

## THE INNERMOST ROOM.

The singer sang the world a song,  
And soon in every tender heart  
Its melody, so sweet and strong,  
Became a dear and lasting part.  
But no one knew, and no one cared,  
That from supreme grief and wrong  
His breaking heart had learned the notes  
That trembled into glorious song.

A woman, who from every cup  
Had drunk life's glad and bitter streams,  
Sat down and wrote a wondrous tale,  
As sweet and bright as fairy dreams.  
But no one knew, and no one cared,  
From what tumultuous seas of thought  
The soul in lonely voyages  
Its parable of life had brought.

The Teacher, with a burning heart,  
With tongue as swift and hot as flame,  
Led with a wise and tender heart  
The world unto its highest aim.  
But no one asked, and no one knew,  
Through what fierce conflict, day by day,  
He won the victory which cleared  
For weaker hearts the higher way.

For each soul has one inner room,  
Where all alone it seeks the grace  
To struggle with its sharpest woe,  
Its hardest destiny to face,  
To lift the duty that it fears,  
To love, to trust, through every doom,  
And not the nearest, dearest heart  
Goes with it to that inner room.

'Tis there that souls learn how to sing:  
'Tis there the truest knights are made:  
There, with the sharp edge of her sword,  
Great Sorrow gives the accolade.  
From thence they come with subtle strength  
The weary and the sad to lift:  
But who remembers that lone room,  
In strife and doubt, its grief and gloom,  
From which they bring the precious gift?

## THE VIRGINIA MONTAGUES.

## A VISIT TO THE MANOR HOUSE.

The little station at which we are to stop is about one hundred and fifty miles south of Washington. For several hours we have been running south, and been gradually drawing nearer to a chain of blue mountains, whose wavy outlines have been following us since mid-day upon our right, and climbing gradually higher and higher into the western sky. Between us and them lies an undulating landscape of field and forest, rich in the gorgeous coloring of the south, and bathed in the warm light of declining day.

The carriage of our old friend the general is there to meet us, and the beaming black face of his gray-headed Achates, greets us with grins of recognition from the box, and with numerous rugs at the brim of his shabby wide-awake, as we and our trunks and the mail-bags are hustled on to the platform, by the sporting and impatient train. He wears no livery, it is true. The carriage has not been cleaned for a month. The horses probably have been taken this very afternoon from the plough; but what of that? Is not the hospitality all the greater on that account. The station-master does not out and touch his hat, but the general is quite as much honored as if a cloud of obsequious porters and powdered footmen had assisted in our removal from the train to the trap; not from a standpoint merely of mutual respect, but simply on social grounds alone, as a Montague of Berkeley County, Virginia. The founder of the Berkeley Montagues, it is well-known, surveyed in 1710 those large tracts of land upon Tuckahoe Creek in that county, which was then a wilderness poorly protected from Indians by a block house, which they still in part own, while the title deeds of the family are a grant given under the hand and seal of "Good Queen Anne."

Nothing can be more picturesque than travel through the hill country of Virginia. Sometimes the rough and winding road leads us through woodlands whose large leaves wave above our heads, sometimes through open fields, where the tobacco just ripening for the cutter's knife is spreading its dark green leaves above the warm red soil, and where the tall Indian corn in all the splendor of its full foliage rustles gently in the evening wind. Here, too, to the right and left, stretch wild stubble fields with their deep carpet of annual weeds over which in a month's time the sportsman's setters will be ranging for the coveys of quail, but now half grown. In the valleys soft meadows spread their level surface fresh from recent rains along the margin of willow-bordered streams that water and enrich them, while over their soft turf the shadows of overhanging woodlands grow longer and longer as the light of day declines. From the tall tobacco barns comes the familiar odor of the curing of the first cut plants, and thin clouds of smoke above their roofs hang clearly against the reddening sky. Negro cabins of squared logs cluster upon the roadside, on sunny hill tops, or in shady glens, while from field and forest comes the wild melody with which the Ethiopian cheers his hours of toil. Behind all, though many miles away, the grand masses of the Blue Ridge Mountains lie piled against the western sky, their rocky summits, their chestnut shaded slopes, their deep ravines hollowed by white cascades that thunder ceaselessly through hemlock groves and shrubberies of rhododendrons and kalmias, all mellowed into a uniform tint of the softest and the deepest blue.

We are now upon the ancestral acres of the Montagues, or what is left of them, and the horses without shout or effort on Caleb's part, turn suddenly from the main road, where the latter is bounded on both sides by an oak forest, and dash along a tortuous track, whose charac-

ter of privacy as roads go, no one would for a moment venture to doubt, as Caleb, with the skill of constant practice, ducks his head beneath, or dodges it to one side of the hanging boughs that every now and then scrape familiarly along the roof of the carriage. A big white gate, hung upon by half a dozen negro urchins, armed with books and slates, lets us out again into the open country, and there, upon a hill in front of us, with groves of oak behind, and maple-orchards before it, the fortress of the Montagues looks out over the surrounding country. Once more we drive into a valley, and once more the horses are standing knee-deep in a little river, while Caleb, for the last time, assists them to appease their apparently quenchless thirst.

This is the famous Tuckahoe Creek mentioned in Queen Anne's grant. It has been dear since then to generations of Montagues. As men it has turned their grist and saw mills; as children they have paddled in its gravelly shallows among the darting minnows; as boys they have learned to swim in its swirling pools or dragged the seine-nets for chub and perch, or stalked the blue-winged ducks that now and then in early autumn go whistling along its surface. Many a field of the Montague tobacco too has it washed away or buried in the mud, and many a deep channel has it cut through cornfield and meadow in those occasional fro-hets whose violence has caused the years in which they occurred to stand out as local landmarks in the flight of time by the fireside of the negro and the poor white man. No Montague has ever built a horse-bridge across it. Railway companies and city corporations are the only people that build bridges in Virginia; and many an impatient lever and returning wanderer, in summer thunder-showers or in winter storms, has waited in despair on its further bank while the turbid waters have been rolling six feet above the gravelly bed of the ford, and rippling over the hand-rail of the little foot-bridge, that in fair weather does excellent service in its way.

A short struggle up the hill beyond brings us to the plateau on which the homestead stands. In front is the mansion itself with its two acres of lawn and as much more of kitchen garden, surrounded partly by a wall, and partly by a picket-fence. Behind are the barns, outbuildings, negro cabins, resonant at this hour of sunset with all the sounds incidental to a Southern farmhouse at close of day. Negroes, their heads bound round with colored handkerchiefs, and carrying tin milk-pails on them, come calling down the lane for the long line of cows that are slowly splashing through the ford beneath; negro ploughmen are coming in on their mules and horses singing lustily to the accompaniment of their jangling trace chains; pigs and calves from diverse quarters, and in diverse keys, hail the approach of their common feeding hour, while through all, the dull thud of the axe from the wood-pile seems to strike the hour of the evening meal.

If picked to pieces there is nothing specially attractive about the general's house; but to any one who had been wandering among the white-wash and fresh paint, and crudeness of the ordinary northern or western rural districts, there will be much that is refreshing in this old Virginia home. The present house, built upon the site of the original homestead, dates back only to the year 1794, and was planted, a family tradition relate, by Mr. Jefferson, who was a second cousin of the then proprietor. However that may be, we have at any rate the long portico resting on white fluted columns which the great statesman is said to have done a great deal in making characteristic of Southern country houses. The high brick walls are unrelieved by ivy or by creepers, but the green Venetian shutters thrown wide open almost cover the space between the many windows, while behind, innumerable offices and buildings of every conceivable shape and material, and set at all angles, gradually lose themselves among the stems of a grove of stately oaks.

In the lawn fence before which our carriage stops, fifty yards short of the front door, there used to be a big gate, and a sweep up to the house for driving purposes; but in these rough and ready days, when there is no regiment of juvenile dependents to keep the weeds picked off, the turf has been allowed to usurp everything that it will, and little vestige is left of the once frequented gravel track. So we dismount at the wicket gate which now is sufficient for all purposes, not, however, before Caleb has rent the air with a tremendous shout, and brought from the back quarters of the house a stout negro woman, and a very irresponsible looking boy of the same persuasion, whose black faces beam with the Ethiopian instinct of pleasure at anything like company. Nor are these the only answers to the stentorian appeals of Caleb which in the South do duty for door bells, but half a dozen foxhounds and setters come bounding toward us with open mouths and bellowing throats. From behind the masses of annual creepers, that, trained on wires, stretch from pillar to pillar of the portico and screen its occupants from view, the flash of a newspaper is for a moment seen, and an elderly gentleman descends the stone steps and comes toward us with hospitable haste. His hair and moustache are as white as snow, his face well chiselled, his figure erect and his eye clear. A somewhat shabby garb is forgotten in the gentleman as he greets us cordially and simply, but with an old-fashioned, gracious hospitality—this undecorated and unpensioned hero of a hundred fights. It is no disparagement to the breeding of an Englishman or of a Northerner to say that he

has a charm of manner that they in their busier and more populous world have long forgotten.

As we cross the lawn the shadows of half a dozen great oaks, in which the general takes especial pride, are just dying from off the grass. The "bull-bats" or nighthawks in the air above us are circling to and fro. Against the dark hedges of box and arbor vitae and trellises laden with honeysuckles, the fire-flies, when short twilight fades into night, will soon begin to dance their ceaseless round; various trees, both deciduous and evergreen, have been scattered about at different times by different Montagues. Here are mulberries that speak of a time some forty years ago when the culture of the silk-worm was being urged by the French upon the Virginian planters as a means of utilizing the mass of female and decrepit labor that was increasing on their hands. Here the mimosa, most beautiful of trees, invites the humming-birds, which in summer mornings hover among its fragile leaves. The shapely maple from the forests of western Virginia, the silver aspen, the acacia, the cherry, all are there. An English holly, brought from eastern Virginia, where it is indigenous, has for many a year given the genuine touch to Christmas decorations of house and church, of which the general, who planted the tree as a boy, has always been proud, though not so proud as he is of the magnolia which he brought himself from Louisiana, long before the war, and which now taps the eaves of the house at the corner where, as a mere shrub, he planted it.

As from the depths of a cane chair upon the broad veranda we see the short twilight fade, and through the waving streamers of bignonia, cypress and Madeira vines, we watch the full moon rising slowly into the sky, and shedding its light over mountain, field and woodland, there is a sense of peace and softness over everything that speaks of a happy latitude where the extremes of northern and southern climates temper one another, and where a singularly picturesque country echoes to the sounds of a singularly picturesque and old-world life. There would most probably come over the senses of the stranger a feeling of having at last hit upon a spot in rural America that had not been regarded as the mere temporary abode of a family engaged in the production of dollars, but where there is the look of a race having long taken root, to whom dollars were not everything. The sights and sounds of farm-house life are near the door, it is true, yet it is the old home of a family whom you would have no difficulty in believing, did you not know it, had been something more than farmers.

Within the house a broad hall reaches from end to end; its floor shining and slippery with polish; its walls wainscotted half way to the ceiling, their upper half simply whitewashed and covered with emblems of rural life. Antlers of deer killed fifty years ago in the dense forests on the eastern border of the country, or trophies of more recent expeditions across the Blue Ridge to the wild hunting grounds of the Alleghanies. Suspended from these hang old shot flasks and powder horns that have served the general and his generations in days gone by, before trouble fell upon the land. In the corner stands the Joe Manton and the long Kentucky rifle, that five-and-twenty years ago were the weapons of the Southern squire in stubble and in forest respectively. Here, on another wall, a younger generation of nephews from Richmond or Baltimore, who look upon the home of their fathers as a happy hunting-ground for autumn holidays, have hung their "greeners" and their cartridge belts. The remainder of the wall is relieved by a map of the county, a picture of the University of Virginia, the capitol at Richmond, and several illustrated and framed certificates of prizes taken by the general at agricultural shows.

It is in the drawing-room, however, that the treasures of the family are collected. Here again oak wainscoting and whitewash, with carved chimney pieces clambering up toward the ceiling, silently protest against your conventional ideas of America; and here too the floor—for the winter carpets have not yet been laid down—shines with polish, and is treacherous to walk upon. Brass dog-irons of ponderous build, and as old as the house, shine against the warm brick hearth, waiting for the logs that the cool October nights will soon heap upon them. Old-fashioned tables that suggest all kinds of grandmotherly skill in silk and worsted, cluster in the corners of the room. Upon the walls hang the celebrities that the good Virginian delights to honor. Here Washington, surrounded by the notables of his time, both men and women, is holding his first reception. Here Mr. Jefferson looks down upon an old cabinet containing bundles of his private letters to the general's grandfather, full of the price of wheat and the improvement of county roads, dashed now and again with allusions to the advantage which the young republic would gain from sympathy with France rather than with her unnatural parent Great Britain. Here, too, Patrick Henry, the greatest popular orator America ever produced, with his long face and eagle eye, hangs above an arm-chair, which a family legend treasures as having rested the old man groaning under the ingratitude of his countrymen upon his last political campaign. There engravings of the Vienna Congress, of Queen Victoria, of the famous royalist, Colonel Tarleton, after Sir Joshua Reynolds, remind you that blood after all is thicker than water. Two or three ladies in the costume of the first George, and as many gentlemen in wigs and swords could tell you, if they could speak, of the big square mansion of English bricks upon the Chesapeake

shore which they still looked upon as the home of their race, and there too in the post of honor above the high chimney-piece is the general's uncle, the senator, who, as every one in America knows, was Minister to France in 183—

Here, too, in utter defiance of the commonest rules of modern decorative art, hang specimens of the earlier efforts of photography, framed moreover in fir cones and in forest leaves! French-looking men in gray uniforms with stars upon the collars of their tunics. In the centre are Lee and Jackson. Around them are those of this family and their friends who fought and bled by their side. The other rooms apart from the furniture are much the same. There is a library where the books are kept in high glass covered shelves, and where modern periodicals, Richmond, New York and local papers, with pirated editions of some of the English reviews, lie scattered on the table. A dining-room also wainscotted and whitewashed, with a long table in the centre, surrounded by cane-bottomed chairs, a bare floor, a sideboard containing some curious specimens of old silver, and a chimney-piece devoted entirely to petroleum lamps—a room meant to eat in and not to sit in. There is no bell in the house, but it is not much wanted, as an obsequious darkey, even in these days of freedom, follows you to your room and anticipates your wants.

When supper is over (for late dinner has never crept into Southern life, even Baltimore still dines at unearthly hours), we drift naturally into the veranda. The general's wife has appeared and made tea, but you will not see much of her. She has a soft voice, has once been pretty, and was a Harrison of Sussex County—a distinction which in Southern ears has the same sort of ring as that of a Courtenay of Devon, or a Percy of Northumberland, would have in this more exacting land. She will tell you, if you ask her, that there were many months between '61 and '65 in which she was glad to get a little corn flour, and green coffee, and also of how she buried the plate beneath the magnolia on the lawn when the Yankee general threatened to make "Oak Ridge" his headquarters, and how the negroes remained faithful to her all through the war, and cried when they were told they were free and had to go. She captivated the general thirty years ago at the White Sulphur Springs, and in the comprehensive ideas of kinship which exist in Virginia they doubtless up to that time ranked as cousins.

The general has sent to the barn for some tobacco, and through bowls of red clay such as were smoked by the father of Pocahontas, and long reed stems from the swamps of North Carolina, we blow clouds into the balmy night, and listen to the general's stories of the past.

The general, of course, talks over old days. He has sobered down about the war. In fact, like many of his neighbors, he was himself against secession, or all thoughts of it, till the mutual aggravations and the complications of those feverish times drove him into the struggle in which he so prominently distinguished himself. He is immensely proud of the part his State played in the war, however, and if you saw him every day for six months, he might bore you on the subject; but who can be surprised that the stirring scenes of those five years should be uppermost in the evening of a life that has otherwise been spent in the unbroken monotony of country pursuits?

He never liked the North, and never had anything in common with them. Their ways were not his ways, and for years the intolerance of either waxed stronger from a mutual ignorance born of absolute social separation. He has, however, little rancor left, and is conscious rather of having come well out of the struggle in at least public estimation. His fallen grandeur is soothed by being made the hero of the novels and the magazine articles of his prop-riety and triumphant but generous foe. He lives in dignified retirement, courting no man and civil to all; but they, in the fullness of their hearts forget the stubbornness of his rebellious blade, and in the growing cosmopolitanism of their rampant prosperity, pat him on the head as a curious historic and social relic of which nationally they are proud. He rather likes all this, but takes it with his tobacco, puts it in his pipe and smokes it, in fact, as he used to thirty years ago the bloodhound stories. Outside opinion to the general and his generation are not of much consequence, as death alone will put an end to the conviction that he and his compeers are representatives of a past social state that was superior to everything, not only in America, but on earth.

The general's only brother was a captain in a United States cavalry regiment when the war broke out, and he will tell you of the struggle of conscience that decided the latter against his worldly interests to a course that some partisan historians have flippantly stigmatized as treachery—a treachery that very often gave up comfort and future honors, friends and professional devotion for the cause their native State had seen fit to embrace, whose hopelessness was far better realized by such men than by their civilian and untravelling brethren at home. He was killed at Shiloh, and his sword hangs in the hall, while our friend, his brother, who had never seen anything till then but a militia muster, rose to be a general.

It is a common fallacy to credit the Southern planter with an unusual amount of profanity. Whatever may be the case in the extreme South, the ordinary conversation of the Virginian of all classes is more free from bad language than that