

brave men, to be sure; but they felt that they had to deal now with a braver still, one before whom their souls stood rebuked.

You have seen horses feeding at a trough in a large lot. You have seen one with peculiarly belligerent propensities, ply his teeth and heels so effectually, that all others were compelled to stand off till he had finished his meal; and you have said to yourself, "Certainly a braver horse than that never cracked corn!" But by and by another horse is turned into the lot. The stranger marches boldly up to the trough in a combative attitude, with dilated eyes and nostrils, and ears laid back, and a step disdainful of the earth beneath his proud hoofs. And lo! your nero-horse gives the intruder one keen glance of scrutiny; his courageous countenance falls; instinct tells him that he has found a master, and he retires from the corn and fodder without so much as a single kick! Thus is it with men. This is a truth so well understood in the backwoods, as to give rise to the homely proverb—"that every man, however brave, has some one that he is afraid of!" If there were ever an exception to this rule, that exception is Fent Noland. For while all his enemies fear him, as the sparrow fears the eagle, I do not believe that the man lives on the earth of whom he stands in the slightest dread. I have not space in these rapid sketches to recount his numerous affairs of honor, and his many conflicts of a less methodical character. But I cannot forbear repeating one of the latter class, which I witnessed myself about three years ago.

Noland is excessively fond of horse-racing, as indeed of all exciting sport, and games of every description.

There was a famous race at Fort Smith, high upon the Arkansas River, and immediately on the Cherokee line. And accordingly the amateur of the turf had come all the way from Batesville, a distance of three hundred miles, for the purpose of seeing the sport.

In the evening, after the race was over, the usual number of fights which take place on such occasions, never less than an even dozen, were progressing. Whites, Negroes and Indians were all in a glorious spree.

Noland and myself were looking on at the many strange rencontres, mostly at fisticuffs, when a sudden combat occurred close behind us. One of the parties engaged was an old man, of (as I should judge from his appearance) about sixty; the other was not more than twenty-five. Though so very dissimilar in age, they were equally yoked in courage, and both of very great strength. They both fought with desperation, and with about the same success for a few minutes, until the wind of the elder gave out, when the younger knocked him down, jumped upon him, and drew his bowie-knife to cut his throat.

This was too much for Fent to stand by and behold, without taking a hand in the affray. He suddenly sprang forward, caught the hero of the bowie knife by the hair, and threw him flat on his back on the ground. The old man instantly recovered his feet, and instead of yielding proper thanks to his rescuer, struck him a sounding blow with his fist on the nose, that made the blood flow freely, remarking as he did it, "D—n you, what business had you to interfere?" The other combatant was also up by this time, and making at Fent with his knife. The latter instantly drew from his pocket a revolving pistol, and commenced a continuous fire on both his foes. He broke one of the old man's arms, and one of the younger desperado's legs with as many successive shots; he also then drew his bowie-knife, for the purpose of finishing the work of destruction so singularly begun. The bystanders, however, interfered, and prevented the execution of the deadly design. I have never seen any human being so enraged. For while engaged in a duel, Noland is the most cool, collected man that perhaps ever lived, in an affray, or unexpected conflict, he manifests all the fury of a fiend. On the occasion referred to, he foamed at the mouth like a mad dog, till his lips were covered with white froth, gnashed his teeth, and stamped his right foot in excess of passion, as if he would annihilate the earth itself if possible.

The statement of the foregoing occurrence supplies an explanation of the causes which lead to many of Fent's fiercest combats. He cannot endure to behold unfair play in fighting, or in anything else. He always, too, assumes the side of the feeble against the strong. In truth, nearly all his battles are under-

taken in defence of others. This propensity to take part with the weak, the truest sign of the loftiest courage, is the most salient point in Fent's character. He has frequently been a member of the Arkansas Legislature, and preserves there his perfect consistency, by ever taking the unpopular side of every, and of all questions. A paradox he delights to defend to the utmost extremity, and against all the world. I have often thought, since travelling in New England, what a glorious Boston reformer Fent would have made, had he been so fortunate as to be born in the land of steady habits.

He has recently married a lady of much beauty and great wealth, since which event he has, we are informed, settled down into the calm tranquility of domestic life, and participated in no recent personal difficulty; thus demonstrating, by example, which is the mouth-piece of philosophical history, that the most potent civilizing influence in the world is that which is supplied by the smiles of an amiable and beautiful woman.

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIS S. WALLIS, AND THE FAYETTEVILLE WAR.

At this stage of my hasty sketches, I sit down to paint scenes in which I was myself also a chief actor. I have no need here to recur to the dim twinklings of memory. I find the imperishable facts garnered away, and for ever, in the deepest recesses of my own heart. I am now to speak of events that wrought a thorough revolution, not only in all the outward circumstances of my life, but in the thoughts and feelings of the soul itself; events that dissipated the golden dream of light and love, that gilded the world, and like the fire-play of ten thousand streaming auroras illuminated all the sky—the dream of my early youth! I am to speak now, also, of my deadliest enemy; between whom and myself, only seven years ago, existed hatred unutterable, the most fierce, implacable and savage, that ever burned inextinguishably in the bosoms of two human beings! Seven years! And is it but seven years since the date of those bloody events? Have I only been a wanderer, homeless and friendless on the earth, seven years? Ah, me! How unfaithful is the memory of sorrow to the record of intervening time! Those thrilling scenes are as brilliant now before my mind's eye as they were when I myself mingled in all their shifting show, as the principal figure, too, in the fleeting panorama. But how distant do they seem on account of the dimness of the years which lie mournfully between their immovable standing point, and the dull, barren, present hour! And how cold and calm do they appear now, as if removed afar into the still serene of eternity. And are they not indeed so removed? Their hopes and fears—their loves all tenderness and truth, and their hatreds all torture—where are they? Gone for ever, like a sick man's dream—a nonentity—all save a mere ray of recollection glimmering in a boundless, bottomless vortex of hideous black night!

And my enemy—the arch-demon of my destiny! How changed is my feeling towards him, now that never more our adverse planets shall cross each other's orbits! I hate him no longer. I look on him with an infinite pity; nay, I forgive him all the wrongs he did to me and mine; for now I can clearly perceive that he also, as well as myself, was the victim of a strange delusion, as inexplicable as lunacy, as wild as a raving insanity.

There is one secret connected with the transactions which I am about to detail, that must still remain a secret for some time longer. I long to disclose it; I feel that it is my duty to do so. But still I dare not. It is that which makes my

life so unhappy. My bosom has become the depository of a tale of horror such as all history and hardly any fiction can equal. I feel that I am committing a great sin to keep it. I was not a voluntary agent in its terrific incidents. There is no guilt on my conscience on that account. It is simply because I will not betray to death and infamy a friend, and that friend a woman, who risked her own life to save my own—that I thus sadly suffer. It is a terrible thing to have the mystery of a dark murder locked up in one's bosom. Blood presses with a crushing, unendurable weight even on the conscience of an accessory after the fact. It seems to me, if I could make a full revelation of those awful facts which ever haunt my imagination day and night, that it would be like the removal of a bloody veil hung over the bright sun and blue sky—that then I could sleep one long sweet sleep—a sleep without those ghastly dreamed spectres that gibber with gory locks now nightly around my pillow! Often I am tempted to tell the horrible story to strangers whom I meet casually. Often it trembles on the tip of my tongue and point of my pen. Often I sit down to trace it out, and send to some newspaper to publish anonymously. If the crime were my own I would disclose it, if my execution for the deed were to ensue the next minute. But as I have said, no part of the original guilt was mine. And whenever the dire secret presses with almost irresistible weight for utterance, and I feel myself on the very point of making the disclosure, the image of a pale, sweet, mournful face rises up before me, as if actually there in the dim air, and with an imploring look, bids me "hold!" And I will hold; and thou unfortunate, first of sorrow, and then of darkest sin shall yet escape, though I myself should perish in the struggle with the all-dreaded terror! The slow consumption is busy with thy vitals, oh beautiful and once adored murderess! Soon wilt thou be for ever beyond the clutches of the hangman—beyond the reach of scorn's relentless finger; and beyond all persecution and possibility of pain! Then may I speak and relieve my conscience of its insupportable burden—"cleanse my bosom of this perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart!"

Oh! How I long for the hour of confession. Even these brief hints have supplied a temporary balm to the everlasting wound. But I must cease, or I shall inadvertently reveal all.

I stated in the first of these sketches, that Fayetteville is the seat of justice for Washington, the most populous county in the state of Arkansas.

The earliest settlers in the region, and the very first inhabitants who broke brush on the picturesque hill where the village arose with the rapidity common to towns in the backwoods, were a family by the name of Wallace. They were from the Scotch settlements of North-Carolina. I cannot say whether they were descendants, either, in the direct or collateral line of the ancient hero of the Highlands, though it is certain that one of them, and perhaps two, heired as brave hearts as ever beat beneath the chequered plaid in any wild Scottish bosom of all the many clans in their palmy days of lofty daring. The family consisted of the father and three sons, and two daughters. I shall, in a few words, describe the latter and lovelier portion of them first.

The daughters were both remarkable for personal attractions, but totally different was the style of their charms. Eliza was dark and beautiful as a summer night, when all the stars are conversing of love in that language of poetic symbols, the exchange of eye-beams! She was amiable, pious, and piteous-hearted to all suffering ones. She was the wife of a cold, formal religionist of the Baptist persuasion.

Helen ————. But why attempt a description of one indescribable? There are certain faces that melt, on sight, into the soul, and become relics of memory for ever. You cannot describe them like others, by the eyes, hair, lips, bosom, or voice of dulcet warblings. You cannot describe them at all. You do not so much see, as feel them. Their very look, as they pensively gaze into your enchanted spirit, seems to be a recognition, a sign, as of some mystic tie, that no words may syllable in common air—a reminiscence of some long ago vision, dreamed far back in eternity, ere the soul descended from its serene abode.

Such was Helen R——n. She was married to a demon in mind, and a brute in manners; a sot and an assassin, beneath even the dignity of damnation!

The father, William Wallis, as a mere physical aggregate, was worthy of that illustrious name—a noble-looking Scotchman of the largest size. Although sixty-five, in strength and activity few men of thirty were his equals. Indeed, he did not seem, to judge from his appearance, and the elasticity of his step, much past that age. His face would have been handsome, had it not been for a deep, frightful scar that extended across the whole of his right cheek. But although, with this exception, the exterior man might do well enough, the interior was a compound of the basest cowardice, and the most unmitigated ferocity, mingled in about equal proportions.

A sage has remarked, "That we admire most of all those qualities which we are the most conscious of not possessing ourselves." And certain it is that this huge coward regarded courage as the most admirable of accomplishments. His conversation was a tissue of bloody anecdotes, recounting the most notorious combats which he had witnessed; for in his youth he had been a great traveller, and like travellers in general, when his stock of real facts stopped payment, he drew largely on his principal banker, a wealthy imagination, and the draughts were never dishonored. He would sit for hours, and relate the story of desperate duels and perilous conflicts in which he had been engaged (*ideally!*) with all sorts of foes, and at every disadvantage of odds. His character became so notorious as a *romancer*, that he was generally known by the appropriate nick-name of "lying Bill Wallace."

He had taught his children from their childhood to regard courage as the only virtue, and revenge as the chief enjoyment of life. He had excited their earliest fancies by tales of murderous conflict with dagger and pistol. The whole morality he taught them was comprised in a single precept,—“My sons, never let a man live to say that he has insulted you!” It was no wonder, then, that his three boys, all of the sanguine temperament, full of the fire of life and passion, grew up to be desperadoes, in faith as well as practice. Their naturally destructive organization, subjected to the influence of Western life, would very likely have led to such a result, without any accompanying tuitionary aid; the result was placed beyond any uncertainty by the perpetual pains taken by their father to foster their propensity for blood.

At the date of the events which we are about to record, the youngest of these three desperadoes was eighteen years old. He was tall and handsome, with considerable strength, and much agility. He was exceedingly cruel without being brave; always ready to fight, but never to fight fairly. In the backwoods, and in fact, all over the South, they denote such men by the expressive epithet "Dangerous." They are considered dangerous, because, in every difficulty, they always seek for some advantage, and whenever they have gotten a foe within their power, they are never expected or known to show any mercy. The second son, Alfred, was of a similar character; perhaps he was somewhat more intrepid in spirit; but he was less dreaded in that country than either of the others, on account of the presence of another strong propensity in his nature, that partially neutralized its excess of destructiveness—he had inordinate acquisitiveness. Never was any Jew more itchingly avaricious!

The eldest son, Willis S., was of a very different character from either of his brothers. He was a man all over. His person was noble enough in bearing, and in beautiful strength, to have graced the highest walks of an imperial court. His brow was broad, high and massy. His features were regular in their outlines, and graceful in expression, save when distorted by passion. His fine hazel eye was ordinarily mild, penetrating, and alive with that eager glance which denotes the prevalence of instinct over reflection, and a singular development of the intuitive faculty. The only thing about him which denoted the desperadoe was his voice, which had a strange thumping sound, that fell heavily on the ear, like blows of a hammer on an anvil. He was wholly a creature of passionate impulses. His very heart seemed all one globe of fire. With him to think and to act were the same. And whether the object that moved him in any given case, were love or

revenge, he never paused to weigh consequences, and rarely to consider the means necessary to its attainment.

When a boy, he had been noted for his tenderness. Free-hearted, open-souled, and ever reckless of consequences, he followed the suggestions of every generous emotion; and his sympathies extended to all animated nature. But in particular, his love for the humane was an intense passionate earnestness. For all sorrow, his tears were as free to flow as the summer rain. At school he was ever the friend of the poor and the feeble. And in spite of the tales of war and bloodshed, with which his father so carefully regaled his young ears, fifteen solar cycles had rolled over his head, without any peculiar display of those belligerent propensities for which he was afterward to become so notorious. His only achievements in the combative line, extended only to some half a dozen victorious fights in defence of boys attacked or insulted by others over their size. In such petty affrays, he manifested, however, all that hardihood and courage which knew not the name of fear, that long years after rendered him an object of great fear to others. In spite of both precept and example, he might have passed through life an object of admiration and esteem, had it not been for an incident that occurred when he was about fifteen, that formed the pivot of his destiny, and let loose all the fiend, that still exists although in chains, in the deep, dark centre of all human natures.

From the time he was five years old,—that is from the first day he set his foot in the country school-house,—had young Wallace been in love. His idol was a girl of the same age as himself, and under the tuition of the same master. They said their lessons in the same class. At play-time, when all the other children were amusing themselves in noisy groups, in the usual boisterous merriment, the infant lovers wandered together in the shady groves, and by the reedy margin of melodious rills, happy as the bees and butterflies, and warbling birds, that glided around them. Even then, they whispered of *love*, and discoursed in their sweet sinlessness of the *future* bridal,—alas! that was never, never to be. And thus, from year to year, nurtured by a thousand undying memories, and fed on honey-dews from heaven, and the pure milk of paradise, did their radiant affection grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength, until their very souls seemed mingled into one substance, lost as it were in one delicious identity.

They were now fifteen. The cold and calculating realists of this peddling world cannot conceive what an intensity was the love of such a heart as that of Wallace. It had absorbed time and eternity, and all the terrestrial and celestial spaces. His days and nights were not reckoned by minutes on the solar dial, but by the sweet stolen meetings, by star-light, with her, who was the load-star of his life, the only luminary which he cared for in the wide universe! Perhaps their love was all the more entrancing, that the seal of a deep and necessary secrecy was fixed upon it. The family of Wallace was one of considerable wealth. But the father was considered infamous on many accounts, and it was even rumored, and generally believed, that he was the murderer of his own wife, and the ravisher of his daughter!

Lucy Gordon was an only child, and her parents belonged to the proudest aristocracy of Carolina. They would have considered themselves forever disgraced by the union of their daughter with the son of "lying Bill Wallace," as the father of the young lover was called, all over that whole region of country. She was the pride of their hearts; and according to all accounts, her extreme beauty fully justified their appreciation of such an inestimable pearl.

Fear not, courteous reader, that I am going to inflict on you another tedious description of an angel "with bright hair!"

I know that critics object seriously to my female portraits. They say that I draw them all, as with a pencil dipped in sunbeams, giving a mere glitter on the canvass of pure white light, without the relief of contrasting shadows. It is alleged, that all my epithets are superlatives; and that I have studiously excluded, in my sketches of lovely women, all other degrees of grammar. I confess the soft impeachment, and can only say in my own justification, that such as they seem to me, and not otherwise, do I picture them on the paper,—but, and in how much dimmer colours *there*, than they appear to the living eye, and the delighted

heart. I have worshipped beauty from my boyhood,—the divine beauty of clouds, and stars, and flowers, and rainbows, those flowers of the air, that spread in the water-drop, and blossom in the sunbeam. But to my view, all the bright things, with golden edges, that live on the earth, or wander in the sky, are poor and pale, compared to a beautiful woman,—one whose eye is loaded with *lightnings* of the soul, and whose soft, warm hand is the conductor of streams of magnetism!

Gladly, therefore, would I describe the beautiful Lucy, were it in my power. But I never saw her; nor did I ever receive from those, on whose authority I relate these facts, an accurate outline of her peerless loveliness, which was the common theme of all beholders.

Fifteen summers had flown over the heads of the young lovers. Ten of them had been seasons of rapture and beauty: for they had been gilded by the divine sun of eager innocent love,—that sun, which converts all nature into one great sublime Memnon's statue, musical, all over beneath the impinging rays, which made the air a sonnet, the earth a many-voiced madrigal, and the bright sky, an acrostic, whose stars themselves became melodious capitals, in words that sung the much-loved name.

But for lovers, alas! there are many eyes. Lucy's wanderings were watched, and the secret was out. And then followed the usual incidents, where love chances to be unapproved by parents—interdictions broken, restraint, and tears, and torture.

As the daughter had manifested so decided a tendency towards the soft sentiment, the parents resolved to supply her with an object more congenial to their tastes than the one she had instinctively selected for herself. The new suitor, who came *a-wooing*, backed by the influence of the paternal authority, was an old bachelor on the snowy side of forty, of great wealth, acquired by the unpoetical occupation of a negro trader. He might have been handsome in his youth, for aught we can prove to the contrary. But the slow wear and tear of acquisitive barter, as much as the fierce action of volcanic passions, never fails to leave the impress of crooked wrinkles on the brow, and a repulsive driness and hardness in the countenance, not like to elicit love in any but an arithmetical beholder. And accordingly, we have been told that the new suitor of Lucy was absolutely frightful. But vain was the struggle of a weak girl against the rigorous severity of a father, and tearful entreaties of a tender mother. She yielded. The victim was ready, and the day was appointed for the sacrifice.

The day arrived. From afar and near the invited guests assembled, beaux shining in broad-cloth, and gay belles fluttering in silks, of colors that changed in the sun, as if they had been stripped from the body of a chameleon. The black-robed priest was come. The spectators were ranged around in proper places. The affianced couple were standing on the floor. The first words of the ceremony were uttered, when a figure wrapped in a large cloak rushed into the middle of the room, and with a step so swift and sudden, that the persons present were all too much surprised to think of arresting his advance. Indeed, there was neither time for reflection nor action. For three leaps, rather than steps, placed him beside the startled bridegroom. When his cloak fell from his shoulders carrying with it the masque that veiled his features, and lo! it was young Wallace, with a naked dagger in his right hand, a six-barrel revolver in his left, and two long rifle pistols sticking in his belt. His face was haggard. His very lips were white with the foam of raging passions. His eyes were lurid red, and wild as those of a lunatic broken loose from the asylum. "Die dog!" shouted the infuriate boy gnashing his teeth, as he plunged the gleaming blade in the bosom of the pale bridegroom, who fell dead on the floor. Lucy, overcome with the dreadful sight fainted away in a sudden swoon beside the bridegroom corpse.

Wallace still holding his pistol and bloody dagger, knelt down, and imprinted a burning kiss on her pale lips. Oh! That last brief kiss! What a courage amounting to madness,—what a love boundless, deep as eternity were *there!* *There*, in that mute *farewell* of a myriad hopes departing now forever.

The by-standers were taken by surprise, and for more than a minute stood gazing on the appalling scene with horror and consternation. At last, some one

recovering partially from the momentary alarm, cried out, "seize him; do not suffer him to escape." And several made a movement forward, as if to execute the order. But young Wallace instantly sprung upon his feet from the place where he was kneeling in a puddle of blood, beside the unconscious maiden of his heart. He changed, swift as thought, the revolving pistol to his right hand, taking the gory dagger in his left. The intended assailants recoiled in unfeigned terror, as he shouted out,—“Make way between me and the door, or I'll make it, with bullets!” The affrighted crowd parted quickly to the right and left, and gave him a free passage out. He cast a last, lingering look at Lucy, as she still lay on the crimson floor in that deep swoon; his bosom heaved one smothered sob, as if his heart were bursting with agony; a large tear rolled from his burning eye, slowly down his cheek, now white as the face of the dead at his feet. And then, with a calm step, he left the room, walked deliberately to the large gate, some hundred paces from the door, mounted his horse, which was there held ready for him, by two of his father's negroes, who had been waiting his return, with three large double-barrel shot-guns, one of which he took in his hand, cocked both barrels, and they all three rode off at a brisk gallop!

The spectators soon provided themselves with weapons, and pursued the murderer and his black-skinned accessories. But they were never overtaken. They made their way through the Allegany mountains, at the source of the Catawba river, into East Tennessee, and thence into Western Arkansas, where they arrived about fifteen years ago. One year afterwards, the whole family followed.

For several years after Willis S. Wallace came to Arkansas, he was the prey of an overpowering sadness. He sought no society, and would accept none. He suffered his hair and beard to grow like a savage; paid no attention to his dress, and seemed to be verging to the condition of insanity. His only relief was in hunting. With his train of dogs, which appeared now to be his only friends, he would wander, for weeks together, in the woods and mountains, sleeping out in the open air alone, in all sorts of weather; and often return, with his horse laden heavily with the spoils of the chase.

When thus roaming at will, like a wild man, even the hardy hunters avoided if possible a meeting with one, who was an object of nearly superstitious fear.

Instead of a hat, he wore on his head a large red shawl twisted up into that wild crownlike coiffure so much the fashion among the Western Cherokees. Two pistols were ever in his belt; a large bowie-knife, with a gilt handle, was fastened to his waistband; and his enormous double barrel appeared to be never out of his hands.

At length, all of a sudden, he wholly changed his manner of life,—no one ever knew why. He trimmed his beard and hair; threw off his outlandish dress; and went to the other extreme of foppish finery of ornament. Society he then sought with as much avidity as he had before shunned it. He plunged headlong into every species of dissipation. Wine, women, and the gaming table, by turns divided the worship of his ungovernable passions. Had reason lost her empire over the instincts of the man? Or was he only essaying another means of drowning in the Lethæan sea of excitement, the memory of too much mortal sorrows? Gradually however, he grew more moderate in his sensual indulgences, and a new passionate tendency began to manifest itself in his nature. The appetite for wealth possessed him like a demon. He now established a grocery in the town of Fayetteville, and devoted all his energies to money making, still intermingling however pleasure with business. And under every change of disposition, and alteration of circumstances, extreme *irascibility* was his most peculiar characteristic. Never a month passed over his head without some desperate conflict, in which he was always the victor.

It was a beautiful Sunday, in midsummer, that a band of one thousand Cherokee emigrants from their homes east of the Mississippi, passed through Fayetteville to the country provided for them by the Government, in the distant west. The scene of their passage through the principal street of the village was picturesque in the extreme. Long lines of waggons rolled slowly forwards, creaking with a dull sound under their heavy loads. Then followed the troops of pedestrians of

all ages, and conditions,—hunters, with their rifles and tomahawks: barefoot squaws, with their babes tied on their shoulders: little Indian boys, leading their lean, wolf-like dogs by long strings fastened round their necks; and half naked girls, driving herds of cattle before them. Next came lines of those on horseback; (these belonged to the middle class.) and these too were of every variety of description;—sober and sedate members of the church,—half-breed braves in the wild costume of the desperadoe,—white gamblers who had married Indian women; and beautiful quadroons, with those dark fascinating eyes, and raven ringlets, still more bewitching if possible, floating in the wind, around their fine graceful shoulders. After these followed the families of wealth, the Cherokee aristocracy, in their splendid carriages, many of which were equal to the most brilliant that rattle along Broadway. And next and last of all, came hundreds of African slaves, on foot, and weary and worn down by the heavy burdens they were compelled to carry.

It was earnestly hoped by the citizens of Fayetteville that no grocery would be opened on that day to afford the many Indian vagabonds and desperadoes an opportunity of becoming intoxicated, which would very likely result in some serious mischief. But the Wallaces could not let pass so excellent a chance of making a few dollars. Accordingly, their door was thrown open, and dusky-faced crowds flocked in, thick as honey bees to their evening hive. The door was literally blocked up with the dense throng of savage bacchanals, and more than one hundred were compelled to remain outside, who passed into the liquor-shop their money, from hand to hand, and received in the same manner, large quart and gallon measures of old rich-beaded whiskey, which they gulped down eagerly as if it had been nectar newly drawn from paradise! But this was found to be too slow a method of satisfying their fiery thirst; and accordingly, they made up a poney-purse, as it is called in the backwoods; bought a whole barrel of brandy, at a fourfold price; rolled it out before the grocery door; knocked in the head; and commenced dipping and drinking with those little tin cups and gourds, one of which, every Indian always carries about his person. Men, women, and even children, all joined in the spree; and in an incredibly short time were sufficiently drunk to commence yelling and shouting, as if a whole army of fiends had just arrived in town from the infernal regions. As yet all went on peaceably. All was fun and frolic, music not over musical, and dancing which from the verticose motion of the dancers, might be literally termed a *reel*. The main body, comprising the most respectable portion of the emigrants, had gone on through the village without making any halt, and camped about two miles beyond, on a little creek, there to spend the night.

It was growing late in the evening, the sun being about an hour high, when an event took place to change the boisterous mirth that reigned about the grocery into madness.

A brutal loafer, citizen of Fayetteville, who was busy in the wassail, offered a gross insult to a Cherokee woman. A half-breed desperadoe by the name of Nelson Orr, avenged her by knocking down the ruffian on the sill of the grocery door. He did not stop with this, but jumped on his foe, and commenced choking and gouging him at his leisure.

Riley Wallace, who was standing near, thinking the chastisement sufficient, pulled Orr off his prostrate enemy, though in as gentle a manner as possible to effect the object. Orr immediately turned his wrath against Wallace; drew his bowie knife, and made a bold cut at his breast. The latter retreated into the grocery, pursued by his foe, furious with rage, and bent on slaughter. Willis S. Wallace, seeing the peril of his brother, sprang over the counter, unsheathed his knife, and plunged it up to the hilt in Orr's side, who reeled and fell on the floor. A deafening outcry was raised by the Indians, who sought to lay hands on Wallace, and prevent his egress from the room. Five or six caught him by different parts of his clothing, but he cut them loose with his bloody knife blade, and made his escape to his own dwelling house, where he armed himself more effectually with gun and pistols.

The rumor of the affray was speedily carried to the Indian encampment for

the night, which, as we have stated, was two miles west of Fayetteville; and in a short time, hundreds of Indians, with their guns, were seen approaching the town. About a quarter of a mile ahead of the main body, rode at a swift gallop, a company of twenty horsemen, under the command of William Coodey, a quadroom brave. These dashed up the principal street, and into the public square, with the silver handles of their bowie knives and pistols gleaming in the beams of the setting sun. The sight was absolutely romantic.

As soon as Coodey got sufficiently near the whites, who had armed themselves and gathered in a crowd around Wallace, he addressed them in hurried accents, and informing them that he had come to prevent bloodshed, and that for that purpose it was necessary for Wallace to leave town immediately: for several hundred furious Cherokees would be *there* in a few minutes; and that if they found their enemy, a scene of slaughter would certainly ensue; and if resistance were offered, they would not hesitate to burn down the village. He had scarcely finished the sentence, when a hideous war-whoop was heard in the distance. Coodey and his troop of horse then rode rapidly back, to stay, if possible, the advance of the furious savages.

Wallace at first was unwilling to retreat, swearing "that it should never be said that he fled before the face of mortal man." His friends however conjured him by every consideration of principle and of policy,—for the safety of the village, and the sake of the women and children, to fly in time, and thus prevent the effusion of innocent blood. At length moved by the urgent entreaties of all present, in company with several friends, he rode off and disappeared in the adjacent forests. The utmost exertions of Coodey and the more rational leaders of the Cherokees were barely sufficient to persuade the remainder that Wallace had made his escape, and thus induce them to return without committing any serious outrage.

Orr lingered several days in excruciating torture, and expired as he had lived, a fearless desperadoe to the last. He was attended during his dying moments by his wife, an amiable and pious white woman, who urged him most tenderly to supplicate the throne of infinite mercy for peace and pardon. But to all her entreaties, he only replied,—“It is a d****d poor time to pray, when the devil is come after one.” He was a man without a fear of aught here, or hereafter.

A beautiful pale daughter wept continually by his bed-side during almost the whole time of his last agonizing illness. She utterly refused all food, and could not be prevailed upon to lie down, in order to the slightest repose. When oppressed with weeping and watching, exhausted nature gave way, and she would sink into a brief slumber in her arm chair, it was piteous to hear her unquiet moaning, and the long-drawn sighs, that seemed to tell, that her young heart was breaking with its grief. But when the merciful by-standers, at the request of her mother, would attempt however softly and noiselessly to remove her to an easier pillow, she would start up with a frightful scream, clasp her father's pale face to her little bosom, and beg them most piteously to let her remain. But if they still persisted in their well-meant object of kindness, her dark eyes flashed fire, and she assailed them with teeth and nails, till they let her alone in her sorrow. Ah! that desperadoe, who had slain his half-a-dozen victims,—so cruelly stern to all others, had been the very type of tenderest love to her!

And when he breathed his last, she ceased to weep, and followed his cold corpse to the grave, without a tear, or sob, or whispered word of lamentation. She gazed on, with a dreamy, unconscious look, while the clods rumbled on the coffin-lid, with that hollow sound, like an echo from eternity. But when the last shovelfull of red clay was heaved on the mournful heap, and her mother took her by the hand, to pass away, then she uttered a sharp piercing shriek, and fell down in a long fainting fit of dreadful despair. She arose again, a maniac, with wild eyes, whence the pure ray of intellect was gone forever!

CHAPTER VIII.

JOSEPH LASATER AND JAMES WHITSON.

ABOUT two hundred miles above Little Rock, and ten miles to the north of Arkansas river, is a beautiful little village, called Whitsontown. It is situated on the small river, Mulberry, a clear rapid stream, which moves by like a torrent from the distant heights of the Ozark mountains. It lies in a lovely valley, through the midst of which meanders the mazy current of the river with a spiral motion, like the graceful gliding of a serpent on the green. The valley is about twenty-five miles long, and, on an average, two in breadth. The scenery around it is exceedingly beautiful. The mountains on each side, with their castellated cliffs of gray limestone, and wild waving forests, shoot up to a lofty elevation in some places, almost steep as perpendicular walls, and everywhere mantled with those luxuriant vines, that form the staple undergrowth of the region, bedight in April with radiant blossoms, and hung in October with purple clusters of delicious grapes. Here, in this fertile valley, picturesque as a scene in fairy-land, settled about twenty years ago, the very first emigrants who descended those precipitous mountains,—two families,—Lasater and Whitson.

Joseph Lasater was a Kentuckian of some wealth and much intelligence. He owned half a dozen negro slaves, who cultivated his fine farm, and to whom he was very a kind and indulgent master. He was about the middle height, spare and slender in frame, but of great activity, and the most persevering energy. He was by nature a desperadoe. For perhaps, in his whole life, he had never known the sentiment of fear. In his native old Kentucky, a bully undertook to cowhide him in the public streets. Lasater stabbed his enemy to the heart with a small double-edged stiletto, that he had worn in his bosom from his boyhood, and whose sharp point had been several times purpled with blood before he left school. One of the friends of the slain challenged Lasater. The latter accepted on the following conditions. That they should meet at a place designated, precisely at sunset. Three pistols were to be loaded. Lasater and his foe should then each take a pistol, and fire at a mark, ten paces distant. Whoever hit nearest the centre was then to take the third pistol, and shoot at his adversary's head. If he missed, then the latter should have a fire, and so on until one of them should fall dead. The challenger, whose name was Murray, agreed to these savage terms; and the parties met on the bank of the Ohio river.

It was midsummer. The sun had just set in his crimson glory, rich, rare, radiant in ethereal coloring, as if a million wings of the rainbow had been wound into a pencil to enamel the western sky. The green leaves of the old forest looked as if they had been stained with the red of roses, as wind-waved they glanced in the lingering light. And the birds twittered and chirruped and sung, in every variety of octave, their sweet farewell to the receding orb of day,—the lord of those innocent children of music and of the air.

The seconds proceeded to measure off ten paces; and then made a small black spot with moistened gunpowder, about as high as a man's heart, on a slender pine tree. They then loaded the three pistols as agreed on; handed one to each of their principals, retaining the other themselves, to be given to the successful marksman. The foes then cut a pack of cards for the first shot. Murray drew the queen of diamonds; Lasater the ace of spades; and so obtained the first trial. He took his place; turned his right side to the tree, on which the little black spot not bigger than a quarter of a dollar was scarcely visible at the given distance; let his right hand which grasped his weapon, now at full cock, fall by his side, until the black muzzle reached several inches below the knee; fixed his keen blue eye steadily a moment on the mark; and then raised swift as thought, and instantly pulled trigger. The pistol *lung fire*, as it is called in the backwoods, that is, the