

thanks to whose experience in such brawls I escaped with only a few bruises as keepsakes, by which to remember the adventure. This good turn I had done my best, when opportunity served, to repay, and it had indeed been through my intercession that Gregg had been allowed to ship as second officer on that voyage that had so prematurely terminated.

As for myself, Alfred Mainwaring, I was at that time six-and-twenty years of age, and probably Gregg's junior by a twelvemonth. I had been four years in America, and had spent two of them in the counting-house of a respectable and wealthy mercantile firm at Memphis, some hundreds of miles higher up the Mississippi. The house was known as that of Harman Brothers, but there was in reality but one member of it who bore that name, the sole interest having lapsed to Mr. Anthony Harman, nephew of the original heads of the firm, and himself an elderly man, and a widower with one child. This was a daughter, Alice Harman, who returned from completing her education at an English school, about a year after I first entered into her father's employ. And then—and then it was the old story, were two young people, thrown much into one another's society, and with many tastes and sympathies in common, find acquaintance ripen into friendship, and friendship warm into love, almost before those principally concerned are aware of the transaction. Mr Harman was not a very vigilant parent, and indeed American manners permit so much liberty to young people that the old-fashioned lynx-eyed supervision, of which so much still exists in Europe, is practically unknown. He never, accordingly, threw the slightest obstacle in the way of my intimacy with Miss Harman, nor did he notice the preference which she accorded me; but when I ventured to ask his consent to our engagement, the anger and irritation that he showed would have done credit to the hard-hearted father of the days of Mrs. Radcliff's romances.

Mr. Anthony Harman was not, usually, of a choleric disposition. He was, especially for a Southerner, a well-read man, had travelled much in Europe, and was proud of the polish which he had acquired during years of residence in the cities of the Old World. To myself he had been hospitable and polite, and to Alice he was an indulgent, if not an affectionate father; but at the suggestion that his daughter should marry 'beneath her' in espousing a poor man, he grew literally furious, and all the old prejudices of the Southern slave-owner, dormant hitherto, blazed up into fierce vitality.

'Marry Alice!' he exclaimed angrily. 'A daughter of mine, and the heiress of Harman Brothers, whose signature is as good as bank-paper on the New Orleans Exchange, throw herself away on a beggar! By heavens, sir, she shall be a beggar herself, like the poor white trash starving about the township, if she demeans herself by speaking to you again—to my clerk, sir.—What's that you say, sir, about being a gentleman? as if I were to blame for your effete old British customs of primogeniture, or that the acres have gone to your eldest brother. You may go back to England, Mr. Mainwaring, and call yourself a gentleman, but you are a mean white here; and I find I've been cherishing a viper beside my hearth in fostering you beneath this roof of mine.'

For this unwarrantable language, wrung from him at the first outbreak of his wrath, Mr Harman presently made some apology; but that we should be friends henceforth, or that I should continue so be his clerk, was clearly impossible. Oddly enough, the old man, his first