

liberty; but it was seven years before the release of the eldest child could be obtained.

Such were the dangers and difficulties which called forth the innate energy, endurance, and courage of the pioneer-women, and enabled them to do their part—by no means small—in transforming a howling wilderness into this fair and fertile portion of the New Dominion.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAIDEN CAPTIVE AND HER COMPANIONS —THE BEREAVED HUSBAND.

Abigail Coburn was born on the banks of the Susquehanna, in the month of May, 1773, and lost her mother when in the fifteenth year of her age. Some time after the death of her mother she went, with her father's approbation, to reside with a newly-married couple whom we shall call Jones. Abigail had been but a few months in her new home when Mr. Jones, being seized with that restlessness so characteristic of border-men, determined to pull up stakes and remove into the interior of Virginia. This decision naturally caused Mrs. Jones and her friend no little uneasiness. The Indians had recently been very troublesome in several places, and had already taken some captives. Mr. Jones, being fond of the chase and of the wild adventures incident to forest life, found the settlement rather crowded for his taste, and longed for the deeper wilderness. Therefore, he was not to be persuaded from his purpose, but continued to make preparations to move. Alas, in what bitterness of spirit did he afterwards remember having turned a deaf ear to those remonstrances!

Mrs. Jones, in mortal fear of the Indians, and appalled at the prospect of any wilder surroundings than those to which she had been accustomed, entreated her young friend to accompany her to the new home in the farther wilderness. Mr. Coburn objected strongly to his daughter leaving the settlement. He appeared to have a presentiment that if she went with Mrs. Jones some evil would befall her, and he would never see her again—a presentiment after-

wards but too painfully realized. Mrs. Jones persisted in urging her to go with them. Her father implored her to remain at home. Abigail hesitated, but at length yielded to the solicitations of her friend; and bidding an adieu (which proved to be final) to her father and relatives, she set off with the party for the interior of Virginia. Buoyant with hope, she turned away from the friends and scenes of her childhood, expecting, after a time, to return and find all—father, brothers, and sisters—as she left them. They saw each other no more on earth.

The emigrating party was soon under way, and, after passing through the usual fatigues and dangers of bush travelling, reached the destined spot in safety. Jones immediately set to work and erected a comfortable log cabin, the family camping out till it was prepared to receive them. The family consisted of Jones, his wife and infant child, a young lad of some thirteen or fourteen years old, and Abigail Coburn, not quite sixteen years of age.

Jones had built his house as strongly as possible in his circumstances, hoping thereby to secure his household against any successful attack from the Indians, should they pay him a hostile visit. A few weeks passed away rather pleasantly after getting into their new house, although not altogether without fear. The Indians had not been seen recently in that vicinity, and it was hoped that no danger need be apprehended.

After some time, Jones was obliged by the wants of his family to obtain a fresh supply of provisions, and left home for that purpose. Before leaving, however, he gave his little band directions as to how they should conduct themselves in case they discovered any signs of Indians.

He had been only a day or two absent when one morning the young lad, being about to build a fire, brought in some wood for that purpose, and neglected to fasten the door after him—a precaution he had been directed never to omit. An Indian who had evidently been on the watch for