

From the Columbian Observer. The Spectre of the Forest; OR ANNALS OF THE HOUSATONIC.

A NEW-ENGLAND ROMANCE. By the Author of the Wilderness. In 2 vols. 12 mo. New-York. E. Bliss & White, 1823.

We have read this Romance with unqualified approbation, and a pleasure and interest seldom equalled in the perusal of similar works. The plot is well conceived, and still better executed; the story is well calculated to excite and protract anxious curiosity; and the language and style neat, appropriate, and often beautiful and eloquent.

The time and scene chosen by the Author of this work, is more adapted to give full scope to the true spirit of Romance, than any which perhaps our country affords. The middle of the seventeenth century, found the wilds of America, savage, desolate, and uncultivated. Cultivation was chiefly limited to the Atlantic borders; and Indian wars and depredations kept the settlers in a constant state of alarm, terror, and excitement. It was a time fraught with romantic adventures, tragical catastrophes, and disastrous events. The scene of his story is equally favourable to the deep interest of the work. The Housatonic, or the southern portion of Connecticut, was at that period the seat of superstition, bigotry, paritannical cant, and religious persecution. The round heads of Cromwell, expatriated from their native soil, inoculated Conner with the most bitter venom of their ignorant prejudices, and superstitious passions. Texts & parables in the minds of the ignorant, furnished motives for the blackest crimes, and justifications for the worst enormities. Such a scene and such a period afforded exuberant and fertile materials to a writer of Dr M'Henry's taste, judgment, and imagination; with powers to create and combine, as perfectly and as readily as he can embellish and amplify.

From the evidence before us in this work, we have additional reason to believe, that our native history and scenes, furnish us with the materials for romance, equal to any country of Europe; and that we require nothing but adequate public patronage for American productions, to incite genius to explore the latent treasures of our own country, and give "a local habitation and a name" to what is never dreamed of, nor supposed to exist, till it is produced before us in a tangible and visible shape. We want nothing but a proper appreciation of American productions, in order to place us on a level with Europe, in Letters as well as arms. The American Soldiers, and Naval officers, have their pay—and they fight and conquer, as becomes them. But the American Author is deemed to starvation, as well as disgrace, and yet is censured, because he does not spend his last breath, in efforts to amuse or enlighten a world who regard him with cold indifference, and ungratefully sneer at his labours, without even going into a scrutiny of the merits of his productions.

An outline of the story of the "Spectre of the Forest," as it would necessarily be very imperfect, would not much tend either to excite or allay curiosity. We shall, therefore, conclude this brief notice of what we esteem one of the best American productions of the kind—one, which the Author of Logan might envy, and even the Great Unknown not blush to have written. The following is a well drawn picture of the Warriors' and Hunters' mode of life:

"They pushed to the side of the river most distant from that on which the firing had taken place; but they soon perceived that they were not the object at which it had been directed. Five or six savages appeared chasing a man, who ran at full flight along the edge of the precipice to a place where it made an acute angle with the side of a deep ravine, forming an abrupt peak at a fearful height above the surface of the water.

"It is my father!" cried Ephraim. "God of mercy! his enemies will destroy him at last. He has been in search of me, unfortunate man! and they have now benighted him in where there is no possibility of his escape!"

"Let us hasten to his assistance," cried Parnell, pushing round the head of the canoe.

"Ah! we shall be too late," returned Ephraim. "See! he is already at the edge of that headland, and now can run neither way. Oh! Heaven protect him; he is now at a stand! Oh! Parnell! Parnell!"

"Courage! see the spirit of the old

man," shouted Parnell. "He turns upon them!—He fires!—One of them has fallen! But ah! the others run upon him—Heavens! what does the old man mean? With his gun in his hand he has leaped the precipice! Push across; alive or dead, we must take him up and protect him from the savages!"

When they approached, they were astonished to see old Bradley, standing and loading his gun under the shelter of a tree that grew almost close to the water's edge, a number of the branches of which he had broken down in his fall.

"Halloo my boys!" cried he, as soon as he discerned Ephraim in the boat, "Now for victory. Land here. Here are a couple of trees—excellent shelter for three of us. Let the savages now show themselves. We'll pepper them!"

In an instant Parnell and Ephraim were at their post. But they were not long there until four Indians, who had descended by the ravine, appeared at the point of the promontory only a few yards distant.

"Steady," cried Bradley, with the technical and satisfied tone in which a waggoner encourages his horses. That moment his gun went off, and an Indian rolled into the river—the next, Parnell and Ephraim also fired, and two more followed their red brother. The other Indian fled, but old Bradley pursued, and, with an aim that never missed, brought him down from the height to which he had clambered up the side of the ravine.

"Glorious, my lads! glorious!" exclaimed the old warrior, to Parnell and Ephraim, as they came forward to the place where he stood. "But there is a Jebuzite yet remaining. Stand close—we shall soon see him.

The two young men stood close, under cover of the overhanging precipice, as directed, while Bradley, having again loaded his piece, crouched behind a large fallen fragment of rock, from whence he kept an eye like a Lynx up the whole length of the ravine.

In a short time, the remaining savage, wishing to ascertain the fate of his companions, ventured cautiously and timidly to look over the brow of the ridge that overtopped the ravine.

"He is too far off yet," muttered Bradley—"Keep quiet—keep quiet, lads—the Philistine may come nearer."

Not being able to discover any thing satisfactory from his first station, the anxious Indian ventured to descend for some distance. But his fears prevailing over every other feeling, he soon paused, and after a short deliberation, turned to fly from the dangerous ground. That instant his watchful foe's unerring weapon went off, and he fell lifeless, a ball having penetrated his brain and scattered it on the spot.

"Huzza! the victory is now complete," exclaimed Bradley. "Let us spoil the Heathen of their arms, and then for the canoe, my lads—it is the easiest way of travelling down stream."

But besides the arms of the Indians, Bradley also took care to secure their scalps, in spite of the remonstrances of Parnell, who observed—

"It is an unnecessary and cruel practice to mangle the slain; and, I should think, is too close an imitation of our barbarous enemies, to be followed by christians."

"Psha! youth," cried Bradley. "If it were not for spoiling a good soldier, I should like you to turn preacher. You have an excellent knack at the cant, lad! But you have paid for your learning—you have served an apprenticeship to the trade of spirit-groaning—and I excuse you, for you handle a musket well. But Hugh Bradley has had his own way, these eighteen years past, in spite of both clergy and juryman; and—give me your hand, boy—he cannot now be put off it, by the squeamishness of a strippling."

Parnell, perceiving that moralising to such an auditor would be literally to cast pearls before swine, and not wishing to disturb the harmony which

* An incident, similar to this, in almost all its particulars, is stated to have taken place, in 1793, at M'Kee's Rocks, on the Ohio, a few miles below Pittsburg. From the top of one of these rocks, nearly two hundred feet high, Braddy, a celebrated Indian hunter, was compelled to leap, to save himself from a band of savage pursuers, who had there enclosed him on all sides, except next the precipice, standing on the edge of which, in the shelter of a tree, he for some time, with his loaded rifle, kept them at bay, as a lion would a band of mastiffs had taken place. The warriors seized their arms, and dividing into small parties, raised the cry of pursuit, and prey, rushed upon him, when, to their astonishment, he leaped the precipice, and was, in a few minutes, seen in safety, on the other side of the river. The place is called "Braddy's Leap," to this day.

was so necessary for their mutual safety, shook the hand which Bradley held out to him, in token of his remonstrance having given no offence, and observed—

"Take your own course in the matter, Mr Bradley. 'Tis you who have principally achieved the victory; and I have, perhaps no right to interfere with your mode of disposing of the slain, which, after all can do them no injury."

"Spoken like a philosopher, by Hombomack!" cried Bradley—"But, come my lads! let us to the canoe, and push boldly for a swift voyage to the St. Lawrence."

About an hour after their embarkation the sun went down, and, a storm threatening, they were obliged to look out for a place of shelter. They accordingly put ashore on the southern side of the river, and soon found an excavation amidst the rocky banks sufficient for their purpose. Here, having supped upon part of the venison they had brought from the Huron village, Bradley related the incidents that had brought him to that quarter of the country.

"Ever since the war broke out," said he, "I have of course been pretty industrious in my occupation; and my store of scalps has more than trebled its number. As for the saints and psalm-singers of New-Haven, who would some years ago, if they had dared, have hanged me, first as an Indian-killer, and then for a wizard, why, they now call me a hero, and have more than once furnished me with a handsome supply of powder and ball. But a fig for their kindness; I know its value, Mr Parnell. Their own dear interests are at the bottom of it.

"But no matter; I will pass over many a neat and glorious job, in which I and a few fearless boys gave the blood of the heathen to manure the earth, and their flesh to fatten the wolves and panthers. I will tell thee, my strippling. They happened, a few weeks since, to give rather hot water to a party of us. We were only eight in number, and, for aught I know, they might have been ten times that many. But the worst of it was, we were fatigued, and at least one half of us asleep, when they came upon us.

They killed, or, at least, disabled half a dozen of us, I believe, at the first onset.

"They missed me, however. I shot one of them thro' the body, and immediately darted behind a rock that was near me and turning the angle of a small hill, kept running for a few minutes unseen, and then ascended to an eminence, on which I threw myself upon the ground, among the brush-wood, and watched their motions.

"I knew them to be a party of Hurons. I saw them scalping the half dozen of my friends they had killed, and, at the same time, binding the hands of that unfortunate young sprig of mine behind his back.

"God be thanked, Ephraim is living yet, said I; a chance may turn up, to rescue him. I will, at any rate, dog the savages, if I should follow them to the earth's end, while he is in their power; and if they attempt to torture or destroy him, I may make some of them to smart for it.

"Well! it so happened that, for the space of three weeks, I could make nothing of them. Whether they suspected that I was on the watch, I cannot tell, but they kept too closely together for me to hurt them. At length one fellow lagged one day a little behind the party. I durst not shoot him, for fear of alarming the rest; but I ran upon him unawares, and knocking him down, held the muzzle of my gun to his heart. I threatened to fire if he made any noise. He could speak some English, and understood me. I inquired what his companions intended to do with their prisoner, and was informed that he had been adopted into the family of one of their chiefs, and that consequently, his life was in no danger.

"It is not in my nature to spare an Indian. My heart would never forgive me if I did. I would rather spare a rattlesnake. I plunged my dagger into the fellow's heart, took his scalp, and left him.

"In three or four days after this affair the party reached the Huron village. I hovered round it but for one night. They assembled the next day on an adjoining hill to perform some of their barbarous ceremonies. I watched there for an opportunity to destroy some of their stragglers. But about the middle of the day their assembly suddenly broke up, and they all ran back to the village. I perceived that some alarm had taken place. The warriors seized their arms, and dividing into small parties, raised the cry of pursuit, and prey, rushed upon him, when, to their astonishment, he leaped the precipice, and was, in a few minutes, seen in safety, on the other side of the river. I killed two of them, without being discovered.

"But the next day they espied me

Just as I sent a ball into the heart of one of them. I fled, and they lost me a short time, during which I reloaded and attempted to gain the river, for the purpose of crossing it so as to get out of their reach. But I was ignorant of the country, and came upon a precipice which I could not descend. The savages there again discovered me, and giving me chase, I became so hemmed in that I was obliged to take the leap, which, my lads, I believe, somewhat alarmed you. But it was neck or nothing. And now my hearts of bickory! all's right. Hugh Bradley still lives to torment the Coperskins. But hush! what growling is that? A wild beast within here, by hombomack! See the fiery eyes of it burning like lamps! To your guns, my brave fellows!"

That instant a second pair of blazing eyes were seen, and a louder and more terrific growl heard.

"Two of them, by the devil!" exclaimed Bradley. Lads be cool, and mind your hits. This is damned work worse than dealing with savages."

That moment one of the beasts, a huge panther, made a spring upon Bradley, who was rather in advance of the others. It was too dark to take sure aim; but the muzzle of his gun accidentally struck between the glaring eyes of the assailing animal, and a ball lodged instantly in its brain. It fell, without farther struggle, a dead weight upon Bradley, overturning him by its weight upon the ground.

The other panther now darted forward in aid of its companion; but Bradley was shielded from its fangs by the dead carcass which covered him. Parnell and Ephraim both fired at it, but neither of the wounds they made were mortal, and the infuriated animal would have rushed forward, and torn them to pieces, had not Bradley seized one of its hinder legs and held it firmly to the spot.

"Plunge your daggers into its heart instantly, my lads," cried Bradley, "or it will trample me to death."

Parnell hastened to obey, but the panther caught him, and threw him down; and its distended jaws would have immediately fixed themselves in his neck, had he not with wonderful presence of mind, dexterously plunged his dagger into the animal's mouth, so forcibly that it perforated one of the palate bones and stuck there. Ephraim's weapon, however, soon decided the contest, for it reached the animal's heart, who that moment fell, and expired by the side of its companion.

"Well done, Ephraim!" shouted Bradley. "All's well, if Parnell be not killed," continued he, extricating himself from beneath the dead animals.

"I have only had the coat torn off my shoulders," said Parnell, rising from the ground. But I fear that you must be severely hurt."

"I have only," replied Bradley, "got arms and legs bruized by the dead weight of these clumsy brutes, whom we now, thank Heaven, sent to perdition for their inhospitality. Could they not have allowed us the shelter of their roof for one night? But damn them, they are no better than the savages in their dispositions."

"We have now taken forcible possession of their habitation," said Parnell. "But I wonder they did not endeavor to expel us at our first intrusion."

A singular alteration has taken place in the papers of New Orleans, in which one party charges the other with endeavoring to form an interest inimical to the permanency of the United States, and with a determination to establish the throne of Louis XVIIIth in that country.

A curious story is in circulation and is pretty generally credited—Two men went into a grocery store, a few evenings ago, which is kept by an elderly woman in south eleventh street, and requested permission to put a barrel into her store for a few hours. The men not returning, and the store becoming rather tainted the barrel was broken open, and a dead negro was found in the vessel with six dollars in his hand, which have since been appropriated to bury him. (Dem. Press.)

MURDER.

A man by the name of Hannon, residing near Monticello, recently shot his overseer in the breast and killed him. He was taken shortly after and carried to the corpse, several persons among the bystanders then touched it, but the wound being hard and dry no blood appeared: Mr Hannon was then told to touch the body—he did so, and the blood gushed from the wound as if it had been just made. This was done in the faith of the common superstition that the murderer's touch will always cause the wound of his victim to bleed. Superstition in every shape is dangerous, and is always a sad ordeal by which to determine guilt or innocence. Epitaphium.

From the New York Gazette, November 11.

Mr. Van Rans, the owner of the famous horse ECLIPSE, has an offer of 2500 dollars for the use of him, in Kentucky, during the next season, which offer he will probably accept, unless he receive here 40 subscriptions at 50 dollars each, before the first of December next, in which case he will be kept near the city, as usual.

Singular marriage. A Mr. Miller aged 40, was lately married to a Mrs. James, not quite 15, by the Rev. Mr. Richardson. All the parties were of Hartford County, Maryland. It appears that Mr. Richardson married the above Miller to his first wife, about five years before the last one was born; and she although not 15 years of age, has now been united in the holy bonds of matrimony no less than three times.

Elkton Press.

HYPOCHONDRIAC.

A farmer residing at Field's Point, (says a Providence paper,) unluckily had a spouse, subject to epileptic affections, which frequently filled her cranium with odd conceits. At the destruction of the Gaspee frigate in the bay below, her husband, a man of unbounded patriotism, was one of the brave fellows who followed the gallant Mr. John Brown, in the expedition against the vessel; leaving his wife una-companied, but by her little brood of chubby children. During the absence of the husband, she was visited by one of her hypochondriacal fits, and conceived herself to be a goose, determined to have a setting. Accordingly she built a nest, in the cellar, producing a quantity of eggs on which she located herself with every mark of irascibility, discernable in a goose, during the process of sitting.

On the return of the husband, he, to his astonishment, found his wife had subscribed to the rites and ceremonies observed by the goose of the interesting season of incubation; preferring the flock of embryo goslings, to the ruddy faces of a numerous progeny. He protested in vain against her conduct; he solicited, persuaded and implored to no purpose, for she replied to his expostulations and entreaties with a cackle and a rustling of her petticoats. A physician was sent for who informed the unhappy husband that the malady of his wife would not yield to the most powerful nostrums. But, said he, if she possesses any article for which she has incalculable value, bring it to me, and I will undertake to remove or at least palliate her disorder. A China bowl, which the lady had received from her mother at the celebration of her nuptials, was produced, with an assurance that of all things on earth, she valued it most highly.

The physician took it, went to the cellar, and ordered her to rise. She cackled, and rustled her petticoats. "Rise instantly," said the doctor, "or this bowl I will shiver in ten thousand pieces." She cackled more vehemently—he drew back his arm and aimed at the stone wall. "Villain break it if you dare," she exclaimed, and starting from the nest, wrested from the jaws of destruction the bowl which she prized so highly, and which happily affected her cure. She lived many years afterwards, exempt from her afflictions which so long rendered her early life miserable, and annually offered sacrifices and libations to the wonder working bowl!

Alexandria, D. C. Oct. 29.

A man, a shememaker by profession, in a state of inebriation fell into the river on Tuesday last, from off a vessel lying at central wharf, and was drowned. Poor fellow! notwithstanding the many soles he had a-mended in this world, old cobbling death has deprived him of his all. It is hoped, however, his is now provided with better quarters, than his last in this world.

Herald.

At a late exhibition under the direction of the Agricultural Society, at Schohaire, N. Y. a woman presented three infant daughters that she had at one birth. There was no premium established, but a small number of bachelors presented her with \$5 each, making up a handsome purse.

The case of the good lady would perhaps come with more propriety under the cognizance of the Manufacturer's Society.—U. S. Gaz.

From the Huntsville Republican.

At the circuit court of this county, now sitting, chief justice CLAY presiding, was tried an action brought on by a Miss CONNALLY, against a Mr. CHASE, for breach of promise of marriage. The case we understand was fully made out, with the aggravating circumstances of seduction, and the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff of \$1000. The defendant's property was estimated at \$2500.