

THE VICTIM

The older brother led him to a fallen log, sat down, and held his hands.

"No, Boy," he said quietly. "I'd as well tell you the truth now. I'm going to send you to Kentucky to a wonderful school, taught by learned men from the Old World — wise monks who know everything. You want to go to a real school, don't you?"

"But my Mamma don't know —"

"That's just it, Boy. We can't tell her. She wouldn't let you go."

"Why?"

"Well, she's a good Baptist, and it's a long, long way to the St. Thomas monastery."

"How far?"

"A thousand miles, through these big woods —"

The blue eyes dimmed.

"I want to see my Mamma before I go —" his voice broke.

The man shook his head.

"No, Boy; it won't do. You're her baby —"

The dark head sank with a cry.

"I want to see her!"

"Come, come, Jeff Davis, you're going to be a soldier. Remember you're the son of a soldier who fought under General Washington and won our freedom. You're named after Thomas Jefferson, the great President. Your three brothers have just come home from New Orleans. Under Old Hickory we drove the British back into their ships and sent 'em flying home to England. The son of a soldier — the brother of soldiers — can't cry —"

"I will if I want to!"

"All right!" the man laughed — "I'll hold my hat and you can cry it full —"

He removed his hat and held it smilingly under the boy's firm little chin. The childish lips tightened and