"

"You bet."

Our friend and guide seemed to have been a jayhawker and mountain marauder--on the right side. His attachment to the word "which" prevented any lively flow of conversation, and there seemed to be only two trains of ideas running in his mind: one was the subject of horses and saddles, and the other was the danger of the ford we were

coming to, and he exhibited a good deal of ingenuity in endeavoring to excite our alarm. He returned to the ford from every other conversational excursion, and after every silence.

I do' know's there 's any great danger; not if you know the ford. Folks is carried away there. The Toe gits up sudden. There's been right smart rain lately.

If you're afraid, you can git set over in a dugout, and I'll take your horses across. Mebbe you're used to fording? It's a pretty bad ford for them as don't know it. But you'll get along if you mind your eye. There's some rocks you'll have to look out for. But you'll be all right if you follow me."

Not being very successful in raising an interest in the dangers of his ford, although he could not forego indulging a malicious pleasure in trying to make the strangers uncomfortable, he finally turned his attention to a trade. "This hoss of mine," he said, "is just the kind of brute-beast you want for this country. Your hosses is too heavy. How'll you swap for that one o' yourn?" The reiterated assertion that the horses were not ours, that they were hired, made little impression on him. All the way to Burnsville he kept referring to the subject of a trade. The instinct of "swap" was strong in him. When we met a yoke of steers, he turned round and bantered the owner for a trade. Our saddles took his fancy. They were of the army pattern, and he allowed that one of them would just suit him. He rode a small flat English pad, across which was flung the United States mail pouch, apparently empty. He dwelt upon the fact that his saddle was new and ours were old, and the advantages that would accrue to us from the exchange. He did n't care if they had been through the war, as they had, for he fancied an army saddle. The Friend answered for himself that the saddle he rode belonged to a distinguished Union general, and had a bullet in it that was put there by a careless Confederate in the first battle of Bull Run, and the owner would not part with it for money. But the mail-rider said he did n't mind that. He would n't mind swapping his new saddle for my old one and the rubber coat and leggings. Long before we reached the ford we thought we would like to swap the guide, even at the, risk of drowning. The ford was passed, in due time, with no inconvenience save that of wet feet, for the stream was breast high to the horses; but being broad and swift and full of sunken rocks and slippery stones, and the crossing tortuous, it is not a ford to be commended. There is a curious delusion that a rider has in crossing a swift broad stream. It is that he is rapidly drifting up-stream, while in fact the tendency of the horse is to go with the current.

The road in the afternoon was not unpicturesque, owing to the streams and the ever noble forests, but the prospect was always very limited. Agriculturally, the country was mostly undeveloped. The travelers endeavored to get from the rider an estimate of the price of land. Not much sold, he said. "There was one sale of a big piece last year; the owner enthorted Big Tom Wilson to sell it, but I d'know what he got for it,"

All the way along, the habitations were small log cabins, with one room, chinked with mud, and these were far between; and only occasionally thereby a similar log structure, unchinked, laid up like a cob house, that served for a stable. Not much cultivation, except now and then a little patch of poor corn on a steep hillside, occasionally a few apple-trees, and a peach-tree without fruit. Here and there was a house that had been half finished and then abandoned, or a shanty in which a couple of young married people were just beginning life. Generally the cabins (confirming the accuracy of the census of 1880 swarmed with children, and nearly all the women were thin and sickly.

In the day's ride we did not see a wheeled vehicle, and only now and then a horse. We met on the road small sleds, drawn by a steer, sometimes by a cow, on which a bag of grist was being hauled to the mill, and boys mounted on steers gave us good-evening with as much pride as if they were bestriding fiery horses.

In a house of the better class, which was a post-house, and where the rider and the woman of the house had a long consultation over a letter to be registered, we found the rooms decorated with patent-medicine pictures, which were often framed in strips of mica, an evidence of culture that was worth noting. Mica was the rage. Every one with whom we talked, except the rider, had more or less the mineral fever. The impression was general that the mountain region of North Carolina was entering upon a career of wonderful mineral development, and the most extravagant expectations were entertained. Mica was the shining object of most "prospecting," but gold was also on the cards.

The country about Burnsville is not only mildly picturesque, but very pleasing. Burnsville, the county-seat of Yancey, at an elevation of 2840 feet, is more like a New England village than any hitherto seen. Most of the houses stand about a square, which contains the shabby court-house; around it are two small churches, a jail, an inviting tavern) with a long veranda, and a couple of stores. On an overlooking hill is the seminary. Mica mining is the exciting industry, but it is agriculturally a good country. The tavern had recently been enlarged to meet the new demands for entertainment) and is a roomy structure, fresh with paint and only partially organized. The travelers were much impressed with the brilliant chambers, the floors of which were painted in alternate stripes of vivid green and red. The proprietor, a very intelligent and enterprising man, who had traveled often in the North, was full of projects for the development of his region and foremost in its enterprises, and had formed a considerable collection of minerals. Besides, more than any one else we met, he appreciated the beauty of his country, and took us to a neighboring hill, where we had a view of Table Mountain to the east and the nearer giant Blacks. The elevation of Burnsville gives it a delightful summer climate, the gentle undulations of the country are agreeable, the views noble, the air is good, and it is altogether a "livable" and attractive place. With facilities of

communication, it would be a favorite summer resort. Its nearness to the great mountains (the whole Black range is in Yancey County), its fine pure air, its opportunity for fishing and hunting, commend it to those in search of an interesting and restful retreat in summer.

But it should be said that before the country can attract and retain travelers, its inhabitants must learn something about the preparation of food. If, for instance, the landlord's wife at Burnsville had traveled with her husband, her table would probably have been more on a level with his knowledge of the world, and it would have contained something that the wayfaring man, though a Northerner, could eat. We have been on the point several times in this journey of making the observation, but have been restrained by a reluctance to touch upon politics, that it was no wonder that a people with such a cuisine should have rebelled. The travelers were in a rebellious mood most of the time.

The evidences of enterprise in this region were pleasant to see, but the observers could not but regret, after all, the intrusion of the money-making spirit, which is certain to destroy much of the present simplicity. It is as yet, to a degree, tempered by a philosophic spirit. The other guest of the house was a sedate, long-bearded traveler for some Philadelphia house, and in the evening he and the landlord fell into a conversation upon what Socrates calls the disadvantage of the pursuit of wealth to the exclusion of all noble objects, and they let their fancy play about Vanderbilt, who was agreed to be the richest man in the world, or that ever lived.

"All I want," said the long-bearded man, "is enough to be comfortable. I would n't have Vanderbilt's wealth if he'd give it to me."

"Nor I," said the landlord. "Give me just enough to be comfortable." [The tourist couldn't but note that his ideas of enough to be comfortable had changed a good deal since he had left his little farm and gone into the mica business, and visited New York, and enlarged and painted his tavern.] I should like to know what more Vanderbilt gets out of his money than I get out of mine. I heard tell of a young man who went to Vanderbilt to get employment. Vanderbilt finally offered to give the young man, if he would work for him, just what he got himself. The young man jumped at that--he'd be perfectly satisfied with that pay. And Vanderbilt said that all he got was what he could eat and wear, and offered to give the young man his board and clothes."

"I declare" said the long-bearded man. "That's just it. Did you ever see Vanderbilt's house? Neither did I, but I heard he had a vault built in it five feet thick, solid. He put in it two hundred millions of dollars, in gold. After a year, he opened it and put in twelve millions more, and called that a poor year. They say his house has gold shutters to the windows, so I've heard."

"I shouldn't wonder," said the landlord. "I heard he had one door in

his house cost forty thousand dollars. I don't know what it is made of, unless it's made of gold."

Sunday was a hot and quiet day. The stores were closed and the two churches also, this not being the Sunday for the itinerant preacher. The jail also showed no sign of life, and when we asked about it, we learned that it was empty, and had been for some time. No liquor is sold in the place, nor within at least three miles of it. It is not much use to try to run a jail without liquor.

In the course of the morning a couple of stout fellows arrived, leading between them a young man whom they had arrested,--it didn't appear on any warrant, but they wanted to get him committed and locked up. The offense charged was carrying a pistol; the boy had not used it against anybody, but he had flourished it about and threatened, and the neighbors wouldn't stand that; they were bound to enforce the law against carrying concealed weapons.

The captors were perfectly good-natured and on friendly enough terms with the young man, who offered no resistance, and seemed not unwilling to go to jail. But a practical difficulty arose. The jail was locked up, the sheriff had gone away into the country with the key, and no one could get in. It did not appear that there was any provision for boarding the man in jail; no one in fact kept it. The sheriff was sent for, but was not to be found, and the prisoner and his captors loafed about the square all day, sitting on the fence, rolling on the grass, all of them sustained by a simple trust that the jail would be open some time.

Late in the afternoon we left them there, trying to get into the jail. But we took a personal leaf out of this experience. Our Virginia friends, solicitous for our safety in this wild country, had urged us not to venture into it without arms--take at least, they insisted, a revolver each. And now we had to congratulate ourselves that we had not done so. If we had, we should doubtless on that Sunday have been waiting, with the other law-breaker, for admission into the Yancey County jail.

III

>From Burnsville the next point in our route was Asheville, the most considerable city in western North Carolina, a resort of fashion, and the capital of Buncombe County. It is distant some forty to forty-five miles, too long a journey for one day over such roads. The easier and common route is by the Ford of Big Ivy, eighteen miles, the first stopping-place; and that was a long ride for the late afternoon when we were in condition to move.

The landlord suggested that we take another route, stay that night on Caney River with Big Tom Wilson, only eight miles from Burnsville,

cross Mount Mitchell, and go down the valley of the Swannanoa to Asheville. He represented this route as shorter and infinitely more picturesque. There was nothing worth seeing on the Big Ivy way. With scarcely a moment's reflection and while the horses were saddling, we decided to ride to Big Tom Wilson's. I could not at the time understand, and I cannot now, why the Professor consented. I should hardly dare yet confess to my fixed purpose to ascend Mount Mitchell. It was equally fixed in the Professor's mind not to do it. We had not discussed it much. But it is safe to say that if he had one well-defined purpose on this trip, it was not to climb Mitchell. "Not," as he put it,--

"Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,"

had suggested the possibility that he could do it.

But at the moment the easiest thing to do seemed to be to ride down to Wilson's. When there we could turn across country to the Big Ivy, although, said the landlord, you can ride over Mitchell just as easy as anywhere--a lady rode plump over the peak of it last week, and never got off her horse. You are not obliged to go; at Big Tom's, you can go any way you please.

Besides, Big Tom himself weighed in the scale more than Mount Mitchell, and not to see him was to miss one of the most characteristic productions of the country, the typical backwoodsman, hunter, guide. So we rode down Bolling Creek, through a pretty, broken country, crossed the Caney River, and followed it up a few miles to Wilson's plantation. There are little intervalles along the river, where hay is cut and corn grown, but the region is not much cleared, and the stock browse about in the forest. Wilson is the agent of the New York owner of a tract of some thirteen thousand acres of forest, including the greater portion of Mount Mitchell, a wilderness well stocked with bears and deer, and full of streams abounding in trout. It is also the playground of the rattlesnake. With all these attractions Big Tom's life is made lively in watching game poachers, and endeavoring to keep out the foraging cattle of the few neighbors. It is not that the cattle do much injury in the forest, but the looking after them is made a pretense for roaming around, and the roamers are liable to have to defend themselves against the deer, or their curiosity is excited about the bears, and lately they have taken to exploding powder in the streams to kill the fish.

Big Tom's plantation has an openwork stable, an ill-put-together frame house, with two rooms and a kitchen, and a veranda in front, a loft, and a spring-house in the rear. Chickens and other animals have free run of the premises. Some fish-rods hung in the porch, and hunter's gear depended on hooks in the passage-way to the kitchen. In one room were three beds, in the other two, only one in the kitchen. On the porch was a loom, with a piece of cloth in process. The establishment had the air of taking care of itself. Neither Big

Tom nor his wife was at home. Sunday seemed to be a visiting day, and the travelers had met many parties on horseback. Mrs. Wilson was away for a visit of a day or two. One of the sons, who was lounging on the veranda, was at last induced to put up the horses; a very old woman, who mumbled and glared at the visitors, was found in the kitchen, but no intelligible response could be got out of her. Presently a bright little girl, the housekeeper in charge, appeared. She said that her paw had gone up to her brother's (her brother was just married and lived up the river in the house where Mr. Murchison stayed when he was here) to see if he could ketch a bear that had been rootin' round in the corn-field the night before. She expected him back by sundown--by dark anyway. 'Les he'd gone after the bear, and then you could n't tell when he would come.

It appeared that Big Tom was a thriving man in the matter of family. More boys appeared. Only one was married, but four had "got their time." As night approached, and no Wilson, there was a good deal of lively and loud conversation about the stock and the chores, in all of which the girl took a leading and intelligent part, showing a willingness to do her share, but not to have all the work put upon her. It was time to go down the road and hunt up the cows; the mule had disappeared and must be found before dark; a couple of steers hadn't turned up since the day before yesterday, and in the midst of the gentle contention as to whose business all this was, there was an alarm of cattle in the corn-patch, and the girl started off on a run in that direction. It was due to the executive ability of this small girl, after the cows had been milked and the mule chased and the boys properly stirred up, that we had supper. It was of the oilcloth, iron fork, tin spoon, bacon, hot bread and honey variety, distinguished, however, from all meals we had endured or enjoyed before by the introduction of fried eggs (as the breakfast next morning was by the presence of chicken), and it was served by the active maid with right hearty good-will and genuine hospitable intent.

While it was in progress, after nine o'clock, Big Tom arrived, and, with a simple greeting, sat down and attacked the supper and began to tell about the bear. There was not much to tell except that he hadn't seen the bear, and that, judged by his tracks and his sloshing around, he must be a big one. But a trap had been set for him, and he judged it wouldn't be long before we had some bear meat. Big Tom Wilson, as he is known all over this part of the State, would not attract attention from his size. He is six feet and two inches tall, very spare and muscular, with sandy hair, long gray beard, and honest blue eyes. He has a reputation for great strength and endurance; a man of native simplicity and mild manners. He had been rather expecting us from what Mr. Murchison wrote; he wrote (his son had read out the letter) that Big Tom was to take good care of us, and anybody that Mr. Murchison sent could have the best he'd got.

Big Tom joined us in our room after supper. This apartment, with two mighty feather-beds, was hung about with all manner of stuffy family clothes, and had in one end a vast cavern for a fire. The floor was

uneven, and the hearthstones billowy. When the fire was lighted, the effect of the bright light in the cavern and the heavy shadows in the room was Rembrandtish. Big Tom sat with us before the fire and told bear stories. Talk? Why, it was not the least effort. The stream flowed on without a ripple. "Why, the old man," one of the sons confided to us next morning, "can begin and talk right over Mount Mitchell and all the way back, and never make a break." Though Big Tom had waged a lifelong warfare with the bears, and taken the hide off at least a hundred of them, I could not see that he had any vindictive feeling towards the varmint, but simply an insatiable love of killing him, and he regarded him in that half-humorous light in which the bear always appears to those who study him. As to deer--he couldn't tell how many of them he had slain. But Big Tom was a gentleman: he never killed deer for mere sport. With rattlesnakes, now, it was different. There was the skin of one hanging upon a tree by the route we would take in the morning, a buster, he skinned him yesterday. There was an entire absence, of braggadocio in Big Tom's talk, but somehow, as he went on, his backwoods figure loomed larger and larger in our imagination, and he seemed strangely familiar. At length it came over us where we had met him before. It was in Cooper's novels. He was the Leather-Stocking exactly. And yet he was an original; for he assured us that he had never read the Leather-Stocking Tales. What a figure, I was thinking, he must have made in the late war! Such a shot, such a splendid physique, such iron endurance! I almost dreaded to hear his tales of the havoc he had wrought on the Union army. Yes, he was in the war, he was sixteen months in the Confederate army, this Homeric man. In what rank?" Oh, I was a fifer!"

But hunting and war did not by any means occupy the whole of Big Tom's life. He was also engaged in "lawin'." He had a long-time feud with a neighbor about a piece of land and alleged trespass, and they'd been "lawin'" for years, with no definite result; but as a topic of conversation it was as fully illustrative of frontier life as the bear-fighting.

Long after we had all gone to bed, we heard Big Tom's continuous voice, through the thin partition that separated us from the kitchen, going on to his little boy about the bear; every circumstance of how he tracked him, and what corner of the field he entered, and where he went out, and his probable size and age, and the prospect of his coming again; these were the details of real everyday life, and worthy to be dwelt on by the hour. The boy was never tired of pursuing them. And Big Tom was just a big boy, also, in his delight in it all.

Perhaps it was the fascination of Big Tom, perhaps the representation that we were already way off the Big Ivy route, and that it would, in fact, save time to go over the mountain and we could ride all the way, that made the Professor acquiesce, with no protest worth noticing, in the preparations that went on, as by a natural assumption, for going over Mitchell. At any rate, there was an early breakfast, luncheon was put up, and by half-past seven we were riding

up the Caney,--a half-cloudy day,--Big Tom swinging along on foot ahead, talking nineteen to the dozen. There was a delightful freshness in the air, the dew-laden bushes, and the smell of the forest. In half an hour we called at the hunting shanty of Mr. Murchison, wrote our names on the wall, according to custom, and regretted that we could not stay for a day in that retreat and try the speckled trout. Making our way through the low growth and bushes of the valley, we came into a fine open forest, watered by a noisy brook, and after an hour's easy going reached the serious ascent.

>From Wilson's to the peak of Mitchell it is seven and a half miles; we made it in five and a half hours. A bridle path was cut years ago, but it has been entirely neglected. It is badly washed, it is stony, muddy, and great trees have fallen across it which wholly block the way for horses. At these places long detours were necessary, on steep hillsides and through gullies, over treacherous sink-holes in the rocks, through quaggy places, heaps of brush, and rotten logs. Those who have ever attempted to get horses over such ground will not wonder at the slow progress we made. Before we were halfway up the ascent, we realized the folly of attempting it on horseback; but then to go on seemed as easy as to go back. The way was also exceedingly steep in places, and what with roots, and logs, and slippery rocks and stones, it was a desperate climb for the horses.

What a magnificent forest! Oaks, chestnuts, Poplars, hemlocks, the cucumber (a species of magnolia, with a pinkish, cucumber-like cone), and all sorts of northern and southern growths meeting here in splendid array. And this gigantic forest, with little diminution in size of trees, continued two thirds of the way up. We marked, as we went on, the maple, the black walnut, the buckeye, the hickory, the locust, and the guide pointed out in one section the largest cherry-trees we had ever seen; splendid trunks, each worth a large sum if it could be got to market. After the great trees were left behind, we entered a garden of white birches, and then a plateau of swamp, thick with raspberry bushes, and finally the ridges, densely crowded with the funereal black balsam.

Halfway up, Big Tom showed us his favorite, the biggest tree he knew. It was a poplar, or tulip. It stands more like a column than a tree, rising high into the air, with scarcely a perceptible taper, perhaps sixty, more likely a hundred, feet before it puts out a limb.

Its girth six feet from the ground is thirty-two feet! I think it might be called Big Tom. It stood here, of course, a giant, when Columbus sailed from Spain, and perhaps some sentimental traveler will attach the name of Columbus to it.

In the woods there was not much sign of animal life, scarcely the note of a bird, but we noticed as we rode along in the otherwise primeval silence a loud and continuous humming overhead, almost like the sound of the wind in pine tops. It was the humming of bees! The upper branches were alive with these industrious toilers, and Big Tom

was always on the alert to discover and mark a bee-gum, which he could visit afterwards. Honey hunting is one of his occupations. Collecting spruce gum is another, and he was continually hacking off with his hatchet knobs of the translucent secretion. How rich and fragrant are these forests! The rhododendron was still in occasional bloom' and flowers of brilliant hue gleamed here and there.

The struggle was more severe as we neared the summit, and the footing worse for the horses. Occasionally it was safest to dismount and lead them up slippery ascents; but this was also dangerous, for it was difficult to keep them from treading on our heels, in their frantic flounderings, in the steep, wet, narrow, brier-grown path. At one uncommonly pokerish place, where the wet rock sloped into a bog, the rider of Jack thought it prudent to dismount, but Big Tom insisted that Jack would "make it" all right, only give him his head. The rider gave him his head, and the next minute Jack's four heels were in the air, and he came down on his side in a flash. The rider fortunately extricated his leg without losing it, Jack scrambled out with a broken shoe, and the two limped along. It was a wonder that the horses' legs were not broken a dozen times.

As we approached the top, Big Tom pointed out the direction, a half mile away, of a small pond, a little mountain tarn, overlooked by a ledge of rock, where Professor Mitchell lost his life. Big Tom was the guide that found his body. That day, as we sat on the summit, he gave in great detail the story, the general outline of which is well known.

The first effort to measure the height of the Black Mountains was made in 1835, by Professor Elisha Mitchell, professor of mathematics and chemistry in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mr. Mitchell was a native of Connecticut, born in Washington, Litchfield County, in 1793; graduated at Yale, ordained a Presbyterian minister, and was for a time state surveyor; and became a professor at Chapel Hill in 1818. He first ascertained and published the fact that the Black Mountains are the highest land east of the Rocky Mountains. In 1844 he visited the locality again. Measurements were subsequently made by Professor Guyot and by Senator Clingman. One of the peaks was named for the senator (the one next in height to Mitchell is described as Clingman on the state map), and a dispute arose as to whether Mitchell had really visited and measured the highest peak. Senator Clingman still maintains that he did not, and that the peak now known as Mitchell is the one that Clingman first described. The estimates of altitudes made by the three explorers named differed considerably. The height now fixed for Mount Mitchell is 6711; that of Mount Washington is 6285. There are twelve peaks in this range higher than Mount Washington, and if we add those in the Great Smoky Mountains which overtop it, there are some twenty in this State higher than the granite giant of New Hampshire.

In order to verify his statement, Professor Mitchell (then in his sixty-fourth year) made a third ascent in June, 1857. He was alone,

and went up from the Swannanoa side. He did not return. No anxiety was felt for two or three days, as he was a good mountaineer, and it was supposed he had crossed the mountain and made his way out by the Caney River. But when several days passed without tidings of him, a search party was formed. Big Tom Wilson was with it. They explored the mountain in all directions unsuccessfully. At length Big Tom separated himself from his companions and took a course in accordance with his notion of that which would be pursued by a man lost in the clouds or the darkness. He soon struck the trail of the wanderer, and, following it, discovered Mitchell's body lying in a pool at the foot of a rocky precipice some thirty feet high. It was evident that Mitchell, making his way along the ridge in darkness or fog, had fallen off. It was the ninth (or the eleventh) day of his disappearance, but in the pure mountain air the body had suffered no change. Big Tom brought his companions to the place, and on consultation it was decided to leave the body undisturbed till Mitchell's friends could be present.

There was some talk of burying him on the mountain, but the friends decided otherwise, and the remains, with much difficulty, were got down to Asheville and there interred.

Some years afterwards, I believe at the instance of a society of scientists, it was resolved to transport the body to the summit of Mount Mitchell; for the tragic death of the explorer had forever settled in the popular mind the name of the mountain. The task was not easy. A road had to be cut, over which a sledge could be hauled, and the hardy mountaineers who undertook the removal were three days in reaching the summit with their burden. The remains were accompanied by a considerable concourse, and the last rites on the top were participated in by a hundred or more scientists and prominent men from different parts of the State. Such a strange cortege had never before broken the silence of this lonely wilderness, nor was ever burial more impressive than this wild interment above the clouds.

We had been preceded in our climb all the way by a huge bear. That he was huge, a lunker, a monstrous old varmint, Big Tom knew by the size of his tracks; that he was making the ascent that morning ahead of us, Big Tom knew by the freshness of the trail. We might come upon him at any moment; he might be in the garden; was quite likely to be found in the raspberry patch. That we did not encounter him I am convinced was not the fault of Big Tom, but of the bear.

After a struggle of five hours we emerged from the balsams and briers into a lovely open meadow, of lush clover, timothy, and blue grass. We unsaddled the horses and turned them loose to feed in it. The meadow sloped up to a belt of balsams and firs, a steep rocky knob, and climbing that on foot we stood upon the summit of Mitchell at one o'clock. We were none too soon, for already the clouds were preparing for what appears to be a daily storm at this season.

The summit is a nearly level spot of some thirty or forty feet in

extent either way, with a floor of rock and loose stones. The stunted balsams have been cut away so as to give a view. The sweep of prospect is vast, and we could see the whole horizon except in the direction of Roan, whose long bulk was enveloped in cloud. Portions of six States were in sight, we were told, but that is merely a geographical expression. What we saw, wherever we looked, was an inextricable tumble of mountains, without order or leading line of direction,--domes, peaks, ridges, endless and countless, everywhere, some in shadow, some tipped with shafts of sunlight, all wooded and green or black, and all in more softened contours than our Northern hills, but still wild, lonesome, terrible. Away in the southwest, lifting themselves up in a gleam of the western sky, the Great Smoky Mountains loomed like a frowning continental fortress, sullen and remote. With Clingman and Gibbs and Holdback peaks near at hand and apparently of equal height, Mitchell seemed only a part and not separate from the mighty congregation of giants.

In the center of the stony plot on the summit lie the remains of Mitchell. To dig a grave in the rock was impracticable, but the loose stones were scooped away to the depth of a foot or so, the body was deposited, and the stones were replaced over it. It was the original intention to erect a monument, but the enterprise of the projectors of this royal entombment failed at that point. The grave is surrounded by a low wall of loose stones, to which each visitor adds one, and in the course of ages the cairn may grow to a good size. The explorer lies there without name or headstone to mark his awful resting-place. The mountain is his monument. He is alone with its majesty. He is there in the clouds, in the tempests, where the lightnings play, and thunders leap, amid the elemental tumult, in the occasional great calm and silence and the pale sunlight. It is the most majestic, the most lonesome grave on earth.

As we sat there, awed a little by this presence, the clouds were gathering from various quarters and drifting towards us. We could watch the process of thunder-storms and the manufacture of tempests. I have often noticed on other high mountains how the clouds, forming like genii released from the earth, mount into the upper air, and in masses of torn fragments of mist hurry across the sky as to a rendezvous of witches. This was a different display. These clouds came slowly sailing from the distant horizon, like ships on an aerial voyage. Some were below us, some on our level; they were all in well-defined, distinct masses, molten silver on deck, below trailing rain, and attended on earth by gigantic shadows that moved with them. This strange fleet of battle-ships, drifted by the shifting currents, was maneuvering for an engagement. One after another, as they came into range about our peak of observation, they opened fire. Sharp flashes of lightning darted from one to the other; a jet of flame from one leaped across the interval and was buried in the bosom of its adversary; and at every discharge the boom of great guns echoed through the mountains. It was something more than a royal salute to the tomb of the mortal at our feet, for the masses of cloud were rent in the fray, at every discharge the rain was precipitated in increasing torrents, and soon the vast hulks were trailing torn

fragments and wreaths of mist, like the shot-away shrouds and sails of ships in battle. Gradually, from this long-range practice with single guns and exchange of broadsides, they drifted into closer conflict, rushed together, and we lost sight of the individual combatants in the general tumult of this aerial war.

We had barely twenty minutes for our observations, when it was time to go; and had scarcely left the peak when the clouds enveloped it. We hastened down under the threatening sky to the saddles and the luncheon. Just off from the summit, amid the rocks, is a complete arbor, or tunnel, of rhododendrons. This cavernous place a Western writer has made the scene of a desperate encounter between Big Tom and a catamount, or American panther, which had been caught in a trap and dragged it there, pursued by Wilson. It is an exceedingly graphic narrative, and is enlivened by the statement that Big Tom had the night before drunk up all the whisky of the party which had spent the night on the summit. Now Big Tom assured us that the whisky part of the story was an invention; he was not (which is true) in the habit of using it; if he ever did take any, it might be a drop on Mitchell; in fact, when he inquired if we had a flask, he remarked that a taste of it would do him good then and there. We regretted the lack of it in our baggage. But what inclined Big Tom to discredit the Western writer's story altogether was the fact that he never in his life had had a difficulty with a catamount, and never had seen one in these mountains.

Our lunch was eaten in haste. Big Tom refused the chicken he had provided for us, and strengthened himself with slices of raw salt pork, which he cut from a hunk with his clasp-knife. We caught and saddled our horses, who were reluctant to leave the rich feed, enveloped ourselves in waterproofs, and got into the stony path for the descent just as the torrent came down. It did rain. It lightened, the thunder crashed, the wind howled and twisted the treetops. It was as if we were pursued by the avenging spirits of the mountains for our intrusion. Such a tempest on this height had its terrors even for our hardy guide. He preferred to be lower down while it was going on. The crash and reverberation of the thunder did not trouble us so much as the swish of the wet branches in our faces and the horrible road, with its mud, tripping roots, loose stones, and slippery rocks. Progress was slow. The horses were in momentary danger of breaking their legs. In the first hour there was not much descent. In the clouds we were passing over Clingman, Gibbs, and Holdback. The rain had ceased, but the mist still shut off all view, if any had been attainable, and bushes and paths were deluged. The descent was more uncomfortable than the ascent, and we were compelled a good deal of the way to lead the jaded horses down the slippery rocks.

>From the peak to the Widow Patten's, where we proposed to pass the night, is twelve miles, a distance we rode or scrambled down, every step of the road bad, in five and a half hours. Halfway down we came out upon a cleared place, a farm, with fruit-trees and a house in ruins. Here had been a summer hotel much resorted to before the war,

but now abandoned. Above it we turned aside for the view from Elizabeth rock, named from the daughter of the proprietor of the hotel, who often sat here, said Big Tom, before she went out of this world. It is a bold rocky ledge, and the view from it, looking south, is unquestionably the finest, the most pleasing and picture-like, we found in these mountains. In the foreground is the deep gorge of a branch of the Swannanoa, and opposite is the great wall of the Blue Ridge (the Blue Ridge is the most capricious and inexplicable system) making off to the Blacks. The depth of the gorge, the sweep of the sky line, and the reposeful aspect of the scene to the sunny south made this view both grand and charming. Nature does not always put the needed dash of poetry into her extensive prospects.

Leaving this clearing and the now neglected spring, where fashion used to slake its thirst, we zigzagged down the mountain-side through a forest of trees growing at every step larger and nobler, and at length struck a small stream, the North Fork of the Swannanoa, which led us to the first settlement. Just at night,--it was nearly seven o'clock,--we entered one of the most stately forests I have ever seen, and rode for some distance in an alley of rhododendrons that arched overhead and made a bower. It was like an aisle in a temple; high overhead was the somber, leafy roof, supported by gigantic columns. Few widows have such an avenue of approach to their domain as the Widow Patten has.

Cheering as this outcome was from the day's struggle and storm, the Professor seemed sunk in a profound sadness. The auguries which the Friend drew from these signs of civilization of a charming inn and a royal supper did not lighten the melancholy of his mind. "Alas," he said,

"Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'T is not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace:
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief:
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss."

"Loss of what?" cried the Friend, as he whipped up his halting steed.

"Loss of self-respect. I feel humiliated that I consented to climb this mountain."

"Nonsense! You'll live to thank me for it, as the best thing you ever did. It's over and done now, and you've got it to tell your friends."

"That's just the trouble. They'll ask me if I went up Mitchell, and I shall have to say I did. My character for consistency is gone. Not that I care much what they think, but my own self-respect is gone. I never believed I would do it. A man can't afford to lower himself in his own esteem, at my time of life."

The Widow Patten's was only an advanced settlement in this narrow valley on the mountain-side, but a little group of buildings, a fence, and a gate gave it the air of a place, and it had once been better cared for than it is now. Few travelers pass that way, and the art of entertaining, if it ever existed, is fallen into desuetude. We unsaddled at the veranda, and sat down to review our adventure, make the acquaintance of the family, and hear the last story from Big Tom. The mountaineer, though wet, was as fresh as a daisy, and fatigue in no wise checked the easy, cheerful flow of his talk. He was evidently a favorite with his neighbors, and not unpleasantly conscious of the extent of his reputation. But he encountered here another social grade. The Widow Patten was highly connected. We were not long in discovering that she was an Alexander. She had been a schoolmate of Senator Vance,--" Zeb Vance "he still was to her,--and the senator and his wife had stayed at her house. I wish I could say that the supper, for which we waited till nine o'clock, was as "highly connected " as the landlady. It was, however, a supper that left its memory. We were lodged in a detached house, which we had to ourselves, where a roaring wood fire made amends for other things lacking. It was necessary to close the doors to keep out the wandering cows and pigs, and I am bound to say that, notwithstanding the voices of the night, we slept there the sleep of peace.

In the morning a genuine surprise awaited us; it seemed impossible, but the breakfast was many degrees worse than the supper; and when we paid our bill, large for the region, we were consoled by the thought that we paid for the high connection as well as for the accommodations. This is a regular place of entertainment, and one is at liberty to praise it without violation of delicacy.

The broken shoe of Jack required attention, and we were all the morning hunting a blacksmith, as we rode down the valley. Three blacksmith's shanties were found, and after long waiting to send for the operator it turned out in each case that he had no shoes, no nails, no iron to make either of. We made a detour of three miles to what was represented as a regular shop. The owner had secured the service of a colored blacksmith for a special job, and was, not inclined to accommodate us; he had no shoes, no nails. But the colored blacksmith, who appreciated the plight we were in, offered to make a shoe, and to crib four nails from those he had laid aside for a couple of mules; and after a good deal of delay, we were enabled to go on. The incident shows, as well as anything, the barrenness and shiftlessness of the region. A horseman with whom we rode in the morning gave us a very low estimate of the trustworthiness of the inhabitants. The valley is wild and very pretty all the way down to Colonel Long's,--twelve miles,--but the wretched-looking people along

the way live in a wretched manner.

Just before reaching Colonel Long's we forded the stream (here of good size), the bridge having tumbled down, and encountered a party of picnickers under the trees--signs of civilization; a railway station is not far off. Colonel Long's is a typical Southern establishment: a white house, or rather three houses, all of one story, built on to each other as beehives are set in a row, all porches and galleries. No one at home but the cook, a rotund, broad-faced woman, with a merry eye, whose very appearance suggested good cooking and hospitality; the Missis and the children had gone up to the river fishing; the Colonel was somewhere about the place; always was away when he was wanted. Guess he'd take us in, mighty fine man the Colonel; and she dispatched a child from a cabin in the rear to hunt him up. The Colonel was a great friend of her folks down to Greenville; they visited here. Law, no, she didn't live here. Was just up here spending the summer, for her health. God-forsaken lot of people up here, poor trash. She wouldn't stay here a day, but the Colonel was a friend of her folks, the firstest folks in Greenville. Nobody round here she could 'sociate with. She was a Presbyterian, the folks round here mostly Baptists and Methodists. More style about the Presbyterians. Married? No, she hoped not. She did n't want to support no husband. Got 'nuff to do to take care of herself. That her little girl? No; she'd only got one child, down to Greenville, just the prettiest boy ever was, as white as anybody. How did she what? reconcile this state of things with not being married and being a Presbyterian? Sho! she liked to carry some religion along; it was mighty handy occasionally, mebbe not all the time. Yes, indeed, she enjoyed her religion.

The Colonel appeared and gave us a most cordial welcome. The fat and merry cook blustered around and prepared a good dinner, memorable for its "light" bread, the first we had seen since Cranberry Forge. The Colonel is in some sense a public man, having been a mail agent, and a Republican. He showed us photographs and engravings of Northern politicians, and had the air of a man who had been in Washington. This was a fine country for any kind of fruit,--apples, grapes, pears; it needed a little Northern enterprise to set things going. The travelers were indebted to the Colonel for a delightful noontime rest, and with regret declined his pressing invitation to pass the night with him.

The ride down the Swannanoa to Asheville was pleasant, through a cultivated region, over a good road. The Swannanoa is, however, a turbid stream. In order to obtain the most impressive view of Asheville we approached it by the way of Beaucatcher Hill, a sharp elevation a mile west of the town. I suppose the name is a corruption of some descriptive French word, but it has long been a favorite resort of the frequenters of Asheville, and it may be traditional that it is a good place to catch beaux. The summit is occupied by a handsome private residence, and from this ridge the view, which has the merit of "bursting" upon the traveler as he comes over the hill, is captivating in its extent and variety. The pretty

town of Asheville is seen to cover a number of elevations gently rising out of the valley, and the valley, a rich agricultural region, well watered and fruitful, is completely inclosed by picturesque hills, some of them rising to the dignity of mountains. The most conspicuous of these is Mount Pisgah, eighteen miles distant to the southwest, a pyramid of the Balsam range, 5757 feet high. Mount Pisgah, from its shape, is the most attractive mountain in this region.

The sunset light was falling upon the splendid panorama and softening it. The windows of the town gleamed as if on fire. From the steep slope below came the mingled sounds of children shouting, cattle driven home, and all that hum of life that marks a thickly peopled region preparing for the night. It was the leisure hour of an August afternoon, and Asheville was in all its watering-place gayety, as we reined up at the Swannanoa hotel. A band was playing on the balcony. We had reached ice-water, barbers, waiters, civilization.

IV

Asheville, delightful for situation, on small hills that rise above the French Broad below its confluence with the Swannanoa, is a sort of fourteenth cousin to Saratoga. It has no springs, but lying 2250 feet above the sea and in a lovely valley, mountain girt, it has pure atmosphere and an equable climate; and being both a summer and winter resort, it has acquired a watering-place air. There are Southerners who declare that it is too hot in summer, and that the complete circuit of mountains shuts out any lively movement of air. But the scenery is so charming and noble, the drives are so varied, the roads so unusually passable for a Southern country, and the facilities for excursions so good, that Asheville is a favorite resort.

Architecturally the place is not remarkable, but its surface is so irregular, there are so many acclivities and deep valleys that improvements can never obliterate, that it is perforce picturesque. It is interesting also, if not pleasing, in its contrasts--the enterprise of taste and money-making struggling with the laissez faire of the South. The negro, I suppose, must be regarded as a conservative element; he has not much inclination to change his clothes or his cabin, and his swarming presence gives a ragged aspect to the new civilization. And to say the truth, the new element of Southern smartness lacks the trim thrift the North is familiar with; though the visitor who needs relaxation is not disposed to quarrel with the easy-going terms on which life is taken.

Asheville, it is needless to say, appeared very gay and stimulating to the riders from the wilderness. The Professor, who does not even pretend to patronize Nature, had his revenge as we strolled about the streets (there is but one of much consideration), immensely entertained by the picturesque contrasts. There was more life and

amusement here in five minutes, he declared, than in five days of what people called scenery--the present rage for scenery, anyway, being only a fashion and a modern invention. The Friend suspected from this penchant for the city that the Professor must have been brought up in the country.

There was a kind of predetermined and willful gayety about Asheville however, that is apt to be present in a watering-place, and gave to it the melancholy tone that is always present in gay places. We fancied that the lively movement in the streets had an air of unreality. A band of musicians on the balcony of the Swannanoa were scraping and tooting and twanging with a hired air, and on the opposite balcony of the Eagle a rival band echoed and redoubled the perfunctory joyousness. The gayety was contagious: the horses felt it; those that carried light burdens of beauty minced and pranced, the pony in the dog-cart was inclined to dash, the few passing equipages had an air of pleasure; and the people of color, the comely waitress and the slouching corner-loafer, responded to the animation of the festive strains. In the late afternoon the streets were full of people, wagons, carriages, horsemen, all with a holiday air, dashed with African color and humor--the irresponsibility of the most insouciant and humorous race in the world, perhaps more comical than humorous; a mixture of recent civilization and rudeness, peculiar and amusing; a happy coming together, it seemed, of Southern abandon and Northern wealth, though the North was little represented at this season.

As evening came on, the streets, though wanting gas, were still more animated; the shops were open, some very good ones, and the white and black throng increasing, especially the black, for the negro is preeminently a night bird. In the hotels dancing was promised--the german was announced; on the galleries and in the corridors were groups of young people, a little loud in manner and voice,--the young gentleman, with his over-elaborate manner to ladies in bowing and hat-lifting, and the blooming girls from the lesser Southern cities, with the slight provincial note, and yet with the frank and engaging cordiality which is as charming as it is characteristic. I do not know what led the Professor to query if the Southern young women were not superior to the Southern young men, but he is always asking questions nobody can answer. At the Swannanoa were half a dozen bridal couples, readily recognizable by the perfect air they had of having been married a long time. How interesting such young voyagers are, and how interesting they are to each other! Columbus never discovered such a large world as they have to find out and possess each in the other.

Among the attractions of the evening it was difficult to choose. There was a lawn-party advertised at Battery Point (where a fine hotel has since been built) and we walked up to that round knob after dark. It is a hill with a grove, which commands a charming view, and was fortified during the war. We found it illuminated with Chinese lanterns; and little tables set about under the trees, laden with cake and ice-cream, offered a chance to the stranger to contribute

money for the benefit of the Presbyterian Church. I am afraid it was not a profitable entertainment, for the men seemed to have business elsewhere, but the ladies about the tables made charming groups in the lighted grove. Man is a stupid animal at best, or he would not make it so difficult for the womenkind to scrape together a little money for charitable purposes. But probably the women like this method of raising money better than the direct one.

The evening gayety of the town was well distributed. When we descended to the Court-House Square, a great crowd had collected, black, white, and yellow, about a high platform, upon which four glaring torches lighted up the novel scene, and those who could read might decipher this legend on a standard at the back of the stage:

HAPPY JOHN.
ONE OF THE SLAVES OF WADE HAMPTON.
COME AND SEE HIM!

Happy John, who occupied the platform with Mary, a "bright" yellow girl, took the comical view of his race, which was greatly enjoyed by his audience. His face was blackened to the proper color of the stage-darkey, and he wore a flaming suit of calico, the trousers and coat striped longitudinally according to Punch's idea of "Uncle Sam," the coat a swallow-tail bound and faced with scarlet, and a bell-crowned white hat. This conceit of a colored Yankee seemed to tickle all colors in the audience amazingly. Mary, the "bright" woman (this is the universal designation of the light mulatto), was a pleasing but bold yellow girl, who wore a natty cap trimmed with scarlet, and had the assured or pert manner of all traveling sawdust performers.

"Oh, yes," exclaimed a bright woman in the crowd, "Happy John was sure enough one of Wade Hampton's slaves, and he's right good looking when he's not blackened up."

Happy John sustained the promise of his name by spontaneous gayety and enjoyment of the fleeting moment; he had a glib tongue and a ready, rude wit, and talked to his audience with a delicious mingling of impudence, deference, and patronage, commenting upon them generally, administering advice and correction in a strain of humor that kept his hearers in a pleased excitement. He handled the banjo and the guitar alternately, and talked all the time when he was not singing. Mary (how much harder featured and brazen a woman is in such a position than a man of the same caliber!) sang, in an untutored treble, songs of sentiment, often risqué, in solo and in company with John, but with a cold, indifferent air, in contrast to the rollicking enjoyment of her comrade.

The favorite song, which the crowd compelled her to repeat, touched lightly the uncertainties of love, expressed in the falsetto pathetic refrain :

"Mary's gone away wid de coon."

All this, with the moon, the soft summer night, the mixed crowd of darkies and whites, the stump eloquence of Happy John, the singing, the laughter, the flaring torches, made a wild scene. The entertainment was quite free, with a "collection" occasionally during the performance.

What most impressed us, however, was the turning to account by Happy John of the "nigger" side of the black man as a means of low comedy, and the enjoyment of it by all the people of color. They appeared to appreciate as highly as anybody the comic element in themselves, and Happy John had emphasized it by deepening his natural color and exaggerating the "nigger" peculiarities. I presume none of them analyzed the nature of his infectious gayety, nor thought of the pathos that lay so close to it, in the fact of his recent slavery, and the distinction of being one of Wade Hampton's niggers, and the melancholy mirth of this light-hearted race's burlesque of itself.

A performance followed which called forth the appreciation of the crowd more than the wit of Happy John or the faded songs of the yellow girl. John took two sweet-cakes and broke each in fine pieces into a saucer, and after sugaring and eulogizing the dry messes, called for two small darky volunteers from the audience to come up on the platform and devour them. He offered a prize of fifteen cents to the one who should first eat the contents of his dish, not using his hands, and hold up the saucer empty in token of his victory. The cake was tempting, and the fifteen cents irresistible, and a couple of boys in ragged shirts and short trousers and a suspender apiece came up shamefacedly to enter for the prize. Each one grasped his saucer in both hands, and with face over the dish awaited the word "go," which John gave, and started off the contest with a banjo accompaniment. To pick up with the mouth the dry cake and choke it down was not so easy as the boys apprehended, but they went into the task with all their might, gobbling and swallowing as if they loved cake, occasionally rolling an eye to the saucer of the contestant to see the relative progress, John strumming, ironically encouraging, and the crowd roaring. As the combat deepened and the contestants strangled and stuffed and sputtered, the crowd went into spasms of laughter. The smallest boy won by a few seconds, holding up his empty saucer, with mouth stuffed, vigorously trying to swallow, like a chicken with his throat clogged with dry meal, and utterly unable to speak. The impartial John praised the victor in mock heroics, but said that the trial was so even that he would divide the prize, ten cents to one and five to the other--a stroke of justice that greatly increased his popularity. And then he dismissed the assembly, saying that he had promised the mayor to do so early, because he did not wish to run an opposition to the political meeting going on in the courthouse.

The scene in the large court-room was less animated than that outdoors; a half-dozen tallow dips, hung on the wall in sconces and stuck on the judge's long desk, feebly illuminated the mixed crowd of black and white who sat in, and on the backs of, the benches, and cast only a fitful light upon the orator, who paced back and forth

and pounded the rail. It was to have been a joint discussion between the two presidential electors running in that district, but, the Republican being absent, his place was taken by a young man of the town. The Democratic orator took advantage of the absence of his opponent to describe the discussion of the night before, and to give a portrait of his adversary. He was represented as a cross between a baboon and a jackass, who would be a natural curiosity for Barnum. "I intend," said the orator, "to put him in a cage and exhibit him about the deestrick." This political hit called forth great applause. All his arguments were of this pointed character, and they appeared to be unanswerable. The orator appeared to prove that there wasn't a respectable man in the opposite party who wasn't an office-holder, nor a white man of any kind in it who was not an office-holder. If there were any issues or principles in the canvass, he paid his audience the compliment of knowing all about them, for he never alluded to any. In another state of society, such a speech of personalities might have led to subsequent shootings, but no doubt his adversary would pay him in the same coin when next they met, and the exhibition seemed to be regarded down here as satisfactory and enlightened political canvassing for votes. The speaker who replied, opened his address with a noble tribute to woman (as the first speaker had ended his), directed to a dozen of that sex who sat in the gloom of a corner. The young man was moderate in his sarcasm, and attempted to speak of national issues, but the crowd had small relish for that sort of thing. At eleven o'clock, when we got away from the unsavory room (more than half the candles had gone out), the orator was making slow headway against the refished blackguardism of the evening. The german was still "on" at the hotel when we ascended to our chamber, satisfied that Asheville was a lively town.

The sojourner at Asheville can amuse himself very well by walking or driving to the many picturesque points of view about the town; livery stables abound, and the roads are good. The Beau-catcher Hill is always attractive; and Connolly's, a private place a couple of miles from town, is ideally situated, being on a slight elevation in the valley, commanding the entire circuit of mountains, for it has the air of repose which is so seldom experienced in the location of a dwelling in America whence an extensive prospect is given. Or if the visitor is disinclined to exertion, he may lounge in the rooms of the hospitable Asheville Club; or he may sit on the sidewalk in front of the hotels, and talk with the colonels and judges and generals and ex-members of Congress, the talk generally drifting to the new commercial and industrial life of the South, and only to politics as it affects these; and he will be pleased, if the conversation takes a reminiscent turn, with the lack of bitterness and the tone of friendliness. The negro problem is commonly discussed philosophically and without heat, but there is always discovered, underneath, the determination that the negro shall never again get the legislative upper hand. And the gentleman from South Carolina who has an upland farm, and is heartily glad slavery is gone, and wants the negro educated, when it comes to ascendancy in politics--such as the State once experienced--asks you what you would do yourself. This is not the place to enter upon the politico-social

question, but the writer may note one impression gathered from much friendly and agreeable conversation. It is that the Southern whites misapprehend and make a scarecrow of "social equality." When, during the war, it was a question at the North of giving the colored people of the Northern States the ballot, the argument against it used to be stated in the form of a question: "Do you want your daughter to marry a negro?" Well, the negro has his political rights in the North, and there has come no change in the social conditions whatever. And there is no doubt that the social conditions would remain exactly as they are at the South if the negro enjoyed all the civil rights which the Constitution tries to give him. The most sensible view of this whole question was taken by an intelligent colored man, whose brother was formerly a representative in Congress. "Social equality," he said in effect, "is a humbug. We do not expect it, we do not want it. It does not exist among the blacks themselves. We have our own social degrees, and choose our own associates. We simply want the ordinary civil rights, under which we can live and make our way in peace and amity. This is necessary to our self-respect, and if we have not self-respect, it is not to be supposed that the race can improve. I'll tell you what I mean. My wife is a modest, intelligent woman, of good manners, and she is always neat, and tastefully dressed. Now, if she goes to take the cars, she is not permitted to go into a clean car with decent people, but is ordered into one that is repellent, and is forced into company that any refined woman would shrink from. But along comes a flauntingly dressed woman, of known disreputable character, whom my wife would be disgraced to know, and she takes any place that money will buy. It is this sort of thing that hurts."

We took the eastern train one evening to Round Nob (Henry's Station), some thirty miles, in order to see the wonderful railway that descends, a distance of eight miles, from the summit of Swannanoa Gap (2657 feet elevation) to Round Nob Hotel (1607 feet). The Swannanoa Summit is the dividing line between the waters that flow to the Atlantic and those that go to the Gulf of Mexico. This fact was impressed upon us by the inhabitants, who derive a good deal of comfort from it. Such divides are always matter of local pride. Unfortunately, perhaps, it was too dark before we reached Henry's to enable us to see the road in all its loops and parallels as it appears on the map, but we gained a better effect. The hotel, when we first sighted it, all its windows blazing with light, was at the bottom of a well. Beside it--it was sufficiently light to see that--a column of water sprang straight into the air to the height, as we learned afterwards from two official sources, of 225 and 265 feet; and the information was added that it is the highest fountain in the world. This stout column, stiff as a flagstaff, with its feathery head of mist gleaming like silver in the failing light, had the most charming effect. We passed out of sight of hotel and fountain, but were conscious of being--whirled on a circular descending grade, and very soon they were in sight again. Again and again they disappeared and came to view, now on one side and now on the other, until our train seemed to be bewitched, making frantic efforts by dodgings and turnings, now through tunnels and now over high pieces of trestle, to

escape the inevitable attraction that was gravitating it down to the hospitable lights at the bottom of the well. When we climbed back up the road in the morning, we had an opportunity to see the marvelous engineering, but there is little else to see, the view being nearly always very limited.

The hotel at the bottom of the ravine, on the side of Round Nob, offers little in the way of prospect, but it is a picturesque place, and we could understand why it was full of visitors when we came to the table. It was probably the best-kept house of entertainment in the State, and being in the midst of the Black Hills, it offers good chances for fishing and mountain climbing.

In the morning the fountain, which is, of course, artificial, refused to play, the rain in the night having washed in debris which clogged the conduit. But it soon freed itself and sent up for a long time, like a sulky geyser, mud and foul water. When it got freedom and tolerable clearness, we noted that the water went up in pulsations, which were marked at short distances by the water falling off, giving the column the appearance of a spine. The summit, always beating the air in efforts to rise higher, fell over in a veil of mist.

There are certain excursions that the sojourner at Asheville must make. He must ride forty-five miles south through Henderson and Transylvania to Caesar's Head, on the South Carolina border, where the mountain system abruptly breaks down into the vast southern plain; where the observer, standing on the edge of the precipice, has behind him and before him the greatest contrast that nature can offer. He must also take the rail to Waynesville, and visit the much-frequented White Sulphur Springs, among the Balsam Mountains, and penetrate the Great Smoky range by way of Quallatown, and make the acquaintance of the remnant of Cherokee Indians living on the north slope of Cheoah Mountain. The Professor could have made it a matter of personal merit that he escaped all these encounters with wild and picturesque nature, if his horse had not been too disabled for such long jaunts. It is only necessary, however, to explain to the public that the travelers are not gormandizers of scenery, and were willing to leave some portions of the State to the curiosity of future excursionists.

But so much was said about Hickory Nut Gap that a visit to it could not be evaded. The Gap is about twenty-four miles southeast of Asheville. In the opinion of a well-informed colonel, who urged us to make the trip, it is the finest piece of scenery in this region. We were brought up on the precept "get the best," and it was with high anticipations that we set out about eleven o'clock one warm, foggy morning. We followed a very good road through a broken, pleasant country, gradually growing wilder and less cultivated. There was heavy rain most of the day on the hills, and occasionally a shower swept across our path. The conspicuous object toward which we traveled all the morning was a shapely conical hill at the beginning of the Gap.

At three o'clock we stopped at the Widow Sherrill's for dinner. Her house, only about a mile from the summit, is most picturesquely situated on a rough slope, giving a wide valley and mountain view. The house is old rambling, many-roomed, with wide galleries on two sides. If one wanted a retired retreat for a few days, with good air and fair entertainment, this could be commended. It is an excellent fruit region; apples especially are sound and of good flavor. That may be said of all this part of the State. The climate is adapted to apples, as the hilly part of New England is. I fancy the fruit ripens slowly, as it does in New England, and is not subject to quick decay like much of that grown in the West. But the grape also can be grown in all this mountain region. Nothing but lack of enterprise prevents any farmer from enjoying abundance of fruit. The industry carried on at the moment at the Widow Sherrill's was the artificial drying of apples for the market. The apples are pared, cored, and sliced in spirals, by machinery, and dried on tin sheets in a patented machine. The industry appears to be a profitable one hereabouts, and is about the only one that calls in the aid of invention.

While our dinner was preparing, we studied the well-known pictures of "Jane" and "Eliza," the photographs of Confederate boys, who had never returned from the war, and the relations, whom the traveling photographers always like to pillory in melancholy couples, and some stray volumes of the Sunday-school Union. Madame Sherrill, who carries on the farm since the death of her husband, is a woman of strong and liberal mind, who informed us that she got small comfort in the churches in the neighborhood, and gave us, in fact, a discouraging account of the unvital piety of the region.

The descent from the summit of the Gap to Judge Logan's, nine miles, is rapid, and the road is wild and occasionally picturesque, following the Broad River, a small stream when we first overtook it, but roaring, rocky, and muddy, owing to frequent rains, and now and then tumbling down in rapids. The noisy stream made the ride animated, and an occasional cabin, a poor farmhouse, a mill, a schoolhouse, a store with an assemblage of lean horses tied to the hitching rails, gave the Professor opportunity for remarks upon the value of life under such circumstances.

The valley which we followed down probably owes its celebrity to the uncommon phenomena of occasional naked rocks and precipices. The inclosing mountains are from 3000 to 4000 feet high, and generally wooded. I do not think that the ravine would be famous in a country where exposed ledges and buttressing walls of rock are common. It is only by comparison with the local scenery that this is remarkable. About a mile above Judge Logan's we caught sight, through the trees, of the famous waterfall. From the top of the high ridge on the right, a nearly perpendicular cascade pours over the ledge of rocks and is lost in the forest. We could see nearly the whole of it, at a great height above us, on the opposite side of the river, and it would require an hour's stiff climb to reach its foot. From where we viewed it, it seemed a slender and not very important, but certainly

a very beautiful cascade, a band of silver in the mass of green foliage. The fall is said to be 1400 feet. Our colonel insists that it is a thousand. It may be, but the valley where we stood is at least at an elevation of 1300 feet; we could not believe that the ridge over which the water pours is much higher than 3000 feet, and the length of the fall certainly did not appear to be a quarter of the height of the mountain from our point of observation. But we had no desire to belittle this pretty cascade, especially when we found that Judge Logan would regard a foot abated from the 1400 as a personal grievance. Mr. Logan once performed the functions of local judge, a Republican appointment, and he sits around the premises now in the enjoyment of that past dignity and of the fact that his wife is postmistress. His house of entertainment is at the bottom of the valley, a place shut in, warm, damp, and not inviting to a long stay, although the region boasts a good many natural curiosities.

It was here that we encountered again the political current, out of which we had been for a month. The Judge himself was reticent, as became a public man, but he had conspicuously posted up a monster prospectus, sent out from Augusta, of a campaign life of Blaine and Logan, in which the Professor read, with shaking knees, this sentence: "Sure to be the greatest and hottest [campaign and civil battle] ever known in this world. The thunder of the supreme struggle and its reverberations will shake the continents for months, and will be felt from Pole to Pole."

For this and other reasons this seemed a risky place to be in. There was something sinister about the murky atmosphere, and a suspicion of mosquitoes besides. Had there not been other travelers staying here, we should have felt still more uneasy. The house faced Bald Mountain, 4000 feet high, a hill that had a very bad reputation some years ago, and was visited by newspaper reporters. This is, in fact, the famous Shaking Mountain. For a long time it had a habit of trembling, as if in an earthquake spasm, but with a shivering motion very different from that produced by an earthquake. The only good that came of it was that it frightened all the "moonshiners," and caused them to join the church. It is not reported what became of the church afterwards. It is believed now that the trembling was caused by the cracking of a great ledge on the mountain, which slowly parted asunder. Bald Mountain is the scene of Mrs. Burnett's delightful story of "Louisiana," and of the play of "Esmeralda." A rock is pointed out toward the summit, which the beholder is asked to see resembles a hut, and which is called "Esmeralda's Cottage." But this attractive maiden has departed, and we did not discover any woman in the region who remotely answers to her description.

In the morning we rode a mile and a half through the woods and followed up a small stream to see the celebrated pools, one of which the Judge said was two hundred feet deep, and another bottomless. These pools, not round, but on one side circular excavations, some twenty feet across, worn in the rock by pebbles, are very good specimens, and perhaps remarkable specimens, of "pot-holes." They are, however, regarded here as one of the wonders of the world. On

the way to them we saw beautiful wild trumpet-creepers in blossom, festooning the trees.

The stream that originates in Hickory Nut Gap is the westernmost branch of several forks of the Broad, which unite to the southeast in Rutherford County, flow to Columbia, and reach the Atlantic through the channel of the Santee. It is not to be confounded with the French Broad, which originates among the hills of Transylvania, runs northward past Asheville, and finds its way to the Tennessee through the Warm Springs Gap in the Bald Mountains. As the French claimed ownership of all the affluents of the Mississippi, this latter was called the French Broad.

It was a great relief the next morning, on our return, to rise out of the lifeless atmosphere of the Gap into the invigorating air at the Widow Sherrill's, whose country-seat is three hundred feet higher than Asheville. It was a day of heavy showers, and apparently of leisure to the scattered population; at every store and mill was a congregation of loafers, who had hitched their scrawny horses and mules to the fences, and had the professional air of the idler and gossip the world over. The vehicles met on the road were a variety of the prairie schooner, long wagons with a top of hoops over which is stretched a cotton cloth. The wagons are without seats, and the canvas is too low to admit of sitting upright, if there were. The occupants crawl in at either end, sit or lie on the bottom of the wagon, and jolt along in shiftless uncomfortableness.

Riding down the French Broad was one of the original objects of our journey. Travelers with the same intention may be warned that the route on horseback is impracticable. The distance to the Warm Springs is thirty-seven miles; to Marshall, more than halfway, the road is clear, as it runs on the opposite side of the river from the railway, and the valley is something more than river and rails. But below Marshall the valley contracts, and the rails are laid a good portion of the way in the old stage road. One can walk the track, but to ride a horse over its sleepers and culverts and occasional bridges, and dodge the trains, is neither safe nor agreeable. We sent our horses round--the messenger taking the risk of leading them, between trains, over the last six or eight miles,--and took the train.

The railway, after crossing a mile or two of meadows, hugs the river all the way. The scenery is the reverse of bold. The hills are low, monotonous in form, and the stream winds through them, with many a pretty turn and "reach," with scarcely a ribbon of room to spare on either side. The river is shallow, rapid, stony, muddy, full of rocks, with an occasional little island covered with low bushes. The rock seems to be a clay formation, rotten and colored. As we approach Warm Springs the scenery becomes a little bolder, and we emerge into the open space about the Springs through a narrower defile, guarded by rocks that are really picturesque in color and splintered decay, one of them being known, of course, as the "Lover's Leap," a name common in every part of the modern or ancient world

where there is a settlement near a precipice, with always the same legend attached to it.

There is a little village at Warm Springs, but the hotel--since burned and rebuilt--(which may be briefly described as a palatial shanty) stands by itself close to the river, which is here a deep, rapid, turbid stream. A bridge once connected it with the road on the opposite bank, but it was carried away three or four years ago, and its ragged butments stand as a monument of procrastination, while the stream is crossed by means of a flatboat and a cable. In front of the hotel, on the slight slope to the river, is a meager grove of locusts. The famous spring, close to the stream, is marked only by a rough box of wood and an iron pipe, and the water, which has a temperature of about one hundred degrees, runs to a shabby bath-house below, in which is a pool for bathing. The bath is very agreeable, the tepid water being singularly soft and pleasant. It has a slightly sulphurous taste. Its good effects are much certified. The grounds, which might be very pretty with care, are ill-kept and slatternly, strewn with debris, as if everything was left to the easy-going nature of the servants. The main house is of brick, with verandas and galleries all round, and a colonnade of thirteen huge brick and stucco columns, in honor of the thirteen States,--a relic of post-Revolutionary times, when the house was the resort of Southern fashion and romance. These columns have stood through one fire, and perhaps the recent one, which swept away the rest of the structure. The house is extended in a long wooden edifice, with galleries and outside stairs, the whole front being nearly seven hundred feet long. In a rear building is a vast, barrack-like dining-room, with a noble ball-room above, for dancing is the important occupation of visitors.

The situation is very pretty, and the establishment has a picturesqueness of its own. Even the ugly little brick structure near the bath-house imposes upon one as Wade Hampton's cottage. No doubt we liked the place better than if it had been smart, and enjoyed the negligé condition, and the easy terms on which life is taken there. There was a sense of abundance in the sight of fowls tiptoeing about the verandas, and to meet a chicken in the parlor was a sort of guarantee that we should meet him later on in the dining-room. There was nothing incongruous in the presence of pigs, turkeys, and chickens on the grounds; they went along with the good-natured negro-service and the general hospitality; and we had a mental rest in the thought that all the gates would have been off the hinges, if there had been any gates. The guests were very well treated indeed, and were put under no sort of restraint by discipline. The long colonnade made an admirable promenade and lounging-place and point of observation. It was interesting to watch the groups under the locusts, to see the management of the ferry, the mounting and dismounting of the riding-parties, and to study the colors on the steep hill opposite, halfway up which was a neat cottage and flower-garden. The type of people was very pleasantly Southern. Colonels and politicians stand in groups and tell stories, which are followed by explosions of laughter; retire occasionally

into the saloon, and come forth reminded of more stories, and all lift their hats elaborately and suspend the narratives when a lady goes past. A company of soldiers from Richmond had pitched its tents near the hotel, and in the evening the ball-room was enlivened with uniforms. Among the graceful dancers--and every one danced well, and with spirit was pointed out the young widow of a son of Andrew Johnson, whose pretty cottage overlooks the village. But the Professor, to whom this information was communicated, doubted whether here it was not a greater distinction to be the daughter of the owner of this region than to be connected with a President of the United States.

A certain air of romance and tradition hangs about the French Broad and the Warm Springs, which the visitor must possess himself of in order to appreciate either. This was the great highway of trade and travel. At certain seasons there was an almost continuous procession of herds of cattle and sheep passing to the Eastern markets, and of trains of big wagons wending their way to the inviting lands watered by the Tennessee. Here came in the summer-time the Southern planters in coach and four, with a great retinue of household servants, and kept up for months that unique social life, a mixture of courtly ceremony and entire freedom, the civilization which had the drawing-room at one end and the negro-quarters at the other,--which has passed away. It was a continuation into our own restless era of the manners and the literature of George the Third, with the accompanying humor and happy-go-lucky decadence of the negro slaves. On our way down we saw on the river-bank, under the trees, the old hostelry, Alexander's, still in decay,--an attractive tavern, that was formerly one of the notable stopping-places on the river. Master, and fine lady, and obsequious, larking darky, and lumbering coach, and throng of pompous and gay life, have all disappeared. There was no room in this valley for the old institutions and for the iron track.

"When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
We, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise."

This perverted use of noble verse was all the response the Friend got in his attempt to drop into the sentimental vein over the past of the French Broad.

The reader must not think there is no enterprise in this sedative and idle resort. The conceited Yankee has to learn that it is not he alone who can be accused of the thrift of craft. There is at the Warm Springs a thriving mill for crushing and pulverizing barites, known vulgarly as heavy-spar. It is the weight of this heaviest of minerals, and not its lovely crystals, that gives it value. The rock is crushed, washed, sorted out by hand, to remove the foreign substances, then ground and subjected to acids, and at the end of the process it is as white and fine as the best bolted flour. This heavy

adulterant is shipped to the North in large quantities,--the manager said he had recently an order for a hundred thousand dollars' worth of it. What is the use of this powder? Well, it is of use to the dealer who sells white lead for paint, to increase the weight of the lead, and it is the belief hereabouts that it is mixed with powdered sugar. The industry is profitable to those engaged in it.

It was impossible to get much information about our route into Tennessee, except that we should go by Paint Rock, and cross Paint Mountain. Late one morning,--a late start is inevitable here,--accompanied by a cavalcade, we crossed the river by the rope ferry, and trotted down the pretty road, elevated above the stream and tree-shaded, offering always charming glimpses of swift water and overhanging foliage (the railway obligingly taking the other side of the river), to Paint Rock,--six miles. This Paint Rock is a naked precipice by the roadside, perhaps sixty feet high, which has a large local reputation. It is said that its face shows painting done by the Indians, and hieroglyphics which nobody can read. On this bold, crumbling cliff, innumerable visitors have written their names. We stared at it a good while to discover the paint and hieroglyphics, but could see nothing except iron stains. Round the corner is a farmhouse and place of call for visitors, a neat cottage, with a display of shells and minerals and flower-pots; and here we turned north crossed the little stream called Paint River, the only clear water we had seen in a month, passed into the State of Tennessee, and by a gentle ascent climbed Paint Mountain. The open forest road, with the murmur of the stream below, was delightfully exhilarating, and as we rose the prospect opened,--the lovely valley below, Bald Mountains behind us, and the Butt Mountains rising as we came over the ridge.

Nobody on the way, none of the frowzy women or unintelligent men, knew anything of the route, or could give us any information of the country beyond. But as we descended in Tennessee the country and the farms decidedly improved,--apple-trees and a grapevine now and then.

A ride of eight miles brought us to Waddle's, hungry and disposed to receive hospitality. We passed by an old farm building to a new two-storied, gayly painted house on a hill. We were deceived by appearances. The new house, with a new couple in it, had nothing to offer us except some buttermilk. Why should anybody be obliged to feed roving strangers? As to our horses, the young woman with a baby in her arms declared,

"We've got nothing for stock but roughness; perhaps you can get something at the other house."

"Roughness," we found out at the other house, meant hay in this region. We procured for the horses a light meal of green oats, and for our own dinner we drank at the brook and the Professor produced a few sonnets. On this sustaining repast we fared on nearly twelve miles farther, through a rolling, good farming country, offering little for comment, in search of a night's lodging with one of the

brothers Snap. But one brother declined our company on the plea that his wife was sick, and the other because his wife lived in Greenville, and we found ourselves as dusk came on without shelter in a tavernless land. Between the two refusals we enjoyed the most picturesque bit of scenery of the day, at the crossing of Camp Creek, a swift little stream, that swirled round under the ledge of bold rocks before the ford. This we learned was a favorite camp-meeting ground. Mary was calling the cattle home at the farm of the second Snap. It was a very peaceful scene of rural life, and we were inclined to tarry, but Mary, instead of calling us home with the cattle, advised us to ride on to Alexander's before it got dark.

It is proper to say that at Alexander's we began to see what this pleasant and fruitful country might be, and will be, with thrift and intelligent farming. Mr. Alexander is a well-to-do farmer, with plenty of cattle and good barns (always an evidence of prosperity), who owes his success to industry and an open mind to new ideas. He was a Unionist during the war, and is a Democrat now, though his county (Greene) has been Republican. We had been riding all the afternoon through good land, and encountering a better class of farmers. Peach-trees abounded (though this was an off year for fruit), and apples and grapes thrived. It is a land of honey and of milk. The persimmon flourishes; and, sign of abundance generally, we believe, great flocks of turkey-buzzards--majestic floaters in the high air--hovered about. This country was ravaged during the war by Unionists and Confederates alternately, the impartial patriots as they passed scooping in corn, bacon, and good horses, leaving the farmers little to live on. Mr. Alexander's farm cost him forty dollars an acre, and yields good crops of wheat and maize. This was the first house on our journey where at breakfast we had grace before meat, though there had been many tables that needed it more. From the door the noble range of the Big Bald is in sight and not distant; and our host said he had a shanty on it, to which he was accustomed to go with his family for a month or six weeks in the summer and enjoy a real primitive woods life.

Refreshed by this little touch of civilization, and with horses well fed, we rode on next morning towards Jonesboro, over a rolling, rather unpicturesque country, but ennobled by the Big Bald and Butt ranges, which we had on our right all day. At noon we crossed the Nollechucky River at a ford where the water was up to the saddle girth, broad, rapid, muddy, and with a treacherous stony bottom, and came to the little hamlet of Boylesville, with a flour-mill, and a hospitable old-fashioned house, where we found shelter from the heat of the hot day, and where the daughters of the house, especially one pretty girl in a short skirt and jaunty cap, contradicted the currently received notion that this world is a weary pilgrimage. The big parlor, with its photographs and stereoscope, and bits of shell and mineral, a piano and a melodeon, and a coveted old sideboard of mahogany, recalled rural New England. Perhaps these refinements are due to the Washington College (a school for both sexes), which is near. We noted at the tables in this region a singular use of the word fruit. When we were asked, Will you have some of the fruit?

and said Yes, we always got applesauce.

Ten miles more in the late afternoon brought us to Jonesboro, the oldest town in the State, a pretty place, with a flavor of antiquity, set picturesquely on hills, with the great mountains in sight. People from further South find this an agreeable summering place, and a fair hotel, with odd galleries in front and rear, did not want company. The Warren Institute for negroes has been flourishing here ever since the war.

A ride of twenty miles next day carried us to Union. Before noon we forded the Watauga, a stream not so large as the Nollechucky, and were entertained at the big brick house of Mr. Devault, a prosperous and hospitable farmer. This is a rich country. We had met in the morning wagon-loads of watermelons and muskmelons, on the way to Jonesboro, and Mr. Devault set abundance of these refreshing fruits before us as we lounged on the porch before dinner.

It was here that we made the acquaintance of a colored woman, a withered, bent old pensioner of the house, whose industry (she excelled any modern patent apple-parer) was unabated, although she was by her own confession (a woman, we believe, never owns her age till she has passed this point) and the testimony of others a hundred years old. But age had not impaired the brightness of her eyes, nor the limberness of her tongue, nor her shrewd good sense. She talked freely about the want of decency and morality in the young colored folks of the present day. It was n't so when she was a girl. Long, long time ago, she and her husband had been sold at sheriff's sale and separated, and she never had another husband. Not that she blamed her master so much he could n't help it; he got in debt. And she expounded her philosophy about the rich, and the danger they are in. The great trouble is that when a person is rich, he can borrow money so easy, and he keeps drawin' it out of the bank and pilin' up the debt, like rails on top of one another, till it needs a ladder to get on to the pile, and then it all comes down in a heap, and the man has to begin on the bottom rail again. If she'd to live her life over again, she'd lay up money; never cared much about it till now. The thrifty, shrewd old woman still walked about a good deal, and kept her eye on the neighborhood. Going out that morning she had seen some fence up the road that needed mending, and she told Mr. Devault that she didn't like such shiftlessness; she didn't know as white folks was much better than colored folks. Slavery? Yes, slavery was pretty bad--she had seen five hundred niggers in handcuffs, all together in a field, sold to be sent South.

About six miles from here is a beech grove of historical interest, worth a visit if we could have spared the time. In it is the large beech (six and a half feet around six feet from the ground) on which Daniel Boone shot a bear, when he was a rover in this region. He himself cut an inscription on the tree recording his prowess, and it is still distinctly legible:

D. BOONE CILT A BAR ON THIS TREE, 1760.

This tree is a place of pilgrimage, and names of people from all parts of the country are cut on it, until there is scarcely room for any more records of such devotion. The grove is ancient looking, the trees are gnarled and moss-grown. Hundreds of people go there, and the trees are carved all over with their immortal names.

A pleasant ride over a rich rolling country, with an occasional strip of forest, brought us to Union in the evening, with no other adventure than the meeting of a steam threshing-machine in the road, with steam up, clattering along. The devil himself could not invent any machine calculated to act on the nerves of a horse like this. Jack took one look and then dashed into the woods, scraping off his rider's hat but did not succeed in getting rid of his burden or knocking down any trees.

Union, on the railway, is the forlornest of little villages, with some three hundred inhabitants and a forlorn hotel, kept by an ex-stage-driver. The village, which lies on the Holston, has no drinking-water in it nor enterprise enough to bring it in; not a well nor a spring in its limits; and for drinking-water everybody crosses the river to a spring on the other side. A considerable part of the labor of the town is fetching water over the bridge. On a hill overlooking the village is a big, pretentious brick house, with a tower, the furniture of which is an object of wonder to those who have seen it. It belonged to the late Mrs. Stover, daughter of Andrew Johnson. The whole family of the ex-President have departed this world, but his memory is still green in this region, where he was almost worshiped--so the people say in speaking of him.

Forlorn as was the hotel at Union, the landlord's daughters were beginning to draw the lines in rural refinement. One of them had been at school in Abingdon. Another, a mature young lady of fifteen, who waited on the table, in the leisure after supper asked the Friend for a light for her cigarette, which she had deftly rolled.

"Why do you smoke?"

"So as I shan't get into the habit of dipping. Do you think dipping is nice?"

The traveler was compelled to say that he did not, though he had seen a good deal of it wherever he had been.

"All the girls dips round here. But me and my sisters rather smoke than get in a habit of dipping."

To the observation that Union seemed to be a dull place :

"Well, there's gay times here in the winter--dancing. Like to dance? Well, I should say! Last winter I went over to Blountsville to a dance in the court-house; there was a trial between Union and Blountsville for the best dancing. You bet I brought back the cake

and the blue ribbon."

The country was becoming too sophisticated, and the travelers hastened to the end of their journey. The next morning Bristol, at first over a hilly country with magnificent oak-trees,--happily not girdled, as these stately monarchs were often seen along the roads in North Carolina,--and then up Beaver Creek, a turbid stream, turning some mills. When a closed woolen factory was pointed out to the Professor (who was still traveling for Reform), as the result of the agitation in Congress, he said, Yes, the effect of agitation was evident in all the decayed dams and ancient abandoned mills we had seen in the past month.

Bristol is mainly one long street, with some good stores, but generally shabby, and on this hot morning sleepy. One side of the street is in Tennessee, the other in Virginia. How handy for fighting this would have been in the war, if Tennessee had gone out and Virginia stayed in. At the hotel--may a kind Providence wake it up to its responsibilities--we had the pleasure of reading one of those facetious handbills which the great railway companies of the West scatter about, the serious humor of which is so pleasing to our English friends. This one was issued by the accredited agents of the Ohio and Mississippi Railway, and dated April 1, 1884. One sentence will suffice:

"Allow us to thank our old traveling friends for the many favors in our line, and if you are going on your bridal trip, or to see your girl out West, drop in at the general office of the Ohio and Mississippi Railway and we will fix you up in Queen Anne style. Passengers for Dakota, Montana, or the Northwest will have an overcoat and sealskin cap thrown in with all tickets sold on or after the above date."

The great republic cannot yet take itself seriously. Let us hope the humors of it will last another generation. Meditating on this, we hailed at sundown the spires of Abingdon, and regretted the end of a journey that seems to have been undertaken for no purpose.

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