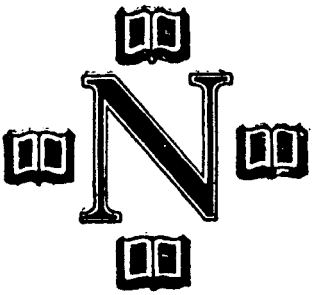
MEMORY DAYS

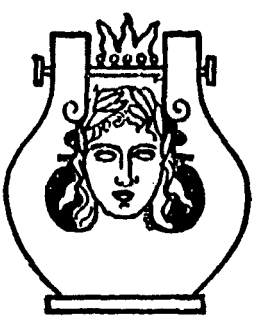


MEMORY DAYS

In Which the Shenandoah Valley is Seen in Retrospection, With Glimpses of School Days and the Life of Virginia People of Fifty Years Ago

By

ALEXANDER S. PAXTON



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To the memory of my sainted father and mother this volume is affectionately dedicated

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"Sweet Memory, wafted by thy gentle gale,
Oft up the stream of time I turn my sail
To view the fairy haunts of long-lost hours
Blest with far greener shades, far lovelier bowers."

—*Samuel Rogers*

CHAPTER I

THE VALLEY AND EASTERN VIRGINIA

"'Tis a land of fatling herds and fruitful fields,—
All joys that peace and plenty yield;
Earth's sweetest flowers here shed perfume,
And here Earth's fairest maidens bloom."

Shenandoah, in the poetic language of the Indian, signifies "Daughter of the stars."

How the savages came by this name we do not know. It might have been from the springs that, far up on the sides of the Blue Ridge, send their little streams purling over their stony beds, here and there leaping over some ledge and rushing from their sources under the stars to feed the beautiful river that flows at the base. Or perhaps as the Red Man looked down into the crystal depths of the river and saw mirrored there the stars he loved, the Great Spirit whispered into his ear the name so fitting and so beautiful, "Daughter of the stars."

And the Valley to which this stream has given its name is not less beautiful than the river. With a rich and well watered soil, with abundant woodland, at an early day it invited a class of immi-

grants who by thrift and industry made it a garden spot. The old Scotch-Irish pioneers came with the rifle and the axe, with the Bible and the family altar, with the church and the schoolhouse, and laid the foundations of the grandest part of the State that now rejoices in being named for the virgin queen. On toward the west they moved, and fields bending under rich crops smiled in the sunshine, and villages and towns sprang up as if by magic. Surely it was a goodly land, and the ante-bellum days were noted for the high tone of their social life. They were industrious and enjoyed the fruits of their labor. Their homes, mostly of brick, were stately, their barns painted and with glass windows, almost rivalling in appearance the dwelling itself.

The strongest religious denomination was the Presbyterian, and the old stone churches, on Sabbath days, were crowded. Some of the oldest Valley churches were the old Stone Church, and Tinkling Spring, so called from the tinkling of the water of a spring which fell over a ledge of rock. Then there was Falling Spring, where the water gushed from the foot of the hill and leaped over a ledge into a basin several feet below. These were the gates of Jerusalem, as the psalmist sang, "whither the tribes of the Lord went up to the

testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." The cemeteries of these grand old churches were well enclosed and cared for. As I have walked in them I have felt that I should remove the shoes from off my feet, as the place where I stood was holy ground. The Presbyterians were so numerous in the Valley that until I was nine or ten years old I hardly knew there were any but Presbyterians in the country.

A sect called Tunkers—from Pennsylvania—a branch of the Quakers—was well represented. They were peaceable, good citizens, and always had comfortable homes. The men wore straight-breasted coats and broad hats, the women wore sunbonnets, and the girls were noted for their beautiful complexions and rosy cheeks. When a young man married they set him up in business, at public expense, and bade him God-speed on his journey.

The Valley farmers planted orchards, and the very ground seemed to tremble under the weight of fruit. Of course apple-butter was a staple product, made to perfection. A visitor to the Valley from the South thus gave his experience at an apple-butter boiling. Late one evening he stopped for the night at a well-to-do home near the mountains. The young people gathered in and he saw there was to be a frolic of some kind. Of course

he mixed in with the guests, and singled out a pretty, black-eyed damsel as his partner. Looking into another room he saw two persons with long ladles stirring in a large kettle. Surely, thought he, they are not making soap! After a while his companion said, "Let us go in and stir." Said he, "My pretty miss, I'd follow you to the ends of the earth." With a smile she said, "I thought the earth round, sir." "Then I'll follow you around the world," he retorted. Relieving the two workers at the kettle, his companion told him to stir for dear life and to touch every spot in the kettle, else it might be burned. Away they went around and across, and across and around. Soon the paddles struck and she said, "There now!" He thought she referred to his awkwardness, and tried to be more careful. Soon they struck again, and the little lady sang out, "There now!" "What do you mean?" said he. "La! don't you know?" she asked. "Why, no, tell me." "You see, when our paddles cross and hit, then you g-go-got to kiss me!" "Yes, my dear," said the Southern knight, "I'll be an apt scholar in this school," and he promptly gave her a kiss. Again the paddles hit and again he kissed her.

In the social gatherings innocent games were

indulged in, but cards and dancing were rarely heard of. The first, people said, helped to make gamblers of the boys, and the young people were too loyal to their church to "trip the light fantastic." At these gatherings all seemed to enjoy themselves in the highest degree. About 10 o'clock a bountiful supper was served, no punch-bowl being there to tempt the young from the paths of temperance. At midnight the guests departed.

In the Valley churches in those days there were grand old preachers. The keynote of their sermons was "Jesus and the resurrection." I remember Brown of the Stone Church, Dabney of Tinkling Spring, McFarland of Bethel, White of Lexington, and Ewing of Falling Spring. My boyish admiration and veneration placed these men on a plane higher than the average minister of to-day. I heard the following story told of an old minister against whose sanction a fiddle was brought into his choir. On the first Sunday he said, "Sing and fiddle number 65." A smile passed over the congregation. At the announcement of the second hymn he said, "Please fiddle and sing number 39." Almost a titter passed around. At the third hymn he said, in a high tone, "Let us sing and fiddle and

fiddle and sing number 102." The fiddle was out of tune and never came in again.

There were not so many slaves in the Valley as there were in eastern Virginia, and the masters were more indulgent and lenient with them. As a result they were very much attached to their homes, and nursed and petted the white children in those homes. They were well clad, and on Sundays the "biled shirt," black suit, and white gloves made the darky an object of envy to his brother from east of the Ridge. I used to hear some of our darkies laugh at the "Tuckahoe nigger" for his peculiar expressions, such as "wheat patch" for wheat field, and "pig killin'" for butchering hogs.

The people in the Valley were called Cohees, an Indian name, the signification of which I never heard. Education in the Valley was indicated by the great number of academies and "old field" school houses, the crowning school of all being Washington College at Lexington. It was the alma mater of some of the grandest men of the day. With these few remarks upon the land of the Shenandoah we will cross over the Blue Mountains and speak of people and things over there.

Beginning at Jamestown in 1607, the pioneers

pushed up the James River, up the Rappahannock, and the Rapidan from the tidewater section to the Piedmont country at the base of the Blue Ridge. The people were a little different from those in the Valley. These came mostly from England, and possessed the characteristics peculiar to the people of the mother land. They were high toned, chivalrous, and hospitable in the highest degree.

There was an aristocratic tinge in the blood of the average planter, and the lines of class distinction were sharply drawn. There was little or no social intercourse between the planters and the class of mechanics and ordinary tradesmen. All the large plantations had overseers who managed the negroes. On some plantations there were from one hundred to three hundred slaves held in subjection by a rigid discipline. They were hired out to labor on public works or at factory plants, and at Christmas I used often to hear the songs of the hirelings as they were homeward bound, seeming happy and lighthearted.

The dialect of the people seemed a little peculiar to their friends in the Valley. They used the word "carry" where the Cohees would say *take* or *bring*, thus, "Carry the horse to the rack and tie him up." I once heard a young gallant say

he carried a girl to church and in my innocence I asked if she was a little one or a big one. As to the origin of the name "Tuckahoe" I heard this: A fellow stole a hoe, and, being caught, said he did not *steal* the hoe, he only *tuck* it.

Having plenty of slaves to do the work, the gentry indulged in hunting, fishing, and social visiting. A horse and gun were the usual equipment for the young man's pleasure. Fox hunting was a rare sport, and, as in the mother country, the women often joined in the sport. An invitation to visit was not to come to spend the day, but a week or more, and as the heavy carriages rolled to and from the splendid mansions, guests came and went and the halls resounded with mirth, and with walking, riding, hunting, cards and dancing, the hours fairly flew. The old Virginia reel was a favorite dance, and now and then a few couples who had fallen from grace (!) would indulge in a waltz.

The decanter was always set out for the male guests, and peach brandy and honey were considered a rare combination, and though social drinking was general, drunkenness was very rare.

In farming the crop that paid was tobacco, and from the sunny slopes of the Blue Ridge to the Eastern Shore, in season, the landscape would be

dotted with patches and fields of tobacco. From the burning of the plant-bed, in the early spring, to the time when the hogshead was ready to burst under the press, tobacco was the center of interest. One attraction about this so-called luxury was that at any time it could be exchanged for gold. The mule, the darky, and the tobacco field were the three factors in the prosperity of this section.

Lynchburg never forgave Porte Crayon in his "Virginia Illustrated" for the picture of the "Lynchburg team," a barefooted, bareheaded negro boy astride a hogshead of tobacco on a wagon drawn by a mule in front, an ox on the right and a horse on the left side behind, certainly a singular combination of forces.

The largest religious denomination was the Episcopal, and it was loyal to the mother church. Among the stirring features in the religious life of the community were the camp meetings, which were held chiefly by the Methodists and Baptists. Much good was generally done at these meetings in reclaiming backsliders, in strengthening tottering saints, and in turning some sinners into the straight and narrow way.

In that elder day one of the pets of Virginia was the University at Charlottesville, which, though belonging to the State, she specially

claimed as located in her borders. Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, was situated on a small mountain in sight of the University. In its day it was a stately mansion. Most of the material for its construction was brought from England. The floors of the dining-room and ballroom were in marble in imitation of mosaic pavement. There were niches in the walls for beds, with a small window just above, so no need of bed-steds. In the cellar was a secret door opening into a subterranean passage five feet in height, lined with brick and extending some three hundred yards down into the woods on the left side of the house. It doubtless was intended as a means of escape if cut off by an enemy in front, and Jefferson himself came near having to use it the day Tarleton, the British trooper, almost captured him. He barely had time to mount his horse and gallop down one side of the mountain as the dragoons dashed up to the gate from the other side. From this house is a beautiful view of the Rivanna Valley and the great statesman could look down on the dome of the University whose foundations he had laid. In the library in the dome was a whispering gallery, a thing of great interest to the visitor. The University was patronized largely by Virginia and the South, and the standard was high. A band of

English scholars visiting the schools of the United States pronounced the course at this noted University more thorough and the examinations more impartial than anything seen in the North. Grand old men filled the chairs of the University,—Gildersleeve, Harrison, McGuffey, and others,—and they left the impress of their work upon the school and gave it a high place.

One day, Scheledevere, the professor of modern languages, was hearing a class in Horace for Professor Harrison. A blunderhead of a student was trying to translate a portion of the ode beginning, "Erexi monumentum aeris," or, "I have erected a monument of brass." The verdant youth translated it, "I have eaten a monument of brass!" Stamping his foot the Professor cried out, "Zounds! how did he *digest* it?"

This school had on its roll of alumni a noble list of names; students who afterward became governors, senators, legislators, lawyers, and divines, all of whom as they added to the glory of their alma mater also made more glorious the name of old Virginia.

Well does Virginia deserve the name of "Mother of States and Statesmen." Proud may she be in having given to the nation six Presidents, the last of whom was John Tyler. With tender

care does she guard and venerate the tombs where sleep her illustrious dead. Of course Mount Vernon heads the list. Yearly thousands go to pay a tribute of love and admiration to the hero who sleeps there, and to catch an inspiration from the memories that cluster around his noble life.

"In the long vista of the years to roll,
Let me not see my country's honor fade;
Oh! let me see our land retain its soul:
Her pride in Freedom, and not Freedom's shade."

—*Keats.*

CHAPTER II

CRYSTAL SPRING

"More limpid water can no fountain show,
A fairer bottom or a smoother brow;
A painted world its peaceful gleam contains,
The heavenly arch, the bordering groves and plains."

"Jerusalem! how *tempus* does *fugit*," exclaimed an impatient old man who, in a bustle one day, tried to quote the old Latin motto. Yes, Time does fly. The present is but a moment, the mighty past is behind us, and the untried future stretches away before us. Hope gives a tinting to its sky, and we press on eager to taste new joys. Yet, there are pictures in the past upon which we love to gaze. And sitting all alone in my chamber this morning, memory is calling up other days and other scenes. Voices from the past seem to whisper to me, and hands that I once clasped are beckoning me to come back to the fields of boyhood. And I go back to the home of my boyhood and stand by the spring at the foot of the hill, underneath the widespreading willows. I take the old gourd and drink again of the cool, sparkling water. And as I drink there comes into my mind the

words of that beautiful poem by Samuel Woodworth, whose refrain is,

> "The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
> The moss-covered bucket that hung in the well."

The refreshing draught sends a thrill of life-giving vigor through my body, and none other has ever tasted sweeter. It has the same gurgling sound as it gushes forth, a strong stream from its subterranean source. The pebbles still glisten on its bottom and the crimson willow roots still fringe its banks.

Thence memory leads me to another gushing fountain, under the old sycamore tree, where I used to slake my thirst when the flush of school-boy play was upon my cheeks.

Few there are who do not enjoy a retrospective view of their school days. Amid the hurry and bustle of business life it is pleasant to pause and look back to those good old days when, free from care, we bounded over the hills and reveled in the sports of childhood. Watch the gray-haired man as he talks of his own school-boy days and see his eye kindle and his face beam with animation as he lives over those happy hours! Grandmother, as she sits in her easy chair in the corner, will smile as she tells the listening children of well-remem-

bered scenes in her youth; how Jamie admired her curls and the choice June apple that Charlie saved for her!

Yes, from those dear old scenes there comes floating down to us, across the waste of years, a fragrance that life, since then, has never given us. The music of childhood will continue to echo in our hearts until the strings are touched by the hand of death.

Come, now, with me and I will take you to a noted spring by the old schoolhouse under the shadow of the Blue Ridge in old Virginia, where, years ago, I took my first step along the great highway of learning.

We are standing on the south bank of the James River in Rockbridge County and looking to the southwest. We see Arnold's Valley extending several miles, reposing as a beautiful bride in the arms of the great mountain barriers. On the east we look upon the lofty summits of the Blue Ridge crowned with cedar and pine, except where here and there white cliffs rear their giant forms. On the south stands, in sullen majesty, old Thunder Hill, so called because, owing to its great height, storms wrap the summit in clouds, lightnings encircle it, and peals of thunder shake its very crest.

On the west, Little Mountain, in graceful

curves, runs up from the river, over whose oak-covered sides the evening shadows play, and whose top is gilded with the parting rays of the sun as he takes leave of this beautiful valley.

We will follow the course of Otter Creek, a small stream rising in the dark shadow of some mountain hollow and running through the valley. Its waters are clear as crystal, and along its banks stand stately sycamores, and the willows bend to kiss the limpid waters as they glide by. Here and there are holes in which trout are darting to and fro. Now we pass the swimming-pool under the cliff, in which, during the warm days of summer, juveniles of various ages and colors cool their limbs and exercise their muscles. After a pleasant walk of a mile and a half we come to a fine spring gushing out from under a sycamore only a few steps from the creek. We drink, and the cool freestone water is so refreshing! Along the terraced bank and on the plateau extending beyond stand in all their primeval beauty the oak, the hickory, the cedar, and the poplar, forming a grove in which the fabled satyrs and graceful nymphs might delight to dwell.

We throw ourselves on the grassy bank, and the rippling waters and the singing birds make for us

a music that is in keeping with this woodland scene.

Yonder come two horsemen—Dr. Watson, our family physician, and a visiting friend. Dismounting, they drink of the spring from the old weather-beaten gourd, and join us on the bank. Says the friend, "I never drank cooler, sweeter water, nor saw a finer spring. It must have a pretty name." "We call it Crystal Spring," said the Doctor, "and it is the pride of our little valley. Clearer, purer water does not gush from the mountains. Just look into it again." Standing by the bank the visitor looks down upon the pebbles that stud its bottom, and then upon its waters, as purling over the smooth stones they hasten to mingle with those of the creek. "Surely," he says, "this is a splendid spring. Perhaps it is a jet from the old Spaniard's Fountain of Youth." "There is a legend connected with its name," says the Doctor. "Tell it, tell it!" comes a general chorus. The Doctor begins:

"Many years ago a tribe of Indians encamped on the plateau up there and used the grand hunting-grounds in this valley. In the open space yonder they had their dances and sang their songs. The daughter of the chief was a beautiful maiden of whom he was very proud. She was loved by

a young brave of a hostile tribe beyond the mountains, and every month in the light of the moon he came to visit the lovely princess of the forest. In the still hours of the night as the moon was sinking and the shadows around the spring were deep these devoted lovers met here. Then, as dawn began to make rosy the eastern sky, he stole away to a mountain ravine to wait for the shades of another night and she to her wigwam to dream of her ideal warrior and hunter.

"As a pledge of his love and also as a charm he had given her a gem clear as crystal which one of his ancestors had brought from beyond the Father of Waters, and she wore this jewel on her string of beads around her neck. Now a young brave from her own tribe also loved the maiden, but she told him she loved another. Bitter jealousy sprang up in his heart. He saw the jewel sparkle on her neck, and knew it told of his rival's love. Following her to the spring in the twilight hour, he told her he was going to get the cursed stone and crush it to powder. Seizing her in his arms he snatched the prized gift from her neck. In her desperation she caught his hand and grasped the jewel, which she threw behind them into the spring. He plunged his hand into the water after it, when, lo! it had dissolved, and gave to the

waters their sparkle and beauty. Hence it got the name of Crystal Spring."

"That is a beautiful legend," said the visitor. "I like to hear the stories handed down to us by the Indians."

"Here is a grand social rallying point in the way of picnics," continued the Doctor. "Could some of these trees talk they might tell many tender words which some Romeo poured into the willing ear of some Juliet. Here the hunters meet after the chase, and mixing, in the ratio of 3 to 1, the fiery contents of a flask with the pure water, they have a combination called 'grog,' said to be very palatable by the above mentioned sportsmen."

The long shadows bid us depart. As we stand for a moment, a squirrel and his mate, in search of their evening meal, come hopping down to the edge of the bank, and, seeing the intruders, scamper back to their holes. One more drink and we slowly take leave of this spring over which hangs the charm of romance and around which are so many touches of beauty.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD HOME

"Home, sweet home,
Name ever dear to me,
I love that dear old home."

—*Bailey.*

There is a song whose chorus finds an echo in the heart of every loyal son of the Old Dominion. It is sung not only on the Eastern Shore, where the blue Atlantic kisses the cheek of the dear old mother, but it rolls back over green field and wooded hill to the highlands, and is caught up by the dwellers under the shadows of the glorious mountains. And, when far from the borders of the mother-land one of her children hears the music,

"Oh carry me back to old Virginny,
To old Virginny's shore,"

then his heart warms with love, and he longs to return.

My cradle was rocked at the foot of the Blue Ridge, near Lexington, in the Valley of Virginia. The mountain breezes were healthy, the springs

that gushed from the hills were pure and delicious, and there boys grew strong and vigorous.

Let me be a barefooted boy again, back at the old home, and tell you something of its life and surroundings. In the quiet of a spring evening I am standing on Quarry Hill, looking down upon my home, and then upon the beautiful landscape that, with all its varied beauty, stretches away toward the Alleghanies. Mountains are on every side enclosing the valley of the James. Yonder comes this river winding in graceful curves, its banks fringed with living green, and the sun reflecting on its smooth surface a dazzling silver sheen. The evening breeze is laden with the perfume of apple blossoms from the orchard at the foot of the hill; and the sun, nearing the western horizon, is flooding with gold the beautiful scene. From the pasture, in slow procession, the cattle are winding their homeward way, and from the hillside comes the tinkling of sheep bells. Yonder, in a field to the left, standing in a row, are six cherry trees arrayed in their white blossoms. It makes me long for cherries just to look at them, yet, I remember on one or two occasions when, having sampled the fruit *too early,* I was much distressed and was bowed in pain and sorrow until my good mother

administered relief from her medicinal stores and made me happy again.

I look down upon the home, and though it is plain in architecture it is beautiful to me. The smoke is curling up from the kitchen chimney, suggestive to the hungry boy of the evening meal. There is the garden by whose walks are beds of thyme and the old-fashioned pinks which I love to smell. In the yard stand six Lombardy poplars, tall, graceful and aristocratic, looking down on their neighbors. I remember once, when a stray squirrel took refuge in one of them, the only gun at hand was an old flint-lock shotgun, a gun about as dangerous behind as before. An Englishman offered to aim at the squirrel, and as the flint would not ignite the powder in the pan, Uncle Humphrey, a negro, was to touch it off with a stick burning at one end. "Ready!" cried the gunner, and bang! went the gun. The squirrel looked down and smiled on the battlefield below. The gun lay on the ground in one place, the Englishman lay on his back in another, and the darky was in full retreat!

With Trip, my faithful dog, I come down the hill by the old chestnut tree giving promise of rich fruit when, in October, the frost with its snowy fingers shall open the burs, on by the chinquapin bush and the cluster of papaws, all friends of mine.

The persimmon tree calls to my mind the dark day when, tasting its fruit unwisely, my lips for a time contracted so as to advertise me as a natural whistler! On I go to the spring-house, the rallying place at milking time for the juveniles, white and black. Whilst the milkmaids are busy, and mother attends to her dairy work, we little fellows have a picnic riding on low willow limbs, or wading in the branch. Oh, but those were happy days! Give me the farm life for the boy. In our home we were taught practically the Fifth Commandment. We never questioned, except in a limited way, the authority and wisdom of our parents. Original sin always brings forth some of its fruits, and now and then some of us little folks had Solomon's doctrine on training up a boy gently instilled into our minds and laid upon our backs. Learning how Solomon acted when he was older, I concluded that he did not get enough of the rod when he was a youngster.

We were taught to love the Bible and mother would tell us stories from it and have us memorize short verses. Morning and evening we heard it read as we gathered around the family altar. When old enough we were taken to church, seven miles distant, across a river and over a mountain. We earned our devotions. We learned to love our

pastor, Rev. Jno. D. Ewing, and were delighted when he would come to our house to spend the night.

Life in the old home was spiced with innocent pranks and pleasing episodes. A common expression learned from the negroes, referring, of course, to the night-time, was, "The black thing will catch you!" What the "Thing" was we hadn't the faintest conception, but whether it was Satan or a bear, we dreaded the meeting! One night, as my younger brother, in a dimly lighted room, was getting into a linen garment, just as he stood with hands extended above his head, I, who was safe in the bed, cried out, "Look, look! Black Thing is coming after you!" Rip, rip! went the garment. "Oh my! oh my!" wailed my brother, and Zip, bum! came the boy rolling into bed, tucking his head well under the cover. The next morning, when mother surveyed the wreck, I made one of the narrow escapes of my life, and heaved a sigh of relief to think what might have been.

In the cool of the summer evenings after supper the sports on the lawn were exciting and exhilarating. In my play with toads I am afraid I bordered on cruelty to animals. The toad is afraid of a black snake, as the black snake will swallow the jumper without any apology. I would get an old

crooked black root, with a snaky look, and run it along on the ground after the toad, which fearing its minutes were numbered, would jump for dear life! Away we would go, until finally the toad, from sheer exhaustion, would just fall over and lie still, resigned to his fate. I have long since repented of that sin, and hope I have been forgiven.

Our social intercourse was free and pleasant. "Bring your knitting and spend the day" was an invitation often accepted, and the ladies would sit and talk and knit, and knit and talk. The subjects discussed were various, including babies, gardens, chickens, weddings, the school, the preacher, and the church.

With the machinery of the kitchen in good running order, cook and assistants, the hostess did not get nervous over the sudden advent of "quality," as our cook called the guests. Spending an evening was customary, and to me the climax of the event was the good supper, when we had hot biscuit, chicken gravy, preserves, and such good things. The boy has to eat to live, but he often lives to eat. Very early I became partial to a little cousin, a graceful little girl with dark brown eyes and pretty curls. When Cousin Jennie, our nearest neighbor, was among the guests, I enjoyed the visit "lots more." She was lively, but not

noisy, playful but not rude, with nice manners and a good disposition, and I "just liked her all the time."

On the list of my childhood friends were the pickaninnies, as happy a little tribe as ever basked in the sunshine. Their summer clothing consisting of a single garment, they got the full benefit of the passing breeze, and a small stream was no obstacle in their path, for they simply waded it. "Little Marster" was captain of this company of dusky hue, but generally ruled in kindness, as the little darkies shared in his sports and added to his pleasures. Troubles in the ranks which the captain could not settle were referred to a higher tribunal and quieted in short order.

Ah! but I well remember the old clock as it stood in the corner ticking off the seconds. My grandfather brought it from Scotland and it was a treasured heirloom. It was an eight-day time-measurer, towering up to the ceiling, and with weights I could not lift. There was an attachment showing the phases of the moon, which was more wonderful to me than the movements of the hands. "Tick-tock, tick-tock," went the pendulum, never tiring, never ceasing, or, as Longfellow writes:

"By day its voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,
It echoes along the vacant hall,
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say at each chamber door,—
'Forever—never
Never—forever'!"

Thus the surroundings of my old home were such as made young life pleasant and better. It was my little world, and to me it seemed paradise, and my home in many respects was typical of many others in the community.

CHAPTER IV

CRYSTAL SPRING SEMINARY

"'Tis education forms the common mind:
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

—*Pope.*

On a bright morning in the spring of 1848 two men were standing on the plateau just above the beautiful Crystal Spring. In their veins flowed the old Scotch-Irish blood that made the sturdy character of the men over whose cabins the smoke first curled along the banks of the Shenandoah, and whose descendants have made that grand old valley bloom and blossom as the rose.

One of these men was my father, the other his cousin and neighbor. They had been in earnest conversation about education and schools for the children. *The object of their visit was the location of a school building.* They spoke of the new generation coming on, represented in the curly heads and bright eyes in their homes, and expressed a desire to give them better educational advantages than they themselves had enjoyed when they were boys. For in their boyhood days the average country school extended only through the winter,

and during the remaining months of the year the muscle of the boys was cultivated in the practice of athletics upon the farm.

My cousin was a man of good mental capacity, and by reading and observation he had acquired a large fund of information. Said he to my father,

"Cousin Preston, you know we have felt the need of more schooling in our lives, and we ought to give our children all the advantages we possibly can offer them."

"Yes, Squire," replied my father, "you are right. What we give them in this line can't be stolen from them. It will be a treasure they always can claim as their own."

"We want to establish a school here," continued Cousin William, "that will make scholars of our girls and boys; not an old-field establishment like the ones we used to attend. Of course we will have to begin at the foundation and build up; but let us aim at a cap-stone that will be beautifully carved and polished."

"Squire, I admire your zeal in the matter. Right here is the best location, as our river chaps can come, and we will gather in the Valley children too."

"This location is excellent," Cousin William replied; "central, yet retired; the birds and squir-

rels in these woods will teach the pupils nothing bad, and the spring and creek will add to comfort and cleanliness. You know a very desirable combination is a small boy, a cake of soap, and plenty of water!"

And, in the spirit of self-reliance, and following the custom of utilizing home products so prevalent in those good old days, these two leading spirits in the enterprise decided to build the house with their own resources.

There was an independence in the simple life of the Valley farmers of those days that we do not see practiced now. The winter clothing came from the flock of sheep that grazed along the hillsides, and the flax-patch furnished the cool summer garments. The music of the spinning-wheel and the clatter of the weaver's shuttle were heard in those homes, and told of thrift and economy. All the shoes for every-day wear were made from the hides of home-raised cattle. Living thus, at the end of the year the farmers owed no man anything.

So, taking their tools, and some negro hands, they met at Crystal Spring and the work began on the schoolhouse. The woods rang with the axes, trees fell, logs were hewn, the foundation was laid, and the walls arose in due time. It was built on the plateau about fifty yards from the spring, on

the south side of the creek. Of course in architectural plan and finish it did not resemble the modern structure with its comfortable and handsome equipments. Its walls were of hewn logs, the cracks between being stopped with mortar. A chimney whose heating capacity was measured by a cart load of wood, stood at one end. The entrance door was on the south side and there was another opposite. A window on the right of the front door lighted up the sacred precincts of the teacher's chair, whilst one eighteen inches in height extended across the entire west end. Along this was placed the writing-bench, as it was called, a wide board inclined from the wall and a bench to suit the height. Around the walls were benches without backs, whilst a few benches sitting across the floor had the luxury of backs. The house was covered with clap-boards, and with its wooden chimney was a very dignified-looking structure for educational purposes in those days.

Nestled under the overshadowing branches of those grand old trees it was protected from the summer sun and screened from the full sweep of the wintry blasts.

The last nail was driven in the roof, the door latch and string were satisfactorily adjusted, and the work was pronounced good.

Uncle Aleck, the negro "boss workman," as he styled himself, was the head man on my Cousin William's farm, and Uncle Aleck felt highly honored in having been selected for the work at Crystal Spring. He was a character in whom Dickens would have rejoiced. Being versed in theological questions so as to point his flock, on Sabbath mornings, toward the better land, and also to marry negro couples, he was held in high esteem by his "brederin." I remember him as a high-toned negro, and there were no suspicions of fondness for visiting chicken roosts ever attached to his name. His manner was pompous, yet respectful, and his penchant for using big and meaningless words made him an amusing character to his white friends. He was especially popular with the younger generation, as he was very courteous and obliging to us on all occasions.

Uncle Humphrey, our old family servant, was also one of the workmen on the schoolhouse. He also stands out as a conspicuous negro character of that day, honest and trustworthy to a high degree. He, too, was a churchman, a deacon, and he led in prayer-meetings; he also tackled questions of church finance and decided knotty points of discipline among the erring members.

Uncle Aleck, standing with arms akimbo, gazed

with admiration at the finished schoolhouse, and said, "I tell you, Marse Preston, dat house is hard to beat. She is fine fur de children to 'losophize in."

"Yas," assented Uncle Humphrey, "you is mighty right, 'Bauzzee'; dey can learn till their little heads nearly bust."

Then, at the suggestion of my cousin, I think, the house was honored with the very euphonious name of "Crystal Spring Seminary."

Little did those dear old men think, as they talked and laughed over the name, that some of the little flaxen-headed boys who then entered those plain walls with the old "Blue-back Speller" in one hand and the more interesting lunch basket in the other, in a few years, on those same benches, would be translating *Cicero's Orations,* reading Xenophon's *Anabasis,* and demonstrating geometry on the blackboard!

CHAPTER V

SCHOOL BEGINS

"Letters admit not of a half renown;
They give you nothing, or they give a crown;
No work e'er gained true fame or ever can,
But what did honor to the name of man."

—*Young.*

The next term Crystal Spring Seminary needed a guiding spirit. In those days a few of the leading families of our neighborhood would select a suitable teacher, guaranteeing him a certain salary, with all extra pupils he could get, and this "king of the birchen sceptre" would "board around" free amongst the leading patrons. There was always a flutter in the home when the teacher was introduced as a boarder. The juveniles were, for a time at least, on their better behavior, and the "small boy" smacked his lips in view of an improvement in the bill of fare. Peach preserves for supper, and chicken gravy for breakfast, were luxuries not found in his every-day life, and, desiring to be "on the good side" of the pedagogue, he was very attentive and communicative, often to the point of being invited elsewhere—especially when the young teacher and "Big Siss" were getting

better acquainted in the parlor. On one occasion, I remember, he bounded into the august presence of the new pedagogue, shouting, "Chicken for dinner! Done killed de old rooster!" On another occasion "Siss" unfortunately tried to tease little Johnnie about a wee maiden with sunny ringlets. Equal to the emergency, he retorted, "I know who *your* sweetheart is!" "Who is he?" asked the young pedagogue, upon whom the flash of sister's dark eyes were having an electric power. "Why Bill Saunders; he brings Siss candy!" The girl, seeing the net in which she was being caught, suggested that Johnnie's mother wanted him. But the youngster was going to win. "I know you love him too," he said. "Hush!" cried Siss. "Tell us," eagerly put in the new Romeo. "Why does she love him? How can you tell?" "Why, 'cause you set so *close* to him!" Whereupon Johnnie was led out of the room and Siss, whose cheeks were glowing, explained the situation to mother. Whereupon a visit was paid to the peach tree, and the solo, as it floated upon the evening air, told that the "small boy" repented too late.

Then the lunch-basket from the home in which the teacher, for the time, was abiding had some extra touches given to its appearance; and the parting injunction from the good mother was, "Be sure

and take the basket to the teacher *first*." Even now I can see the chicken, cakes, half-moon pies and other tempting morsels that were drawn from the depths of the old basket when the teacher unfolded the snowy linen.

In selecting a teacher there were some fundamental qualities to be possessed by the applicant. The average teacher was not only required to be good in the elementary branches of English, but he must be able to write a fair, round hand, and make a good pen out of a goose quill, also have no scruples about using the rod.

Such qualities for training "the young idea" our fathers found, on this occasion, centered in Miss Rachel P. or "Aunt Rachel," as she was called by all the young people of the neighborhood. She was a lady of high-toned Christian character, who in other sections of the county had won quite a reputation as queen in the realm of the birchen sceptre. We heard that in her last school she had young women and young men as pupils, and that fact raised her very high in our childish estimation. Aunt Rachel had a reputation for drilling her pupils in spelling and the multiplication table, also for teaching them good manners. We heard it whispered that there was a lively time when she introduced the delinquent urchin, with pants rolled

up, to "Mr. Birch." And we afterward found out, both by an experimental course and by the more interesting proof of observation, that on such occasions the "small boy" imitated a first-class acrobat, and that he also showed some talent for vocal music.

Well, Aunt Rachel was engaged to teach, and the day appointed for opening school was one Monday in May. I remember well that Monday, a bright, beautiful day. Never having been to school I looked forward to the beginning with the deepest interest, feeling that I was about to step into a wider sphere. I arose earlier that morning than usual, and it was one of the proudest moments of my life when, taking my speller and reader, I bade my mother good-bye, and with my older sister trudged off to be enrolled as a pupil of Crystal Spring Seminary.

The distance from my home was two and a half miles. In good weather I always walked, and my little sisters, who attended the Seminary later, also walked. Yet now we often find parents objecting to having a strapping, big boy of twelve years walk a mile to school! I verily believe the average boy of to-day is by no means so vigorous either in mind or body as the boys of that day. Well, on that Monday morning when I got to the school-

house quite a number of pupils were there waiting for the teacher. It was a purely democratic assemblage, the boy from the mountain-side feeling his importance in the race for education as much as the boy from the river home. In the time that elapsed before we were called in, I began to form some acquaintances. I was about eight years of age, the youngest boy in the crowd. A boy with only one suspender and a red head attracted my attention, and I had an idea that it would be prudent to be his friend. A big mountain boy excited my admiration by telling how he knocked a squirrel out of an oak tree, with a rock, before breakfast that morning. I wondered why a young woman as large as my mother should be coming to school. Then the strange little girl with the red dress on was not near so pretty as my Cousin Jennie.

"Get you a drink and come in," called out Aunt Rachel from the door. Away we ran down to the spring. The creek, with visions of wading and trout catching, so engaged the attention of a few of us that we came near being tardy the first morning. Aunt Rachel's opening speech was short and to the point. "I want you all to be good children and study your lessons well." This covered the whole ground. Then, beginning on her right, she called each pupil to her and assigned

some lesson. There was but little classification, as few had books alike, though the Blue-back Speller was in the ascendency. There were readers of every color and description, from the old "North American" to the New Testament. Soon the buzzing sound of the preparation of lessons filled the room, and the first day's work in our new schoolhouse was begun.

CHAPTER VI

A DAY IN SCHOOL

"A little learning is a dangerous thing.
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

—*Pope.*

Our school had been running along for some time, and the machinery was well oiled and everything in good working order. We fully realized that Aunt Rachel was mistress, and when she disciplined us we knew we *needed* it.

Take an average day at the Crystal Spring Seminary. The September sun has risen but little above the crest of the Blue Ridge, and we are on our way to school. Our desire to be early is not so much anxiety about lessons as to have time to wade in the creek, catch crawfish, or play "Base" in the grove.

"Yonder comes Aunt Rachel!" sings out a little girl whose keen eyes have caught sight of old Swan's white figure amid the distant trees. Many heads are thrust out of the door, and those who were playing stop to look for this important arrival.

The time to open school comes, and our teacher

calls out from the door, *"Books!"* It is caught up by the nearest, then repeated by those farther off, until the old grove echoes, "Books, books!" The bustle of entering, getting seated and ready for work is soon over. Aunt Rachel, from her chair of state, surveys the field, adjusts her spectacles, and says, "Now, get to your lessons." The "tasks," as the night lessons were called, come first. A class in "spelling on the book" is called up, the lesson beginning with the word "ba-ker." Down the line they go, spelling in turn, until a towhead pauses at "p-o-n-y." "What does it spell?" asks Aunt Rachel. "Dun' know," replies the urchin, rolling the whites of his eyes toward the ceiling. As a suggestive idea, Aunt Rachel says, "What does the little boy ride on?" His face brightens and he pipes out, "P-o-n-y; saddle."

"Kee hee!" giggled the little girl by his side.

"It spells *'pony'*" says Aunt Rachel, and impresses the fact upon his mind by a ringing thump on his head.

Next a class of two in primary geography comes to the front. They are just beginning, and the question, "What is a volcano?" comes to lazy Dick. He looks unutterable things toward the wall and is silent.

"Next," and little Jane blushes and hangs her

head. Turning the page of the book, containing a picture of a volcano, toward the class, the teacher says, "Now, can you tell me?" "Yes 'um," said Dick, "I know now. It's a mountain what shoots!" Soon another question is missed by the class. Forbearance ceases to be a virtue and the sentence is pronounced, "Get this lesson over at play time!" Other "tasks" are heard, some pupils doing fairly well, and others making wild shots. A larger class in English grammar is up. Fanny Tolley reads her sentence and parses it all nicely, receiving the pleasing comment, "Well done!" By the way, Fanny is the model girl of the school, to whom others are pointed as worthy of their imitation. Next, Frank Reynolds, a rather precocious but lazy boy, reads, "The horse and cow are in the lot." Being asked to parse "cow," he rattles off, "Cow is a neuter noun, positive degree, first person, and—" "Hold on," says the teacher. "What are you driving at?" "I'm driving at the *cow,*" replies Frank. "Take your seat and see if your grammar teaches you to parse this way" He does not look happy.

Meanwhile, those who are not reciting are studying. We are permitted to study aloud, and, under the screen of the buzzing sound, many a whispered word is spoken and many a prank is played. Here

is one little fellow working away faithfully over a reading-lesson. On a bench opposite some of the larger girls are working their "sums" in arithmetic. Pike was the ideal book in this study, a grum, unattractive looking work. Generally we see the boys and girls sitting together; but on yonder bench a few little damsels are sitting all alone, no doubt acting upon the advice of prudent mamas. Aunt Rachel does not seem to anticipate any damaging effects from Cupid's darts when discharged at random. There, at the intersection of two benches, a boy and girl are having a nice tête-à-tête. Just in front of the teacher's chair two flaxen-headed chaps are looking intently at their books, pretending to be absorbed in their lessons, but the tones of their voices indicate the planning of an apple-tree hunt after school. About one-half are really studying, the other half are only half working. The hours in the school-room do grow long, and it is hard to be busy all the time. Now my attention is directed to a Valley youngster who is giving Cousin Jennie a red peach. She looks so pleased that I wonder which she likes the better, the boy or the peach. I think, however, the fruit will be more palatable, for he is an ugly boy.

"Ouch!" ejaculates a boy on the left. "Aunt Rachel, Bob Tygart stuck a pin in me!"

"Come up here, Bob." The culprit, a red-headed, loose-jointed boy, moves slowly up to the bar. "Did you stick Thomas?"

"Yes 'um."

"Why did you do it?"

" 'Cause I wanted to see him jump!"

"I'll make you jump, sir." He jumped!

"Thus, once and awhile, the monotony of the room is broken into, in a way rather interesting to all except the active participants.

The time for examining the slates has come. In written arithmetic there are no classes; each pupil works along as fast as individual capacity and application permit. When the slate is full of "sums" there is a rest until these are inspected. This inspection time has now come. "Bring up your slates" is the order from headquarters. Thereupon they form a solid wall of slates around the chair. Aunt Rachel takes one at a time and looks over the work, the pupil explaining what was to be done. With the aid of a key to old Pike, Aunt Rachel more readily detects errors. If a "sum" is wrong, a line is drawn across it and it has to be reworked. This is a tedious exercise, and behind the barrier thus formed many a bit of drama is enacted.

Running out from one side of the door, about

two feet, there is a mark cut in the floor. About this time of day many wistful glances are directed thereto. It is the twelve o'clock mark. This is for the benefit of teachers who can not indulge in the possession of a watch, but Aunt Rachel has one. On a sunny day the mark tells the meridian time, but when cloudy the teacher who has no watch has to calculate by the number of lessons certain classes have said. The appetite of the small boy is getting rather acute and he is beginning to speculate on the contents of his basket which hangs on the peg in the wall. Although much interested in the quality of the contents, he is really more concerned in regard to the quantity.

The last slate is examined, and Aunt Rachel pauses in her work. She looks at the mark, then at her watch, to be doubly sure, and issues the general proclamation, "Get your spelling lessons."

This is the last act of the morning session. Spelling books and dictionaries are brought forth, and such a babel of tongues! It is a time when all, both the studious and the idle, join in common work. To be so near the dinner basket, and then to be "kept in," is terrible to think of! All study the lessons aloud, if so desire, and the lazy boy makes up for his real interest in the work by the higher key on which his voice is pitched. From

"ba-be-bi," etc., up to "jux-ta-po-si-tion," there is a grand concert of voices, every note in the gamut being struck, yet, to a musical ear, it is a most inharmonious whole. During this jubilee of sound and work Aunt Rachel is not idle. The latest recruit to the primary ranks stands by her chair and labors in distinguishing *c* from *e*.

The spelling begins. The smaller classes have spelled and taken their seats by the wall to clear the floor for the largest class to "spell by plank." All stand in line, on a plank near the opposite side of the room. As each pupil spells a word correctly, a step is taken to the next plank in the direction of the chair. The one who misses a word stands still. There is a novelty about it that interests us little fellows in the performance. Soon the line is broken, some lagging on the rear planks. Now and then a boy, several planks in the rear, will steal up a plank, knowing that he is in danger of the delinquents' corner at recess.

The last plank has been reached by only two or three and the lesson is over. Then, with bated breath, we wait for the final order. "Get your dinners," says Aunt Rachel, and there is a hubbub exceeding the clatter of the spelling concert. Lazy Dick and idle Tommie now do good work, displaying a wonderful capacity for imbibing not the ideal, but the substantial things of life.

All in the room, however, are not happy. From the corner in which sit the delinquents in spelling and geography woeful glances are cast at the merry groups elsewhere.

Lunch devoured, the spring visited, then commences the playing. Boys and girls have separate grounds and different sports. Aunt Rachel is not afraid of Cupid indoors, but is suspicious of him in the shady grove.

"Prisoners' base" is the game for the boys, and being equally divided the first "dare" is given. Here we go, forward and back, round and about, until the end of the first skirmish reveals several prisoners on either side. Then, when some swift runner goes around the other base and releases all the prisoners he is cheered as a hero. Tired of this, "I spy" is proposed. Jake Rhodes hides his eyes and begins to count two hundred. Away we run, some behind the big trees, some climb into the dense cedars, and others leap over the high banks. "Two hundred! All ready?" cries Jake, as from the base he cautiously surveys the landscape on every side. He then circles around the base with a wider and wider radius. From the opposite side the sound of pattering feet strikes his ear, and to his mortification he sees two boys run in. More on the alert, he watches every tree and

corner. "I spy Will Price!" he cries, and comes to base at full speed. Few run in ahead of Jake. The sympathy of the boys seems always for the hiding ones, and in the race for the base they cheer them on. All have come in except George Morris, a fleet-footed boy. Jake has extended his circle of inspection to the extreme limits. All is excitement now to see who wins. From the west end of the grove comes Jake's cry of "I spy, I spy!" and here they come, just a-flying! George is gaining, and around the base the excitement is at fever heat. Twenty boys are jumping up and down, clapping their hands and sides, and making the woods ring with "Run, George!" "Run, George!" And George won by just one leap.

In the mean time, in a retired spot on the other side of the grove, the girls are playing by themselves. Their games are of a more quiet and graceful type. Aunt Rachel is in the house writing copies for exercises in penmanship, now and then, from the door, taking a view of the grounds, to know that the sea is calm and the sky is clear.

The shadow on the floor has moved east of the mark and from the door comes the call, "Books, books!" Again it is passed around the grounds, and there is a rush for the spring. The gourd is eagerly sought for, whilst some, kneeling on the

clean stones, drink of the cool, clear water. Flushed faces dotted with drops of perspiration are cooled by bathing in the spring branch. Pocket combs are in demand, for everybody is required to come in clean and neat.

Order is restored and the writing-bench is filled by the little folks. Our pens are goose-quills fashioned by Aunt Rachel's sharp knife, and our copies suit our grades of progress. Cousin Jennie and I are still practicing on oblique lines and a curve called "pot hook." Somehow we two generally sit together at the writing-bench. She doesn't shake my arm, and I like her anyway. We have so many lines to write and show to Aunt Rachel. The evening work is in many respects similar to that of the morning. The spelling-book battalion leads in the march, after which reader follows reader. The multiplication table pupils are reciting. Jim Parker tackles the seventh line and sails smoothly until he says, "7 times 6 are 44." "No," says Aunt Rachel. Jim looks searchingly upon the floor and comes again, "7 times 6 are 40." "Tell him," and Cousin Will says, "7 times 6 are 42." "That's it," says Jim. "I knowed it but couldn't think of it."

"May I get a drink?" asks a pale-faced girl

who has used salt rather plentifully on potatoes for lunch.

"Yes, take the gourd along."

Having no bucket, the big gourd is brought up filled with the refreshing water, handed to the teacher first, and then around to the most thirsty, until the contents are exhausted.

"Aunt Rachel, Bill Hill is making faces at me!" sings out a red-faced urchin. Aunt Rachel, being busy, and the buzzing on a high key, she does not hear the complaint.

"Hush, you fool you! I didn't hurt you," says Bill, sotto voce. Thinking, perhaps, that Bill may hurt him, the red-faced boy calms down. Bill gets his face into its wonted shape.

Every now and then some spelling-book enthusiast goes up to the chair, and, in a supplicating tone, says, "Please, ma'am, what does this word spell?" The monotony is again broken by a screeching voice, "Aunt Rachel, make 'em quit *scrougin'!*" Observation reveals the fact that the victim, between two larger boys, is being transformed into a sardine.

"You boys stand up out there on the floor," says Aunt Rachel. They stand, and little Ned has plenty of room.

Slates are again examined. The sun is begin-

ning to make shadows on the sides of Little Mountain, toward which longing eyes are beginning to peep through the writing-bench window.

Again the order is given, "Get your spelling-lessons." Every one now goes to work in earnest, and the last lessons are generally good. Even lazy Dick joins in the good work, for he has no desire to linger by the fountain. My class is on the floor. I have not been head for two weeks. Good spellers are in our class, and three are above me. Next to the last word is missed by the first boy. Down it comes, missed also by number two. Number three staggers at it, and I hold my breath. "Next." I spell it and march proudly to the head of the class. There is some notoriety to be gained in being first, as on the road home I know that more than one old darky Uncle will ask, "Who is head?" and if I say, "I am," there will come the hearty "Hurra for you!" which I enjoy. We sit down and listen to the big class recite. In the evening they trap down like we do. It is a hard lesson, and "Phthisic" is given out. Down it goes, missed by good spellers, until it comes to Nat Morris, who adjusts the distorted letters of the big word and steps up four places. I just hate to see Nat go above Cousin Hannah Crawford, for I like

her. She pets and kisses me; because I am such a little fellow, I reckon.

The day's work is over and we prepare to leave. Bonnets, books, baskets, and hats are gotten, and all form in a curved line, the largest spelling-class next the door, in the order of class standing, and the other classes filling the line in the same order, with the A-B-C tots on the left wing. Then, as we go out, all say, "Good evening, Aunt Rachel," the girls making a curtsy, and the boys making a bow. Now for the "tagging," or getting the last touch of some schoolmate going in the opposite direction. To get the most "last tags" is prized by some as much as having spelled first.

Cousin Will brings up old Swan, Aunt Rachel mounts, and homeward we go, leaving the grove to the evening bird and to the squirrel for a play-ground.

CHAPTER VII

THE HAWK'S NEST

"What are fears but voices airy?
Whispering harm where harm is not,
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bow is shot?"

—*Wordsworth.*

Balcony Falls is the name of the gap in the Blue Ridge through which the waters of the historic James dash and roll in their course to the lowlands of eastern Virginia. Not far west of this picturesque gateway for the waters, near the south bank of the beautiful river, and almost under the shadow of the grand old mountains, was the home of my boyhood. The road thence to school led through scenes of varied interest. First, through the rich bottom land of my cousin's, by the orchard fence over which the mellow June apples and red peaches fell invitingly into the path, thence along the bank of the James where grew the pawpaw, more luscious to my boyish taste than the banana I knew in later years; thence along the bed of a mountain stream with its tempting trout holes under the sycamore trees, by the patch of chinquapin bushes, under the magnificent chestnut trees,

and, for the last mile, through a dense piece of woodland where the birds sang sweetly and the squirrels gamboled in play. Could a boy do otherwise than love such a road?

Our school session began in the early spring and ended in the late autumn, and, as the winters were severe the children of the river section were too young, and many of the Valley pupils were too thinly clad to face the storms and biting cold. On the road to and from school we formed a merry group, chattering in careless glee, now chasing a rabbit that crossed our path, again throwing a stone at a squirrel frisking in the branches overhead, or wading in the clear, cool streams we had to cross. Little did we realize that some of the happiest moments of our lives were then gliding by!

One point on our way excited our interest and curiosity to a high degree, until we explored the mystery connected therewith. In a dense, dark wood, by peering through the foliage we could see gloomy, gray rocks rising to the height of ten or twelve feet, and at a distance of about two hundred yards from our road. Some told us that great wild-cats had their den there; others, that hawks took their prey there for a feast, and that chicken bones by the cart-load were strewn there.

As we passed this place of dread repute the music of little voices fell to a lower key, or if one were alone the speed of the train was measured by the strength of the engine. Week by week we grew bolder in passing the once dreaded spot, until, in solemn council, some bolder spirit moved that on the next evening we solve the mystery of the rocks by a bold dash thereto. With some slight misgivings, the proposition was finally adopted.

The time came, and the campaign had been mapped out, the road being the base line of operations. The girls and smaller boys were to hold this line and guard the baggage, whilst the veterans were to move forward. With Cousin Will at the head of our column we advanced cautiously, halting every few steps for any developments in front. Nearer and nearer we came to the long-talked-of spot, and the rocks seemed to grow larger and looked grimmer. We looked for clouds of hawks and dens of wild-cats! We reached the base of the nearer rock. Who would climb to the top or go around? With an air of bravado I shouted, "Get away, you old cats!" and threw a stone across the gray pile. I should have mentioned that our weapons of warfare were a stick in one hand and a stone in the other. Hark! Horrors!

We heard a crackling of sticks and a rustling of leaves on the other side, and without orders to retreat, we dashed back through the woods to the road, our gallant leader in advance! The girls screamed as we rallied for breath on the base line, one boy with scratched face, one with torn pants, and one hatless. So demoralized were our forces that further retreat was at once suggested, and, had not Abe Mitchell, a big Valley man, appeared on the scene, thereby reviving our courage, the "light brigade" had doubtless rallied on the home fortifications. We told him there were at least a dozen wild-cats over there. Laughing, he said, "Follow me, boys, and we will drive them away." Hardly admiring the boldness of our new leader, yet we all followed, as we felt safer near him than in the road, where, by a flank movement, the wild-cats might play havoc with us.

Mounting the nearer rock with him, we saw a flock of startled sheep on the other side! Our hearts beat less rapidly, we grew bold again in an instant, explored the rocks, and found it really the hawk's banquet hall, but no trace of a wild-cat's den. Proudly did we tell the home-folks of our bold visit to the Hawk's Nest, but we touched lightly, I confess, on the hasty retreat.

In that day wolves and bears made their homes

in the dark caves and deep ravines of the mountains that lay, ridge after ridge, to the south of our homes. As children we often heard of the night attack of bruin upon the pig-pen, and the raid upon the flock of sheep by ravenous wolves. In one night, a short time before this, the wolves had killed twenty sheep for my father. So we looked with dread upon these denizens of the forest, believing they would have no more regard for the feelings of a boy than for a sheep.

One cloudy, sultry evening, when the atmosphere was in a suitable condition for the ready transmission of sound, we were returning from school, and as we were passing by the Hawk's Nest, all at once we heard a fierce howling and snarling apparently in the woods close to us. Aunt Rachel, on old Swan, cried, "Run, children, the wolves are after us!" My sister and Cousin Hannah commenced breaking switches, which they used vigorously in increasing Swan's speed, and we little fellows made music with our feet as we pattered down the road. On went the cavalcade, the children panting, Swan's feet clattering, the wolves still howling nearer and nearer! One of the boys struck his big toe against a rock and over he tumbled. But no time for delay; on he came, hold-

ing his toe in one hand and screaming, "Oh, Lordy! the wolves will get me!"

"If you don't stop hollering the wolves *will* get you," cried Aunt Rachel. Taking the advice, he transferred all extra power to his heels, and forgetting his toe, he made up for lost time and soon caught up with the fleeing crowd. The woods seemed endless and the howls sounded louder! At last, almost breathless, we dashed out into the lane between two fields. "Stop, children!" cried Aunt Rachel. "We are safe. The wolves are on the mountain." Surely enough, they were over a mile away, up on the side of the mountain.

Exhausted from the stampede, we threw ourselves upon the grassy banks, wiped our faces, fanned with hat and bonnet, and thought bitter things about the wild dogs. That night those savage beasts kept up that dismal howling until twelve o'clock. There was no school the next day, but a grand wolf hunt was organized by the neighborhood. The hunt resulted in the killing of many and the driving of the others farther back from the settlements. As I think of that evening those howls still ring in my ears.

In those days, in the country, merchants were located far apart. This gave rise to a class of itinerant tradesmen called peddlers. These mer-

chants generally traveled around on foot, carrying on their backs bundles of merchandise from fifty to one hundred pounds in weight. The Irish peddler came with his linen goods, the Englishman with his kerchiefs, laces, and such things; the Jew with his "sheep goots" of jewelry and elastic wares, and the Yankee, often in a wagon, with a regular "racket store." On most things these traveling merchants made from fifty to one hundred per cent. profit, and their food and lodging rarely cost anything. When the peddler unrolled his pack on the front porch his treasures were surveyed and admired by old and young, white and black. An Irishman of this class spent a night in our home. The next morning, at family prayers, he leaned his chair back against a door in the partition next a bedroom. The button on the inside gave away, and Pat, chair and all, rolled in a heap backwards into the room. As his heels went up, doubtless thinking he was going through a trap-door into a pit made to catch peddlers, he uttered an exclamation, "Holy Vargin, save me!" Gathering himself up from the floor he came out smiling, amid the apologies of my mother for not having warned him of the danger. Devotions gave way to laughter for a time, and my father had to nerve himself to finish. Pat sat up straight in his chair after that sad experience.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

"Yet a few days, and those who now appear
In youth and beauty like the blooming year,
In life's swift scene shall change."

—*Dryden.*

The summer days had gone and in the woods the autumn winds were rustling the yellow leaves. The frogs no longer piped in chorus by the pond in the meadow, and the whippoorwill's plaintive call was hushed. The chestnuts were opening out, and the school boy was watching with longing eye the brown nuts as they came peeping out from their cushions of velvet. The chinquapins, dark and glistening in their open burs, dotted the bush, and when it was shaken they fairly rained upon the ground. What fun we had playing "Jack in the bush," or "Odd or even," and the long strings we made!

I remember one, twice as long as I was, that I twined around Cousin Jennie's neck and told her I'd trade it to her for a ring she had been wearing. And when the trade was made I was proud as a prince with my newly won jewelry, and, as you can imagine, the finger that wore it was not hidden

in my pockets. But, lo! next morning the little girl whispered in my ear, "Ma says I mustn't give my ring away to *anybody,*" and with a sad heart I delivered up the precious ring. The "anybody" consoled me to some extent, as I thought no *other* boy would get it. I told her to keep the string, and that it was becoming to her pretty neck. I knew that I liked Cousin Jennie, for I saved nice fruit for her, and then I thought about her sometimes when she was away.

We boys would bring choice apples to school, and the one who was generous was the popular boy; but I preferred to be popular with the little brown-eyed girl. One day John Tolley, a Valley boy, came up to recite, and his pants' pockets were stuffed with fruit to the verge of bursting. Aunt Rachel told him to empty them, and the inventory of contents was as follows: Six apples, four peaches, six marbles, twenty chinquapins, twelve hickory nuts, with strings, nails and divers other articles of practical use to a boy.

In the grove there were several large hickory nut trees, and it was often a race in the morning to get the fallen fruit. The squirrel would always get the first choice, stow it away, and peep down from his store room at us as we picked up our share.

Those mellow days of autumn were pleasant for us at school, and as I look back over the years that have flown, the joys of none were sweeter than those that made music in my heart at old Crystal Spring during that first session of school.

One evening, when the last lesson had been heard, our teacher told us that school would soon be out, that there would be an examination and some of us would have to say pieces. At this unexpected announcement a buzz of surprise went around the room.

"Yes," continued Aunt Rachel, "I will have your home folks come and hear you, and I want you all to study up and do your best."

Young as we were, the thing pleased us, and the matter was discussed on the way home and at the supper tables. The next day the pieces were assigned, and I was among the honored ones who were to "speak." For the next two weeks the tone of the school-room was louder than ever, in anticipation of the work of the final day. Fanny Tolley was to recite a long piece of poetry, Cousin Joe was to tell what he saw at the "show"—a literary production from the pen of Cousin William, and Cousin Jennie was to recite "Mary had a little lamb." I knew she was going to do it well.

I know not whether my bump of combativeness

suggested the selection assigned to me or not, but it was the thrilling poem beginning,

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
But children you should never fight."

I thought it a gem, and threw my whole soul into it, feeling that upon my shoulders rested no small part of the honors of the day. And we were studying hard to be prepared in all ways. There were reviews in spelling, with all the catch words noted, capitals in geography asked over and over; the multiplication table was repeated by the juniors until even lazy Dick could sail smoothly through the seventh line; copy-books were arrayed in clean dresses, and all things were gotten in trim for the day of inspection. Why, Mr. Ewing, our preacher, was to be there and open with a prayer! The whole thing was a revelation in our young lives, and we looked forward to it with an eager interest the spice of which still lingers, though long, weary years have rolled between that day and now.

The last day of school dawned at last, and the stir began early in the home. It has been often noted that on the morning of some gala day the boy leaves his downy pillow with much more zeal and grace than on ordinary occasions. On this

morning Sunday suits were donned, and larger lunch baskets, with their luscious contents, greeted our admiring gaze.

At the appointed time—but it seemed a weary while to us!—the visitors were seated, the exercises were opened, and the prayer was made, doubtless for the first time some of those Valley boys had heard a prayer. Then came the oral examination of the leading classes, the star actors in the play. Aunt Rachel, to shield the rear-guard classes, and avoid a probable defeat, did not lead them into action. The principal subjects were spelling and geography.

Some of the larger pupils worked a few "sums" and handed them around for inspection; the examining committee inspected them, looked wise, but said little. The multiplication table was ground out by a juvenile class in double-quick time, winning approbation from the audience, for in that elder day this was an accomplishment of no ordinary value. Fanny Tolley came out first in geography, as she rattled off the capitals of the world in fine style; and Cousin Hannah was best in arithmetic, working an example that embraced the four ground rules. Mr. Ewing said they did well, and they asked no higher praise. These literary feats ended about noon, and a recess of an

hour was given for the discussion of lunch lore. And then—why, the dinner spread in the grove made the hungry boys' eyes fairly dance! My mother and Cousin William were especially attentive to the Valley children, inviting them to share in the feast of good things which many of them did not bring. Then came a volunteer exhibition in athletics for the entertainment of the crowd, such as jumping, racing and leap-frog, and some boys who did not figure much in the examination now took the lead and won some faint applause. In the latter days the champions of the college base-ball nines, of the foot-ball teams and of the boat crews are applauded even above the medallist or the valedictorian! "O tempora, O mores!" It was not muscle versus brains at old Crystal Spring.

On this occasion Aunt Rachel's voice had to speak peace to some troubled elements, as, in rivalry and jealousy, two mountain boys on the athletic roll came to the verge of mortal combat. Quiet being restored as the clouds of war rolled by, the oratorical part of the program began. It was an exhibition of beauty unadorned, no pompous display of programs, no band of music, salutatory, nor valedictory, simply an unvarnished tale.

John Hill, a bud of genius grown in Valley soil, first reeled off a few lines from some good old hymn. Then came Cousin Jennie with her little lamb, and I almost held my breath for fear the lamb would get away from her, and when it didn't I thought she beat John Hill all to pieces! Then, in order, came the rest of the program, there being no slip of memory that I can remember, for Aunt Rachel had impressed upon us that there must be no such word as fail. Either my excited appearance or the sentiment of my piece aroused the risibles of a big country Jake who sat opposite me, and wore a broad grin all the time I was giving my piece. It being my first attempt in public on the stage, at first my heart was in my throat, and my knees quivered, but a smile from Cousin Jennie nerved me for the conflict and I went boldly through. Cousin Joe's piece about the "show" created the greatest flutter in the audience as he gave a graphic description of the impression the camel made on him.

The last piece was said and Mr. Ewing was called on for a talk. I think he took advantage of his audience, and, as many of them needed it, his remarks took the line of a short sermon. With this the exercises closed and the curtain

dropped on the first session at Crystal Spring Seminary.

Then came the buzz of congratulations to Aunt Rachel and to those who had just played a part in the exercises.

On the outskirts the servants, who at the windows and doors had enjoyed the rendering of the pieces in a high degree, were discussing the merits of their favorites. As I came by them Uncle Humphrey said to me, "My laws! Alexander, you just rode a high hoss, with his head away up in th' a'r, erwhile ago. I bets on you every time." Uncle Aleck said to my cousin, "Willie, you norated powerful fine. I told dese niggers dat some day you'd study theologism and be a tarin' down preacher." Even Aunt Eliza, our cook added to the fund of praise: "You children did mighty pretty an' showed sech nice manners." Those simple words from the true and faithful slaves made our hearts flutter with pride, as much as the encomiums of our white friends.

Afterward I dared ask Cousin Jennie if her heart didn't thump when she was reciting "Mary and the little lamb." She informed me that girls' hearts didn't thump, and I felt very much depressed and realized that I had shown my ignorance in the matter.

Then the good-bys were spoken, the rough hands of the mountain boys were shaken, all were homeward bound and the first session at Crystal Spring Seminary was over.

CHAPTER IX

STRAY BLOSSOMS

"In joyous youth what soul hath never known
Thought, feeling, taste, harmonious to his own?
Who hath not praised while beauty's pensive eye
Asked from his heart the homage of a sigh?"

—*Campbell.*

In the interregnum between Aunt Rachel's last session at Crystal Spring Seminary and the advent of a new ruler I was sent, for a few months, to Oak Grove, an educational institution some six miles from home. One Joseph Steele, a college graduate, presided over this domicile of learning. I boarded with "Aunt" Nancy Thompson, a life-long friend of my mother's, and one of the "salt of the earth." At first there was a spice in the new life, the meeting and getting acquainted with strange faces, and the coming of a boarding pupil created a slight ripple on the surface of this literary fountain. Thanks to my training at Crystal Spring Seminary I was well advanced and was classed with pupils older than myself. I noticed more class-work than in our home school, for Mr. Steele had been to college and caught new ideas.

In my first day's experience, in surveying the

room and its buzzing pupils, my eyes lingered on a little girl with black hair and dark blue eyes, with a pretty red ribbon around her neck. In about five seconds the spell of the feminine was over me, and my boyish admiration went out to the sweet little girl. I caught myself comparing her with Cousin Jennie, and realized that her beauty was of a very different type. For, looking away across the hills to a home close by the James, I saw a little girl with dark brown eyes and light brown hair, and I almost wished to see her again. But then the blue eyes flashed on me, and, being partial to beauty, I stole frequent glances at the little girl so near me. At recess I gave her a big red apple and the acquaintance, after a little chat, moved on to the border line of friendship. As the days went by I found it very pleasant to talk to Hazel Moore and look into her pretty eyes. I brought her apples and nuts, and she smiled on me in a most bewitching manner. I forget whether it was leap year or not, but Hazel played her part well. It developed on my part into a case of boyish love, pure and artless. I was bold in the cause and cared not for teasing nor idle gossip. She was older than I, but about the same height.

We were both, it chanced, in a large geography class, some of which were young men and women.

They "trapped down," as it was called, and held the places thus won. The class stood in a semi-circle extended across the room. I took my place at the foot, and away up yonder, near the head, was Hazel. Some of the hardest studying of my school life was done in order to reach her. Trapping one by one I passed up the line, running around six-footers, until one bright morning I made the last step and stood by her side, as happy as a bee on a honeysuckle blossom! Her smile paid me for the hard work to get there. Yes, indeed it did. Mine surely was a case of boyish love, since it was a source of aspiration for higher aims in life!

If Hazel missed a question, I, too, missed it, and we were trapped down together. I was too gallant to "trap" her down. Most of the day's lessons being over she and I would get adjoining seats, where one of the girls' benches, at right angles, met one of the boys' rows. I would draw a house on my slate and call it "our home," and she seemed so pleased that my talent for drawing developed rapidly, especially along the line of domestic architecture. In a generous and melting mood one day I gave Hazel, as a token of my tender esteem, a beautiful double silver pocket

comb. The next morning her sister returned it. saying her mother thought I might have need of it myself. I was in the depths for a short time, but a bewitching smile brought me up again.

It was a happy day when my room-mate and I went to spend the night with John, Hazel's brother. Mother Moore was so nice to me that I began to feel as one of the family. By the way, Billy T., my friend, claimed Mollie, the older sister, as his little sweetheart, so we were comrades in a good cause. After the night's tasks had been learned, came the games, the plums in the pudding. We played "button," and I always gave it to one beside Hazel to get the seat next to her, which I prized as if next to the throne. Next we played blindman's buff, and when I knew by the merry laugh that I had caught Hazel, in the excitement I just couldn't help throwing my arms around her and holding her tight, whilst she struggled to be free!

Thus the days glided by as a sweet dream. Yet I made good progress in my studies, combining work and play, duty and pleasure, loving and being smiled on. I had a confidant, a young man, who also stood betwixt me and the rougher boys. At one recess, as we walked in the grove, I asked him if he had ever heard of a man's marrying a

lady older than he? "Yes," said Ben promptly, "and they lived happy as June bugs!" On hearing the comforting words I almost shouted, for some happy day I might claim Hazel.

I had some rivals and they often vexed my soul, but by dint of cool determination and big red apples I seemed to keep in the lead. One day a boy larger than I said something about Hazel that was improper. I told him he lied! "What you got to do with it, you little monkey?" I dared him to come out in the woods. Reluctantly he followed me, and Ben, and some other boys, came along to see fair play. Seeing my zeal and support he cowed and whined out, "I didn't mean it." Said I, "I'm going to whip you for saying it, anyhow, you dog you," and quick as thought I popped him in the stomach, shortening his breath and doubling him up, and then I popped him on the side of the head, making him spin around and groan. But gathering himself up he peppered me in fine style for a minute or two. Round and round we went, until I ducked down, caught him by a leg and threw him, zeboom! on his back, and his head striking a root he was stunned. Then Ben said we must stop, and that I had won the day. Mail-clad knight of the Middle Ages, victor in the tournament field, never received warmer praise than I.

The boys said I did right and they felt like drumming the fellow out of school. John Moore told Hazel how I had fought for her, and the next morning she gave me some sweet flowers and her mother sent me a piece of nice cake. "I never did like that boy," she said, "and am so glad you whipped him. I like you lots better now." Why, I wanted to tackle him again just to get such a nice reward.

One evening word came to me to come home the next Saturday. Dearly as I loved my old home I half regretted to leave Oak Grove. When I told Hazel good-by I said, "I'll think about you sometimes. You must come to see me, as I have been to see you," and she replied, "Come back some time. I'll think of you, too." Oh, the artlessness of childhood!

CHAPTER X

A NEW ADMINISTRATION

"Remorseless time!
Fierce spirit of the glass and scythe! What power
Can stay him in his silent course! On, still on,
He presses, and forever."

—*George D. Prentice.*

The snows of two more winters had clothed the Blue Mountains in white robes, then melted away, and again the violets were peeping out on the southern meadow slopes. Over these beds of blue flowers mild breezes were softly stealing, and they told us of the coming of spring.

Aunt Rachel had finished her last session at Crystal Spring Seminary. Her strength not being equal to the increasing work of the position, she resigned. I can not pay too high a tribute to the memory of this good and dear woman. She was a Christian of a high type and a faithful teacher. She sought not only to train her pupils' minds but to implant in their hearts moral principles that would bloom into better living. Thus her influence on us all was good, and we loved her well. She was strict, yet just to the line, and the secret of her character building lay in the fact that she

realized she was not dealing in stubble, in wood or in iron, but that she was training immortal spirits. Of her it may be truly said that her good works followed her.

Her last session closed earlier than usual, and in a quiet way. It was a sad day at the old schoolhouse. After the regular day's work was over, Aunt Rachel said she was not going to teach any more as she had not been feeling well lately, and she continued about as follows: "This has been the most pleasant school of my teaching life, and I am sorry to have to give you up. I thank you for your kindness to me and consideration of me as your teacher. Always try to be good, rather than to be rich or distinguished, and strive to live useful lives. I shall always remember you with the kindliest feelings and pray God to make you Christian men and women. We part to-day, my young friends, but let us all try to meet up yonder around the Great White Throne, where there will be no more parting! May God bless you all. Good-by!"

As she closed, her voice faltered and tears streamed down her cheeks. There was the secret of her influence; she loved us. Tears were in our eyes and many of the girls sobbed aloud. After a quiet leave-taking, Aunt Rachel for the last time

mounted old Swan, and the Valley pupils stood with tearful eyes watching her until hidden by the grand old trees, and then slowly they turned toward their humble homes.

As the time came for the selection of a new teacher it was the general opinion that as more muscle and labor might be needed in the discipline a man should be chosen. The requirements, both mental and physical, seemed to be met in one Dick Richeson, a young man of good figure, sandy hair, homely face, and boasting of some experience in curbing young and rebellious spirits.

His advent created quite a flutter amongst the fair damsels of the neighborhood until they got a peep at his mouth. Also the juveniles were inquisitive as to his personal appearance and the probability of his following Solomon's advice about the training of youngsters. He was measured up by every boy in the community, and the common opinion was, "You had better look out!" Mr. Richeson stood on a higher literary plane than Aunt Rachel, as he could cipher beyond old Pike, teach book-keeping, and start a boy in algebra. Such scholastic acquirements raised him in our estimation to the height of the poplar tree by the school-room door.

In due time school opened with most of the pu-

pils that Aunt Rachel taught. As Fanny T., Cousin Hannah, and my sister were almost young ladies, it was not thought the proper thing for them to go to school to a young man teacher, even if he did not claim to be an Adonis. Miss Nancy T., an old maid, remarked at a discussion of the question, "La, me, I wouldn't think of going to school to a young gentleman. He might make love to me, and then—well, I might faint!"

The first day was mostly spent by Mr. Richeson in trying to classify the pupils, evidently an improvement on Aunt Rachel's plan of administration. So many difficulties were in the way that he seemed ready to cry out in the agony of despair, in view of the different text-books and different grades of progress therein. Then, of course, most of the boys during the day were feeling the forbearance and testing the patience of the new teacher. We were getting larger now, more democratic in our ideas and disposed to advocate a civil rights' bill for the protection of the schoolboy. That evening, before dismissing us, Mr. Richeson delivered his maiden speech along the lines of order, discipline, how to study, and so on, in a strain that led us to believe he thought us semi-barbarians and dunces. We were very sensitive to any reflection upon Aunt Rachel's methods, and

the classifying was the only thing that struck us favorably. On the whole, we about decided not to like him, and to make it uncomfortable for him, provided he did not make it too much so for us. "How do you like your new teacher?" we were asked all along the road home. "Don't like him," we said. "He thinks Aunt Rachel doesn't know much." The girls said, "He is so ugly." "He doesn't dress nicely."

The next day at noon, concluding that forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, the new administration transferred a small limb of a cedar tree to the corner by his chair, where it stood threatening us with fearful results should we not be wiser and better, and a subdued air reigned over the benches for a time. But, growing bolder, a little bud of genius was invited to the teacher's chair, and initiated into the policy of the new ruler. Bob said it didn't hurt much. Then Nat Morris stumped the teacher on a sum and we were wicked enough to be glad of it, as he didn't know so much after all. All the time he seemed to be measuring the big boys, some of whom were equal to him in pounds and inches, as we little fellows thought he gave them more rights and privileges than a just government should do.

Things drifted on and on, and Mr. Richeson

failed to secure our regard or confidence. He would doctor the little fellows, and, for similar offences, excuse the larger boys. This will, for any teacher, gain the contempt of all his pupils. He did few things "like Aunt Rachel," and we resented this departure from the old paths. We also found we could slight our lessons to some extent.

One Sunday he went courting or trying to do something of the kind, lost the road coming home that night, and failed to get to school in time on Monday. When he failed to make his appearance at eight, the time for opening school, and hearing of the probable reason, we scattered in short order. Coming in over an hour after, puffing like a steam tug, he found a silent grove. We would not have treated Aunt Rachel that way for anything. To get even with us and the world, he issued an order for us to come to school the next *Saturday*. This was denounced as an outrage unheard of in the annals of crimes against school-children, and in the indignation meeting a resolution was unanimously passed that we would not come unless our parents said so. Now, in those old Scotch-Irish homes there reigned rule and obedience first and last. So great was the feeling in our behalf that one of the principal patrons advised Mr. Richeson to with-

draw the order. He did so, and said we had better not do that again. We smiled over our triumph and thought, "Old fellow, you had better not lose the road on another courting expedition."

One day he whipped a little girl for not knowing a long lesson, which we thought the meanest thing we had ever heard of. I said if he'd touch Cousin Jennie I'd hit him with a rock. I told her so, and she said she'd try to be good. I replied, "Good or not, I dare him to hit you!" and in my spirit of chivalry I would have risked my life for the sweet little girl.

Not having been used to good society, when he visited in the better homes, by doing green and awkward things, he was laughed at and ridiculed by the younger people. Once at dinner, a finger-bowl being passed to him, after the fish course, he quenched his thirst therefrom, remarking that he always liked to drink out of a bowl.

Soon it was whispered that we were not learning as much as under Aunt Rachel and that the glory was departing from the temple.

Things went on in a most unsatisfactory manner, many of the larger girls having stopped, and my father took my brother and me away before the close of the session. We afterward heard that Mr. Richeson ended with only a few pupils, no re-

grets and no tears. The Latin dictum, *Poeta nascitur, non fit,* can be said of the teacher with equal truth. Hundreds mistake their calling in trying to enter this noble profession.

It was during this term that I was wrongly suspected of being profane. It happened this way. A great many negroes were employed in building a dam across the river, auxiliary to the construction of the canal. One night some of these light-fingered sons of Africa entered uninvited our apple house and helped themselves rather bountifully to some choice fruit. The next morning, boiling with indignation, I called to enlist the sympathy of my cousin's family in our misfortune. I found them at the breakfast table, and said with some warmth, "Them *dam* niggers broke into our tobacco house last night and stole lots of our apples!" My cousin William, an elder in the Presbyterian church, almost held his breath as he looked at me and then at his good wife who also looked unutterable things.

"Why, Alexander, what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean those niggers working at the dam stole our apples."

"Ah!" said Cousin William, "I see now. I misunderstood you at first, my boy." I was restored to the plane of his good opinion.

Will whispered to me as we left the house, "Alex, I thought you was cussin' sure enough."

In the same way "Hell-gate Hollow," just south of our farm, always needed an explanation, and here it is. In the geological changes through which those mountains passed the great mass of debris forced out, and leaving the gorge behind, was deposited in front of the hollow in the shape of a hill guarding the entrance. It was first called "Hill-gate Hollow," but some backslider perverted the name to Hell-gate, which name has been retained. It was thus ill-named, as the ravine, with its ivy-crowned sides, pools of cool, clear water, filled with trout, and cascades over moss-covered rocks, makes a most romantic spot and delightful summer excursion from the noonday heat.

After returning from Oak Grove I talked much of my boarding-school life. I was a step ahead of my cousins, having seen much more of the world. I must have mentioned Hazel's name rather often, for one day Jennie said, "Alex, you must like Hazel." Said I, "Why, y-ye-yes, we were good friends." My cousins had seen her often at Falling Spring Church, and Cousin Will had said he liked her looks mighty well. As she spoke the blue eyes were dancing before my mind, and I

could see the dark ringlets fall over her snowy neck as she tossed her little head. The tempter whispered, "She's prettier than Jennie." And then the good spirit cried, "Get hence, get hence, Jennie is the prettiest and the best."

"Alex, did you give Hazel candy?" "No, I ate all the candy I got." "You greedy boy, you might have brought me some," she said. "Did you take her any apples?" "Let me see. I most forget. Why, yes, one day, I gave her a red one." "I believe Hazel was your sweetheart over at Oak Grove!" It was a stunner and confusedly I stammered out, "I d-did like Hazel over there, but now I'm back on the river." "I wish," said Jennie, "*I* had a red apple." "You *shall have* one and a sweet one, too." The next day she got the apple and all was quiet along the James once more. For Jennie and I are no longer reveling in the bowers of childhood, but are crossing the beautiful land of girlhood and boyhood where the present is joyous and the future brightens at every step.

CHAPTER XI

AN ELOPEMENT

"Ah! love can every hope inspire;
It banishes wisdom all the while;
And the life of the nymph we admire
Seems adorned forever with a smile."

As a boy I had an eye partial to beauty, whether it was painted on the flower, radiated from the bright eye of some pretty girl, or crowned some queenly woman. And so it befell that my boyish admiration went out toward Mrs. L., the young wife of the proprietor of the hydraulic cement works at Balcony Falls. Tall, graceful, with black hair and dark, flashing eyes, bright and sparkling in conversation, Mrs. L., in my boyish fancy, was a queen among women. Her visits to our home were grand events, and I loved to sit and listen to her humorous comments on things in general. On that day Aunt Eliza, our cook, taxed her culinary skill to the utmost in getting "a grand dinner for de tiptop quality." Always stylishly dressed, Mrs. L. was closely observed by the ladies of the river circle, as fashion sheets were rare in those days. I just loved to hear her call my

mother, "Mother Paxton," for it made me feel proud of the imaginary relationship.

One day she said, "Mother Paxton, I think I never told you of my elopement and marriage." "Why, did I ever think you ran off to get married!" said my mother. "Yes, and I'm afraid you'll think I was a naughty girl; but let me tell you of it." "Go on," replied my mother, "and maybe after I hear the story I'll not scold you much." And then Mrs. L. told her story, which I will give in substance.

Her father, she said, was a rich farmer near Cumberland, Maryland. She had been raised, as it were, in the lap of luxury, and educated in Baltimore. As a school girl she had met Charles L., a young man of handsome appearance, refined manners, and pleasing address. Many were the billet-doux scented with geranium leaves and breathing tender messages that, by a secret mail service, found their way to her boudoir. School days over, she reigned as a belle in her social circle. Charles L. called once, twice, three times, and her father began to frown. Very aristocratic himself, he desired wealth and high social position for his daughter when she married. Socially and intellectually Charles L. was her equal but was just beginning life on rather small means. Plumed and

gallant knights with lordly estates paid homage to her, but to her, Charles was the grandest of them all, and she gave her heart to him. Love in a cottage was to be preferred to gilded halls and a cold, politic marriage.

By way of parenthesis, let me introduce a sidelight on the scene. If Charles had shown the tact and nerve of the young man I'll mention, he, too, might have won the father over to his side. A young man, who lacked only money in the estimation of a wealthy father, dared to ask him for his daughter. He railed on him, saying, "What! Why, sir, you'll bring my daughter to the washtub." The young fellow looked him straight in the eye, and said, "Well, sir, if I do, I'll carry her water for her!" The old fellow eyed him closely for a few seconds and then said, "Take her then, you rascal you!" He won by a word fitly spoken —an "apple of gold in a picture of silver."

Now, to return to Mrs. L.'s story. The B. & O. Railroad ran through her father's farm, there being a station a mile above. With the aid of a faithful maid letters still came and went. No longer permitted to see her lover in her own home, meetings were arranged in the homes of friends, for "forbidden fruit is always the sweetest." In

an unfortunate moment the maid dropped a letter near Miss Mary's father and by her excited manner betrayed the secret. He captured the letter, guessed the writer, read it, and had a stormy interview with his daughter. He threatened her with disinheritance and a nunnery if she still persisted in her course. But love laughs at opposition.

The letter spoke of elopement, and the word made her father furious. In two weeks or so it was arranged that Charles L. was, on a certain day, to come down on the 9 o'clock morning train, and she was to get to the railroad, about three-quarters of mile from her home, and signal the train to stop. To get to the train unobserved required a circuitous route and an early start. The day came, and by a back way she followed, at some distance, the maid with a small satchel. Her plan was to hide near the track until she heard the whistle, and then run for dear life. Things worked well until, from a distance, she was spied by a negro man, who, loyal to Mr. A., reported that he had seen Miss Mary crossing the new ground and going toward the railroad. He and his son, mounting their horses and calling the hounds, dashed off in the direction of the trail. Fearing pursuit, Miss Mary had the maid lift up the edge

of a brush pile, conceal her underneath, and then run to the woods near by. On the horsemen came, the dogs barking as if on a trail. And, sure enough, they "treed" her under the brush! The game was caught, and it was a *dear!*

Baffled, she was led captive back home, and for three days locked in her room with a diet of bread and water to cool down her ardor and restore her blinded vision. Released from prison, for several weeks there was quiet in the home. Confidence being somewhat restored, Miss Mary was given more liberty, even to the extent of visiting a neighbor. But you'd as well try to turn water up stream as to keep two lovers from meeting. They met. They planned for another campaign. This time, early on a certain morning, she was to go to the shanty of an old Irish woman, a short distance from the road, and conceal herself therein until train time. Miss Mary had been kind to the woman and hoped for a favor.

The day came, and as the first touches of dawn crimsoned the east she and her maid went to the humble house and aroused "Aunt Bridget," whom she asked to hide her from her father until time for the morning train. At first the old woman hesitated between her love for Mary and loyalty to Mr. A., in whose house she lived. "Oh, me

darlint, how kin I do it? If yez father finds you, he'll put me out. Saint Patrick, help me!" "But, Aunt Bridget, I'll pay you well. You shall not suffer." Then she took Miss Mary up the greasy rounds of a ladder to the loft where was a bed on which were two feather ticks. She told her to sit there, whilst she kept a sharp lookout below, and if she saw her father coming she would put her between the ticks! The sun arose and the home was astir. The minutes seemed as hours to Miss Mary. The die was cast, and if she failed again her lot would doubtless be hard. At eight o'clock the breakfast bell would ring and then doubtless she would be missed. The train was due at nine. A long lane led from the home by the shanty on to the railroad track. The old woman watched faithfully. Suddenly, at 8.50, there was a commotion at the house, servants running to the stables, and Mr. A. shouting. "He's a comin'!" cried the watcher as she came puffing up the ladder. "Git right in here, chile, an' lie still as death!" and she smoothed the top of the bed over the trembling girl.

Hardly had she gotten down the ladder when Mr. A. galloped up and called to Bridget to tell Mary to come out of the house. "Faith, by the holy saints, I hain't seen the darlint chile these

two weeks. She's done fergot her auld friend." "Stop your lying and bring her out; her tracks came this way." "Law, come and see for yersilf; me house is a little one." In he came, glanced around, and up the ladder he climbed. As he laid his hand on the bed, Mrs. L. said, her heart nearly stopped beating. Sadly muttering, "She's not here," he turned, went down the ladder, mounted his horse and galloped off in another direction. Just then the train whistled for the station above, and Miss Mary sprang from her hiding-place, her dress crumpled and dotted with feathers. The train was thundering down the road and moments were precious. With a white scarf to signal she slipped along, hidden by the fence, until she reached the open space, and then the race commenced. With the scarf flying she fairly flew toward the track. Her father, from a distance, spied her, and came at full speed. The train slowed up and all was excitement. The passengers took in the scene and windows and platforms were crowded Her father was gaining and her speed seemed to slacken. From the train came cheers and handkerchiefs waved. The old engineer cried out, "Run, lady run!" Charles L. jumped off to meet her, and putting an arm around her fairly carried the trembling girl to the car-

steps, where strong hands pulled her aboard. With extra steam turned on the train swept by just as Mr. A. dashed up, one minute too late.

Not to be outdone, Mr. A. chartered a train for Richmond, in pursuit. On sped the lovers toward Greensboro, North Carolina, the Gretna Green for young couples flying from paternal wrath. Owing to some delay en route, their train got to Greensboro only a short time before the one carrying the father. A telegram from a friend awaited them at the hotel telling of pursuit. Looking out of a window Miss Mary saw her father and brother drive up to the hotel. "What shall we do?" she almost gasped. "So near and yet to fail!" The landlord was quickly taken into confidence and strategy was planned. The father had found out they were there and his plan was to capture the bride-elect as they left the hotel for the minister's. A carriage was ordered to the front with orders for the driver to say it was for a young couple going to be married. The father interviewed the driver and took his stand near by, ready for the prize. In the mean time, a carriage was ordered to the rear door, in which, with the landlord, they drove to the minister's and were married. "Happy day in the morning!" They came back to the hotel, man and wife, with the minister

and the landlord to certify to the ceremony. Driving up to the front the two gentlemen told Mr. A. it was all over and they were married. With bowed head he went to his room, and returned to his home on the next train.

The honeymoon trip was a few days in Washington and the happy couple came back to Mr. L.'s place of business, and life began in earnest. Six months rolled around and a letter came. She knew the handwriting. With trembling hands she opened and read, "Mary, my dear child, come home to see us. I can't stand it any longer. Papa." Tears fell fast as she hurried to show it to Charles. She went by the next train and was received with open arms.

As she finished her story, Mrs. L. said, "Now, Mother Paxton, will you scold me?" "Well, I can't say you did right in all things, still I'm glad you got Mr. L. We will just forget the past, and you be a good woman and all will come out right at last."

And it did, for they were very happy in their home, and Mr. L. prospered in his business, and became a wealthy and influential citizen.

CHAPTER XII

RECONSTRUCTION AT CRYSTAL SPRING

"Oh! early love too fair thou art
For earth,—too beautiful and pure,
Fast fade thy day-dreams from the heart,
But all thy waking woes endure."

—*Whitman.*

"Have you seen the new teacher?" "Does he look cross?" "Is he a great big fellow?" Such questions were asked by the small boy as the advent of the new teacher was heralded in the neighborhood. "Is he young and handsome?" asked the young girls. "I wonder if he is married or engaged," soliloquized the elder sister as the vision of a probable conquest swept over her mind. "He will make you boys chalk the line," said Uncle Frank, who had seen him.

As the rising democracy of Crystal Spring needed reconstruction and bringing back to the good old paths, *discipline* was the essential quality desired in the make-up of the new king.

There was an idea abroad in that day that a boy needed to be anointed with a certain amount of hickory oil every day, and that it must be well rubbed in. This was thought to stimulate his

physical growth, and also to quicken his mental perceptions, and increase the flow of correct ideas. And there must have been something in the doctrine, as the average boy of that day was far ahead of the average boy of the present, with all our boasted improvement in "methods of instruction."

Well, Uncle Frank had interviewed Mr. Joseph Roach, a young man of about twenty-five, and pronounced him equal to any emergency in the school-room. The name struck me as being very funny, and I suggested to Cousin Will that I hoped he didn't look like a bug. Some years had rolled by since many of us had started up the Hill of Knowledge under Aunt Rachel's guiding hand, and as we grew older latent talents began to develop, not so much in the field of letters as in mischief and fun. So our good fathers wanted the reins drawn more tightly and our feet directed in the straight paths.

On the morning of the first day of school there was quite a flutter in many homes, and with ominous foreboding, we wended our way to the old playground. Quite a number of pupils were on the ground when Mr. Roach, emerging from the shadows of the woods, made his appearance. "Golly, boys, look what he's got!" cried out Bill Watkins, a good subject for reformation. "Mercy

alive!" said Dick Stone, "he's bringing in switches the first day. That beats Jim Crow!" "Oh, dear, he'll kill us!" groaned little John Watson, a new recruit to the ranks of learning.

We measured the young man as he approached. He had in his hand three long, keen rods, such as would make a boy dance the hornpipe in quick time. He was tall, black headed, fine looking, stepped fast, and evidently meant business. He spoke very pleasantly to us, entered the schoolhouse, and deposited his symbols of authority in the corner dedicated to hold such furniture. He took in the architectural finish of the room, came out and walked around the primitive structure, marking the proportions thereof, and thence to the grand old spring. Returning to our group, which was fast being reinforced, he talked to us so pleasantly about the surroundings of our school praising the grove, the spring, and the pretty playground, that we began to think Uncle Frank had slandered him.

Calling us in, his opening speech was to the point. He told us he was paid to make us learn, and this he certainly was going to do; that he did not know the king's son from the carpenter's boy and that the aristocracy of his school were good lessons and good behavior; that he and we would

be good friends as long as we would let him be good to us. Then he spoke of time being worth gold to us, of our opportunities and the grand possibilities of the American boy, of high aims in life started even in boyhood, and he won our approbation, when, in conclusion, he said that he wanted to start us on a road that would lead us to the Legislature or to Congress. This tickled us boys and raised him ten degrees in our estimation. We had never heard such a speech before. He then proceeded to examine us, each one separately, and to class us according to the grade we had reached. Some were advanced and others put back in their studies. This was not agreeable to some, especially the ambitious yet not studious pupils who desired to get over ground with little work. Coming to Bill Watkins, a flaxen-headed chap of sixteen, noted for giving the teachers "sass," he decided to put him in a lower grade in spelling. Bill resented the change. "I can spell as well as Dick Stone. I want to go in his class!" "I'm running this school," said Mr. Roach, "and you'll go where I think you belong, sir." "Mr. Richeson didn't do this way," continued Bill, "and I ain't gwine in that class." "I'll see, young man," said the new pedagogue, grabbing a choice symbol with one hand, and Bill, by the collar, with the

other. The music on Bill's back began in quick measure, he keeping time by kicking, striking and stamping. Round and round they went, the first battle of the campaign. Our sympathies were with Bill, yet we refrained from cheering until we saw on which standard victory would perch. Soon Bill began to "boohoo" in fine style. "Going in that class now, sir?" asked Mr. Roach, as he paused in his labors. "I dun' no," blubbered Bill. "You don't?" sang out the teacher and the performance began again, with redoubled interest.

We boys almost held our breath, and the girls, pale with excitement, were huddled in one corner. One more round and Bill cried out, "Yas, sir, I'll do it. Stop, stop!" "All right," said the teacher, as cool as if he had been eating a peach. "Take your seat and get this lesson."

Bill was conquered, and so were the rest of us as regarded classification. We decided it rash in the extreme to pit our opinion against the teacher's, and felt that if we were caught in the trap it would be unintentional. An air of lost liberty pervaded the school, and the sports at recess were of a mild type. Yet, Mr. Roach came out on the playground and taught us a new game. He seemed to us a strange combination, like two persons, one in the schoolroom and the other out with the boys. We

rather liked the latter character. By evening we fully realized that Mr. Roach was going to rule and we had to dance up to the tune of strict obedience. "I told you so," said Uncle Frank when I related to him the stirring events of the day. "You mischievous little rascal, he'll catch you before long." "Not if I can help it," I replied, as the chorus of Bill's tune still echoed in my ears.

Mr. Roach came home with cousins Will and Jennie and was there installed to board out his first quarter. The school session now was longer. The next morning Will said, "Mr. Roach just chatted Cousin Hannah until I got so tired and sleepy waiting to show him to bed that I asked him if he wasn't getting sleepy. Cousin Hannah nearly spanked me for interrupting the nice time in the parlor." The next day I noticed they had a big red napkin in the dinner basket and some half-moon pies that made my mouth water.

On telling my mother of the first impressions Mr. Roach made upon us, she said it reminded her of an incident in her girlhood.

"Our school was in bad repute," said she, "as some unruly boys had either run out or whipped out two or three teachers. For a time no one wanted the school. At length a big, red-headed Scotch-Irish teacher came along, heard the history

of former pedagogues, and said he would take the school. Spending a week before the opening of school in visiting around, by drawing out the small boy in confidence he got the names of the ringleaders in the insurrections, and the character of the plots. He decided on a vigorous and aggressive policy. On the first morning of school he was on the ground by sunrise, cut a whole armful of rods, and took his seat by the door in the room to wait for something to develop. Soon the leaders came, one by one, to put the ball in motion by the time the teacher arrived. Seeing the open door, number one entered, when he was seized by the iron grasp of the domine, given a sound thrashing, and set down to a lesson. Number two, in his ignorance of impending danger, bounced into the room with a whoop, was grabbed, thrashed and set down to a lesson. So, numbers three and four, on to six, were in succession initiated in the same way, and when the rest of the school came they found the ones 'formerly possessed, healed, and clothed in their right minds.' He had the best school in all that part of the country. And I hope Mr. Roach will have a good one." I told her I thought it looked that way.

One bright morning I was the owner of a small package of "candy kisses," as they were called,

the pieces being small and rectangular in shape, wrapped in papers of pretty colors, and each package contained a verse of tender poetry. I could not appreciate the poetry, but the candy and the name had charms for me. Joining Cousin Jennie on the road to school we walked along, a little distance from the others. I enjoyed talking to her alone better than in a crowd, as somehow we liked to talk of things of interest to us two rather than the crowd. I told her I had something good for her and she must give me one of the same name for mine. I gave her three guesses, and when she failed to guess I handed her the candy, telling her to read the name on the paper. She blushed and said, "I won't do it!" "You keep the candy kisses," I said, "and I'll steal one from you to pay for them." "You can't," she said with a coquettish toss of her pretty curls. I was silent, but my thoughts were busy devising ways and means for accomplishing my cherished purpose.

On a smooth piece of road, and when close to her I pointed to her side of the path and said, "Why, just look yonder!" Of course she looked, and as she turned her face from me I kissed her flushed cheek, just above the dimple. It was so sweet! If the theft was a sin it was deliciously wicked. Said she, "You bad boy, behave your-

self." As I was beginning to revel in the blissful recollection of the kiss, a little voice piped out from behind a bush, "Never mind, Alex, I saw you kiss Jennie, and I'm going to tell, see if I don't." It was her little brother, who, under guidance of an evil spirit, was there in ambush. "If you do," I said, "I'll whip you." "I isn't a bit afraid of you," replied the little urchin. Then I thought of bribery. "What will you take not to tell?" "Gimme that candy and I won't." "We'll give you half, and it's so good," I said. "No, I'll tell if you don't gimme all." The little shylock was exacting, and was thus bought off. I told Cousin Jennie that I got the best of the bargain. All that day, when I'd cast an admiring glance at my little cousin, I noticed that her cheek was still tinged with the color of a red peach.

CHAPTER XIII

MUSTER DAY AND CIRCUS DAY

"'Tis time short pleasure now to take,
Of little life the best to make,
And manage wisely the last stake."

—*Cowley.*

In Virginia, under the old regime, they had a "Muster Day." On this day all the able-bodied men between eighteen and forty-five had to assemble at an appointed rendezvous to be enrolled and to line up in martial array. This class was called the "militia," the bulwark of defence for the country. From serving therein, preachers, teachers, doctors, and millers were excused. But there was more fun in going to muster than in staying away. The grounds for the regiment of our part of the county were near the Natural Bridge, and companies with captains came from different neighborhoods. On the day appointed, the champions of liberty assembled from every point of the compass, from the rich river bottoms, the mountain hollows, and the upland farms. A warlike man was the colonel of our regiment, with cocked hat and plume, golden epaulets and handsome sword

dangling by his side. Mounted on a fiery steed he was much observed as he dashed to and fro. His aids, too, were conspicuous by their uniforms and fine steeds. At 10 A. M. the adjutant went forth and called out in stentorian voice for the captains to get up their companies and march them over into the big field to form the regiment in the ranks of war. Then there was a great commotion, a calling of Bill Smith, Ned Jones, Doc Wilson, Hezekiah Trout and all, to get in a line. The captains as a rule ignored the technical terms of tactics and used plain English. Some tried to drill their men en route to the battle line. For "forward march" they'd say, "go on there, men;" for "quick time," "hurry up there!" and one old fellow for "double-quick time," cried, "Get up and run like the devil!" and the best man kept several steps in front. The drum beat for the companies to form the regiment, and the adjutant got them into a long line and saluted the colonel. This officer then drew his sword, and waving it over his head shouted, "Forward, march!" The drums beat and the fifes blew, but nearly every fellow had a step of his own and the line bent and swayed until it looked like the worm of a rail fence. The colonel, too, thought plain English better for the average plebeian to understand, and cried out,

"Stop there. Get in a straight line again." The line backed and twisted, surged to right and left, until it got fairly straight. Next the colonel ordered, "Right face," when about half of them turned to the left! "Don't you know your right hands from your left," he cried. In trying to have the companies "right wheel into line" he called out, "Bring your companies around one behind the other," and they all got so mixed up that he had to get each captain to call his men out of the boiling mixture, reform, and get them into regimental line. In facing from front to left an amateur soldier with heavy shoe stepped on the toe of a barefooted mountaineer. "Ouch!" cried the victim, and planted his fist between the eyes of the offender, who fell in an inglorious heap. But quick as a flash he was on his feet, and a civil war began then and there. "Cease fighting!" shouted the colonel, and both were put under arrest and sent to the guard-house, the receptacle for all evil doers and insubordinate spirits.

After a couple of hours of marching and countermarching, of involutions and evolutions, the colonel said he was proud of his regiment and felt sure that at war's alarm it would rush to the front and win a bloody field. Then with his staff he galloped around the line, followed by a cloud of

dust, and reining up in front, courteously lifted his hat and shouted, "Break ranks; march! I'm done with you now." They understood, and at once acted.

And I remember there was a company of volunteer horsemen—we called them a "troop"—who had flashy uniforms, hats with pretty plumes, and prancing horses, and they made a fine appearance as they swept across the field and executed some manœuvres. Then the meeting was changed into a social affair. The crowd rallied in the shady grove adjoining the field, where refreshments of various kinds were served with lavish hand. There was the ginger cake stand by the barrel of spicy cider, the pie counter with rich milk, the tables loaded with fried chicken and biscuit. There were also "blind tigers," whose wares had an exhilarating effect on drooping spirits, and on the principle that "stolen waters are sweet," these springs were well patronized. Now and then some thirsty militiaman would imbibe too freely and, thinking it was the glorious Fourth, proceed to make a patriotic address. It was noticed that the eye of our gallant colonel, later in the day, had an unusual lustre, and his tongue a fluency bordering on the unusual Over on the left was the horse traders' ring, where the jockeys held high carnival. The ordinary

jockey is a rival of Ananias, but the higher toned ones are reticent as to defects in their goods, and only answer questions, leaving it to the purchaser to discover flaws, if any. If a horse has a blind eye and you do not see it, it is *your* fault, as purchaser or trader, and not his!

Over on the right was a race track where speed was tested in horseflesh, and money, from a dime to a ten-dollar note, was often risked on the race. Surely it was exciting to see the dust fly from the heels of the flying coursers, and sometimes to see an old horse, apparently nothing but a stack of bones, sweep ahead, seemed really marvellous.

In keeping with the martial spirit of the day, often the sheriff or constable, those sworn officers of the law, would have to visit the skirmish line and command peace between belligerent parties. By the setting of the sun the victory was won, and the victorious legions were marching for the home camps. Those old "muster days," though not always cloudless, nor free from wrong, still had a charm about them. I should mention that it was a holiday for the slaves, and the negro men attended the muster in crowds. Sambo showed his white teeth in a broad grin as he saw "Ole Marse," out in the field drilling, or "Young Marse" galloping over the field in the plumed and gallant troop.

What these faithful people saw and heard there that day furnished food for pleasant talk for days and weeks.

And the advent of the circus, too, made a flutter in all grades of society, from the stately mansion to the hut of the mountaineer. Saint and sinner met on common ground in the ringmaster's tent. For weeks before the circus was to come every old stable or blacksmith shop by the roadside blazed with flaming pictures of the wonders to be seen on that eventful day. The lazy schoolboy showed a new zeal in spelling out and reading these posters. The circus had a few animals along to ease the conscience of the morally straight-laced, who would go just to see the natives of the forest, and could not help seeing the ring performances! "Happy day in the morning!" if the sun rose clear. Only men trooped along the roads to the muster grounds, but on this great day, men, women, and children came early to the show grounds, and stayed most of the day.

Speaking of the circus signs, I am reminded of an old shoemaker, in a certain village, who had full sway in his trade. A new man, who knew some Latin, came and set up shop opposite the old veteran's. On the new sign were these words, *"Mens conscia recti"; i. e.,* a mind conscious of

right, meaning that honesty was his policy. The old fellow eyed the flaming sign closely, scratched his head and thought a long while. Then his sign went to the painter, and came back with these words, *"Men's women's* and *children's conscia recti."* He won in the race.

To the circus came many men with many motives. There was the confidence man, the melon man, the trickster, gamester, jewelry man, and the patent medicine man, all running a lively business before the doors were opened.

The great tent erected, the band struck up and the performance began. I was ten years old when I saw my first circus. My uncle, whom I was visiting, took me, and it was a red-letter day for me. I remember it all—everything they did and almost all they said. First twenty horsemen, gaily dressed, came prancing in on richly caparisoned horses, and in a dashing way executed figures that almost made my head swim. The feats of horsemanship, of leaping, and of strength that followed made me rub my eyes and wonder if they were really so. The boy who turned summerset through a paper hoop from a galloping horse and lighted on the horse again, unhurt, made me think he would be governor some day. He was a hero in my estimation. A young woman who rode wore

her dress so short that a child in the crowd called, "It's a little girl!" I thought she had outgrown her dress, and I noticed some ladies near me get red in the face. I enjoyed the old clown. In giving the views of the circus, which he pretended were gathered from different churches, he said the Presbyterians stood on the corner as the procession passed, and got all they could without paying anything for it. He missed it with my uncle, who was an old blue-stocking. Then the clown tried to buy a fine horse from the ringmaster. The price was agreed on and the old fellow said he was "powerful glad" at the purchase. Said the ringmaster," The money, $150, please, sir." "Oh, I'm so absent-minded," and he felt in all his pockets, but no money! "Got no money with me." "Then you can't have the horse," said the ringmaster. Sadly he looked on the ground for a few moments, and then, clapping his hands in great glee, he cried out, "Why, I see how to fix it. I'll give you my note." "It isn't worth anything," said the ringmaster. "Yes it is, you bet. Why *everybody* down in my county has got it." He didn't get the horse.

If all along the way of life I had remembered things good and elevating, as well as I remember the clown's jokes on that day, I would have made a wiser and better man.

CHAPTER XIV

SCHOOL AMUSEMENTS

"Pleasure with instruction should be join'd;
So take the corn and leave the wine behind."
—*Dryden.*

Our school sessions now began about the middle of August, and, extending on through the winter, ended the last of May. Thus we took a deeper drink from the fountain of letters, and afterward could take practical lessons in the art of farming. Talents for such were displayed in the corn and harvest fields, and in the meadow. On the river farms the older boys worked along with the slaves, and my boyhood was far happier than some town youths, who spent their days hunting for something with which to kill time.

New sports were introduced upon our playground, such as "hop scotch," "quoits," "corner ball," and "town ball." In the early part of the session the games were mostly confined to the shade, that of marbles being a favorite. Knocking out the middle man at the first shot, thus winning the game, was considered a feat of more renown than spelling "phthisic" or working an example in

fractions. For one to "poke," *i. e.*, to move his hand toward his opponent's marble before shooting, was a violation of the code of honor in the game. If a juvenile of lax morals was seen to infringe upon this regulation his ears were saluted with the cry, "Vent your poking!" and he drew back to the true line. I do not remember ever playing for "keeps." No such spirit of gambling pervaded the game in those good old days.

As the leaves took on the variegated hues of autumn, the game of "town ball" was introduced among us. This was the forerunner of modern base ball, and much akin to it. We used flat bats and home-made balls. The excitement of running around the corners and taking in a player was as great as now makes the ball grounds ring with cheers. We had no "fouls;" a boy could knock a ball to Jericho if he was able and it would be all right. Often a good player left alone on one side would knock the ball in an unexpected direction, and before it could reach the ring again he had taken in half of his side, as the air rang with shouts. Sometimes in the midst of an exciting game the call to "books" would be put off, thanks to the interest and consideration of our teacher.

As the days got cooler, "corner ball" offered more exercise of muscle, and was installed as a

favorite. A ring of corner bases was described, two captains selected the players on each side, and possession of the corners was won by lot. The winning side on the corners, and the others in the ring, the fun began. Back and forth, round and round, the ball is thrown from corner to corner, until it is styled "hot ball," when the commotion in the ring is increased by a "whack" of the ball on the back of some boy, and away scamper the corner players. Then should a ring player hit a running corner fellow, the cry of "run boys!" is raised and the tide turns. The last boy struck lost his place. It was a spicy game on a cool day, and had a peculiar fascination for me.

Our teacher now and then took part in our games, and he still retained our respect; in fact it increased our esteem for him. His presence on the ground kept down a multitude of sins. The school now was on a higher plane, the discipline better, the studying closer, and there was springing up in our hearts a certain pride in Crystal Spring Seminary. Once and awhile some lad affected with mischief, habitual idleness, or violation of some special rule, was healed by a prescription of Dr. Birch, who still had his office in the southeast corner, ready and willing to treat and cure diseases incident to original sin.

I always knew my lessons, but, through a love of mischief, I was often the recipient of some tender attentions from that famous physician. One day a class of little fellows were sitting on the recitation bench, their bare feet and legs dangling down. The teacher being called outside, I took a keen switch and, by tapping their bare ankles, made it very lively for those unwashed extremities. A very picnic of fun was I having when a hand was laid upon my shoulder and a familiar voice said, "Let me have that instrument." "Yes, sir," said I, and nerved myself for the bout. "Time about is fair play," said the teacher, and I danced to the music for a few long moments, to the great delight of my former victims. Jane Trent was a big, red-headed, angular, mountain girl, ill-natured and meddlesome. I did not admire this rustic lass, and delighted to tease or worry her. Once or twice, when too practical in some prank, a smack from her big hand came near causing my head and heels to exchange places. One cold day she and I were sitting on opposite sides of the tall, old-fashioned stove, on whose top lay ashes and cinders. Her big gray eyes were in line with the top, and, as she said something to ruffle my feelings, I just blew across the surface and a cloud of dust swept into her organs of vision. Clawing

at her eyes with her long, bony fingers she cried out in agony, "Oh, Lordy, he's blinded me! I'll tear his eyes out!" I was wicked enough to smile almost audibly at her sad condition, when there came floating across the room the invitation, "Come up here, sir." I went, I saw, I suffered! For a week I steered clear of Miss Jane.

Dick Blackburn was a heavy-set young man striving to read in the New Testament as a text-book. His favorite place on a cold day was on the end of a high bench by the stove, where he sat with his feet elevated on the front plate, his elbows on his knees, his chin resting in one hand and the worn Testament in the other. One gloomy, sad day I was going to put some wood in the stove, and listening to the tempter, gave the end of the bench a sudden jerk, and down came chin, elbows, knees and Testament, a confused mass of matter, shaking the house "from turret to foundation stone." Dick looked at me, and thought unutterably wicked things as he floundered around on the floor preparatory to coming to the surface again. The whole school tittered, and I giggled. Mr. Roach, who had seen the whole performance, called me up, got his hickory rod, but to my relief his risibles were so excited over the ridiculous aspect of the case that he only warned me against

such a sin in the future. I felt better, but that evening, when old Dick caught me, I had to beg like a fine fellow to avert a good paddling.

Similar feats were performed by my fellows, I presume, but my own are more vivid to me as I look back over the years that intervene. The bitter and the sweet were intermingled in those days, but the sweet filled up life to such an extent that the bitter left no taste.

CHAPTER XV

BARRING OUT THE TEACHER

"O think what anxious moments pass between
The birth of plots, and their last fatal periods!
O 'tis a dreadful interval of time."

—*Addison.*

On the playground of Crystal Spring Seminary the course of true love generally ran smooth. It was the presence of Mr. Roach, no doubt, which caused the white flag to float so peacefully over our heads. But it is natural for boys to have jealousies, rivalries, dislikes and spats. If such there were, it was only the muttering of the storm that was heard in the vicinity of the seat of power, and it broke in its fury at a more remote distance. When, to satisfy injured feelings, blows were deemed necessary, then before school in the morning or after it in the evening the warlike contestants with some friends and curious spectators repaired to Dry Hollow, a hidden retreat about a quarter of a mile toward the mountain, and there the code of honor was complied with. This battleground trembled frequently under the feet of John Watkins and Bill Blackburn, two sturdy plow-boys from the Valley, between whom

a mutual dislike ripened, and they met in almost daily collision. "I dare you to Dry Hollow this evening!" one of these warlike spirits would say. "I'll be there, and lick you, too!" the other would reply. School out, by different routes, to avoid suspicion and detection, the friends and spectators would gather for the fray, and at it the boys went, first with fists, then with sticks, then followed the grapple and tussle, and down they came, and the one on top won the victory. Be it said to the honor of the spectators, that their interest was manifested by their calls to a halt, if the fighters resorted to extreme measures, and not by betting on the result.

John Sullivan was a true son of the Emerald Isle, pugnacious to the extent of tackling Goliah had he risen up in his path, but he had great respect for the rod in a masterly hand. Coming home by the river road one evening with a lot of us, he spoke against the honor and dignity of some of our homes. My brother Mac and Cousin Luther decided to champion the insulted side, and the skirmish began. After half a mile of random firing, as we entered a dense wood, they opened hot and heavy. John was a match for the two, with his Irish blood and dogged tenacity, but our side cheered on their knights. Even Cousin

Jennie, usually so mild and gentle, entered into the spirit of the fight, but once she made Luther put down a rock. Although she wanted John pounded it must be done with softer material. Whilst Mac would engage him in front, Luther, by a flank movement, would pop him on the left wing. Wheeling to the new attack, a few well-directed shots made the enemy there fall back. Thus the tide of battle surged back and forth, and the "spalpeen" was about to win. Suddenly there emerged from the dense bushes the figure of our teacher, clothed in majesty and power. Had he risen from the dead the consternation had not been greater. In a second there was a great calm. Then came the startling words, "I'm going to whip everything along this road in the morning!" and off he strode toward home. We almost held our breath at first, and then, as we trudged homeward, discussed the horrors of the situation in subdued tones.

I whispered to Cousin Jennie that I was so sorry for her. The idea of whipping *her!* It must not be done. All at once an idea struck me, and I whispered to my sweet cousin, "Say, I'll take yours, and tell him to just give me *double.*" "That

wouldn't be right," she replied. "I'll take it, if all do." But I held on to the idea.

Next morning I went to school early, and waited for Mr. Roach at the forks of the road, for a burden was on my heart. Joining him I said, "Mr. Roach, I don't think Cousin Jennie deserves a whipping, for she made Luther put down a rock. And if you *will* whip her, please let me take hers too. Give me *double,* won't you?" Looking me straight in the eye, he said, "Are you in earnest?" "Yes, sir, I *am,*" I replied. "You are a generous fellow. I'll think about it." I then dropped behind, and left him to his thoughts.

My offer must have softened his hard heart and saved us all, except the three actual lawbreakers; for, on opening school, he said that after considering the matter, he would only punish the three boys. Although it was an October morning, John had on an overcoat, evidently suffering from chilliness. Mr. Roach invited him to lay it aside; when, lo! he had on two other coats, and two waistcoats! "Cold, are you, sir? I'll warm you up!"

I think that was the last skirmish by the roadside. I was about half sorry that I couldn't show Jennie how much I liked her by helping to bear her burdens. When I told her the part I had

played she said I was good, and maybe some time she could help me. I was hoping for the some time, and my heart was lighter and my step was quicker.

Mr. Roach was quite a beau in the neighborhood. He not only played the gallant to Cousin Hannah, but was a welcome visitor in other homes, where bright eyes sparkled and cheeks flushed at his coming. There was a family who had lately moved into the Valley, descendants, perchance, of the Scotch poet, who sang,

> "If a body meet a body a comin' thro' the rye,
> If a body kiss a body, need a body cry."

Two sweet sisters in this home exerted a magnetic influence on our dominie and a friend of his. On Friday evenings, after school hours, the two young men would direct their steps toward the Burns mansion. I remember an embarrassing scene in that home. Unseen, one cloudy evening, they reached the house and knocked at the door of the sitting-room, once, twice. There was no response. The third time a sweet voice called out, "Come in if you are *green,* and stay out if you are *white!*" In the excitement of the moment, forgetting on which line of color they stood, in they marched, and "Oh my!" "Oh my!" greeted them,

and confusion, blushes, and apologies followed. "Why Mr. Roach," said Miss Annie, "I didn't dream it was *you*. I am so sorry. The children had been fooling us by knocking, and we thought they were at the door." The novelty of the reception seemed to have deepened the devotion of the young men, for that very night, in a hidden nook, Mr. Roach's friend slipped a ring on Miss Annie's finger, and in a few weeks a beautiful bride was led away to her new home. Mr. Roach's affection seemed to be divided between Miss Mary B. and Cousin Hannah. Discussing this delicate question one day with Will I learned that he thought Mr. Roach loved Cousin Hannah the better; for once he heard him saying some poetry to her about "Eyes so bright they shine at night;" and then when he told her good-by he held her hand too long for just *liking* her. I told Will I didn't know much about these things, but I wanted Cousin Hannah to have a nice beau.

"Christmas will soon be here," remarked John Watson one morning as we were nearing the school grounds. "Yes," I replied; "and I wonder if Mr. Roach is going to give us any holiday." "John, he's boarding at your house; don't you know anything about it?" "No, but I heard him say that children got as wild as colts when they

had too much holiday, and had to be broken in again." "Well, that just means he'll not give us any," said Cousin Will. "I tell you what, boys, let's 'bar' him out. Pa said he and Cousin Preston helped to do it once, and when the old fellow broke in they grabbed him and took him to the creek before he'd give up." "I see you boys taking Mr. Roach to the creek," piped in Mary Watson. "He'd whip every one of you."

We interviewed Mr. Roach on the subject, but learned nothing, so the plot was formed. Our demands, reduced to writing by one of the girls,—for several joined our ranks,—were a week's holiday, a bushel of old man Parker's apples, and a stick of candy apiece, and Monday morning, a week before Christmas, was appointed for the outbreak of the rebellion. By sunrise on this day the conspirators were on the ground, with hatchet and nails preparatory to the barricade. As the uninitiated arrived, some joined in with zeal, and others with faint hearts reluctantly agreed to stay inside.

"Suppose he whips us all," said a pale-faced Valley boy. "Hush! you little goose," said John Watson. "He'll not do that." "You'd better look out," suggested Bill Watkins. "No telling what he'd do if you stirred him up." Bill remembered

from sad experience what stirring a hornet's nest meant.

"Yonder he comes!" cried the boy from the lookout station, and we waited with bated breath. "Hush! he's at the door," whispered one of the leaders. Finding the door barred, he knocked, and in a pleasant tone said, "Open the door." Within all was quiet as death, the timid ones hidden under the writing-bench, the girls huddled in the darker corners, and the braver rebels at the posts of danger, for with them the die was cast, let come what would. Then Mr. Roach went to a window and, surveying the scene inside, the true situation first dawned upon him.

In a firm tone he asked, "What are you all doing in there?" The time for action had arrived, and Cousin Will said, "We've got you barred out, and—and—we want holiday." "You do? Well, well. I'll see about it. Some of those girls put you all up to this." He then walked toward the spring, evidently to meditate upon the momentous question. "He's gone to get a big stick to break down the door," croaked one of the timid. "I wish I was out of here!" "And so do I," chimed in two or three others. "Keep quiet, you cowards," said a leader. "Here he comes back and no stick either."

Upon Mr. Roach's asking for our request again, the official document was handed out. Looking at it he smiled and said, "Miss Hannah wrote this. I thought those young ladies were up to some plot. Apples and candy! Why, you'll break me. Well, I'll sign it if you all will promise to be good this week. Will you?" In the grand chorus of "We'll be good," that fairly made the roof shake, every note of the gamut was struck from the deep bass of old Dick up to the soprano of the girls. We had triumphed, and the week passed by like a pleasant dream, a kind of millennial period for our school—good lessons, punctual attendance, no friction and Dry Hollow a forsaken spot. Soon Friday evening came and then the big red apples and the luscious sticks of candy were fairly dealt out to each pupil "and all went merry as a marriage bell."

CHAPTER XVI

CHRISTMAS TIMES

"Joy kneels at Morning's rosy shrine,
In worship to the rising Sun."

—*Brooks.*

In those days we, too, heard the story of Santa Claus, and in our dreams heard the pattering of the hoofs of his reindeer steeds upon the roofs of our homes, but he did not bring us the rare gifts he now has credited to his kindly generosity. Stockings, small and large, were hung up, and fond hopes indulged, and it needed no ringing of the rising bell to open little eyes on Christmas morning, and little hands went quickly to work to hunt for the gifts.

I remember how I was amused at the gift to Miss Mary in "Major Jones' Courtship." The Major got Miss Mary to promise to keep, all her life, the present he would give her. She was to have a very large meal sack hung up in the back porch. Before daylight he slipped quietly in and got into the sack. When they came out early to inspect, the mother said it was a yearling calf! The old negro cut it down and he fell with a bump

and the Major rolled out covered with meal. The girl blushed and stuck to her promise. I thought I'd prefer a summer night to make such a present.

Rabbit hunting was an ideal sport Christmas week, and Uncle Frank declared that if we only could get some salt on old Molly's cotton-tail she could be easily caught!

There were little folks' parties with plays, riddles, chestnuts, and the juvenile gambling game of "Jack in the bush." I remember how, one night, I came near winning all the nuts in the room before my trick was discovered. It was to have a few nuts peep out between my closed fingers, as if my hands were bursting with a large number. Thus guesses would range from forty to sixty, and on opening three or four were all! The penalty was the difference between the two numbers, and my victims would fairly groan in the spirit as they felt for the forfeited number. A sharp, red-headed girl saw my plan, and caught me in my own trap, winning about fifty at one play.

I was the fortunate possessor of a book of riddles, enigmas, and conundrums. I pored over this rare volume in advance of the juvenile parties, and, being crammed, could take the lead in asking knotty questions. One night at Cousin William's I asked Mr. Roach to conjugate ice-cream. He

said he couldn't, and I said, "I scream, you scream, he screams." "You're getting most smart enough to graduate in grammar," replied my honored instructor.

A Christmas tree was unheard of in our neighborhood. But this year a German boarding at my father's superintended the decorating of one at our home. It was mostly fixed up behind the curtain, and when the hour came for the play to begin the dining-room door was thrown open and my cousins and the home squad marched in with wondering eyes and exclamations of surprise. There stood a miniature cedar tree, brilliantly lighted with wax tapers, strings of popped corn and wreaths of highly colored paper encircling its well-rounded shape, and apples, candies, and cakes dangling from its limbs. It was a new creation to us and we were introduced into a new world of pleasure. Cousin Jennie said it looked like a picture of Fairy Land. I told her she'd have to be the fairy. Aunt Eliza, the cook, exclaimed, "La's a mercy, chillun, it's too purty to look at." Old Uncle Humphrey, peeping in the door, rubbed his hands, exclaiming, "My stars! it beats my time."

In those good old days the slaves enjoyed the holiday week as much as their masters. Christ-

mas morning, before daylight, they would slip into the house, tiptoe to the bedroom doors and catch, "Christmas gift!" They always got something, which, though trivial, gave them pleasure. They had their little gatherings and a well-laden table was furnished by the mistress. The banjo, the bones, and patting the knee furnished music for these light-hearted creatures. It was better than a circus to see them play and dance at these gatherings. I am thinking of an occasion of merry-making at my cousin's. In the kitchen about twenty or thirty of them were having a jolly time, when a big basket of apples and cakes from the dining-room appeared on the scene. The merriment subsided and they all proceeded to feast. In the mean time Cousin Hannah had made a "horse head," a frightful looking thing, made of a pillow, tongs, and red flannel. The flannel was cut to represent ears, eyes, nose, and teeth, and it was tacked on the pillow. It was enough to have made a Mexican war veteran tremble had he met it in a lonely spot. Followed by a lot of us youngsters to see the fun, Cousin Hannah went around to the back window, and, as some one threw the sash open on its hinges, she thrust the frightful thing in before the gaze of the terrified darkies. Expressions of "Oh Lordy!" "De Lawd hab

mussy!" "De Debil's comin'!" filled the room, a rush was made for the door, and a stampede to the cabins followed. The larger and stronger finally rallied in Uncle Reuben's cabin, and the wailings of the younger ones, who, being upset in the rush of older companions, were bringing up the rear, made the night hideous. The prank explained, with "Haw-haws!" "What you niggers run fur?" "Shure enough I thought old Satan was comin' in dat window!" "Bet, you just butt me clean over!" "See Jim clear dat fence!" they all came back to the banquet-hall and resumed their pleasure. The darkies were firm believers in ghosts and "ha'nts." The older ones could tell of some wonderful apparitions seen by them— a headless man, woman in white with eyes of fire, a dancing skeleton and such things. They were noted for roaming around at night, but they would go a mile out of the way to avoid a graveyard. A necklace of diamonds on a tombstone was safe at night from any negro thief.

Happy beings, you rocked my cradle, you played with me in childhood, you nursed me in sickness, you wept by the coffins of my pets, you cared for me in storm and sunshine, and I shall always remember you with the most grateful affection.

When I go to visit the graves of the dear old home folks I also go to the graves of Uncle Humphrey and Aunt Eliza, and as memory brings these old friends before me with their patient services, my eyes grow moist and my tears fall. Quietly they sleep on the brow of the hill, and the sweet briar and the wild honeysuckle cover their graves. And I think that up Yonder these two humble servants may be singing with "Marse Preston" and "Miss Hannah" even as they used to sing with them at family worship on Sabbath mornings in the dear Christian home near the banks of the James.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DEATH ANGEL

"O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an Angel visited the green earth
And took the flower away!"

—*Longfellow.*

Our beautiful Valley was an ideal spot for health. No school in the land had as few absences on account of serious cases of illness. Now and then the small boy, having feasted too greedily on green apples, or eaten too much melon, would be "doubled up" from cramps, or have a spell of cholera-morbus. The unhappy victim was then treated to a few drops of turpentine, a blue pill and a dose of castor oil. The prescription invariably effected a cure, and the cure was followed by a song of thanksgiving for having survived both disease and remedy, and a solemn vow never again to be imprudent. It was fun to see the other fellow tackle the oil, his pleading looks cast toward the ceiling, most agonized countenance, violent gesticulations, and manifold gyrations, as, spinning around on a pivot, he strove to keep the abominable thing down. The whole

scene was voted almost equal to the circus. In winter the cure for a "cold" was to "bake" the feet before a hot fire, then jump into bed and cover up head and heels—"all over." For a sore throat the good mother gave the sufferer, on retiring at night, a good dose of hot red-pepper tea, and bound the swollen throat with a woolen stocking. There was virtue in the treatment and I speak from a warm experience in the matter. For on one dark night, when I had expressed doubts and made opposition beyond the line of forbearance, acute arguments were used which induced me to reconsider my course and to yield in the matter. The combined warmth of both applications worked a marvelous cure, and by morning I was well.

One morning in November John Watson, whose father was a doctor, announced that scarlet fever was in the neighborhood just across the river, and that some children had died. Then there was a hush in the merry talk and a serious air pervaded the little group of girls and boys standing by the big log fire in our schoolroom. It was a cloudy, gloomy day, and something seemed to whisper coming evil. The next day nearly every pupil had a little bag containing brimstone and assafoetida suspended around his neck. This was a talisman to ward off the disease, and many of the

faithful believers in the preventative showed their devotion by frequent sniffing of the aromatic contents of the bag.

The next morning Cousin William met us at his gate and told us not to come in, as Luther had scarlet fever. It made us turn pale, and on we hurried to tell the sad news at school. And as I thought of the fever being right in Cousin Jennie's home, and that she perhaps would take it, I was sorely troubled in my heart. Our teacher said that the germs were in the air, that it was "an epidemic," a new word to our ears, and that stopping from school would not keep us from having it, as we all had to breathe the air. In a few days nearly all the children at Cousin William's were down with the fever, but it seemed to be a mild type. It was a long, sad week to us at school. We were listless in our studies, and our teacher, in sympathy with us, relaxed much from his strict standard. There were many vacant seats in the room. Next the fever got into the Valley, and then for two weeks there was no school When the early violets began to peep forth in the warm, sunny corners the disease had run its course and all were well at my cousin's. I was rejoiced to see Jennie again, looking only a little pale, and I brought her a little bouquet made up of violets

and dogwood blossoms tied with a cotton string. Her smile of appreciation more than paid me for the trouble I had when the old dogwood limb broke.

But our sky was not cloudless. Rumors reached us that Lucy McFarland was very ill with the fever. She was an Irish girl, a little beauty of about nine years of age, with black, curly hair, dark brown eyes, cheeks like a red peach, and pouting lips. She was a pet with all the larger pupils and a universal favorite. I had often given her a choice apple that otherwise Cousin Jennie would have enjoyed. One evening the tidings came that Lucy was dead. When I ran in to tell my mother I just cried, big boy that I was, for I was very fond of the sweet little girl. We could not go to the funeral, but our thoughts were there.

Again school opened, but the playground was quiet the first morning. In little groups we stood around and talked of little Lucy. Some of the larger Valley girls had been to the funeral, and they told us how natural she looked in her little coffin with white roses on her breast, and that they buried her in the little cemetery under a pine tree, and Cousin Jennie said that some day we would go there and put some flowers on the little grave.

When Tom, Lucy's brother, came Mr. Roach shook hands with him, and stooping over whispered something in his ear.

On opening school Mr. Roach spoke of the fever, of the anxiety and sorrow it had brought, for there were several homes over the river in which little chairs were empty. He spoke very touchingly of the little girl whose face had helped to make our room bright. He said that she was up yonder in a city whose streets are of gold and whose gates are pearls. He said that he would always remember her with the kindliest feelings, and his words were beautiful and impressive. Our sympathy went right out to Tom and, at noon, he was the recipient of many favors and delicate little courtesies. There is something very tender in the sympathy of childhood. It does not come in high sounding words, nor in beautifully written sentences, but it beams forth in the kindly look and is resplendent in the kindly act. Thus, to the crushed and bleeding heart, it often comes as sweet and refreshing as the dew of the morning to the flower that is bent or broke.

"No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears,
No gem that twinkling hangs from beauty's ears,
Not the bright stars which night's blue arch adorn,
Nor rising sun that gilds the vernal morn,
Shine with such lustre as the tear that flows
Down virtue's manly cheek for others' woes."

—*Darwin.*

CHAPTER XVIII

A WRECK AND A DEER HUNT

"The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprang from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then as the headmost foes appear'd,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared."

—*Scott.*

South of my home, in graceful outlines, rose the ridges and peaks of the Blue Ridge. At Balcony Falls, in a gap worn out in the ages past, the James River dashes through the mountain ranges. Across the stream, just as it enters this mountain channel, a large dam was built to form a sheet of water above, on which boats might ride. When the river was much swollen the water, as it poured over, boiled up below almost to the height of the structure.

On one occasion when the river was up a large freight-boat got adrift above, and, at the mercy of a high wind and strong current, drifted down toward the dam. Aboard were some negro hirelings returning home, as it was Christmas week. Some of them jumped into the icy water and tried

to swim to land but were drowned. The captain headed the boat for the dam and awaited the fearful plunge. The boat made the leap, plunged into the seething waters, but stemmed the tide and gallantly rode on below, down the roaring stream, seemingly into the very jaws of death. When it passed close to Velvet Rock, whose moss-covered top was only a few inches above the water, some of the half-crazed negroes jumped on the rock. On the doomed boat sped, until it crashed upon a sloping rock just above the surface of the stream, wrecking the front part. Every one jumped on the rock. The hinder part of the boat staggered for a few minutes, and then, swept around by the current, it broke off from the wrecked part and was hurled away to its doom. The evening was cold and the wind biting, and, as the water was rising, the men would either freeze or be washed off.

The news flew in every direction, and hundreds rushed to the scene. To get a rescuing boat to the imprisoned men required an experienced and skillful hand. There seemed to be but one man equal to the emergency. He was Sam Padget, an old negro boatman who knew well the channel and its dangers. "Will you go, Sam?" asked a dozen men at one time. "Yaas, sir; sure I will. I can't

stand here an' see dem poor men drown." Then taking a large canoe up the stream above Velvet Rock, he floated safely down to it and took in the four men who were on the rock. To get to the shore through the rocks and whirling waters seemed an impossible feat. Down he came, gradually nearing the shore. At last the boat touched the bank and they were safe. "Bress de good Lawd fer dat!" sang out an old darky as he jumped once more on terra firma. Everybody praised Sam, and after resting a few minutes he started out for the lower rock where the wreck was. Down he drifted thither, took in four men and landed them safe. The crowd made the mountain hollows echo with their cheers. Two more trips are made and only two are left. They cheer at every return.

"Sam, aren't you tired?" asks somebody. "Yaas, boss, I mus' rest a little." And putting his head in his hands, with elbows on his knees, he rested some twenty minutes. Was the brave, faithful man praying for strength and safety in the last trip?

It was twilight, and the dangers increased. Rising he said, "I'se ready. I'll try to get them, too." "Hurrah! he has got them!" cried some one. On he came, nearer and nearer to the shore,

and the great crowd almost held its breath. But when within a few yards of the bank a whirling current suddenly hurled the little boat upon a half-hidden rock. It upset and the men were thrown into the icy waters, where, struggling for a few seconds, they sank to rise no more! A wail of sorrow swept over that great throng, and tears flowed freely. Later there was a handsome monument erected near the spot, a monument travelers can see to-day as they pass. The lines of inscription read, "To the memory of Sam Padget, who lost his life in rescuing men from a wrecked boat." And he was a hero.

One bright morning in the summer of 1852 my keen eye caught sight of a flag floating from the summit of a peak that rose abruptly from the water's edge just above the dam. Most beautifully did its graceful folds sport with the mountain breeze. I looked at it long, and with wonder and admiration. Said my father, "It is a Whig flag to help rally the voting boys." On the morning after the election, as if conscious of victory, it seemed to float more proudly than ever. It waved on until the sleeting rains and winds of winter tore it from its staff.

My father remarked one day to Cousin William, a Democrat, "The prettiest thing George

Washington ever said was 'Give me a banner to plant on the mountains of West Augusta, and I'll rally around me men who will lift our bleeding country from the dust and set her free.' So this general of whiggism [Taylor] literally planted a banner on the mountain and rallied around it voters who lifted his bleeding party from the dust and set her free."

From my earliest childhood I had a curiosity to climb the splendid mountain ridge that lay sleeping just south of our home. Finally my father gave his permission and my brother and I, taking the dogs and following a cattle trail, reached the lofty summit. I expected to see, beyond, broad farms and beautiful homes as in our Valley. But I saw only mountain ridges and peaks in endless chains. It reminded me of the Delectable Mountains in Pilgrim's Progress, of which my mother had read to me and shown me their picture. I could see little valleys or coves between the longer ridges, running toward the west, with sparkling streams, and open spaces covered with grass dotted here and there. My father told me that in these coves were the favorite haunts of the deer.

Deer-hunting was indulged in chiefly by those who kept packs of hounds. The deer, when not

alarmed and feeding, may be approached within easy shooting range in this manner. The deer grazes for half a minute, and then, throwing up his head, sniffs the air, scenting danger. Getting on the leeward side, with hat off and arms and gun close by his side so as to look like a post, the hunter steps softly toward the deer just as its head goes down to graze, and stopping as the head comes up. Thus by close watching and patience he gets nearer and nearer the game, when, as the head goes down, quick as a flash, bang! goes the gun and over falls the prize. Such victories are rarely won.

The kind of deer-hunting furnishing, perhaps, the most sport is called "driving." Let me describe it. On the appointed day the hunters and hounds rally at the house of Captain Burks near the head of the Valley, and the campaign is planned. Two strong men, as "drivers," are to take the dogs and, entering the coves several miles west of the river, they are to come down until a deer is started, and then aim to drive it by the "stands." These are places where hunters await the coming of the deer, and some are on either side of the peak on which we saw the flag floating. It seems the deer have regular routes for running to the river on either side of this mountain.

The drivers blow their horns and the hounds, eager for the hunt, respond in a chorus that is music to the hunter's ear. Off they go, and plunge into the depths of the woods. Over the wooded hills and along the streams the dogs search for the game, scattering far and wide unless blown in by the driver's horn. The yelping of the pack in the north cove is a sign that a deer has been started. The dogs in the south cove are blown in, so as to head off the game if it crosses the ridge and turns to the west. Now the music begins. Soon it is seen that the deer is taking the line for the "stands" north of the peak. Outrunning the dogs it will often turn up some ravine and, in the dense laurel thickets, try to hide from its pursuers. On the bare rocks and in the water the dogs often lose the trail and much time is lost. Again the chase begins, and over Hell Gate Hollow and across the huckleberry ridges the panting buck comes, nearer and nearer to his doom. Most of the day is spent in getting the deer on the "last run." On the "stands" men are alert, hearing the baying of the hounds. Rhodes, in the first stand, cocks his gun and holds his breath. But, bad luck, the deer is bearing too far toward the mountain. He aims and fires, but on leaps the frightened animal. Stone, in the second stand,

braces himself behind his tree and right toward him comes the deer. When within a few yards Stone steps out, aims, and the old rifle "flashes in the pan," as the old flintlocks would sometimes do, and on bounds the fine buck. Stone throws his hat on the ground, stamps his foot and utters language not becoming a Christian! Parks, on the last stand, with nerves at highest tension, knows that if he misses the day is lost. Leaning across a large rock, to insure a steady aim, he fires, and the "monarch of the herd" comes to the ground.

"Hurrah for me! I got him!"

"You'd not done it if my cussed old gun hadn't missed fire," growls Stone.

Here come the dogs, Sounder in the lead, and gathering around they bark their delight at the success of the hunt, until, hushed to silence, they lie around panting with tongues lolling out.

"All hands to Paxton's Spring, for I'm nearly dead for a drink," shouts Burks, the leader of the band, and with the deer across his horse he leads the way.

At the spring the tired hunters first quench their thirst out of the old gourd, and sitting around discuss the events of the day. Moved by the spirit, Captain Burks says, "Let's have some 'grog,' boys." "All right," respond the others in a lively

chorus. Whereupon, producing a flask of "mountain dew," he mixes an unspiritual combination known as "grog," which seems to give new life to the tired huntsmen.

CHAPTER XIX

WINTER SPORTS

"'It snows!' cries the school-boy, 'Hurrah!' and his shout
Is ringing through parlor and hall,
While swift as the wing of a swallow, he's out,
And his playmates have answered his call;
It makes the heart leap but to witness their joy;
Proud wealth has no pleasures, I trow,
Like the rapture that throbs in the pulse of the boy,
As he gathers his treasures of snow!"

—*Mrs. Hale.*

Very pleasant to me is the recollection of a snow-storm in the old Valley. All night long the flakes had been falling thick and fast, and quietly covering the earth with a mantle of white, and it looked so pure and beautiful as, in the early morning, I first saw it on the window sill. The cedar trees in the yard, drooping under their crystal burdens, presented grotesque figures, and far up on the mountain sides the old pines stood, proudly arrayed in white. Visions of untold pleasures swept across the minds of us boys, and we fairly clapped our hands in glee. The clouds had gone, and the sun arose, flooding the earth with a splendor dazzling to behold. The winter birds were flitting from tree to tree, chirping in cheerful notes, or

seeking the barn and surrounding sheds in search of food.

In those days snow did not interfere with the attendance upon school. Except the smaller ones, the pupils all came, some on horses, some in sleighs, and some bravely trudged through the snow. A roaring fire was soon kindled and a space before the door swept or shovelled away. Then began the fun of snow-balling. The boy who could make a hard ball, and, in throwing, make a center shot was the hero. As the negro boys who came to take the horses and sleighs home started back, they were followed by a shower of balls, and their ducking of heads and doubling up in dodging was prime fun for the boys. Here was a duel between two veterans, and the balls flew thick and fast until one gradually retreated. Here a half dozen smaller boys had attacked a larger one, in front, on the flank, and in rear, pelting him with a storm of shot and shell that soon made him take refuge behind a big tree.

At the noon recess the firing along the skirmish line was resumed, and both muscle and lungs did good work. Then some budding military genius would propose a battle with balls. Sides were chosen, the lines drawn, and the battle began. As the boy who was hit had to fall out of line as

wounded, good marksmanship was at a premium. Soon the lines were thinned down to two to one. Pop, pop! went the guns, and one of the two fell. Then came the tug of war, each side cheering on its champion. Cool and collected, they aimed and shot, but by skillful dodging the balls skimmed by. One boy stepping on a rock, lost his balance. "Zip!" went the ball of his opponent against his side, and the victorious army made the grove ring.

I had just read in the life of Napoleon Bonaparte, of the snow fort at Brienne, and how he captured it, and I proposed our making one. All worked like bees, and soon a rude imitation was piled up and named "Fort Defiance." The late victorious army was to man the works, and ours was to storm them. Their banner, planted on the wall, was a yellow handkerchief, ours a red one. The attack began by a shower of balls from long range aimed especially at the flag on the rampart. Its staff tottered, and down it fell amid our cheers. We charged up closer, but a well-directed fire from the garrison checked our advance, and soon we fell back to the first line, for there were two lefthanded boys in the fort whose aim was deadly. Again we charged, but again retreated. I told our captain of Napoleon's plan. Six good throwers were selected to move quickly to the rear

and attack that point vigorously, as we made another charge in front. Being hit in the breast and back at the same time was more than mortal boy could stand, and soon the red flag waved over the captured fort.

In due time, of course, a crust was frozen on the top of the snow strong enough for coasting. Instead of the fancy sleds of modern times, we had plain ones, or light poplar planks, planed on the bottom, curved in front, and with small blocks nailed thereon. On these we could "fairly fly" down a hill.

A long bench dragged up the hill near by, and holding about twenty boys and girls, packed on like sardines, furnished more fun than any other coasting arrangement. Down the slope it glided with its merry freight, and as its speed slackened somewhat at the foot of the hill sometimes the engineer at the rear end, by a quick movement of his foot, caused the bench to wheel around, turn over and dump its cargo pell-mell, heels over head, on the snow. From this crash of heads and wreck of matter the juveniles would extricate themselves with few bruises and in different frames of mind. Some were laughing, some were mortified at the undignified performance, and others were indignant almost to the point of capsizing "the en-

gineer," as the rear boy was called. Cousin Jennie vowed she would never ride again if Sel Brafford was the guide. Yet the next day a new engineer would play the same trick on the eager passengers.

Having a small board, big enough for only two, I invited my sweet cousin to ride with me. "Will you upset me at the bottom?" she asked with a merry twinkle of her eye. "Not for the world," I responded. "Then I'll trust you," she said. All ready, with my precious freight in front of me and securely held to guard against accident, down the hill we went and swept away out on the level below. "That's nice, I'll try it again," said the little girl with a winning smile. So we had a second merry ride, and I felt happier than at a picnic, when hark! from the grove came the dismal sound of "Books!"

Among the sweet pictures of the past which memory holds are the bright moonlight nights, when, taking my younger brothers and sisters out on the hill back of our home we coasted until the summons came for us to leave our sport. With flushed cheeks and tired limbs we gathered around the cheerful fire, prayers were said, little feet were warmed, and all were tucked in our beds to rest and dream of pleasant things. How often since then, as the burden and cares of life pressed

heavily upon us, have we wished to be back in the dear home nest and again to be tucked in the little trundle-bed by hands of love!

In a few days the ponds and river were frozen over so that morning and evening lessons could be taken in the art of skating. In that day skates were a luxury in which the country boy rarely indulged. The first lesson in the art was to learn to stand on them. The second, to pick one's self up gracefully when the steel runners would fly from under one. The third lesson was to move forward, as the tendency often was to go backward. The fourth lesson, to stop and keep erect when at full speed, as the stopping often meant a general collapse. Having mastered the above lessons, and being puffed up with pride, I wished to show my skill to an admiring crowd of juveniles of both sexes. I intended to jump over a small stick imbedded in the ice when going at high speed. "Look out! I'm coming!" I cried, and jumped. For a moment I was in a confused state of mind and body, then saw new stars near the zenith, followed by an aching sensation in the vicinity of my brain. Soon I realized that I was lying sprawling on the ice, hatless and almost headless. Rallying from the wreck I decided there was no place like "Home, sweet home."

The ice that winter was fourteen inches thick, loaded wagons crossing on it at the ferry. The young ladies, having witnessed some of the ungraceful postures we beginners assumed, decided not to venture on an uncertainty. One sad day, two little damsels growing bold and braver, by slow degrees, came out on the ice. As the ice got smoother their little feet threatened to slip, and Cousin Will took each by the hand and restored confidence. One feature of thick ice is that it sinks in the center of the stream, and cracks in straight lines with the noise of a gun. These sounds run rapidly, and when passing near one ignorant of the cause they are alarming to a high degree. Just as Cousin Will took the visitors by the hand there came a tremendous cracking seam right toward them, and under their feet! "Oh, oh!" they screamed, and tried to run, and in the excitement slipped up and pulled Cousin Will down also, all in a shapeless mass, struggling for dear life.

Mr. Paine cried out, "No danger!" The only reply was, "Oh dear, the ice is sinking! We'll be drowned! Save us, save us!" Quiet being restored to the ice, their nerves also got more quiet, and regaining their feet they quickly sought the shore and vowed to have no more to do with such a treacherous thing as ice.

CHAPTER XX

'POSSUM HUNTING

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountains in its azure hue."

—*Campbell.*

In the fall of 1856, in the absence of my father, I was installed as guardian of the home. One dark night, as the clock struck twelve, my mother tipped into our room and whispered, "Something is after the chickens. Go out and see." Armed with the gun and my father's sword—a Revolutionary relic—my brother and I boldly marched out to repel the midnight invasion of our domain. Pictures of rogues and wild-cats flashed through our minds, and "death to the foe!" was to be our battle cry. Sure enough, the domestic feathered tribe were cackling and screeching, the old rooster sounding forth the very notes of despair! We reconnoitered at a safe distance, closing in gradually on the enemy, but we had taken the military precaution to leave the gate open for retreat.

Suddenly, just behind us, there was a scrambling at the fence and a crash into the weeds on our side. Before valor could say, "Charge!" instinct whis-

pered, "Save yourselves," and at once the sword of the brave and the historic gun were in full retreat through the open gate, and our forces rallied on the back porch. Then came our big dog Nep trotting after us. He came over the fence to our aid and we had run from our best friend. With Nep as our body-guard we went forth again. The door was intact, yet bedlam reigned inside the chicken house. Bringing a lantern and flashing the light into a corner, I saw the cunning foe as the keen eyes of a 'possum twinkled down upon me from the wall plate. The midnight robber was then captured and caged for exhibition on the following day.

A 'possum hunt was arranged for the next night. Scott, the boss at the quarry, was to be captain, and Uncle Reuben, with his dog Tip, was to lead the van. Uncle Reuben was a faithful old slave of my cousin's, and a regular "'possum scenter." Now for the boy a 'possum hunt was ideal sport. The time, the darkness, the stillness of the night, the deep woods—all added a weirdness that he enjoyed. Supplied with an axe, matches, and fat pine for torches, up the mountain branch we went. "Be quiet till Tip trees," was Uncle Reuben's order. Soon Tip's bark told of game, and a line of battle was formed around the tree. "Strike a

light!" shouted Scott, whose dignity as captain had been quite overshadowed by Uncle Reuben. Out flashed the torch, and it revealed a picturesque scene. Upon a stunted gum, and hugging the end of a limb, was the marsupial quadruped. A blow from the axe that made the old tree quiver never moved him. He scorned the barking of Tip and the shouts of the besiegers.

"Lem me clime up dar and shook him off," said barefooted George, whose skin in the torch light gleamed blacker than the night.

"Go up," said the Captain, and up George shinned, and shook the limb. But the 'possum stuck closer than ever. George was crawling out nearer the prey, when crash! and down came limb, 'possum and nigger, all in a heap. In the excitement the light went out and Tip caught George's heel instead of the 'possum. Yelling, he kicked the dog off and cried, "Kotch him! Kotch him!" Scott, somehow, got hold of the animal by the hind leg, but it made an impress of its teeth upon the leg of the daring Captain, who immediately let go. After Scott's experience the others were more cautious in handling the 'possum.

"Here he goes up de tree!" shouted Uncle Reuben. He caught the game by the tail, and swinging his head against the tree a truce was de-

clared, and he was thrown into the bag, the first fruits of the hunt.

After a short breathing spell, Uncle Reuben said, getting up, "Grass don't grow under de feet of 'possum hunters. Les's go to Simmon Holler." Thither we go. Tip scents for the game in advance. We follow, now butting against a tree, now pulling through a knot of bushes and feeling in the dark for the hat knocked off, not knowing but that we might gather up the coils of a snake.

Jumping over a log Tip sniffs the air and gives a significant bark. "What you got dar now?" asks his master. "Light, boys." Uncle Reuben gets a stick and says, "Some varmint is in here. I'll twist him out and you boys be sure to kotch him when he runs. Here it is, somethin' soft. Look out, he's comin'!" Then from those depths there comes to our nasal organs most unmistakable proof of the sort of game it is.

"Whew, whew!" cries Uncle Reuben. "De Lawd hab mussy! Skunk, skunk! Run, boys; run!" We run—run at the risk of cracked heads and torn garments, until Uncle Reuben calls from behind. "Hold on dar, de Debil ain't gwine ter git you!"

A council of war is held, and as the unaromatic odor comes floating to us on the midnight breeze it

is voted to retire to the more fragrant air of our homes.

The opossum is noted for his cunning in seeming to be dead and seizing an opportunity to escape. The one we brought home that night was turned over to the cook to prepare for dinner. The next day he still seemed insensible, but not stiff, and was dipped in hot water and most of his hair was scraped off. Being plunged into water still hotter, he suddenly came to life and, almost hairless, scampered around the room among the frightened negroes, several of whom were in the kitchen They rushed out into the yard crying, "De Debil in dat ar possum. He's wusser dan a ha'nt!" "Umph! save me from gwine back in dar!"

But, when dinner came, seated around their favorite dish of "'possum and taters," these negroes forgot their scare and did justice to the meal.

CHAPTER XXI

THE NEW TEACHER

"The clouds may drop down titles and estates;
Wealth may seek us, but wisdom must be sought;
Sought before all, but (how unlike all else
We seek on earth!) 'tis never sought in vain."

—*Young.*

The snows of another winter had fallen gently upon the little grave under the moaning pine, emblematic of the purity of the little life so early closed. A new teacher had been installed in the Crystal Spring Seminary, and he wielded the birchen sceptre with a firm hand, so that law and order still reigned. Passing over this year we come to a turning point in the history of our school. Many of the older boys had joined the great army of workers, and their places had been filled by new boys, most of whom belonged to the bare-footed brigade. Some of the larger girls had entered the school of housekeeping, and doubtless were now turning the spinning-wheel. Some of them, on the threshold of young womanhood, whose budding charms were attractive to the young men, were deemed, by prudent mamas, ready for select female schools. Much to my sorrow, Cousin Jennie's

name was on the list. Farewell to the pleasant walks to and from school, farewell to the sweet smiles that had brightened the old school-room and made the long days seem short! Under an inspiration of the poetic muse, and after a great waste of pencil and paper, copying and revising, I pronounced the following verse very good:

> The day will be so very long,
> When I no longer see thee near;
> Sad will be my evening song,
> When *thou* art far away, *my dear!*

I wanted my sweet cousin to see this, but my heart failed me when, several times, I vowed I'd show it to her. Somehow I was getting a little shy when she was near me, and I thought the word "dear" a little too pointed. But I just couldn't leave it out and make the thing rhyme, and I thought the time had not quite come for such "burning words." In solemn home council it was decided to send Jennie to a select school for girls at the home of our pastor, some five miles away, but all the joy did not leave my heart, for I could still see her on the Sabbath days, at old Falling Spring Church.

But then, generally distance lent enchantment, for the parson guarded, with tender care, his bevy of fair young women, and discouraged any atten-

tions from former young gentleman friends. Ah, well do I remember those bright Sunday mornings, how soon I'd get up, anxious to be early at the shrine; the waiting and watching at the gate, and how my heart went pit-a-pat as the looked-for-carriages with their treasures drove up guarded by the reverend gentleman himself on his steed! But I felt paid for my labors by a nod and a smile as the girls, looking like visions of the morning, swept in through the gate around which many an admiring swain was doing faithful picket duty. There was no danger of such devoted sentinels ever sleeping on post.

Crystal Spring Seminary had now reached the point where a college-bred teacher was needed. Some of us were ready for Latin, Greek, algebra and geometry, hitherto unknown visitors within the walls of our school. These names had a high-sounding ring about them, and it was with a lofty air of importance that I reeled off this list of new studies to a plain old farmer. With a touch of irony in his tone he replied, "Can you spell? Do you know *English grammar well?*" I almost felt insulted.

After some skirmishing in the field of inquiry, Mr. Wm. F. Paine, a graduate of Princeton College, was chosen to fill the chair. His father was

a veritable son of "Green Erin," having crossed the Atlantic, in his earlier days, in search of the "home of the free." When Mr. Paine came, Dr. Watson, our family physician, as master of ceremonies, pointed out the landscape, and introduced him into the homes in his field of labor. We gave him a grand reception in our home, all, from the oldest to the youngest, giving him glances of welcome. As he talked of Princeton, of Washington City, of the Capitol, and the President, with whom he had shaken hands, our wonder and admiration rose to a high point, and Uncle Frank said Mr. Paine had seen the world and could teach us things outside of books. Before school commenced he had won my set of boys, for though his head was full of Greek, Latin and geometry, he'd talk to us about our every-day matters, go fishing and swimming with us, and tell us funny anecdotes that made us shake with laughter. I remember this one:

"A country preacher, in the fall of the year, going to preach a funeral, called at the home of a good sister who had just made some nice sausage. She filled the pockets of his overcoat with the savory meat. For some reason the burial was to be before the sermon. During the services at the grave some hungry dogs scented the parson's

highly seasoned treasures, and, as they nosed too close for safety, only by a vigorous use of his heels did he ward them off. Afterward in the pulpit, as the church was cold, the pastor still wore his great-coat. At the close of the sermon, a dignified old deacon, wishing to whisper something in the preacher's ear, tipped softly up the pulpit steps, which were somewhat in the rear, and gave the coat tail, just by the sausage-laden pocket, a smart jerk. Not turning his head, the excited parson kicked with a zeal both spiritual and physical in the direction of his assailant. The deacon, struck amidships, lost his equilibrium, tumbled headlong down the steps, and, as he was gathering up the bruised mass and getting fresh wind, the preacher, in his defense, said, 'Brethren and sisters, please pardon me. The truth is, I have sausage here in my pockets, and ever since I've been on the grounds this *hungry dog* has been trying to steal them."

Proud of the dawn of a new era upon our Seminary, I told Uncle Humphrey that I was going to study Latin and algebra. "My laws, child," said he, "how smart you is gettin'. Did yer pa ever do that?" "No, when he was a boy colleges hadn't started yet," I replied. "Well, well, Lating and

algibber, if you takes in all dat, your little head will just *bust!*"

I had great respect for the old man, and his good opinion weighed much in my young mind. He was a deacon in the Baptist colored church at the Natural Bridge, and "Brudder Humphrey" was an oracle of both wordly and spiritual wisdom in the eyes of the faithful. I had as much confidence in his being "good" as in one of our own church elders, and I often slipped around to his cabin window and heard him pray at night. He always asked God to bless "Marse Preston," "Miss Hannah," and "de chillun." We children were made to treat these old negroes with great respect, and when convicted of giving "sass" to one of them we were sure of punishment.

One evening, about sundown, as I was returning from the Valley, in the grove just above Cousin William's, I met Cousin Jennie and Mr. Paine, strolling along and chatting at a fast rate. I thought she was smiling on him more sweetly than was necessary, and the green-eyed monster whispered uncomfortable things in my ear. I looked wistfully back, as the small boy looks over the high palings into the orchard where the red peaches are hanging. I knew then that I liked Jennie very much, or I would not have felt so worried. "But, pshaw! she's too young for Mr.

Paine," I thought, "and I'll just bet he's got a great big sweetheart down yonder. I don't think she'd like that big *mustache* of his, and I know there would be no fun kissing *him!*" Thus I consoled my troubled spirit as I wended my way homeward.

I enjoyed a sharp remark of a young fellow at church the following Sunday. Mr. Paine met a young lady as she rode up, assisted her to alight, hitched her horse, and was escorting her down to the church door. As they passed into the yard, the girl bestowing a bewitching smile upon her new acquaintance, said young Socrates, "Miss Fanny has a *Paine* in her head this morning, and it will soon go to her heart." Of course the audience laughed, and an old bachelor remarked, "That kind of a *pain* is hard to get rid of."

Perhaps our reader would like to peep into our school-room after a few months of work under our new teacher. The morning session has opened and the machinery, well oiled, is running smoothly. A glance over the benches shows that the personnel of the school has largely changed in the last few sessions. There are fewer girls and more boys. The first lesson of the morning is from the Shorter Catechism. This was a special request of some of the old Scotch-Irish Presbyterian fathers and

mothers who wanted their young hopefuls trained up in the doctrines of the law. Then comes a Latin class and the verb *Amo* is conjugated. We have learned that around "Amo te" there is a tenderness that is suggestive of practical use only on *special* occasions. There is not the buzz in the room that was in the elder day, yet a certain freedom is allowed. Hanging up on the wall, in gilt letters, is the only written rule, "DO WHAT IS RIGHT." Dr. Birch is not standing in the corner waiting to prescribe, as of yore, but he is near by, in his office. The school is better classified, and, although the discipline is not so rigid as in other years, still there is a smoothness in the order of things that gives a pleasant air to the room.

The daily session is shorter, yet we make better progress in our studies. A class in algebra goes to the black-board and astonishes the visitor by the ready manner in which "x + y" is handled. Stress is still laid on spelling, and parsing in English grammar is considered an accomplishment. Altogether, our visitor is pleased with the pictures of order, of study, and of thoroughness seen, expresses great satisfaction, and leaves with the kind invitation, "Call again."

We were taught singing, and many a little voice there got its first training, that afterward swelled

out in some church choir. When divided into four sections, we sang by parts the exciting words,

"Scotland's burning, Scotland's burning,
Look out! look out!
Fire! Fire! Fire!
Cast on water, cast on water!"

and the walls fairly rang with the music.

I remember my zeal in Latin. In the long summer evenings I would often stop under an apple tree and read Fables for an hour. I am sorry such a spirit did not longer remain with me.

In the absence of Cousin Jennie I turned my attention to gathering sweets from other flowers. Not that I was false or forgetful, but my gallantry naturally turned to some fair object whose smiles made sunshine along my path, and little courtesies on my part made life sweeter, and added a refining influence. Belle W., a bright little girl, was the recipient of many gifts of my partiality.

One day Cousin Will saw me slip into her hand a pencil I had begged from him. "Alex," said he, "you're in love with a little gal no bigger than my fist." "She'll grow some more," I replied.

Then there was the old grape-vine swing by the creek, not a thing of beauty, but a joy forever. It didn't matter what I was doing at recess, if Belle

called me to come and swing her, I obeyed, and her merry laugh and "thank you" paid me well.

At the noon recess trout-fishing in the deep hole was a fascinating pastime. A "dull" made of white horsehair, fashioned after the manner of a noose and attached to the end of a light-colored rod, was the implement of warfare. The wily fish, darting to and fro, was finally brought to bay on the deeper side of the hole. Then slowly and cautiously the "dull" was moved toward the fish, nearer, nearer. Now 'tis over his head—"swish!" and out he comes dangling in the air. There was the "Big Hole" for swimming, diving, ducking and turning summerset from a spring-board. Oh, those blessed days! Their memory steals over me softly and sweetly, a beautiful vision that fills my soul with a quiet joy.

My mind still dwells on the tender things of those days. Mr. Paine didn't mind our having little sweethearts, as he said it made us nicer to the girls and there was no danger of our eloping with any of them.

In those days, as now, funny things happened in the recitations. Once a big mountain boy was listening to the algebra class recite. After hearing a boy explain a problem, beginning, "Let x equal

the horse," he whispered to me, "To save my neck, I can't see how *x* can stand for a horse!" Sell B. was a lazy fellow in school, and, in Latin would guess at words from their resemblance in sound to English words. He translated, "Socrates fidibus doctus est," Socrates played on the fiddle! The teacher said it was enough to make the old philosopher turn over in his grave, to be styled a *fiddler*. Again, in Virgil, reading of the night Troy fell, when Aeneas, taking his father on his shoulders, and his little boy by the hand, was escaping from the burning city, whilst his wife, as the text, "Pone subit conjux," implies, followed close behind, Sell rolled out, "His wife rode out on the pony." Said Mr. Paine, "Creusa surely needed a *pony* that night." One more shot of Sell's and the curtain will fall. In the same author are found the words "Dido et dux." Sell, after measuring the words with his eye, thus audibly soliloquized, "Dido must have been a greedy woman to eat more than one duck."

CHAPTER XXII

MARRIAGE BELLS

"There swims no goose so gray but, soon or late,
She finds some honest gander for a mate."
—*Pope.*

I am going to write about some friends who in my childhood and boyhood cared for me, and were my companions. I mean the faithful old servants. Whenever I think or speak of them, a chord in my heart is struck that vibrates in love and grateful remembrance. Our cook, Aunt Eliza, was a bright mulatto, a great talker and noted singer. Coming up the hill from the spring with a bucket of water on her head and one in each hand, she would sing in a voice that could be heard afar off. Her songs were always of the spiritual sort and she seemed gifted in taking a tune and improvising words to fit it. A favorite refrain was,

"In Canaan's land so bright and fair,
Oh I'll be so happy there."

For the simple reason that Bill Brown, her first partner, smiled too often on an ebony maiden in his neighborhood their ways parted, and she was what the heartless world calls a "grass widow."

In course of time one Wince Coleman laid siege to her heart, and his pockets often were heavy with sticks of red candy, a share of which we children always got. Wince was a general mechanic and the blacksmith at the quarry. He won my mother's kind regard by doing for her certain little jobs which required skill, so a cup of good coffee and a full plate often made his eyes dance. How and where he "popped the question" is a mystery, but the time came when two hearts beat as one.

Asking for the bride was an ordeal for Wince, an ordeal almost equal to that of his young master on a similar occasion. Following my father down into the garden among the grape vines, he blurted out, "Marse Preston, I wants you to give me Liza. We's a lubbin' one another. I'll try to be good to her." This was the essence in a nutshell. "Yes, you can have her," father replied; "but don't forget your promise." Again bowing low and scraping one foot on the ground, Wince said, "Tank you, sir, Marse Preston. I does 'preciate de blessin'."

Well, the day was set and the verbal invitations given to Aunt Eliza's wedding. A white bridal dress was made, and red ribbon for her hair, new shoes, and white gloves were bought by my mother.

The heart of the bride-elect was lighter and her song louder. Then came the baking of pies and cakes, as mother said, equal to her own wedding feast.

The hour came for the marriage bells to ring. My Cousin Will, Jennie, and some other young friends were there. Uncle Aleck, Cousin William's head man, was to perform the ceremony. The parlor was thrown open and the guests, white and black, crowded in. The bride, leaning on the groom's arm, and carrying a big bouquet of roses, entered, and they stood before the colored divine.

"You, Liza Brown and Wince Coleman, have come to be j'ined in holy matrimony. Any interjections, let be said now. Does ye lub one another?" Aunt Eliza lisped out, "Yes, sir," and Wince in a high key, sang out, "Sure 'nough I does." At this one of my cousins laughed out, and there was danger of a general volcanic outburst, but mother cleared her throat in time, a signal for order and quiet. The parson proceeded, "Now, jine right hands. Wince, does you take Liza for your lawful and wedded wife?" "You bet I does." "Liza, does you take Wince to be your lawful and wedded husband?" She nodded assent. "Den de blessin' of de Lord be on you both, and be good chillun. I announce you man and

wife, and let nothing eber dismember de legality ob dis matrimonial union. Amen."

Then followed a hand-shaking, and Uncle Reuben sang out, "Let's kiss de bride." "Wince may kiss me, but you niggers won't," said the bride, and thereupon Wince kissed her. Then the negroes retired to Aunt Eliza's house, where, in a large room, a royal supper was spread. What a happy time! One road to a darky's heart is through his throat, and when armed with knife and fork behind a cooked turkey he is in the border-land of paradise. There was abundance that time, and all ate to the full.

After supper Jack cut the "pigeon-wing" to the music of the banjo. There was no waltzing, as the colored maids were too modest to be hugged in public. Uncle Aleck told some big yarns and led off in the "Haws-haws" that followed. Sam sang some negro melodies to the banjo, and all went merry-hearted creatures, with the kindliest feelings merry hearted creatures, with the kindliest feelings toward the "white folks," left for their homes.

Uncle Ike was the wag on our farm, and could mimic the voice and manner of any negro. In the negro life in our valley there was no care nor thought for the morrow. Well fed, well clothed, and well housed, not overworked, and mostly with

kind and indulgent masters, they seemed the happiest beings on earth. Their pride in the master's family was remarkable and they had perfect contempt for "po' white trash," the poorer whites who, in many ways, put themselves on an equality with the negroes. Old man B. was the hardest man on his people in our neighborhood. He made them dance up to the music of work and obedience. Yet, on one Christmas, he would take the men to a store and give them a fairly nice suit, and a pair of boots; and, on the next Christmas the women went and got a nice dress and shoes apiece. And these servants were loyal to their master's house, and would resent any reflection upon it.

A negro could often express a general truth in a quaint but pointed way. Once two of them were removing an old tree from a yard. The churchman was pulling it with a rope in a certain direction and the sinner was digging away at the root. As the tree began to shake the one holding the rope would jump back and forth, watching the threatened danger. "Ha!" said the sinner, "church-man skeer bad as any other man!" The other replied, "Church-man want to stay here long as any other man, too."

CHAPTER XXIII

BARRING THE TEACHER IN

"Opposed to her, on t'other side advance
The costly feast, the carol and the dance,
Minstrel and music, poetry and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day."

—*Dryden.*

The mellow autumn days with their golden sunsets had passed. The trees, so lately clothed in their gorgeous robes, were beginning to look bare and cold. The time for the gathering of the later fruits and crops had come, and all was bustle and stir on the farm. The grand old orchards were bending under their loads of fruit, and the time for apple-picking, cider making, and apple-butter boilings were equal to a picnic for the boy. Especially did he enjoy life in the vicinity of the cider-press, and as the rich juice trickled down into the trough he sampled it times without number, as his capacity for storage seemed to have an elasticity that knew no bounds.

Then came the heaping loads of corn, which were thrown in a long pile by the cribs, and next the fun of the husking. I well remember the frolic that particular fall. For two or three days

previous there was unusual activity in the culinary departments, extra cooks, extra baking, pigs roasted, chickens boiled, loaves of bread and pumpkin pies piled almost as high as a boy's head. A barrel of cider, getting a little spice to its flavor, was rolled into the yard and tapped. The day came,—a day, of course, in the week of moonlight nights,—and invitations were sent to the neighboring farms and to the furnace hands in the Valley. At least one hundred came, and the work began. The pile was divided and two leaders selected, and the leaders walking up and down their heaps led the singing in improvised lines to a monotonous tune, and at the end of each line a chorus by the huskers, thus:

1st Captain, "Ole 'possum up de simmontree,"
Chorus by all—"Shuck away, shuck away!"
"Cut him down and eat him up."
Chorus—"Shuck away, shuck away!"
2nd Captain, "I fell in lub wid a yaller gal,"
Chorus—"Oh, yes, oh, yes!"
"Her eyes did shine like stars at night."
Chorus—"Oh, yes, oh, yes!"

The chorus leaders now and then changed the words. Buckets of cider were handed around, and then the chorus was,

"Drink away, drink away!"

By eleven o'clock came the scramble at the dividing line for the last ears, and the winning side tried their lungs.

Next was the feast on the long tables in the yard. The negroes surely did enjoy this change of work. After the supper my father was sitting in the house, when four stalwart negroes came in, caught him up in his chair, and placed it on a box in the middle of the yard. Thus seated on an improvised throne he was saluted as king. As before a Dahomey prince, they bowed the knee; to the music of the banjo and bones, danced fantastic figures, and marching around him in a large circle they sang the old-time melodies. In the pale moonlight the scene was weird enough, and doubtless was a faint reflection handed down through their generations of kingly homage away back yonder in dark Africa.

When the court reception was over my father arose from his throne, thanked his dusky subjects for the honor conferred upon him in being selected for their king, when he had no royal blood in his veins. He thanked all who sang around the corn pile for their kindly work, and told them if any one of them, in going by, ever felt hungry to come in and get a "square meal."

Then there was a chorus of, " 'Rah for Marse

Preston!" and with, "Good night, Boss," "Good night, Marse Preston," "Good night, Miss Hannah," "Good supper!" "Neber eat such pies!" "Good white folks," etc., those happy, faithful slaves departed to their homes, with no care and no thought for the morrow.

The frosty winds of December were again fanning our cheeks as morning after morning we were on the road to Crystal Spring Seminary. The period of the year was nearing to which both the small boy and his older brother looked with much interest, the time for the ringing of the Christmas bells. In the fertile brain of some boy the idea originated of barring Mr. Paine out, "just for the fun of the thing." We had no doubt of his giving us holiday, but still it seemed amusing thus to break into the monotony of school life. The plot was laid, the day set, and early one cold morning the clans gathered and the work of barring out began. The vote on the question had not been unanimous, and some spurned the idea. Some of the girls were indignant, and threatened to stay outside. But the keen morning air suggested the inside. Mr. Paine was popular, and the remarks made in connection with him were all pleasant and respectful. The fortress was secure and anxious hearts awaited the crisis. The hour for the open-

ing of school came, passed, and no teacher! Was he sick? Had anything happened to him? One of the boys reported him "alive and well" at breakfast that morning, for he ate six big buckwheat cakes! Several false alarms were sounded, but were only passers-by.

"Boys," said Wm. A., "won't this shock Mr. Paine's nerves!" "I wonder if he didn't dream about it last night?" said John Tolley. "No," remarked Joe P., "he'd been here *soon* this morning, and upset all our plans." "You big, ugly boys ought to be ashamed of yourselves!" said Mary Peck, a pretty girl. "You young sinners will repent of treating Mr. Paine this way!" piped in a big boy who said it was wrong, and similar remarks were made, until our patience being sorely taxed, John Watson jumped on the writing-bench, and pushing aside a loose plank of the loft, said in a careless way, " 'Spose he's up here." Thrusting his head into the opening and peering into the gloom, he cried out in an excited tone, "La! I'll declare, if he isn't here!" "Yez a foolin'," said John Sullivan, the Irish boy. "Look yourself, then," replied John. Up went Sullivan's head into the hole. "Saint Patrick's day in the mornin', an shure he's right here!" A hush of awful solemnity rested upon the school, a dead

silence, broken, in a few seconds, by sounds of animation from the loft. Seeing is believing, and all doubts were removed when Mr. Paine descended from the upper regions.

Laughing heartily he said, "You seem anxious to keep me *inside*. I'll not run away." The girls tittered and the boys grinned, but the expression was not one of joy. Said Mr. Paine, "A little bird flew by my window and sang, 'Look out for Tuesday morning!' I took the warning and thought I'd play a joke on you." A buzz swept over the girls, and some of them clapped their hands, saying, "I'm so glad!"

"I'm going to give a week's holiday, and treat you too, for the nice things you said about me just now," continued Mr. Paine. "Open the doors and get to your lessons."

Of course everybody laughed at us afterward, but we grinned and endured, for the candy was sweet and the apples juicy that we got on that Christmas eve.

"Down from the misty past came the expression "School butter." We heard of it from our fathers, and looked upon it as the greatest insult when cried out to a lot of school boys. The offender had to be caught, at any risk, and naught but a ducking could atone for the wrong.

There was not a poor child in the neighborhood that did not come to our school. There was a county commissioner who had charge of a fund raised by taxation to pay the tuition of indigent children. The teachers kept a record of their time, and at the close of a session the accounts, vouched for on oath, were paid. So in that day education, in the Valley, was as general as now.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE NATURAL BRIDGE

"Some objects please our eyes
Which out of nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock or hanging precipice."

—*Pope.*

A few miles above Balcony Falls, Cedar Creek comes rushing down from the hills into James River. Across this creek, and spanning a deep ravine, about a mile and a half from the river, Nature, in ages past, built a grand arch which we call the Natural Bridge. This ravine, whose western side is a perpendicular wall of rock, is impassable for a mile below, and two miles above the arch. One of our old preachers, on seeing this bridge, said, "If man had made this, he would charge toll for crossing. I think the Lord should have a gate here and the proceeds go to foreign missions."

The width of the chasm here is about three hundred feet, both sides being rock walls. The height of the lower part of the arch from the creek below is two hundred and twenty feet, and it is forty feet thick. The cedar, arbor vitae, and

spruce pine grow in great profusion, and from a short distance the structure seems clad in a garb of living green.

Strangers can be taken across, ignorant of the fact that it is a natural bridge, as the road bed lies between a natural wall of rock covered with evergreens on the north, and a high, solid plank-fence on the south. We go to the brink and cautiously peer into the depths below where the water is winding and foaming among the rocks, a dizzy feeling comes over us, and we draw back from the awful chasm.

Once a little fellow from Boston, who wished to look over, got on his hands and knees to insure safety. Thus, bold beyond prudence, the shelving rock on the edge suddenly gave away and his departure for parts below was very unceremonious. A cold shudder passed over the spectators, and for a few seconds they held their breath. A feeble cry was heard. Held by the hands of others a visitor looked over, and there, caught in some cedars projecting from a crevice in the wall, some twenty feet down, was the poor fellow hanging over the yawning chasm. From the store, near by, a rope was quickly gotten, whilst words of cheer were shouted to him by those above. The rope was let down in noose form, which he ad-

justed under his arms, and they drew him to the top. Fainting, he lay unconscious for several minutes. Reviving he asked, "Where am I?" "At the Natural Bridge in Virginia," some one replied. Springing to his feet he said, "I'm going home," and left on the very next stage coach.

On a crag projecting out over the depth below was a cedar stump with a level top about a foot in diameter. On this, it was said, a romantic maiden stood and read a love-letter. It made my head swim to look at it and think of the foolish feat. At one time, during my boyhood, a car let down by ropes and pulleys was worked for a while, and the less timid were lowered and elevated in this car. On one occasion, when the car was near the bottom, the man at the wheel lost his hold and down came the car with a bump that mixed up the passengers very much. They decided to walk back.

Once a smart chap put on buckskin gloves to show the folks how to go down the rope. The crowd below were ready, and down he started, hand over hand at first. But soon fearing to trust to one grip he began to slide down, the rope running through his hands. The gloves, from friction, soon wore out, and when he reached the bottom the rope had nearly worn his hands to the bone.

Standing by the creek below and looking up to the great arch overhead, one is struck with awe and admiration at the immense structure. On both sides are traces of names carved in the hard limestone, names seeking immortality! At the top of them all is that of George Washington, now seen only with the aid of a glass. It is said that he threw a silver dollar across the bridge as an exhibition of his muscle. If so, the Father of his country must have belonged to the free-silver party.

On looking up directly under the arch there can be seen the image of an eagle as if painted there. His head is toward the north. Now, on looking more closely, the impress of a lion's head can be clearly seen under the eagle's right wing, as if overshadowed by it. Thus nature, foreseeing that the British lion would crouch beneath the American eagle's wing, stamped the picture there that our fathers might see and take courage.

The Natural Bridge is an ideal place for picnics, and during the warmer months, from far and near, many parties come with heaping baskets of lunch to celebrate a gala day. There under the arch, seated on the clean, smooth stones by the purling water, they talk and jest, and then, spreading their lunch on rock tables, they eat and drink to each

other's health. Afterward, in groups, mostly of *two,* they scatter around, and the day passes as a sweet dream. Many a romance, beginning there under the inspiration of Nature's sublime works, ends under the bridal arch.

Going up the stream some three hundred yards and climbing up the east cliff by a winding path, some two hundred feet from the bed of the creek, there can be seen under a ledge of rock a current of water rushing madly on, in a line parallel with the creek. It is ice cold, deep and dark, and called the Hidden River. Whence came it and whither does it go? Nature alone can answer.

In a snow storm, when the trees are drooping beneath their burdens, the dark green foliage in striking contrast with the snowy robes, the scene presents a picture as if from some enchanted land.

CHAPTER XXV

COUSIN JENNIE'S PARTY

"Pleasure that comes unlooked for is thrice welcome;
And if it stir the heart, if aught be there
That may hereafter in a thoughtful hour
Wake but a sigh, 'tis treasured up among
The things most precious; and the day it came
Is noted as a white day in our lives."

—*Rogers.*

"Alex, you and Mr. Scott come up to-night. Jennie will be home, and bring some of her schoolmates, and we have invited some other young folks. Come, for we'll have lots of fun."

"Thank you," said I to Cousin Will. "I think we'll come." I hurried to find Scott, who was manager of the cement tunnel on our place, a pleasant, jolly fellow of some twenty-four years of age, who boarded at our home. He made a companion of me, and also took delight, sometimes, in teasing me.

One summer I had cultivated a watermelon patch and sold the luscious fruit. On a hot evening, in getting ready for market, I was going down the spring hill, carrying a large basket containing three melons, and impatient at some delay. Meeting Scott, he placed his foot, a foot of unusual

size, just in front of mine. Of course I tripped, and down I fell, rolling in one direction and the fruit in another. As the author of my misfortune began to enjoy the performance, I made him think he was in a hail storm by raining rocks upon him. Taking refuge behind a tree he begged for a truce, and promised to pay the market price for injured melons. Yet I was very fond of him.

On telling Scott of the party he patted me on the shoulder and said, "Of course, my boy, we'll go, and have a frolicsome time." "Whew! going to a regular party," said I. "Why, I never was at one. What do they do?" "They talk and laugh, eat apples, chestnuts, cakes and play games," he replied. "If we can just start a *kissing* game, look out for a feast!"

En route to the party Scott offered me some advice in conducting the social campaign. "Sit up to the girls and talk like a rattle-trap. The more foolishness you talk the louder they'll laugh. Girls don't fancy a slow, bashful chap."

Well, in time came the ordeal of introduction to four strange girls all seated in a row. I bowed four times in the right direction, but did not catch the individual names. It was my luck to get in a corner with Miss D., a tall, dignified-looking girl, apparently old enough to be my mother. I

touched on the weather, on gossip, on her school, but she only half smiled, and lisped out "yes" or "no," according to the tenor of my remarks. I grew discouraged, and felt that I was doomed to failure in this line of business. But on her remarking that she was a victim of the toothache, my heart went right out to her in sympathy, and I gave my experience in this affliction, told of the baby's cutting teeth, of all the remedies I ever heard for the same, and wound up by asking if she would let me pull it! Giving me a look that chilled my kindly feelings, she replied, "You are crazy, boy!" I wondered if she was not half right. I would have retreated, but was hemmed in, escape seeming impossible. Just then I noticed Cousin Jennie and Scott watching us, and evidently enjoying the situation. I looked into the fire; my ideas had all flown. I grew redder and hotter, the perspiration began to moisten my temples, and to add fuel to the flame I heard Scott say, "A dead calm on the sea!" In a fit of desperation I gasped out, "Let me bring you a drink of water. Maybe it will help that tooth." "No, thank you," said the afflicted one. "Then, I *must* get one. Excuse me," and squeezing through a narrow space I shot for the door. I felt like singing, "Joy to the world," as the night air cooled my heated brow.

Regaining my wonted temperature I again returned to the room, but tried the *other side* this time. My experience in the new quarter was more agreeable. A little black-eyed girl chatted so fast that I could hardly wedge in a remark, only showing my interest by nodding assent and laughing at her wit and spice. Scott had cornered a pretty girl with black curls, and was entertaining her to perfection, judging from the way she was smiling.

As I saw my uncle introduce John W., a bashful youth, to my afflicted friend, I wished to whisper in his ear to beware, for other ships had wrecked on that shore! I could not help observing the drift of things. They did not talk much, only looked unutterable things at each other.

When the stock of ideas seemed to be getting low, plays were introduced. First was the game of "button." Around the ring went the leader with a button in hand, pretending to give it to each player, with the words, "Hold fast what I give you." Then each one guessed at the question, "Who has the button?" At the command, "Rise, buttoner," a pawn was collected from each one failing to guess the right one. After a few rounds came the sale of the pawns, an exciting time. These consisting of pencil, knife, ring, or handkerchief, had to be redeemed by the owners acting the

penalty imposed by the judge. Held over the head of the judge, with the words "fine" or "superfine" prefixed, as it was the property of a boy or a girl, sentence was passed, and the owner called forth to redeem same. The judge was a young lady cousin, a bright, fun-loving girl. "Fine," said the leader at the sale of the first pawn. "What must the owner do?" "Whistle 'Old Dan Tucker,'" said the judge. Whereupon Cousin Will, after several attempts, got his mouth puckered up to the tuning point and gave us a verse of that inspiring tune. "Superfine" was called out for the next. The penalty was to stand up in the middle of the floor and recite a piece of poetry. My little black-eyed friend, equal to the occasion, jumped up and gave us a stanza of the song, "Young Rory O'Moore courted Kathleen Bawn." Thus the sale went on amid peals of laughter. I almost held my breath as my knife went up. Said the merciless judge, "Sing us a verse of a love song." I was so scared I didn't know a love song from a comic song, and, as my musical bump was not well developed, I begged to be excused. "No," said the judge, "you must try for your treasure." Clearing my throat two or three times the frog only seemed to get larger. Amid calls of "Sing," "Go on," I tremblingly took the floor and struck out on one of

my boyish favorites, "Miss Susianna," a negro melody. At the end of the first verse things were swimming so around me I decided to take my seat. Next Cousin Jennie's kerchief was held up and she was to select a gallant knight, take his arm, and promenade three times across the room. Bless her sweet soul! perhaps to pay me for my effort at vocal music, she chose me, and I forgot all my late agony in the bliss of having her arm in mine. We executed the movement as gracefully as the waxed floor permitted, for at one turn I came near *"skeeting"* up, to the amusement of my partner. The last was old Scott's, and I was delighted when he was told to kneel at Miss D.'s feet, fold his hands and say, "Here I give myself to thee." Down he went on his knees, and when he got to, "Here I—," the poor girl, fearing the thing might be half in earnest, I suppose, blushed crimson, and said, "I don't want you!" The room roared with laughter and Scott retreated, looking quite crest-fallen.

The next game was proposed by Scott, who explained that it was innocent, and the spice that seasoned it was a modest kiss; that over in eastern Virginia they all played it and enjoyed it. Before they could rally from the announcement of the new feature of the play, Scott was getting all

things ready for the practical part. Couples were first chosen by lot, then a couple were chosen to take chairs in the center of the room, and around them the rest marched singing some verses, the chorus being, "Come my love, kiss me quick and let me go." At this point each couple in the ring changed partners with those in front, and those in the chair, if both were willing, in plain English, kissed each other. Then the front couple took the chairs and the play proceeded. By a streak of good luck in the changing of couples, I got with Cousin Jennie as our turn came to take the chairs. She whispered in my ear that she was not going to let me kiss her, but in her eye there was a look of "I dare you!" So, when the moment for action came, being too near the bee-hive to lose the honey I dared to try. Slightly hesitating, she yielded. I would not have exchanged that kiss for the presidency. Mr. Paine's partner was a girl who had been staying at my cousin's, rather plain looking, and as she was rather tender toward him, we watched the performance with much interest. His gallantry made him dance up to the music the accompaniment to which she played with a good grace.

Scott, I think, plotted to get with Miss P., the owner of the curls. They were among the last in

the chairs, and he, in his ardent enthusiasm, gave her such a smack that it made Cousin Sarah, the mistress of ceremonies, fairly jump. Scott's smack "broke up the meeting," as my cousin suggested a rest from our labors!

Apples and chestnuts were then brought in and a new music filled the room. I did not offer to crack the nuts for Miss D., although I remembered the sore tooth. Naming the apple and counting the seeds furnished a source of interest. Mine had thirteen seeds. As the numbers in their meaning ran thus, "Eleven he courts, twelve he marries," in my innocence I was asking for information as to *thirteen*. Scott, sitting by me, at this juncture leaned over and whispered, "Hush!" I hushed.

Soon the old clock in the hall struck eleven, the good-nights were said, the gate closed on the departure of the last guest, and the "party" was a thing of the past. I had been introduced into a new sphere of life. My brain fairly whirled with the excitement of the evening, and it was long ere sleep came to my pillow.

CHAPTER XXVI

DECLAMATION EVENING

"While words of learned length and thund'ring sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head should carry all he knew."

—*Goldsmith.*

The former instructors at Crystal Spring had ignored the claims of Demosthenes and Cicero on the rising generation. But our new teacher, as soon as the ordinary machinery of the school was in running order, introduced this important feature of education in semi-monthly exercises. Visitors, he said, would not be invited until, by practice, some ease and grace had been acquired. This promise was somewhat quieting to our nerves.

Friday morning dawned bright and beautiful, the day for our first attempts on the rostrum. In honor of the occasion shoes had an extra gloss, and Sunday neckties were in evidence. Mr. Paine explained and illustrated the outlines of manner and gesture. As we listened our hearts beat faster than on the great day of Aunt Rachel's oratorical display. The work on the raw material began. First came the juveniles, some of whom, like scared

rabbits, rattled off their pieces in double-quick time, on the principle that he who wins the race must run the fastest. Mr. Paine cautioned them and advised putting on the brakes, but the wheels only went the faster. One young hopeful staggers up to the rostrum, forgets the first line, and down he goes amid the titterings of the audience. Another starts out on too high a key, scares at his own voice, and rushes to his seat.

On the suggestion of our teacher, that we try to make gestures, Dick Morris beat the air to a modest extent, but every stroke was out of time and out of tune. George Campbell, in a gesture about the stars, got both arms extended in a perpendicular line toward the heavens, when lo! his memory failed and his hands were still among the stars! Bravely he stood at his post, feeling for the sentence that would lower his upper limbs, until amid the "kee-hees" of the ruder ones, Mr. Paine told him to take his seat. He seemed greatly relieved to get back safe to terra firma. I tried to declaim the merits of the Father of our country, but both voice and knees were shaky, and, in an expressive gesture aimed at the locality of the heart, I struck a little below said organ, and the concussion, for an instant, slightly interfered with the correct

modulation of voice. But I soon rallied, and proceeded with my lines.

William Anderson did "Marco Bozzaris" in heroic style. In the gesture at the last "Strike!" in his enthusiasm outreaching the narrow limits of the stage, his clenched hand just grazed the nose of an admiring listener. John Tolley marched up, faced the audience, and tried to launch out in "The bark that held the prince went down," but the "goslings" made him squeak so as to make the house roar. He sat down feeling much like a goose.

Mr. Paine was lenient in his criticisms, and said there was hope of our success, and that practice, doubtless, would bring rich results. He spoke of the value of the exercise in making men of us. Said he, "The leading men of our country can speak, in the law, in the pulpit, in the Legislature, in Congress. Right here is the starting point, and I want you to make these walls ring, and then your voices may ring in other and grander walls." Those words sounded as an inspiration to some of us, and there stole into our hearts a desire to excel—the first whisperings of ambition.

The special exercises for the next week were to be compositions, handed in Tuesday morning, examined, and handed back with criticisms on Friday

evening. This work, too, was new to us. Subjects were assigned to us in classes according to grade, and such scratching of heads and thinking to collect ideas on our subject, "Water!" Though a fluent topic, yet, when we tackled it, the springs seemed almost dry. The bundle of crude ideas—"the essay"—was criticised in a delicate way, and the better points complimented. Our school now was on the right plane of instruction, and a stimulus had been infused that gave to it a new life and a brighter hope.

As the weeks rolled by, the exercises in elocution became more entertaining under patient drill and instruction in the art, and the feeling of hesitancy was giving way to that of confidence. By and by we aspired to a debating society, but our teacher did not think us quite ready in years or training for such an organization. But "genius in the bud" is hard to suppress, and at the noon recess, under the big trees on the hill, now and then, we would choose sides, and, in a crude way, try to debate some question. I'm thinking of the practical one we discussed: "Which exerts the greater influence over man, woman or money?" William Anderson led off in a strain that fairly made the leaves of the trees seem to jingle like gold and silver coins. Sweeping everything before him, he came down

the ages with *money* as the signal light that ever beckoned man on to any deed, good or bad. He said the Rothschilds with their millions could buy kings and that one hundred dollars could bribe the average Congressman. Having swept over the field he took his seat amid the clapping of little hands.

The writer was to champion the cause of woman. With some misgivings as to winning, he began with Eve, who tempted Adam and caused the fall of the race; referred to Delilah, to Jezebel, to Trojan Helen, and to Joan of Arc. Then, from his grandmother, who taught him the Catechism, from mothers and sisters in our homes, from the tens of thousands of sweet maidens whose images disturb the dreams of just so many devoted youths, from all these he gathered an influence that led man far beyond the gold and silver mines, up toward the stars, even to the pearly gates. And, as he sat down, the same hands clapped. Other speakers followed, battling manfully for their respective banners. When, finally, the vote was taken, so masterly were the arguments, or so devoted were the audience to "filthy lucre," that money won.

At length one evening we had an invited audience and an appreciative one—as our mothers,

sisters, and others who loved us were there to encourage us in our efforts. Cousin Jennie, too, was there, and I nerved myself for my best effort. One of her smiles would pay me for all my labor on my selection. And dear old Aunt Rachel had come, for the first time since that cool autumn evening when she bade us farewell several years before. With a tear glistening in her eye, she said, "The house and the old trees look natural, but I miss so many of my old boys and girls! These young ones I hardly know now. We are all getting older."

The exercises began, and as piece after piece was rendered in a creditable manner, the visitors smiled and rejoiced at these exhibitions of hitherto latent talent. A general invitation was now given for all declamation evenings, and we generally had an audience that incited us to greater efforts and inspired us with higher aspirations.

The girls who honored us with their presence on these notable evenings generally walked, in imitation of English girls who delight in such exercise, and the older boys were delighted at the chance of escorting some of them home. Those soft, mellow autumn evenings! I look back to them with a longing affection, for a new life was opening up to

my heart. Boyish diffidence was giving away to a desire to associate with bright, beautiful girls. Now, instead of being satisfied in giving them apples and grapes, I thought of flowers with their emblems, and pretty verses of poetry as a feast of a higher order for the soul. Prudes had said, "Attend to your lessons, my boy. You are too young to play with Cupid's darts. Your mind will be abstracted and distracted by the sparkle of bright eyes." The effect of such association was to make me study more diligently, and to arouse a desire to excel.

Cousin Jennie was in Christiansburg at school. I just pored over the map of southwest Virginia to locate my fair cousin, and she seemed a thousand miles off! Then, the cruel teacher forbade even cousins to write to each other. I wondered if she ever had a sweetheart. Anyhow, I sent Cousin Jennie an original valentine, twenty verses of hexameter measure, the production of which cost me many late hours and much hard thinking. Of course I signed my name, as I wanted no doubt as to the author of such an effusion. She managed to send me a reply and thank me for my "nice poetry," also to inclose a geranium leaf. I read the letter over a dozen times and smelled the leaf clear away.

CHAPTER XXVII

NARROW ESCAPES

"Ranged in a line the ready racers stand,
Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand:
Swift as on wings of wind upborne they fly,
And drifts of rising dust involve the sky."

—*Pope.*

It was the week before Christmas. The old river had been frozen over, allowing pedestrians to pass safely across. A few sunny days, however, had made the bridge treacherous. The tailor on the opposite side was making suits for my brother and me, and as the boats were frozen fast in the ice, our treasures were so near and yet so far." Mortal boy could stand it no longer, Christmas, and no new suits to don. So we decided to cross on the ice bridge. We knew there was danger, as the ice was dotted with holes here and there, and the water was dark, cold, and deep. Each of us grasping a long, light pole about five feet from either end, we started on our perilous feat. If either of us broke in the pole would span the hole and help him to scramble out of the icy water. On we went, winding around the holes, and when about the middle of the stream we got almost

panic-stricken; but as it was as dangerous to retreat as go forward, we still tried to reach the farther shore. When within eight or ten feet of the bank, the ice having all melted away, we found a channel of water in our path. There was no time for delay, as every minute the ice was getting weaker under the warm sun. But my good angel whispered a way of escape. Placing the pole on the bottom in the middle of the channel I sprang across, and just did land on the slippery bank. My brother, taking the pole, tried twice, but failed to get beyond the vertical line, and so fell back on the ice. It was an awful situation, and he began to cry. The third time he struck the edge, and as he began to slip down the steep bank into the water I caught and helped him up. We surely were on the edge of a watery grave. The home folks were so glad of our safety that they forgot to scold us. They cut a way for a canoe to come through the ice and take us back.

I once heard a man tell my father that he bet an Irishman fifty cents he could not lick an iron wedge on a bitter cold morning. "Faith, an' I can," sang out Pat, and the tongue and wedge met, but stuck fast together. Pat jerked the wedge loose and tore off some of the skin of his tongue! "By the holy saints, the cussed thing is bewitched!"

said Pat by way of explanation. I had never studied philosophy, and having little confidence in Trent's veracity, I doubted the story. The next morning, when the mercury was dancing around zero, I spied an axe at the wood pile, all bespangled with crystals of frost. An evil spirit whispered to make the experiment and prove Trent to be indeed mistaken. So, gently I brought the tongue and axe together, and tightly they adhered to each other! The more I pulled, the more of the unruly member clung to the iron. In my distress I went for help, my tears flowing fast. On opening the door to my vigorous kick, I presented to my dear relations the appearance of a juggler trying to swallow the axe, handle and all. "Oh, my!" cried mother. "What's the boy doing?" exclaimed father. "He's got the axe in his mouth," piped in my brother. It was no time for useless words, as mine were few. By the application of warm water and the heat of the fire the abominable thing let loose my tongue. Long did I sit by the fire that morning musing over the ups and downs of life. My sympathy went out to Pat, and I was no longer a doubting Thomas, and at the table, when some one asked me if I would have an axe in my bill of fare, I almost thought an ugly word.

Where is the boy who does not like to gallop

a horse? There is an excitement and exhilaration in the gait that is inspiring. The boy also loves to run races on his pony with his neighbor. And horse racing was not always confined to the Dark and Bloody Ground. I plead guilty of this sin, though mine was unadulterated—no betting. In the summer evenings, Dick B., a white boy living on our place, and I volunteered to take the horses to a distant pasture. At first we rode bare-back, and would race across the field at a speed that the average Kentuckian rarely equalled. My father, to check this reckless amusement, forbade our taking even bridles. He did not use the word "race." There was a technicality in the law by which the tenor of same might legally be avoided, so we decided to race without reins, bit, or saddle. The gap into the pasture was by a gentle slope, down which two paths started, at first several yards apart, but converging below into one. Each armed with a long switch and on a horse in each path, at a given signal down the slope we dashed at full speed. Lo! at the bottom of the slope the horses following the paths, ran together, side against side, with such force as to hurl each other to the ground on the right and left, the boys fortunately thrown several feet beyond the prostrate horses. Both boys and horses gave a groan, but

except the shock no damage was done. We did not give the incident to the reporter of the Home Journal.

The next evening we tried the sport again. Dick headed his horse near a fence that had long stakes projecting over a pig-path that ran close by it. I started mine some distance out, on a parallel line. "Ready? Whoop!" away we went. Dick's horse took the pig path, and to save his brains he bowed to every stake as he passed under it. Glancing over and seeing Dick's extreme politeness, I was so convulsed with laughter that I just rolled off my horse, and lost the race. He still swept over the plain, but not near the fence nor converging paths.

From the curse in Eden, down the ages, man has ever stood in dread of serpents. The sight of a snake makes him shudder, and retreat for a stick or stone wherewith to kill the deadly reptile. The rattler is the most honorable of them all, as by the singing of his rattles he gives warning of his presence. When in coil he can spring several feet at his victim. I once heard a negro say that a rattler sprang at him and its tongue grazed his chin.

I was down in the meadow one day watching the mowers with their scythes cutting the grass, for I always loved the smell of the new-mown

hay. I was barefooted, and by the edge of a swamp I stepped on some grass, which, blown down, formed a smooth matting. I stood there only a short time, but I thought the ground under my feet was very soft, and pretty soon I felt a circular motion there, and then came a "Ziz, ziz!" At once I became a first-class acrobat, and with a "Whew!" I vaulted some five feet away and shouted for help. On cutting away the grass there was found a rattler four feet long, whose slumber I had disturbed. That evening his mate was also killed near by.

The black snake and the rattler are deadly enemies, and, on meeting, there is a battle. The rattler, being clumsy, throws himself into coil for the defensive. The other, more active, begins to circle around his enemy, at first at a safe distance. Round and round, with almost lightning speed, he goes. The rattler, in trying to watch the other's swift movement, gradually becomes dizzy. Closer and closer the circle is drawn to the doomed victim. Then, at the right instant, he springs upon the rattler, grasps him by the back of his neck, and quickly encircling him in his coils, gives a contracted motion and it is all over with the rattler.

CHAPTER XXVIII

COMMENCEMENT DAY

"Man loves knowledge, and the beams of truth
More welcome touch his understanding's eye
Than all the blandishments of sound his ear,
Than all of taste his tongue."

—*Akenside.*

In the earlier days at Crystal Spring Seminary we studied Webster's old blue back Speller, and almost knew it by heart, from "baker" to "Nebuchadnezzar." The frontispiece of that book was always a source of much interest to me. In the picture there was a temple standing on a steep hill, and the road leading up to it was winding and rocky. Upon the front of this beautiful building was written in golden letters, "Knowledge." At the foot of the hill a teacher had a little boy by the hand, and was pointing him up to this temple. Away beyond on a hill rising above this one and higher and steeper, was another temple, and on its highest front blazed the word "Fame." I soon learned that the road to the higher temple led through the lower one. I often studied the picture, and wondered if the little boy ever reached the temples.

Many of the old books had given way to newer and better methods, as Pike to Ray in arithmetic; Olney to Mitchell, in geography; and Smith to Pinneo, in English grammar. Steel pens had driven the goose quill into the back ground, and the Spencerian copy plates, with their graceful curves, were hailed with delight. But to teach a pupil the first principles of Latin I have never yet seen a happier combination than old Bullion's Grammar and Reader.

We were now nearing the second session under Mr. Paine. Things in school had drifted along smoothly, and we had advanced from one grade to another in our studies. The drill of the Friday evening exercises in declamation had brought forth good fruits. Boys who, a year ago, were timid and shaky when on the rostrum, and made awkward gestures, now were more at ease in their delivery and more graceful in their action. Also the improvement in composition had been such that some of the advanced pupils now and then entertained the audience by reading and declaiming original productions that brought forth expressions of applause. So, in view of the progress made, our teacher decided to close the session on a grander scale than Crystal Spring Seminary had ever seen. A few representative classes were to be

examined in the morning, then a recess for a picnic dinner, and speaking in the evening. The larger boys were to write their speeches, and topics were chosen in time, so as not to conflict with work in our regular studies. Cousin Will was to have the valedictory, the honor speech. William Anderson was to make a stump speech in behalf of the Fillmore and Donelson ticket. My subject extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific, a patriotic effusion on "America." Faithfully did we work over them, writing, re-writing, memorizing, fitting in the gestures and pronouncing the big words. In my closing sentence, in a mighty effort for a "curl," I got America up so high in the realms of glory, among the stars, that with difficulty did she get back to her old home on terra firma.

A rostrum and seats were arranged in the grove, all in keeping with the dignity of the occasion. In writing and rehearsing my speech, thoughts as to what Jennie would say gave an inspiration to my pen and a new ardor to my zeal.

At 9 o'clock one June morning the exercises began. Our fathers and mothers were there, friends from across the river came, and the old schoolhouse was crowded. Such an examination those good old people had never seen before, and they listened with pride to the inflections of Latin

and Greek verbs, to the translation of Virgil, and Greek fables, and to classes in history, familiar science and astronomy. Hard problems in Davie's Bourdon were solved at the board, and propositions in Legendre were demonstrated to the wonder of the spectators. Last, but not least, came the class in the Shorter Catechism, and it astonished the audience by rattling off, without a halt, the questions on sanctification, justification, adoption, and baptism.

At high noon the examination exercises closed. Soon the invitations were given to the feast of good things on the well-laden tables in the grove. Several negro "uncles" and "aunts" were there, and they waited on the tables nicely. Said Aunt Eliza, our cook, to me, when I refused a choice dish, "La! child, you must eat, if you's gwine to speak dis evenin'."

After the feast of sweet and fat things, with a breathing spell between, came the feast of mind. Mollie, a bright little girl, recited a salutatory poem, gracefully introducing the exercises. Everything passed off smoothly, not a trip in memory. Our friends smiled and applauded, the curious visitor admired the tone of things, the negroes were delighted, and the very trees seemed to look down upon us in quiet approval. When William

A. closed his political speech with "Three cheers for Fillmore and Donelson!" two or three old Whigs joined him in a modest whoop. Old Uncle Humphrey, on the outskirts, thinking the meeting at fever heat, joined in with, "Dat's so, glory! amen!" Cousin William, a strong Democrat, looked solemn over the enthusiasm. Nat Morris then, in a labored effort, discussed the vexed question of "Labor and Capital," and many regular declamations were rendered in good style. Belle W. read a composition on "Gates," a subject that at first struck the audience as prosy. But the bright little girl, beginning with the gates of Eden, and ending with the Pearly Gates of John's wonderful vision in Revelation, was applauded handsomely as she took her seat.

As the farewell of Will's valedictory, taken up by the echoes of the grove, died away, a feeling of sadness swept over our hearts. The singing class, embracing nearly all the pupils, then sang that good old song, "Good-bye," and at its close many eyes were moist.

Then came congratulatory remarks. A big, rough-looking mountaineer, shaking William A.'s hand heartily, said, "Billy, you's chuck full of politics. Some day we'll run you for sheriff or gov'nor, or something of the kind." Cousin Jennie

slipped a dainty little bouquet into my hand and whispered, "I was proud of you." Gold could not have bought those words from me. Her eye had nerved me all through my speech, and then the fragrance of those flowers! Old man Watkins the blacksmith, squinting at me through his glasses, remarked, "Young man, you just tore Ameriky all to pieces!" The thought flashed into my mind that maybe I had so treated my subject. Uncle Humphrey told me, "My stars, Alexander, you s'prised me."

The handshaking and the good-bys were over, and the door of Crystal Spring Seminary closed on another session. The sun went down in a flood of glory that evening, a fitting close of the greatest day of our school.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE.

"From early youth war has my mistress been,
And though a rugged one, I'll constant prove
And not forsake her now;
The flashes of contending steel
Must serve instead of glances from my love,
And soft breathing sighs, the cannon's roar."

On the walls of the Military Institute at Lexington the flag of the Old Dominion had been floating since 1839. Often I had heard it spoken of as a school where the boys wore uniforms with stripes on the pants, the coats bespangled with pretty buttons, and where they were drilled and trained for soldiers, eating rough fare and sleeping on hard beds. And when, for the first time, I saw a cadet at Falling Spring Church, I was charmed with his appearance, so neat, so erect, and with such quick, elastic step. I looked on him as a new species of the genus homo, a more finished type than the common pattern. I read more about Alexander and Napoleon, and, fired with a martial spirit, I hoped to go there, learn to be a soldier, and I thought that, should war come, I might be a hero.

When I first saw the Institute sitting in all its grim dignity on the hill, its turrets and towers reminding me of pictures of the old castles of the Middle Ages, I thought it very grand. I rode close to its walls, and saw the cannon with their murderous-looking mouths bidding defiance to any foe.

Soon there came the rat-ta-tat of the drums, and cadets came pouring out from under the great arch, with burnished guns, cartridge-boxes, and white belts, the officers with swords and nodding plumes, and all presented to me a novel picture. In reply to my question as to the stir, I was told it was for drill. "Fall in!" cry the orderly sergeants, and the four companies form and march off to the parade ground, all keeping step to the music of the band. Then Major Gilham took command and the drilling began. They moved in straight lines to the front, to the right and left, wheeled around in circles, formed a hollow square, double-quicked across the grounds, looking like a beautiful machine worked by a master hand. It was the prettiest sight I had ever seen, and I thought that even Napoleon's Old Guard was far surpassed by that brilliant array of young warriors.

As the flag passed near me I admired its beautiful design, and asked the meaning of the words,

"Sic semper tyrannis." "Take your foot off my neck!" said a wise-looking chap near me. Not knowing the significance of the picture, my sympathy went out to the fellow lying on his back.

The "Glorious Fourth" used to be a great day in old Lexington. On this day the commencement exercises of the Institute were celebrated, closing with fireworks and a grand ball. Many visitors from a distance came, and the country from far and near flocked in to the show. I cut a notch high on my stick the day I, too, celebrated with the other patriotic citizens. I heard the booming of the cannon in salute at sunrise, and I was early on the ground. The corps, in martial array, marched to the Presbyterian Church, the music of the brass band stirring the very soul of the old town. Col. Francis H. Smith, the model superintendent, tall and graceful in his bearing, presided. First, the Declaration of Independence was read by one of the graduating class, then the National oration, and one or two other speeches followed. Then the diplomas were given, an address to the corps by some noted speaker thrilled the audience, and the band played "Good-bye."

As soon as the shades of night had fallen, the parade ground of several acres was well filled by

hundreds to witness the fireworks. This display, to me, was a new page of history, and it was grand. The last rocket described its graceful curve, exploded in flames of purple and crimson tints, and that exhibition was over.

The tide now turned toward the ball-room in the mess hall. Woe! unto the Romeo who had no ticket, for he would be denied admittance by the stern sentinels at the door.

Into the brilliantly lighted and handsomely decorated hall the crowd surged and promenaded round and round, until the leader of the orchestra sang out, "Get your partners." And then

> "When music arose with its voluptuous swell,
> Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
> And all went merry as the marriage bell."

It was the first dancing I had even seen. The music was enchanting, but the men looked like monkeys cutting figures on the floor, whilst the ladies moved around gracefully. If you wish to prove Darwin's theory, of man's evolution from the monkey, just watch him cut the "pigeon wing" in a dance hall. The square dances and the "old Virginia reel" were in favor, as only a few couples were seen waltzing.

In that hall were representatives of the beauty

and chivalry of Virginia, for, from country and town, many belles and beaux had come to join in the festive occasion.

At one o'clock supper was announced, and the music ceased. "From labor to refreshments," the dancers went. Again the fiddle strings were tuned and the revelers "tripped the light fantastic toe" until dawn began to crimson the east, when the lights were extinguished and the banquet hall deserted.

I used to hear much of interest connected with the school. New cadets were hazed with a rough hand, "bucked," dragged, or ducked. A little fellow from Texas with cowboy pluck, once resisted, and when they came at him in overwhelming numbers, with a *bone* he knocked ten in a pile before he was overpowered.

Maj. Thos. J. Jackson was the artillery drillmaster. The lowest class furnished the locomotive power—in place of horses—for the guns. One time when the battery was moving at full speed down the slope and the Major running by the side, a wheel came off and fairly whizzed after him. "Look out Major! The wheel's a comin'!" cried the cadet officers. He never turned to look and the wheel grazed his side. Had there been a collision the wreck might have been a serious one.

Col. Jas. Massie, some years before, had been commandant there. I heard him tell this incident. He was drilling the corps and ordered a "charge bayonet movement going toward a high, close board fence on the west side of the ground. He was stepping backward between the line of glittering steel and the fence. He forgot the command "Halt." Finally he backed against the fence and on came the line of steel! Perspiration oozed from his forehead in great drops, his limbs quaked but the word came not. When within a few steps of the fence he shouted in a stentorian voice, "Confound you, stop!" The order was not from tactics, but they stopped. For a few minutes all order was broken in peals of laughter at his sad predicament. Said the Colonel, "I never afterward gave an order for 'charge bayonets' in front of a plank fence."

In 1856, I think, the State placed a bronze statue of Washington at its Military Institute. The unveiling was on July 4th, and the oration was delivered by Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, a Virginia Congressman. I remember well the applause and the booming of the cannon in salute.

The teaching in the school was of a practical character, and it made excellent mathematicians and civil engineers. The military training and

discipline fitted men to preside over railroads, insurance companies, or any corporation requiring a close insight into details, but it did not give the classic finish like its sister school on the same hill. I heard it said that in Latin the cadet read in Caesar until he got to the "bridge," and finding it washed away, retreated to the lines of English. In drilling the corps was said to equal that of West Point. I saw Major Hardie, the commandant at West Point, drill the V. M. I. boys at one commencement. He was reported as saying they executed movements as well as his corps, only, not being accustomed to his voice, they were a little slower in catching the commands.

In the spring of 1861 the war cloud was looming upon the horizon. The deep mutterings of the coming storm could be heard in the distance and the wiser and more prudent looked anxious. In Lexington political feeling ran very high. A strong Union sentiment prevailed in the town, especially among the mechanics and tradesmen. On the other hand, the students of the College and the cadets were almost unanimous in their sympathy with the seceded States. The corps of the Institute was a splendid body of young men, representing the chivalry of the Old Dominion and the best blood from many Southern States. There was

no congeniality between them and the majority of the Union party of the town. Some of the latter, of the plebeian order, as opportunity was presented, would deride and jeer the cadets for their "rebellious" principles. Of course there were bitter retorts, and the feeling arose to such a pitch that only a spark was wanting for an explosion.

A lot of Unionists in the town decided to show their loyalty to the old flag by unfurling it from the top of a lofty pole, to be raised in front of the court-house. Late one evening this pole was brought in, dressed and left lying in the street ready for raising on the morrow. That night some one by boring holes, made it useless for the jubilee. I never heard who did the mischief, but they blamed the cadets, and indignation was at the boiling point. Some of them swore vengeance against the boys with stripes and buttons.

On the Saturday following a small party of cadets, being uptown, were assaulted in a store, by a much large number of town roughs. The cadets got the worst of the skirmish and beat a hasty retreat to the barracks, where they related their rough treatment. It was the spark, and the pent-up fires burst forth.

The long-roll was beaten and the cry was, "Get your guns! We'll storm the town!" Some of the

professors, hearing the confusion, appeared on the scene, but they could not restrain the maddened crowd. Some, in their impetuosity, started at once for the town with guns and ammunition, in squads, or straggling, as each one got ready. Captain McCausland, a professor, and afterward a general, told them if they were determined to go, to organize first and go with some system. This advice resulted in halting the advanced squads at the old tavern, at the foot of Main Street, about half a mile from the Institute. In the wagon yard they awaited the arrival of others, who poured in as a turbid stream.

About 3 o'clock in the evening, on looking out of my window in the College on the hill near by, I saw the gleam of bayonets. Rushing down to the tavern, I found the yard full of cadets in a state of wild excitement. Major Gilham, the commandant, told them to form their companies, and it was but the work of a few minutes to organize. In unreasonable madness their sole intention seemed to be to storm the town; that it was responsible for the wrong done them.

Up town all was excitement, as the report spread that the cadets were coming on a mission of vengeance. The Union party were arming themselves to give the young soldiers a warm re-

ception, knowing they had the advantage in firing on the unprotected lines from doors and windows. It was a critical point, both in the history of the town and of the Institute.

Down in the yard at the foot of the hill all things were about ready for the forward movement. The companies had their officers, their cartridge-boxes were full, and all were waiting for the order to march. Just then a tall, military-looking man came up at a rapid pace, and, ascending the stile, stood with arms folded and for a moment surveyed the scene before him. It was Col. Francis Smith, the superintendent, who it seemed had just heard of the trouble and came in the crisis of the affair. The moral grandeur of that scene surpassed anything of the kind I have ever witnessed. There he stood, calmly looking down into the flashing eyes and upon the glittering bayonets ready to be bathed in the blood of Lexington's citizens. In those ranks were dear young men who, he knew, would be slain in the streets if they went forward. Stretching out his hand over the battalion the buzzing gradually subsided and at length there was silence. Then he said, "Young gentlemen, I know you have received a great wrong, and you have my sympathy. I am your friend. This is not the way to right the

matter. I appeal to your reason and better natures. A *moral* victory is better than a *bloody* one. Follow me and I will see that you get redress." Then stepping down from the stile he started toward the Institute. There was a dead silence for a few moments, but moral influence triumphed and the crisis was over. One and another began to say, "Let's go back," and on a sudden, as if by magic, the companies broke ranks and all followed their esteemed instructor.

It showed the splendid discipline of the school and that only one born to rule, in one minute, could have transformed a whole corps of cadets from madmen to order and obedience.

On arriving at the Institute, Colonel Smith took them into one of the society halls, gave them good advice, showed them their rashness, and how near it led to a tragedy written in their own blood. Some of the professors made speeches and the prospect for war was touched upon. It was there that Jackson, afterward "Stonewall," made the famous remark, "If we have to fight, let us draw the sword and throw away the scabbard." An order was issued that for the present no cadet should go up town.

In a few days Virginia seceded, and those gallant young men, under Jackson, were ordered to

Richmond. There they rendered valuable service as drill-masters. Then in more active service they won laurels on many a hard-fought field. Grand and noble, old "V. M. I.," I salute you for your past, I praise you for your present, and I bid you God-speed in a future course of usefulness and prosperity.

CHAPTER XXX

FALLING SPRING CHURCH

"On thy calm joys with what delight I dream,
Thou dear green valley of my native stream!
Fancy o'er thee still waves enchanting wand."
—*Bloomfield.*

There was a pleasure in the home life of my boyhood on the old farm by the James that only deepens with the years. Often have I wished that again as a little barefooted boy I could wade in the spring branch, or gambol over the grassy hills. And it is sweet to recall scenes and incidents connected with the spot that is hallowed in memory. Whenever in the early spring I hear the frogs singing, I am carried back to the old home, and, sitting on the porch, I again hear the music among the green willows in the pond by the meadow.

Ours was a busy home; there were no drones in the hive. We were trained to work, from feeding the little lambs up to following the big plow. Thus, industry, as we grew older, was woven into the warp of our beings. So many pets on the farm intensify the boy's devotion to his home; the kitten, the dog, the lamb, the calf, the pony, all

have a hold on his affection. Pure mountain air and freestone water gave us muscle, and roses on our cheeks. Obedience was taught as the first lesson, and if a pupil was slow in learning, his ideas were quickened by the application of the rod. Yet we only loved and respected our parents all the more. We never grew restless under this wholesome discipline, nor wished to go to a far country. In fact, we half regretted that the day, sooner or later, would come for us to leave the home nest and try our wings in finding other homes.

Our church was Falling Spring, one of the old Presbyterian churches of the Valley. It was built of stone, emblematic of the solid faith, of the brave pioneers who laid its foundations, and it stood on the edge of a beautiful strip of woodland. At the foot of the hill a spring gushing out fell with a gentle murmur over a ledge into the pool below. All the surroundings of the old church were beautiful.

Although we lived six miles distant and had to cross the river, we were generally among the first to arrive on Sunday mornings. With few exceptions the whole country was of our faith, and from a circle within a radius of five miles or more the good people came trooping in from all directions. And very many of these fathers and moth-

ers who thus came up to Zion's Hill, bringing their little ones with them and training them up in the law and the prophets, were the very salt of the earth. The pews had doors, the pulpit, on a platform four steps high, was closed in on the sides by a railing, and over it was a sounding-board in shape like the dome of a mosque. The old family pews, with all together in the church below, are figurative of all together in the church above. Within those walls and surrounded by such tender associations Christian character was molded that could battle bravely with the temptations of the world. The little babes came into those homes and soon in their snowy robes and spotless purity they were given to the Lord in baptism. The years rolled by, the covenant promise was fulfilled, and on sacramental mornings the dear young people, one by one, came from the Session House with a look of quiet joy as they entered the new life. "The promise is to you and to your children."

And, too, there was a social pleasure connected with the old church. Friends met and exchanged kindly words, heard of others' ills or joys, and sympathized or rejoiced with them. The young people especially enjoyed the meeting in the grove on their arrival, when courtesies would be extended by young men to young women. Here and

there, near some well-known dismounting block or carriage stand, a young beau could be seen patiently awaiting the arrival of his sweetheart. Her kindly words and bright smiles amply repaid him, if young and timid, for the trial of running the gauntlet of curious spectators as he escorted her through the church yard to the door.

After the doxology and benediction, again the business of gallantry at the doors was revived in a brisk manner, and of rivals the one nearest the door was the fortunate one. Carriage doors had to be opened, saddle-horses brought up to the block, riding-skirts thrown over the graceful figures, and the stirrup adjusted to the dainty little feet. Then the more devoted swains decided to escort the dear creatures home, take dinner, eat some of the choice cake, compliment "pa" on the looks of his crops, and try to tell "grandma" something of the sermon.

On our road home were many girls and boys as brothers and sisters. These would pair off and thus relieve the monotony of the homeward ride. In my early "teens" I noticed that the girls generally preferred going to church on horseback. Afterward I understood better the why and the wherefore. Very pleasant were these rides with such companions, and I imagine that, in addition

to comments on the sermon of the morning, an analysis was sometimes made of the text, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." At the turning off places brothers and sisters again met, and loved each other as before the separation.

Falling Spring was a representative church of the Valley. For thirty years Rev. John D. Ewing was its pastor. He was one of the grand old ministers of the State. Having baptized our babies, married our young people, and buried our precious dead for so long a time he was dearly loved by his flock. His sermons, the communion Sabbaths, and the revival days all made the old church hallowed in our memory. As the shepherd of the flock the bread he broke was pure and sweet. His voice had a musical ring that was pleasant to hear, and there was nothing sensational in his subject-matter nor manner. His style was so plain that a child could understand. In his long pastorate the number enrolled on the church book, by comparison with sister churches, showed that his labors had been especially blessed in winning souls. And doubtless there were many stars in the crown the Master gave him when He called him home.

The singing was general, not confined to the choir. When Mr. Parry, the leader, struck his fork and caught the tune the music filled the house.

They always sang a doxology at the close of the service. The cemetery was a sacred spot, for in it slept the dust of the fathers and mothers of the church. I loved to walk in it and read the inscriptions on the monuments. The lowly mounds were covered with periwinkle and in the summer dotted with wild violets. A holy stillness brooded over the place and made one tread more lightly around the graves of the sainted dead.

CHAPTER XXXI

CONCERNING COURTSHIP

"Wedded love is founded on esteem,
Which the fair merits of the mind engage;
For those are charms which never can decay,
But time, which gives new whiteness to the swan,
Improves their lustre."

—*Fenton.*

A bashful youth longed to tell his love to the girl of his choice, and tell her how his heart beat for her alone, and to ask her to be his wife. Finally he vowed by the bow and arrows of Cupid that he would ask the young lady on his very next visit. When they were alone in the dimly lighted parlor, in a tremulous tone he began, "Miss Juliet, I've always thought lots of you. I think of you in the daytime and I dream of you 'most every night. You are the dearest girl to me in all this country and—" Just then the damsel threw up her hands and exclaimed, "Hush, hush! you scare me!" The poor fellow thought he was on the wrong road to success and, in obedience, he hushed. There was an ominous pause and a quick beating of hearts. Juliet did not fancy the turn things were taking, and decided to be aggressive in the

matter, so giving him a side glance and a smile, she said, "Scare me again!" The mercury in his heart's thermometer ran right up to 100, and he scared her again!

I used to hear how a timid lover in North Carolina "popped the question." Taking a piece of pine wood he cut it into some artistic shape, as a dagger, or a heart, and sent this to his lady love. She thus interpreted the mute emblem, "I pine." If she did not care for him she burned one end slightly and returned the gift. He thus read, "I make light of your affections." But if the refrain to the song of her heart was, "Scare me again," she cut a knot on one end and sent it back to the anxious donor. He interpreted it thus, "Pine not."

Variety is said to be the spice of life and surely it adds a pleasure to courtship. I heard of an old bachelor whose hard heart Cupid at last pierced, and he decided to ask Miss Nancy, an old maid, to marry him. Mounting his steed he was soon at her home and called her from the porch to the gate. Then he blurted out: "Miss Nancy, I likes you powerfully and wants you to be my wife. I'm goin' down to old man B.'s to buy a cow. Think about it and tell me when I come back. Good morning." Miss Nancy's thoughts never whirled through her brain so before and she was standing

at the gate when he rode back. Before he got to the gate he called out, "What do you say, Miss Nancy? All right?" And she sang out in a tenor key, "Yes." And I suppose they lived as happily together as if they had spent two or three years in interchanging geranium blooms, rosebuds, and billet doux.

A young man once imagined his admiration to be the very flower of womanhood. Calling unexpectedly one evening he was ushered by one of the juveniles into the parlor adjoining the family sitting-room, and the girl was not informed of the presence of her admirer. He had ears to hear and he heard. The soft, sweet voice of Miss Angelina was changed into harsh, angry tones as she spoke disrespectfully to her mother. Then he heard her slap her little sister who immediately set up a bawl, and above it all rose the voice of his adored, "Shut up, you brat you!" Guided by some evil genius, she suddenly burst into the parlor and stood before him with the mask off. Amazed at meeting him she just stood still, and wringing her hands cried out, "Oh, Harry Bell, I didn't know you were here!" "I see you didn't," he said. He took her picture in a snap-shot style. She wore an untidy wrapper, her hair had a tousled appearance, and

her cheeks lacked the accustomed bloom. He bowed himself out and he stayed out!

The following incident will show how, on one occasion, spelling checked the courting. In Fredericksburg, Virginia, there lived an excellent lady, the mother of several charming daughters. They were at the blooming period of schoolgirl life, and their sensible mother did not wish them to blend books and society, a combination generally fatal to mental cultivation. But the bright eyes and glossy ringlets of these lasses possessed a magnetic attraction, strong indeed, upon certain susceptible youths of their acquaintance.

The mother, a cultivated, shrewd woman, knew well the effect of frequent calls upon the intellectual progress of her fair daughters, and that the whisperings of Cupid made discord in the music of the schoolroom. And yet, there was a delicate question to handle. These young Romeos were from families in the same social standing, whose mothers and sisters visited in her home. What was she to do? Wound the feelings of these juvenile aspirants to her own gracious smiles, by closing her doors upon them? No. This would be cruel and very impolite.

In opening the campaign she felt safe in issuing a general order, to be as fixed as the laws of the

Medes and Persians, that only on Friday nights should the young ladies entertain. As Romeo heard the latest from headquarters, his countenance was grave, and his heart sad; yet he gracefully accepted the restriction to his social pleasure, throwing, as it did, a damper on his budding hopes.

On Friday evenings the parlor was radiant with light and beauty, vocal with merry voices and sweet music. The good mother observed and, as a few weeks glided by, she drew conclusions more adverse than ever. She decided that this social dissipation of these evenings would be demoralizing to studious habits, and that soft glances and flattering speeches did not point the minds of her daughters up the hill of science.

A happy thought came to her rescue. She would try a new weapon in the warfare. She seemed to be suddenly awakened to the fact that too little attention was given to spelling in schools. She spoke of its weight in education, and of her earnest desire to have her daughters proficient in this branch. She thereupon announced that she would have a weekly drill, in the home, in spelling, and that Friday evening would be the most suitable time for such a literary feast. So, the details were arranged, a speller selected, and a lesson assigned

for the next night, when George T. and Willie R. were to call.

The evening came, the parlor was bright, the boys arrived, the radiant maidens glided in, and happiness reigned therein. About the time the social merriment seemed at its height, behold, in walked the mother, book in hand, followed by the juvenile band of the household, several of whom were to take part with their older sisters in this intellectual diversion.

In her most pleasing manner she apologized for seeming to intrude, explained her new plan to the callers, and said she knew they would join in and enjoy the exercise. To gain her esteem they were willing to climb a mountain, face a ghost, do anything but spell! No time was given to offer excuses, as, at once, the exercise began.

Nearer and nearer, around the circle, came the words. The boys' hearts beat faster, their color became florid, and drops of perspiration dotted their brows! George was next. The word "phthisic" was given out. He twisted in his chair, ran his fingers through his hair, and in an almost choking voice, said, "tizick."

There was a titter amongst the little folks, a smile on the faces of the older girls, but the mother was dignified, and passed the word to Willie, who,

with fearful forebodings, sat dreading his fate. He knew there was a "p" in the word, and spurted out "ptisick."

The juveniles snorted out in laughter, and the mother had to smile. Then passing the word to one of the smaller girls, she spelled it correctly.

The second round she gave the boys easier words, and they acquitted themselves more satisfactorily. In the third round Willie got the word "billet doux," which, after much mental agony, he spelled thus, "billydoo." A general titter followed. As if meeting grim death, George tackled the abominable word! "Billiedue," he gasped out. All had to laugh. At this embarrassing juncture, the mother, taking pity on the boys, told them she would excuse them on the rest of the lesson, but the next time she would expect them to go through.

The lesson over, the queenly mother, after chatting awhile, bade them good evening, and marched the little folks to the nursery.

The boys were not happy, their ideas did not flow so readily as before the ordeal, and they soon bowed themselves out. When revived by the fresh air and around the corner, George said:

"Well, didn't we disgrace ourselves! I never could spell."

"The old lady is a crank and spelling is her

hobby," Willie replied. "You'll not catch me there next time."

They agreed to keep quiet and let James K. and Harry B. enjoy the fun the "next time." These hopeful youths, in blissful ignorance of their fate, called, they tried to spell, they missed, they perspired, they twisted, and inwardly vowed that they would not spell again until they had memorized the dictionary.

The four met in an experience meeting, protested against such modern innovations against the rights and pleasure of visiting young gentlemen, and took a solemn pledge not to call again until that spelling was stopped. Yet, they only deplored the plan, and did not have unkind feelings toward the good mother, who, in so artful a manner defeated them in their attacks upon the fair citadel of her home.

She kept up the spelling-class, and not until those lovely girls had bloomed into lovelier women did she tell them how she outgeneralled the boys who were trying to be devoted to her schoolgirl daughters. And they, in their maturer wisdom, and from a higher point of intelligence, deemed themselves fortunate in having a mother so wise and judicious.

Country weddings in the well-to-do homes of

the olden time were very elaborate affairs, much sewing, much cooking, much inviting. A swell wedding was always at night, and the whole neighborhood was invited. The grounds were lit up, there were flowers on every hand, an array of attendants, a rolling of carriages, and a flashing of rich costumes. The ceremony over, the blessing pronounced, the "man and wife" led the guests to the dining-room. The thing of most interest connected with the supper was the cutting of the "bride's cake," in which was a ring. The one who got the ring would be the next to wear a wedding-ring. Maiden ladies of uncertain years, with nervous hands would select a piece, and the bachelors felt cautiously for their.

I used to hear some funny things connected with weddings. My mother told us of a young Irishman who, by good behavior and industry, took a stand in good society. He was being married to a lady who had several slaves. Pat was delighted with the idea of having the slaves to work for him, and when, in the ceremony, the minister came to the question, "Do you take this woman whom you hold by the hand to be your lawful and wedded wife?" Pat, who doubtless wished to clinch everything as in a trade, sang out, "Faith, and the *naigers* too."

When the eldest daughter of a friend of mine was married they had a big wedding, and of course many guests. After the supper the minister was talking to the father, and remarked, "I tell you, Squire, it is a solemn thing for our girls to marry and go off." Said the Squire, rubbing his hands, "I tell you, parson, it is *more solemn* not to." In my boyhood the wedding-bells were ringing every now and then along the James and out among the hills. I was often real sorry when some stranger from over the mountains would come and steal away some of our pretty young ladies who were nice to me and for whom I had a boyish admiration.

Of the characters, outside of my home, that stand out conspicuous in the picture of my boyhood, my kindly feelings go out to none more than to the family of the physician. I can still see Doctor Watson going his rounds to see his patients, looking so wise in my boyish estimation. He had a touch of the Irish brogue, and was the life of a party or picnic. He was a representative of the medical profession of that day. The old-fashioned doctor did everything to heal and cure, from the pill which he made himself to setting a broken limb or pulling a tooth. Calomel was a power in casting out the evil spirits of disease and a hot

poultice or a fly blister had wonderful virtues. He lived up to the old song,

"He bleeds with his lancet,
And he bleeds with his bill."

Cupping was a favorite means of relieving pain. An old negro woman was describing a tyro in medicine. "He's mighty keerful. He won't give you nothin' doubtful, but jist goes home and reads up about you."

After singing and dancing with toothache I was sent on one occasion to the doctor to have it pulled. But the tooth quieted as if pleading for mercy long before I got to the doctor, and I came near returning home. But I bravely faced the music. He sat me in an arm chair with a big negro girl to hold my head. Then with a clumsy instrument like a brace he pried the tooth out of its socket. My head had to come off or the tooth come out, one or the other. I yelled too late, for the tooth was out.

I heard this of a Philadelphia doctor. Sitting in his office one morning, smoking a cigar, and dreaming under its soothing effects, a young man came in for a prescription. The doctor felt his pulse, glanced at his tongue and wrote a prescription. As the young man started to leave, the doc-

tor caught his name. "Say, what was your father's name? Live in Trenton?" "Yes." "Go to Medical College in Philadelphia in 1850?" "Yes, sir." "Look here, young man, your father and I were roommates. Tear up that thing, and come here and let me see what's the matter with you."

A neighbor said his boy Philander was fit for nothing else and he would make a doctor out of him. So, in a few years, Philander came home from a second-rate medical college a devoted son of Aesculapius. His father, who had a large number of negroes and much sickness that summer among them, told Philander to practice on them. A valuable man got sick. Philander prescribed and the patient soon died. His father told him, "Philander, go out to the mountains and kill the mountaineers. I can't afford to furnish $1,200 negroes for you to experiment on." Doctor Watson asked him about his patient. Said Philander, "I couldn't tell what was the matter with the nigger and so mixed up a whole lot of medicines and gave them to him to try to jump up the disease. But I jumped him out of the ring."

CHAPTER XXXII

THE LAST SCHOOL DAY AT THE SEMINARY

"'Tis vain to weep; to speak, to sigh,
Oh! more than words can tell
When rung from grief's expiring eye
In that word, farewell! farewell!"

—*Byron.*

The commencement at Washington College in Lexington came off the week after the close of our last session. Mr. Paine and several of his pupils attended. I had only seen the college buildings from a distance, sitting on the hill in all their quiet dignity, with their great white pillars standing out in bold relief, and the statue of Washington on the dome. But now I walked along the great colonnade, surveyed the campus, looked into the society halls, visited the libraries, and felt that I was on sacred ground. Then came the final day when the students, wearing badges and preceded by a brass band, marched over to the Presbyterian Church, the speeches were made, the diplomas conferred, the medals bestowed, and the exerises closed with "Home, Sweet Home," by the band. I looked on with wonder and delight and there stole into my heart an aspiration to enter

those classic halls and reap the worthy reward of literary labor.

Again the call came for us to enter the school-room, and we were more diligent than ever in our studies. Few things occurred to break into the monotony of school life. All were steadily climbing the Hill of Science. Some of the little misses of a while past were wearing longer dresses, nearing the border line of girlhood. Belle W. was growing in my esteem, a feeling, however, bounded by admiration and friendship. Bright, pretty, and vivacious, she was a pleasant companion, and I caught myself bestowing on her favors that used to be lavished upon Cousin Jennie. By the way, my fair cousin had developed into a handsome young lady, quite a belle among the young knights of the James. Much to my relief, our teacher visited often across the river. He had boarded part of the session at Mr. B.'s, and Miss Kate's black eyes had done telling work on his heart, judging from little acts of devotion. Little Dick, Miss Kate's brother, a juvenile of fourteen years, came to school. He was a petted, spoiled chap, and very overbearing toward smaller boys. Taylor Peck, a lame boy from the Valley, was a special object of his rough treatment. We larger boys often had to shield the little fellow from

Dick's cruelty. There was such a strong feeling against "bull-dozing" the smaller boys that Dick had scarcely a friend in school. There were plenty of "Tom Browns" who were the champions of the little boys.

Our teacher laid stress on the cultivation of memory. Our geometry class was thus trained: in any of the six books of Legendre only the *number* of the proposition would be given and we had to give the caption and demonstrate. In Bullion's Latin grammar the sixty-five rules were thus learned, and the Latin sentence under each as an example. It was splendid training, for principles thus learned stuck in our minds fast and long.

The session was drawing to a close, but not as in other days. My last words of old Crystal Spring are the saddest of all. Few things here in life end as we wish them to do. Hopes the brightest are often doomed to be blighted. An idle word spoken, or a rash act often turns the tide of things from a cherished course. Our teacher of late had been lax in discipline ,in a half-dreamy state his heart not, as formerly, in his work. Some of the boys whispered that he was "dead in love," was going to marry Miss Kate, lay aside the birch, and join the ranks of the farmers. He spoke of closing in a quiet way. But we boys who last year

had gotten a taste both of the custard pie and lavish praise, wished for more of the same bill of fare. So we presented him a formidable petition, and reluctantly he granted our request to the extent of an exhibition along the line of declamation.

One day at noon, about three weeks before the close of the session, we were engaged in a game of town ball. Without any provocation, Dick B. struck Taylor Peck with a bat on his lame leg, causing him to fall down and writhe in pain. We gathered around, all indignant. I was just boiling with anger, and I felt I must either report the matter to Mr. Paine or paddle Dick well myself. Being a smaller boy, prudence dictated the former course. I announced my decision, and amid a chorus of "Go, go, go!" I gave our teacher a true statement, adding that such treatment had been going on for some time. He said he'd see about it, and sent a message for Dick to report to him. With a sneering remark at me, Dick slowly went to the interview. Being unprincipled and untruthful, he doubtless denied the charge, and slandered me.

Soon after we were called to our studies, and first went to the spring as usual. Dick asked me, "What did you tell Mr. Paine that pack of lies for?" Not having yet cooled down from the

scene of the playground, I caught him by his coat collar and only shook him, without uttering a word. He "boo-hooed," swore vengeance, was going to shoot me, and ran up to the house to tell his tale of woe. Of course he misrepresented the incident at the spring, and when I entered the room Mr. Paine asked me in a very angry tone why I abused Dick. I told him the provocation, to which others testified. A big Valley boy said, "If it had been me, I'd kicked him into the creek!" "You keep quiet, sir," sharply remarked the teacher. "Mr. Paine," said I, "I am sorry I have done wrong and wish to be obedient to the rules of the school, but I'll defend this poor little lame boy against this overbearing fellow." A murmur of assent passed around among the boys. There was a painful silence. I waited to hear my doom.

"Get to your lessons," said Mr. Paine, who looked troubled and abstracted all evening. When the last lesson had been recited and we were waiting to be dismissed, much to our surprise he said, "There will be no more school. You are dismissed." It came like a thunder-clap from a clear sky. All sat still, and the silence was oppressive. It flashed over me that if I would leave school the trouble would be over, as he could not decide be-

tween us. I had been a companion and personal friend for nearly three years, and Dick was his sweetheart's brother. So I spoke up, "Mr. Paine, I'll withdraw from school rather than have it stop this way. Although I don't think protecting a lame boy any reason for leaving." "No, it aint," said half a dozen of my friends. Their blood, too, was up. Said Nat Morris, "Mr. Paine, the way Dick has treated Taylor is a shame, and not a boy here wants him in school. Am I not right, boys?" "Yes, you are!" fairly shouted the boys. Another ominous silence followed. But when Mr. Paine, acting under some strange spell, said, "Get your books and go home," we arose and prepared to go. There were tearful eyes, and some of the girls cried as the good-bys were spoken. As there were threats of ducking Dick in the creek he hastened on home.

Some of us boys and girls stayed there a long time, discussing the affair and regretting it. It was a great fall for the teacher in our estimation; so unfortunate an ending to a long period of success and popularity. Little Taylor took my hand and said, "Alex, you've been mighty good to me." I caught him in my arms and hugged him. Slowly and sadly we turned away from the dear old house, where for so many years many of us had spent such

happy hours. The grand old trees that so long had sheltered and watched over us, as the evening breeze stole through their branches, seemed to nod their "farewells" to our retreating forms. We passed down into the hollow, and Crystal Spring passed out of our sight, but not out of our memory.

I wished to hear Cousin Jennie's opinion of the affair, and called at her home. She had heard a true account, and said, "Alex, you distinguished yourself to-day. I'd done just as you did. I can't see what has come over Mr. Paine." I replied, "I know. He's courting Miss Kate, and hasn't got the nerve to make Dick behave himself." It was comforting to hear words of approval, for I knew well now that Mr. Paine was not disturbing her dreams.

A few days after, Cousin Will called with a note for me, and to get a book Mr. Paine had lent me. The note read thus:

"Dear Alex:

"I see I did wrong and am sorry for it. 'Tis too late to mend the matter. I leave this evening. I'll never forget your kindness and friendship. Make a man of yourself. May God bless you. Good-by. Your friend,

"WM. F. PAINE."

I hastened into the parlor, closed the door, and wept bitterly, for I had loved him dearly. For a short while the fountain of my heart was almost sealed, but his note opened it, and tears came forth in a flood.

CHAPTER XXXIII

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

"In the long vista of the years to roll,
Let me not see my country's honor fade;
Oh! let me see our land retain its soul!
Her pride in Freedom, and not in Freedom's shade."
—*Keats.*

"Yonder comes a candidate. I can tell him by the way he rides." Thus spoke my father, standing by his gate, as a fellow-citizen who desired his vote rode up. Dismounting, he took my father's hand and gave it a long, hearty shake. "How do you do, Mr. Paxton? How is Mrs. Paxton? How are the little folks? All well? How are your crops?" He ranted on for some time, but he soon got to the plum in the pudding. "I am out for sheriff and most humbly solicit your vote. I think you and I agree on political questions, and you know me very well." "Yes," replied my father, smiling, "perhaps I know you too well! But I think you'll do." "Hurrah! for our side," exclaimed Mr. Frank Shields. "I think I'll beat Dick Wilson all to pieces! But time is precious." So, mounting his handsome horse, he cantered off, seeking new fields to win. Scarcely had he passed

out of sight when my father cried out, "Look yonder! If there isn't another one coming! Why, they're just swarming this morning." I should say the office of sheriff in that elder day was a very remunerative and responsible one. He collected the taxes, made arrests, and hanged criminals. The two political parties were the Whig and Democratic. My father was a Whig. The rival candidate was a loyal Democrat, and he then rode up.

He too shook hands, and asked after the welfare of the home-folks. He was more generous than his rival, for as a peace offering he gave us children each a stick of red candy. He seemed to fear there were rocks in his road, and in a nervous manner began his speech. "Mr. Paxton, I know your standing and influence in the community, and feel that if you will rally around me I'll be elected." "Well, you are doubtless qualified for the office, but Frank Shields and I are good friends, both politically and socially, and I shall be loyal to him." "Ah! yes, I see; birds of a feather flock together." "Yes, and the flock of honest birds doesn't want the owl or the hawk to come into their nests." He saw the point and his countenance fell. With a weather remark, he too pushed on, seeking what he could devour. Still,

the candy was sweet and I think we juveniles would have voted for him for any office. We felt like the old Pennsylvania Dutchman in the campaign of Andrew Jackson, who when they sent the election returns, sent this message, "If you haven't enough to elect him, let us know and we'll send some more."

Woe unto the candidate whose life had not been pure and upright. For his sins surely would be painted on the sky for all the world to see. Such a one generally had better sense than to try it. Some, with brazen face, would start in the race, and even if, on rough seas, they sailed to the polls, there they shipwrecked. For in those days a high standard of honor and honesty was demanded by the people. The more politic candidate generally carried in his saddle pockets a large flask of good old "apple jack," a more fiery argument than tariff or currency with some voters.

Even the candidate for governor rode around the doubtful districts, spending the night in some humble cabin in the mountain hollow, eating corn bread and fat bacon, and sleeping in some bed with the junior voters of the family. But he won votes and so won the prize.

Governor Barbour tells this incident of one of his electioneering tours. "My rival and I met

one evening at the home of a plain old farmer whose vote was worth much; for as grandpa voted, so did quite a long list of descendants. We did not touch on politics that night, but strove in entertaining our host and hostess with spicy stories. We slept in the same bed, the lion and the lamb lay down together! I decided that early in the morning I'd slip out and try to make my hay *before* the sun shone. But when I awoke the next morning the sun was peeping in the window, and gently reaching my hand toward my companion, lo! there was an aching void. The early bird was out and might get the worm. Looking out of the window I saw the old man cutting wood. I thought there was my chance and hurried down. Said I, 'Good morning, Mr. Moore. Let me show you how I can cut wood.' I forgot that I had not used an axe for twenty years. I made several awkward licks when the old fellow said, 'If your political axe don't cut any better, you'll never get to be gov-nor.' Soon I saw he was on the fence and had both legs on the other side. Then, remembering that, from observation the night before, the queen of the establishment seemed to hold the sceptre, I decided to find her and strike the political note. Not noticing her about the house, and as I saw no servant I thought she might

be out at the stable milking. Away I went on a tour of inspection, and peering through a crack saw her milking a young cow and my bedfellow holding the calf by the tail. My hopes vanished, for I knew my cause there was lost. I got my horse, thanked the old man for his kindness, and went to the next house for breakfast."

Another candidate told the following: "In the twilight I once stopped at an influential home and was ushered into the sitting-room before the candles were lighted. I noticed in the dim light two little tots sitting on the floor near the mother. Knowing that kind attention to her babies will open the road to any mother's heart, I thought there was my chance. So I called them to my knees and pronounced them the very image of their papa, and, in my zeal to win their mother's heart, I bent over and kissed them. I thought they tittered as though they enjoyed it, and a murmur of subdued laughter seemed to pervade the room which I thought an auspicious omen for me. I rubbed my hands in view of my success in first impressions. Soon after a light was brought in and I almost fainted from the shock when I saw I had kissed two greasy, black little negroes! Almost on my knees, I begged the father's pardon, and implored them not to tell of my mistake until

after the election. The pets were sent out of the room, and it was some time before my temperature of mind or body was normal."

In the Valley there was a sect called the Millerites who predicted the end of the world on a certain day, and had ready their robes of ascension. The leader of a band of these was a well-known scamp. Before light on the morning of this day they went out on a hill to be ready to mount up as Gabriel blew his trumpet. The leader, to be first in the upward flight, climbed on the top of a haystack, and under the burden of the occasion, being wearied, he fell asleep. Some mischievous young fellows had followed the band to see the fun. The snoring of the sleeping saint revealed his roosting-place. Then these wicked sinners stuck a match to the hay and in a second the flames and smoke began to roll around the dreaming victim. Shouting, they awoke him. Up he jumped, and cried out in the agony of despair, "Judgment day, and in hell! Just where I thought I'd be!" Some years after he started to run for some office, and the rehearsal by his opponent of the words uttered on the burning haystack just ran him off the race-track.

In that day men voted *viva voce* in a manly way. The name of the voter was called out and he told in a clear voice the name of his candidate.

There was a ring of honesty about the polls—no bribery, no repeating, no stuffing the ballot-box.

Some grand old men sat in the gubernatorial chair of the Old Dominion. There was "Extra Billy" Smith, one of the gentlemen of the old school. Courteous as a French cavalier, high-toned and loyal to the best interests of his Mother State, he wore the crown with grace and honor. I saw him once in Lexington at a dining at Professor James White's. He was in evening dress, erect, and soldierly in his step. Mrs. White came in to invite the guests out to the dining-room. As guest of honor she asked the ex-Governor to be her escort. Placing one hand on his breast and bowing very low he said, "Madam, I'd follow you to the ends of the earth."

Another of those giants was Henry A. Wise. I heard him on the Fourth of July in 1855, I think, at the V. M. I. commencement, deliver diplomas to the graduating class. He told them they would find the world harder than the mattress of their barracks, but a brave soldier must face and conquer every obstacle in his path. Those were grand old men who helped make the lustre that as a halo encircled the brow of their old mother, and whose names are a precious legacy handed down from the far off and glorious past.

CHAPTER XXXIV

WASHINGTON COLLEGE

"The helm may rust, the laurel bough may fade,
Oblivion's grasp may blunt the victor's blade:
But that bright, holy wreath which learning gives,
Untorn by hate, unharmed by envy, lives."

—*Grahame.*

Near the northern outskirts of Lexington, on a hill, stand the gray ruins of old Liberty Hall Academy. They look now just as they looked in my boyhood. There I learned that many years before, in 1780, Rev. William Graham, one of the pioneer teachers of the Valley, taught a classical school there and that the seed sown bloomed and blossomed into splendid fruitage. It was the forerunner of Washington College, founded in 1813, and George Washington gave liberally to its endowment. As a boy in 1854 I saw it for the first time. Having heard of it from early boyhood and seen its graduates who were men in the higher walks of life I had for it a veneration second only to old Falling Spring Church. The green campus, the long colonnade of massive white pillars, the statue of Washington on the top of the dome were all objects of great interest to me.

And then when the bell rang for change of classes, and the students crowded the colonnade going to their recitation rooms, I saw the busy life of the great school. I seemed to catch an inspiration, as it were, from the surroundings, and something seemed to whisper to me to strive to enter this temple of learning.

Some grand old men had been presidents of the school. In the administration of Dr. Henry Ruffner some mischievous students early one morning tied a calf in the Doctor's big arm chair in his class-room. When he entered, "Baa, baa!" greeted his ears with the laughter of the class already seated to see the fun. Taking in the situation at a glance he said, "Young gentlemen, I see you have an instructor *fully competent* to teach you, so I'll bid you good morning." The calf was soon on the campus and an apology sent to the Doctor.

Professor Campbell had a roguish cow that would steal into the campus and graze, to the annoyance of the students. One night some strong, bold fellows caught old Brindle and brought her into the central part of the lower floor of the Main Building. Then with paints they proceeded to give her a coat of many colors. The cow was bawling and the boys laughing as they commented

on "Old John's fancy stock." But lo! the Professor, who had caught a whisper of the frolic, came on the scene, and in the excitement and darkness worked his way up close to the painters as the finishing touches were being given. Speaking out in the meeting he said, "Young gentlemen, this is my property." "Oh my!" "Look out!" they cried, the cow was turned loose, and out went the lights. The music then was a universal medley, cow, professor, and boys all mixed up, the latter trying to escape the horns and hoofs of Brindle, and in the darkness each one thinking he would be gored or trampled on. In the stampede she upset several of her tormentors, but with little damage. The next day she was the admiration of all who saw her. Professor Campbell took it as a joke and did not report the boys.

In September, 1857, I was enrolled as a freshman in Washington College. I roomed in a building bearing the unpoetical name of "Cat Tail." The next building was Paradise, in which roomed some wild boys, so as to give rise to the expression, "Fallen Angels of Paradise." Many students roomed in the college buildings and boarded in the town.

In a short time I was visited by the hazing committee and "initiated." This was of a mild type,

and consisted in securing one's door and inserting through the keyhole a lighted blasting fuse, filling the room with the disagreeable smoke. If to get relief one put his head out of the window a bucket of water was thrown on the victim. Those who took the treatment in a pleasant way were visited only once, but woe unto him who raged in his den and wanted to fight!

I soon found out that studying at college and at Crystal Spring were different things. The curriculum was extensive, especially in mathematics, being ahead of any college in the State. In this department were descriptive geometry, mechanics, and fortifications and gunnery, equal to any university course. Professor A. L. Nelson was the instructor, and well did he do his work. With long, hard lessons I had often to burn the midnight oil.

Professor J. J. White, instructor in Greek, was my admiration. With a splendid figure and a voice that brought out all the music in the Greek words, he impressed all the students. One day in class he asked me if I could think of an English word derived from *"graus,"* meaning old. I piped out, "Granny," much to his amusement. I came near having to try to whip some wags who started to give me the above nickname.

Professor Junius Fishburne taught Latin the first half of session, but died, and Hugh White, a senior, taught the rest of the session. The college suffered a great loss in the death of Fishburne.

Great stress was laid on declamation, and every Friday evening a certain number had to declaim in the chapel. It made the knees of the freshmen shake to face that critical audience. My training at Crystal Spring helped me much in this exercise.

The discipline of the college was rigid. Students had to attend chapel twice a day, church once each Sabbath. Every afternoon there was "study hour" between 3 and 4 o'clock, when every one was required to be in his room and observe perfect quiet. A boy simply could not stay there and not study. Such discipline is productive of better results than the lax system of modern universities.

On the 19th of January the Graham Philanthropic Literary Society celebrated its anniversary. The buildings were lighted up and the beauty and chivalry of Lexington and neighboring country crowded the chapel. The exercises consisted of the "Anniversary Address," and a question discussed by four debaters.

The next great day was February 22d, celebrated in honor of the founder of the school. The memorial exercises were held in the Pres-

byterian Church, where two speakers, one from the Graham and the other from the Washington Society, delivered addresses. The cadet corps from the Virginia Military Institute marched to the church in martial array, and representatives from their two societies also made addresses. Owing to the classical training of the students their speeches were generally pronounced to be of a more highly finished tone. That night the Washington Society held its anniversity in the chapel.

Commencement was the great day of each session. With a brass band in the front and a procession headed by the board of trustees and faculty, we marched over to the Presbyterian Church, where the exercises were held. Prayer, the salutatory in Greek and Latin, two other speeches, the valedictory, presentation of diplomas and medals and, then "Good-bye" by the band, when the curtain dropped on the session, and all soon were "homeward bound."

The years passed, and I stepped from one class to another, until I was a senior. The average senior is not so wise in his own estimation as a sophomore. For he feels how much there is to learn and how little he has learned; that, as it were, he has only gathered a few shells on the

shore of the great ocean of knowledge whose waves are surging at his feet, and the deep swell of whose tides reach even to the "flaming walls of the universe."

On April 13th, 1861, we heard the booming of the guns at Fort Sumter, and also the deep mutterings of the approaching political storm. Old Virginia clung to the Union until Lincoln called for 75,000 men to whip the sovereign States back into the Union. The college was all aglow with the spirit of secession. A military company was formed, with Professor White as captain. We were drilled by cadets from the V. M. I. and it was well done. The professors and older men formed a squad, and the campus was alive with military commands and movements.

Doctor Junkin was bitter against secession, as he was a Northern man by birth and education. One night a secession flag was put on Main Building by the side of the statue. As the old Doctor came in the gate the next morning and his eye caught the flag, he jumped up about two feet, and cried out, "I'll take that flag down, if I have to tear the building down!" He had the janitor take it down and burn it, and the Doctor prayed that so might all perish who raised a hand against the Union.

But we were *determined* in the matter, and the next night a large flag was put up, and next morning it was floating beautifully over the building. A committee waited on the faculty and told them *that* flag should *not come down!* By the way, all the faculty, except the Doctor, were on our side. The flag floated on.

The Doctor was quiet, and we went into chapel orderly. When our class filed into his room and took seats he asked Reily on the right, "Mr. Reily, is the flag still on the building?" "Yes, Doctor," replied Reily. Then the old man read his resignation, closing with these words, "I'll never teach under a rebel flag!" We filed out quietly, and on that day recitations closed at the old college, for our time was taken up with drill and preparations soon to join Jackson at Harper's Ferry.

The morning came for our departure. We marched to the front of the court-house and a beautiful company flag was presented to us by the ladies of Falling Spring Church, with the Latin words on it "Pro aris et focis," *i. e.,* For our altars and firesides. Captain White, in quivering accents, accepted it. There were few dry eyes in that great crowd who came to see us off. The drum beat, and at the command, "Forward, march," we went to the foot of the hill, where,

getting into a long line of stage coaches and hacks, we tearfully took leave of dear old Lexington and our alma mater. The old bell was silent and the halls deserted. Now closes my ante-bellum story, for we were enrolled as soldiers in the greatest war of modern times.

"How can I see the brave and young
Fall in the cloud of war, and fall unsung?"

—*Addison.*

CHAPTER XXXV

TOURNAMENTS

"On his fiery steed betimes he rode,
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trod."

A relic of the Middle Ages, in a modified form, came down to old Virginia. It was the tournament. In those earlier days, however, mail-clad knights, with lances couched and on fiery steeds, rushed against each other in the arena. Their object was to kill or roll in the dust their opponents. It was often a contest to avenge a wrong or insult to some fair lady, who from her seat looked down with smiles upon the brave deeds of her champion. Having struck the shield of his antagonist with his spear, as a challenge, a herald proclaimed the contest, and amid the clash of steel and the shouts of the spectators one of them was doomed to fall.

Not so in Virginia. It was more a test of skill in horsemanship and steady nerve. A level track of some three hundred yards in length and lying by the edge of a grove, was chosen. At intervals of forty yards three poles were planted by the side of this track, with horizontal arms reaching

over it. From these arms rings three inches in diameter were suspended on wires so as to be easily taken off on a spear. The knight had to come by at full speed, and try to take the rings off the wires with his lance. The one who, in the appointed number of runs, took the most rings was the victor, and might crown some fair one as queen of love and beauty. It was no easy thing to take these rings, and many a hopeful knight flew by and left the rings untouched. Now and then one more fortunate would take all three rings at one dash, when the grove would ring with cheers.

It was in the order of a grand picnic. Notice of the day and place, was sent around and posted at central points, everybody being invited. The young people came from near and far. Dignified papas came to see their boys ride, and smiling mamas came, hoping to see their handsome daughters crowned, or, at least, be chosen as maids of honor. There were three of these maids, named by the three knights on the list of rings taken next to the highest. Many a rustic swain had pledged the crown to some sweet lass should he win. There was a judges' stand on which sat men of nerve and experience to decide on speed or any disputed points.

I recall a tournament near Falling Spring. It was a beautiful day in September, and the foliage of the grove had the gorgeous tints of autumn. In carriages, in wagons, and on horseback a great crowd gathered early in the day. And not least in the general estimation were the heaping baskets and ice cream freezers, fore-runners of a royal feast. The knights on the list were named from history—Montrose of England, Dunbar of Scotland, Killarney of Ireland, Navarre of France, etc. Each knight had a characteristic costume and wore on his breast a representation of the national emblem. The English wore the rose, the Scotch the thistle, the Irish the shamrock, and the French the lily. And as they rode, by twos, before the stand and saluted as they passed, they made a pretty picture. Down the long line of spectators, amid the clapping of hands and waving of handkerchiefs, they moved to the starting point. The riding was fine and the contests close.

The knight of Mountain Hollow, by his costume and mounting, attracted much attention. He wore a large straw hat from whose crown waved black feathers from a rooster's tail, a long linen duster, and long red stockings drawn up over his pants. He was mounted on a raw-boned white mule. As he made his runs the very ground

shook with the exclamations of the crowd. He gathered in the rings, too, along with the more aristocratic gentry. As he came clattering down the track, his hat flapping, his feathers waving, and coat-tail streaming out behind, the marshals could hardly keep the crowd off the track in their enthusiasm and eagerness to see the clown of the ring.

On the last run the contest was between the knights of Navarre and of Montrose, each having the same number of rings. The red rose flew by and two rings were taken. His friends cheered lustily. The crisis of the day was reached when the herald cried, "Make way for the Knight of Navarre!" as the crowd was again pressing on the track. On he came, his white plume flashing down the line, and all the rings were taken! The old grove rang with applause, the very trees seeming to nod their approval. We all were sure then that Miss Mary McC., one of the belles of the James, would be queen.

The lunch was spread on tables in the grove and the feast was enjoyed by all. The gallant knights from foreign lands all seemed to do justice to Virginia biscuit, fried chicken, custard pies, cake and ice cream. After a rest from the labors of the table, came the crowning of the queen. Sure enough, Miss Mary was chosen, and she made a

pretty, graceful one. And, *mirable dictu,* old "Mountain Hollow" named, as the second maid, Hazel, my blue-eyed friend of years ago. Cousin Jennie was chosen third maid by a fellow from New York, who had been spending the summer in the neighborhood, and rode as the "Black Horse" Knight. He was a down-east Yankee, who was dressed à la mode, and had a gold watch and big fob chain. He had been coming over the river to see my cousin far too often, I thought, for mere friendship. So the green-eyed monster whispered, "Look out! He will steal your sweet cousin and carry her to the North." And then I was wicked enough to wish him at the north pole and in the middle of an iceberg. And when he led Jennie up to the queen's court I forgot all about the tenth commandment, and was jealous and envious from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot.

A temporary throne was made and the queen was seated thereon, with her maids in order around her. A handsome speech was then made by a budding genius with oratorical gifts, after which the white-plumed knight with trembling hands placed the crown of flowers on Miss Mary's head, and the courtiers shouted, "Long live the Queen!" Then the maids knelt before her in meek obedience,

and the court in couples passed before the throne, bowing and saluting their sovereign, to all of whom she held out the golden sceptre. It was a beautiful and impressive scene. I slyly whispered to Cousin Jennie that if I had been the victor she would have been queen.

From the high-toned amusement of the tournament the Old Dominion often stooped to one that smacked of barbaric days. She stepped from the sublime to the ridiculous. I refer to a brutal performance called "gander pulling." There is a vein of brutality found in the so-called civilized man. We throw up our hands in pious horror at a bull-fight in Madrid, and yet have one in New York or Boston unmolested by police; and as to standing-room, why, there would scarcely be breathing-room! And this in enlightened Christian America! Why a gander, and not a rooster or a gobbler, was selected for this cruel sport must be found in the graceful outlines and prolongation of the neck. As the gander figures in history in saving the proud mistress of the world from the Gauls, his species, in succeeding ages, should have been spared this humiliation.

Be it to the honor of the women to say that this sport was patronized only by the men, but the patrician and the plebeian alike attended and rev-

eled in the sport. Here is the game as played by our fathers and grandsires.

A level piece of ground was selected and a pole planted by its side, with a cross bar the same as for the tournament. To this arm a gander, whose neck had been well greased, was hung by a cord tied around both feet. The position being uncomfortable, by the free use of his wings he was in a state of constant motion. The performance consisted in galloping by, at full speed, and grabbing the gander by the neck with such a wicked wrench as to end his days. It was hard to do, as the bird, flapping its wings on the approach of the horseman, would make all sorts of lunges, his head bobbing here and there. Then, when one got hold of his neck, unless his grip was strong and quickly clenched it was a failure. If, after a dash, the bird hung motionless, the prize was won. Then another bird was put in its place, and the sport continued until the last neck was wrenched out of place.

The fellow who killed the gander took it home and had "roast goose" for Sunday, as these refined entertainments were celebrated generally on Saturday evening. Under some of these birds, doubtless, the fire had to be kindled early in the morning, else in the evening there would be tired jaws and imperfect digestion in the home.

CHAPTER XXXVI

LAST VISIT TO CRYSTAL SPRING

"Oh! a wonderful stream is the river Time,
As it runs through the realm of tears,
With a faultless rhythm, and a musical rhyme,
And a broader sweep and a surge sublime,
As it blends in the ocean of years!"

—*B. B. Taylor.*

Thirty years have passed since, on that sad evening, we bade good-by to old Crystal Spring Seminary. Again I am sitting upon the old sycamore root that hangs by the spring. The waters are gushing out and gurgling over the clean pebbles down to the creek, just as they did in my happy school-boy days. I drink and they are sweet and refreshing as ever, better than any I have tasted in these long years. The trout are swimming in the hole on the opposite side of the creek. The old mountains are standing as of yore, grand and sublime. But, in many things, how great the change!

A few of the old trees near the spring are still standing, and some on the bank above. I go up on the gentle plateau and a new house, a neat dwelling, is standing where the old school building stood. Little children are playing in the yard,

and beyond stands a field of waving corn over our old playground. The grand oaks, hickories, and poplars that we so loved in those merry days of childhood have fallen, some by the axe and some by the storm.

Yet, standing on a rocky knoll, where a grand cedar once stood, I can point out many well-remembered spots. I go back to the spring, and throwing myself on the green sward near by I look up at the blue sky, and memory brings before me the past. I again hear sweet girlish voices, and the ringing shout of the playground. I am amid the buzzing of the schoolroom and hear the final good-bys of the last day. I hear the applause at our exhibition in the grove and I see Jennie's smile of approval. I hear Belle calling me to the grape-vine swing, and remember how cheerfully I obeyed the pretty princess. But I come back to the present and I ask where now are all those bright boys and girls that once made life so joyous and beautiful in that grove? And then I remember, remember that thirty years have flown since those gala days of youth. Time has brought changes in our lives and changes in our homes. A cruel war has swept over our fair Southern land, leaving in its track graves, and tears, and desolation. And then I remember that upon the ruin

wrought a new South has arisen; yet we love to linger amid the memories and monuments of the old.

Where are they, did I ask? Some are still fighting the battles of life, and many have passed over the river. Some of those girls are now mothers training their households in the good old paths. Many of those boys are found in various avenues of industry making good citizens and fulfilling the promises of their boyhood. Aunt Rachel sleeps in the cemetery of Falling Spring. I tread lightly as I walk around her grave. "Her deeds follow her." Mr. Paine was a gallant soldier in our Southern army, and now lies in the graveyard of Holly Springs. Cousin Will fell at First Manassas. On the next morning I helped to wrap him in his blanket and lay him in his soldier's grave, over which the wild rose blossoms, and around which the morning birds sing a requiem. William A., wounded in a gallant charge at Manassas, still halts on his leg. He is a leader at the bar and Attorney-General of Virginia.

I ask where is Dick B.? and echo answers, "Where?" The man was the outcome of the boy. A bloated debauchee, he was shot down to avenge an insult. Cousin Jennie, in a happy home, reigns as queen. Of the girl friends of my boyhood she

was the flower of them all. Belle lends a charm to a choice circle, a princess in the sphere in which she moves. And, as I look around and see that my only companions are those which Nature gives me, I can but think of the beautiful lines of Moore,

"I feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,
And all but me deserted."

Then, too, I remember that nearly all the dear old people are gone to their rest, and strangers tread in the ancestral halls. I am almost a stranger in the land of my fathers. Bidding farewell to the almost sacred spot, I slowly depart, and as I turn to take a last look at the dear old spring, these words, as true as ever poet sang, come into mind:

"But the bloom and the fragrance of those by-gone years
Will linger around its waters forever."