

# Carlisle Herald and Expositor.

A FAMILY NEWSPAPER—DEVOTED TO GENERAL INTELLIGENCE, ADVERTISING, POLITICS, LITERATURE, MORALITY, AGRICULTURE, ARTS AND SCIENCES, AMUSEMENT, &c. &c.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY B. BEATTY.

CARLISLE, PA. MARCH 12, 1864.

NUMBER 22.

VOLUME XLVI.

## POETRY.

### THE SOUL'S IDEAL.

There was a dream of life and youth,  
That came to me, I know not when the time;  
A creature made of loveliness and truth,  
With form and feature tranquil yet sublime:  
No angel was it, but a thing half real,  
And soon I loved her, as my soul's ideal.  
She dwelt amid the household gods with me,  
To give all genial propinquities truth and grace,  
The real in their earnestness to see,  
Touched with the halo beaming from her face;  
All shapes that weak, fond fancy might beguile,  
Abashed were withered by her placid smile.  
She led me where all shapes of beauty dwelt;  
She gave to sense a something more than earth,  
And when my soul its strange inquiet felt,  
She whispered promise of a higher life to me.  
She gave me strength, she lifted life to me,  
And thus more real grew her own fair face.  
She changed not, this creature of the soul,  
Save that more earnest, tender in her guise;  
In every mood I feel her calm control,  
And own the pleading of her heavenly eyes;  
A gentle, soothing blendeth with the smile,  
That thoughtfulness or joy may well beguile.  
She keeps yet her fresh and buoyant grace,  
But when intent I look within her eyes,  
A something nobler day by day I trace,  
Like blue that deepens in the evening skies;  
And thus rewarding worthier love she came,  
Each day her face is growing more divine.  
She taught me faith and constancy to know,  
To meekly wait for the appointed one,  
Despite the yearning felt for evermore,  
While dwells the soul, companions and lone,  
And when at length content upon me came,  
Love and the Soul's Ideal were the same.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### THE PRAIRIE AND THE SWAMP.

AN ADVENTURE IN LOUISIANA.

It was a sultry September afternoon in the year 18—, My friend Carleton and myself had been three days wandering about the prairies, and had nearly filled our tin boxes and other receptacles with specimens of rare and curious plants. But we had not escaped paying the penalty of our zeal as naturalists, in the shape of a perfect roasting from the sun, which had shot down its rays during the whole time of our ramble, with an ardor only to be appreciated by those who have visited the Louisiana prairies. What matters worse, our little store of wine had been early expended; some Tafia, with which we had replenished our flasks, had also disappeared; and the water we met with, besides being rare, contained so much vegetable and animal matter, as to be undrinkable unless qualified in some manner. In this dilemma, we came to a halt under a clump of hickory trees, and dispatched Martin, Carleton's Acadian servant, upon a voyage of discovery. He had assured us that we must ere long fall in with some party of Americans—or Cochon Yankees, as he called them—who, in spite of the hatred borne them by the Acadians and Creoles, were daily becoming more numerous in the country.

After waiting, in anxious expectation of Martin's return, for a full hour, during which the air seemed to get more and more sultry, my companion began to wax impatient. "What can the fellow be about?" cried he. "Give a blast on the horn!" he added, handling me the instrument; "I can't sound it myself, for my tongue cleaves to my palate from the heat and drought."

I put the horn to my mouth, and gave a blast. But the tones emitted were not the clear echo awakening sounds that cheer and strengthen the hunter: They were dull and short, as though the air had lost all elasticity and vibration, and by its weight crushed back the sounds into the horn. It was a warning of some insupportable danger. We gazed around us, and saw that others were not wanting.

The spot where we had halted was on the edge of one of those pine forests that extended, almost without interruption, from the hills of the Cote d'Azur to the Opelousa mountains, and of a vast prairie, sprinkled here and there with palmetto fields, clumps of trees, and broad patches of brushwood, which appeared mere dark specks on the immense extent of plain that lay before us, covered with grass of the brightest green, and so long, as to reach up to our horses' shoulders. To the right was a plantation of palmettos, half a mile wide, and bounded by a sort of creek or gully, the banks of which were covered with gigantic cypress trees. Beyond this, more prairie and a wood of evergreen oak. To the east, an impenetrable thicket of magnolias, papaves, oak and bean trees—to the north, the pine wood, before mentioned.

Such was the rich landscape we had been surrounded by a short hour before. But now, on looking around, we found the scene changed; and our horizon became far more limited by rising clouds of bluish grey vapour, which approached us rapidly from the west. Each moment this fog appeared to become thicker, the sun no longer dazzled our eyes when we gazed at it, but showed through the mist like a pale moon; the outlines of the forest disappeared, veiled from our sight by masses of vapour; and the air, which, during the morning, had been light and elastic, although difficult to inhale. The part of the prairie

that remained visible, presented the appearance of a narrow, misty valley, enclosed between two mighty ranges of grey mountains, which the fog represented. As we gazed around us and beheld these strange phenomena, our eyes met, and we read in each other's countenance that embarrassment which the bravest and most light-hearted are apt to feel, when hemmed in by perils of which they cannot conjecture the nature.

"Fire off your gun," said I to Carleton. I started as I spoke at the alteration in my own voice. The gun went off, but the report was, as it were, stifled by the compressed atmosphere. It did not even alarm some water-fowl that were plashing and floundering in the creek a few hundred paces from us.

"Look at our horses!" exclaimed Carleton. "They are surely going mad." The animals were evidently uneasy at something. They pricked up their ears, turned half round, and gazed with startled eye behind them; then strained with their heads and necks in the opposite direction to the vapor, snorting violently, and at last trying to break away from the trees to which they were tied. A short time previously they had appeared much fatigued, but now they were all fire and impatience.

"It is impossible to remain here," said Carleton.

"But whither shall we go?"

"Wherever our horses choose to take us."

We untied the animals and sprang upon them. But scarcely were we in the saddle when they started off at a pace as frantic as if a pack of wolves had been at their heels; and taking the direction of the creek which ran between the palmetto plantation and a cypress wood, continued along its banks at the same wild gallop. As we advanced the creek began to widen; in place of palmettos, clumps of marsh reeds, and rushes showed themselves here and there. An earthy stillness prevailed, only broken now and then by the cry of a wild goose; and even that appeared strange and unnatural in its sound.

"What can be the meaning of this?" cried Carleton. "I am burning with heat, and yet I have not the slightest moisture on my skin. All these signs are incomprehensible. For God's sake, sound the horn again."

I did so, but this time the sound seemed to be forced back through the horn, and to die away upon my lips. The air was so hot and parching, that our horses coats, which a short time previously had been dripping with sweat, were now perfectly dry, and the hair plastered upon them; the animals' tongues hung out of their mouths, and they seemed panting for cooler air. "Look yonder!" cried Carleton, and he pointed to the line of the horizon, which had hitherto been of grey, lead-colored vapour. It was now becoming reddish in the south-west quarter, and the vapour had taken the appearance of smoke. At the same time we heard a sort of distant crackling, like a heavy running-fire of musketry, and which was repeated at short intervals. Each time it was heard, our horses appeared scared and trembling.

The creek was getting rapidly wider, and the ground so swampy that it was impossible to proceed further. Seeing this we agreed to return to the prairie, and try if it were not cooler among the palmettos. But when we came to the place where we had crossed the creek, our horses refused to take the leap again, and it was with the greatest difficulty we at length forced them over. All this time the redness in the horizon was getting brighter; and the atmosphere hotter and drier; the smoke had spread over prairie, forest, and plantations. We continued retracing our steps as well as we could to the spot where we had halted. "See there," said Carleton; "not half an hour ago those reeds were as fresh and green as if they had just sprung out of the earth, and now look at them—the leaves are hanging down, parched and curled up by the heat."

The whole prairie, the whole horizon to the southwest, was now one mass of dense smoke, through which the sun's disc looked scarcely brighter than a paper lantern. Behind the thick curtains which thus concealed every thing from our view, we heard a loud hissing, like that of a multitude of snakes; the smoke was stifling and unbearable; our horses again turned panting round, and tore madly towards the creek. On reaching it we dismounted, but from leaping into the water. The streaks of red to our right became brighter and brighter; and gleamed through the higher dark trunks of the cypress-trees. The crackling and hissing grew louder than ever. Suddenly the frightful truth flashed upon us, and at the very same moment Carleton and I exclaimed, "The prairie is on fire!"

As we uttered the words, there was a loud rustling behind us, and a herd of deer broke headlong through a thicket of tall reeds and bulrushes, and dashed up to their necks into the water. There they remained, not flitting across to us, little

more than their heads above the surface, gazing at us, as though imploring our help and compassion. We fancied we could see tears in the poor beasts' eyes.

"We looked behind us. On came the pillars of flame, flickering and threatening through the smoke, licking up all before them; and, at times, a gust of so hot and blasting a wind as seemed to dry the very marrow in our bones. The roaring of the fire was now distinctly audible, mingled with hissing, whistling sounds, and crackling noises, as if mighty trees falling. Suddenly a bright flame shot up through the stifling smoke, and immediately afterwards a sea of fire burst upon our aching eyeballs. The whole palmetto field was in flames.

The heat was so great, that we every moment expected to see our clothes take fire. Our horses dragged us still nearer to the creek, sprang into the water, and drew us toward the bank after them. Another rustling and noise in the thicket of reeds. A she-bear, with her cubs at her heels, came towards us; and at the same time a second herd of deer rushed into the water not twenty yards from where we were standing. We pointed our guns at the bears; they moved off towards the deer, who remained unharmed at their approach; and there they stood, bears and deer, and not five paces apart, but taking no more notice of each other than if they had been animals of the same species.

More beasts now came flocking into the river. Deer, wolves, foxes, horses—all came in crowds to seek shelter in one element from the fury of another. Most of them, however, went further up the creek, where it took a north-easterly direction, and widened into a sort of lake. Those that had first arrived began to follow the new-comers, and we did the same.

Suddenly the baying of hounds was heard. "Hurrah! there are dogs; men must be near." A volley from a dozen rifles was the answer to our explanation. "The shots were fired not two hundred yards from us, yet we saw nothing of the persons who fired them. The wild beasts around us trembled and crouched before this new danger, but did not attempt to move a step. We ourselves were standing in the midst of them up to our waists in water. "Who goes there?" we shouted. Another volley; and this time not one hundred yards off. We saw the flashes of the pieces, and heard voices talking in a dialect compounded of French and Indian. We perceived that we had to do with Acadians. A third volley, and the bullets whistled about our ears. It was getting past a joke. "Halt!" shouted we, "stop firing till you see what you are firing at!" There was a dead silence for a moment, then a burst of savage laughter. "Fire! fire!" cried two or three voices.

"If you fire," cried I, "look out for yourselves, for we shall do the same. Have a care what you are about."

"Morbleu! Sacre!" roared half a score of voices. Who is that who dares to give us orders? Fire on the dogs!"

"If you do, we return it."

"Sacre!" screamed the savages. "They are gentlemen from the towns. Their speech betrays them. Shoot them—the dogs, the spies! What do they want in the prairie!"

"Your blood be on your own heads," cried I. And, with the feeling of desperate men, we levelled our guns in the direction in which we had seen the flashes of the last volley. At that moment—"Halt! What is here!" shouted a stentorian voice close to us:

"Stop firing, or you are dead men," cried five or six other voices.

"Sacre? ce sont les Americains," muttered the Acadians.

"Monsieur Carleton!" cried a voice.

"Here!" replied my friend. A boat shot out of the smoke, between us and our antagonists. Carleton's servant was in it. The next moment we were surrounded by a score of Acadians and a half-a-dozen Americans.

It appeared that the Acadians, so soon as they perceived the prairie to be on fire, had got into a boat and descended a creek that flowed into the Chicot creek on which we now were. The beasts of the forest and prairie, flying to the water, found themselves enclosed in the angle formed by the two creeks, and their retreat being cut off by the fire, they fell an easy prey to the Acadians, wild, half-savage fellows, who slaughtered them in a profusion and with a brutality that excited our disgust, a feeling which the Americans seemed to share.

"Well, stranger!" said one of the latter, an old man, to Carleton, "do you go with them Acadians or come with us?"

"Who are you my friends?"

"recon?" observed the American who had spoken before.

"No, indeed, my friend," said I. "I told you a ready," replied the man with some degree of pride, "we ain't your friends; but if you choose to accept American hospitality, you're welcome."

We glanced at the Acadians, who were still firing, and dragging the beasts they slaughtered into their boat and to the shore. They appeared perfect savages, and there was little temptation to seek guidance or assistance at their hands.

"If it is agreeable to you, we will accompany you," said I to the American, making a step towards the boat. We were eager to be off, for the heat and smoke were unbearable. He answered neither yes nor no. His attention seemed to be taken up by the proceedings of the Acadians.

"They're worse than Injuns," said he to a young man standing by him. "They shoot more in an hour than they could eat in a year, in their tartan French wastefulness."

"I've a notion 'o' makin' 'em leave off," replied the young man.

"The country's theirs, or their masters' rejoined the other. "I reckon it's no business of ours."

This dialogue was carried on with the greatest possible deliberation and under circumstances in which none but a Yankee would have thought of wasting time in words. A prairie twenty miles long and ten broad and a couple of miles of palmetto ground, all in a blaze—the flames driving in nearer every minute, and having in some places, already reached up to the shores of the creek. On the other side a couple of dozen wild Acadians firing right and left, without caring where or whom their bullets struck. Carleton and myself, up to our waists in water, and the Americans, chatting together as unconcernedly as if they had been sitting under the roofs of their own block houses.

"Do you live far from here?" said I at last to the Yankee, rather impatiently.

"Not so far as I sometimes wish," answered he, with a contemptuous glance at the Acadians, "but far enough to get you an appetite for your supper, if you ain't got one already." And taking a tin roll of tobacco out of his pocket, he bit off a piece of it, laid his hands on the muzzle of his rifle, leant his chin upon his hands, and seemed to have forgotten all about us.

"This apathy became intolerable to men in our situation.

"My good man," said I, "will you put your hospitable offer into execution, and take—"

I could not continue, for I was literally suffocated with heat and smoke. The very water of the creek was getting warm.

"I've a notion," said the Yankee, with his usual drawl, and apparently only just perceiving our distress, "I've a notion we had better be movin' out o' the way o' the fire. Now, strangers, in with you." And he helped Carleton and myself into the boat we lay down and became insensible from heat and exhaustion.

When we recovered our senses, we found ourselves in the bottom of the boat, and the old Yankee standing by us with a bottle of whiskey in his hand, which he invited us to taste. We felt better for the cordial and began to look around us.

Before us lay an apparently interminable cypress swamp, behind us a sheet of water formed by the junction of the two creeks, and at present overhung by a mass of smoke that concealed the horizon from our view. From time to time there was a burst of flame that lit up the swamp, and caused the cypress trees to appear as if they grew out of a sea of fire.

"Come," said the old Yankee, "we must get on. It is near sunset, and we have far to go."

"And which way does our road lie?" I asked.

"Across the cypress swamp, unless you'd rather go round it."

"The shortest road is the best," said Carleton.

"The shortest road is the best!" repeated the Yankee, contemptuously, and turning to his companions. "Spoken like a true Britisher. Well, he shall have his own way, and the more so as I believe it to be as good a one as the other." James added two creeks, and their retreat being cut off by the fire, they fell an easy prey to the Acadians, wild, half-savage fellows, who slaughtered them in a profusion and with a brutality that excited our disgust, a feeling which the Americans seemed to share.

"Well, stranger!" said one of the latter, an old man, to Carleton, "do you go with them Acadians or come with us?"

creepers, which rose out of the vast depth of mud that formed the swamp.

"Here's the path," said he. "Then we'll wait and come-round with our horses," I replied. "Where shall we find them?"

"As you please, stranger. We shall cross the swamp. Only, if you can't do like your horses, and sup off bulrushes, you are likely to faint for the next twenty-four hours."

"And why so? There is game and wild fowl for the shooting."

"No doubt there is if you can ent them raw, like the Injuns. Where will you find within two miles round, a square foot of dry land to make your fire on?"

"To say the truth, we did not altogether like the company we had fallen amongst. These squatters bore in general but an indifferent character. They were said to fear neither God nor man, to trust entirely to their axe and their rifle, and to be little scrupulous in questions of property; in short, to be scarce less wild and dangerous than the Indians themselves."

The Yankee who had hitherto acted as spokesman, and who seemed to be in some way or other the chief of the party, was a man apparently near sixty years of age, upwards of six feet high, thin in person but with such bone and muscle as indicated great strength in the possessor. His features were keen and sharp; his eye like a falcon's; his bearing and manners bespoke an exalted opinion of himself, (at least as far as we were concerned) a tolerable degree of contempt for others. His dress consisted of a jacket of skins, secured round the waist by a girdle, in which was stowed a long knife; leather breeches, a straw hat without a brim, and moccasins. His companion was similarly accoutred.

"Where is Martin?" cried Carleton.

"Do you mean the Acadian lad who brought us to you?"

"The same."

The Yankee pointed towards the smoke. "Yonder, no doubt, with his countrymen; but I reckon their infernal hunt is over. I hear no more shots."

"Then we will go to him. But where are our horses?"

"I've a notion," said one of the younger men, "the stranger don't rightly know what he wants. Your horses are grazing half a mile off. You would not have had us make the poor beasts swim through the creek to the pier of the boat? 'Lajah is with them."

"And what will he do with them?"

"Joel is going back with the boat, and when the fire is over he will bring them round said the older Yankee. "You don't suppose—" added he. He left the sentence unfinished, but a smile of scornful meaning flitted over his features.

I looked at Carleton. He nodded.

"We will go with you," said I, and trust entirely to your guidance."

"You do well," was the brief reply. "Joel," added he, turning to one of the younger men, "where are the torches? We shall want them!"

"Torches!" exclaimed I.

The Yankee gave me a look, as much as to say—"You must meddle with every thing." "Yes," replied he, "and, if you had ten lives, it would be as much as they are all worth to enter this swamp without torches." So saying he struck fire, and selecting a couple of pine splinters from several lying in the boat, he lighted them doing every thing with such extraordinary deliberation, and so oddly, that in spite of our unpleasant situation, we could scarcely help laughing. Meantime the boat pushed off with two men in it, leaving Carleton, myself, the old man, and another American, standing at the edge of the swamp.

"Follow me, step by step, and as if you were treading on eggs," said our leader; "and you, Jonathan, have an eye to the strangers, and don't wait till they are up to their necks in mud to pick them out of it."

We did not feel much comforted by this speech, but mustering all our courage, we strode on after our plain spoken guide.

We had proceeded but a very short distance into the swamp before we found out the use of the torches. The huge cypress trees shot up to the height of fifty feet, entirely free from branches, which then however, spread out making the trees appear like gigantic umbrellas, and covering the whole morass with an impenetrable roof, through which not even a sunbeam could find a passage. On looking behind we saw day light at the entrance of the swamp; as at the mouth of a vast cavern. The further we went the thicker became the air; and at last the effort was so stifling and pestilential; that the torches burnt pale and dim, and there then once threatened to go out.

"Yes, yes," muttered our guide to himself, "a night passed in this swamp would leave a man as good as dead for the rest of his days. A night—say, an hour would do it, if your pores were ever so open; but now there's no danger; the prairie fire's good for that; dries the swamps and closes the pores."

torchlight on each log or tree trunk, and trying its solidity with his foot—before he trusted his weight upon it—doing all this with a dexterity and speed that proved his familiarity with these dangerous paths.

"Keep close to me," said he to us, "but make yourselves light—as light at least as Britishers can make themselves. Hold your breath, and—hal what is that log? Hallo, Nathan," continued he to himself, "what's come to you man? Don't you know a sixteen foot alligator from a tree!" He had stretched out his foot, but fortunately, before setting it down he had what he took for a log with the butt of his gun. The supposed block of wood gave way a little, and the old squatter, throwing himself back, was within an ace of pushing me into the swamp.

"Ah friend!" said he, not in the least disconcerted, "you thought to scamper with the best folk with your devilry and cunning."

"What is the matter?" asked I.

"Not much the matter," he replied, drawing his knife from his sheath. "Only an alligator—there it is again."

Add in the place of the log which had disappeared, the jaws of a large alligator gaped before us. I raised my gun to my shoulder. The Yankee seized my arm. "Don't fire," whispered he. "Don't fire so long as you can help it. We ain't alone here. This will do as well, he added, as he stooped down and drove his long knife into the alligator's eye. The monster gave a frightful howl, and lashed violently with its tail, besprinkling us with the black slimy mud of the swamp.

"Take that!" said the squatter with a grim smile, "and that, and that," stabbing the brute repeatedly between the neck and the ribs, while it writhed and snapped furiously at him. Then wiping his knife, he stuck it in his belt, and looked keenly and cautiously around him.

"I've a notion there must be a tree trunk hereaway; it ain't the first time I've followed this track. There it is, but a good six foot off." And so saying, he gave a spring and alighted in safety on the stepping place.

"Have a care, man, cried I. "There is water. I see it glitter."

"Pho, water! What you call water is snakes. Come on."

I hesitated and a shudder came over me. The leap, as regarded distance, was a trifling one, but it was over an almost bottomless chasm, full of the foulest mud, on which the moccasin snakes, the deadliest of the American reptiles, were swarming.

"Come on!"

Necessity lent me strength, and pressing my left foot firmly against the log on which I was standing, and which was each moment sinking with our weight deeper into the soft slimy ground, I sprang across.—Carleton followed me.

"Well done!" cried the old man. "Courage, and a couple more such leaps, and we shall be getting over the worst of it."

"There seems to have been a sort of path made here," said I to our guide, "for—"

"Silence!" interrupted he in a low tone; "silence, for your life, till we are on firm ground again. Don't mind the snakes, added he, as the torchlight revealed some enormous ones laying coiled up on the moss and lianas close to us. "Follow me closely."

But just as I stretched forward my foot and was about to place it in the very print that his had left, the heinous jaw of an alligator was suddenly stretched over the tree-trunk, not six inches from my leg, and the creature snipped at me so suddenly, that I had but just time to fire my gun into his glittering lizard-like eye. The monster bounded back, uttered a sound between a howl and a groan, and striking wildly about him in the morass, disappeared.

"The American looked round when I fired, and an approving smile played about his mouth as he said something to me which I did not hear, owing to the infernal uproar that now arose on all sides of us, and at first completely defied me.

Thousands, tens of thousands of birds, and reptiles, alligators, enormous bullfrogs, night-owls, hingsas, herons, whose dwellings were in the mud of the swamp, or on its leafy roof, now lifted up their voices, bellowing, hooting, shrieking and groaning. Bursting forth from the obscure retreat in which they had hitherto hid themselves, the alligators raised their heinous snouts out of the green coating of the swamp, gnashing their teeth and straining toward us, while the owls and other birds circled round our heads, flapping and striking us with their wings as they passed. We drew our knives, and endeavored to defend at least our head and eyes; but all was in vain against the myriads of enemies that surrounded us, and the unequal combat could not possibly have lasted long, when, suddenly, a shot was fired, followed immediately by another. The effect they produced was magical. The groaning and cries of rage and fury were exchanged for howls of pain and complaint, the alligators withdrew gradually into their native mud, the birds flew in wilder circles around us, the uncouth multitude were all retreated, but the various rollers died away.

But our torches had gone out, and all around us was black as pitch.

"In God's name are you there, old man?" asked I.

"What! still alive?" he replied with a laugh, "and the other Britisher too? I told you we were not alone. These brutes defend themselves if you attack them upon their own ground, and a single shot is sufficient to bring them about one's ears. But when they see you're in earnest they soon get tired of it, and a couple more shots sent among them generally drive them away again; but they are but senseless squealing creatures after all."

"While the old man was speaking his struck fire, and lit one of the torches.

"Luckily we have rather better footing here," continued he. "And now forward quietly; for the sun is set, and we have still some way to go."

And again he led the march with a skill and confidence, in himself which each moment increased our reliance on him. After proceeding in this manner for about half an hour, we saw a pale light glimmering in the distance.

"Five minutes more and your troubles are over; but now is the time to be cautious, for it is on the borders of these cursed swamps the alligators best love to lie."

In my eagerness to find myself once more on dry land, I scarcely heard the Yankee's words; and as the stepping places were now near together, I hastened on, and got a little in front of the party. Suddenly I felt a log on which I had just placed my foot, give way under me. I had scarcely time to call out "Halt!" when I was up to the armpits in the swamp, with every prospect of sinking still deeper.

"You will hurry on," said the old man with a laugh; and at the same time, springing forward, he caught me by the hair.—"Take warning for the future," he added, as he helped me out of the mud; "and look there!"

I did look, and saw half a dozen alligators writhing and crawling in the noxious slime within a few feet of us. I felt a sickening sensation, and for a moment I could not utter a word; the Yankee produced his whiskey flask.

"Take a swallow of this," said he; "but no, better wait till we are out of the swamp. Stop a little till your heart beats quieter. So, you are better now. When you've had two or three such journeys with old Nathan, you'll be quite another man.—Now—forward again."

A few minutes later we were out of the swamp, and looking over a field of palmettos that waved and rustled in the moonbeams. The air was fresh, and once more we breathed freely.

"Now then," said our guide, "a dram, and then in half an hour we are at the Salt Lick."

"Where?" asked I.

"At the Salt Lick; to shoot a deer or two for supper. Hallo! what is that?"

"A thunderclap."

"You have heard but few of them in Louisiana; I guess, or you would know the difference betwixt thunder and the crack of the back-woodman's rifle!"

"To be sure, yonder oak wood has an almighty echo. That's James's rifle—he has shot a stag. There's another shot."

"This time it was evidently a rifle-shot, but re-echoed like thunder from the depths of the immense forest."

"We must let them know that we're still in whole skin, and not in the maw of an alligator," said the old man, who had been leaning his rifle, and now fired it off.

In half an hour we were at the Salt Lick, where we found our guide's two sons busy disembowelling and cutting up a fine buck that they had killed, an occupation in which they were so engrossed that they scarcely seemed to notice our arrival. We sat down, not a little glad to repose after the fatigues and dangers we had gone through. When hind and fore quarters, breast and back, were all divided in right hunter-like style, the young men looked at their father. "Will you take a bite and a sup here?" said the latter, addressing Carleton and myself, "or will you wait till we get home?"

"How far is there still to go?"

"How far? With a good trotting horse, and a better road, three quarters of an hour would bring you there. You may reckon it a couple of hours."

"Then we would prefer eating something here."

"As you will."

Without more words, or loss of time, a haunch was cut off one of the hind-quarters; dry leaves and branches collected; and in one minute a fire was blazing brightly, the joint turning before it on a wooden spit. In half an hour the party was collected round a rickety haunch of venison, which, although eaten without bread or any of the usual condiments, certainly appeared to us to be the very best we had ever tasted.

An American, describing the prevalence of duelling, summed up with, "They even fight with daggers in a room pitch dark. Is it possible?" was the reply. "Possibly, sir," returned the Yankee, "why I have seen them."