

ed over the valley, and the harrassed soldiers beheld a detachment advancing up the marsh at double time to their assistance. Cheered by the sight, with a shout of defiance, they rushed again upon their foes, when, as if by magic, the latter suddenly disappeared beneath the thick grass, and they were left apparently alone with the unequivocal traces of the conflict, which were presented by the trampled and coarse-strewn meadow around.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Edward awakened to consciousness, his eyes gradually recognized the walls of his own barrack room, upon the bed of which he was lying, and from thence wandered to the figure of the garrison surgeon, who was busily engaged in fastening a bandage on his arm—upon which the operation of venesection had just been performed; and the earnest face of Dennis, also occupied in the execution of various duties connected therewith.

Slowly the bewildered senses of the patient were restored, and with their reviving perception came the appalling memory of the bloody onslaught at the bridge, and the capture of Clarence. With tumultuous violence, the crimson torrent rushed from its source, swelling every vein and artery upon his face, previously so cold and pale. Starting up in the bed, Edward grasped the doctor's arm with impulsive strength, and asked with emotion—

"Is she—is Miss Forbes?" He could not finish the sentence, but his arm trembled, and his countenance assumed an expression of intense agony that frightened the medico so, that he could not immediately reply.

"My dear Molesworth, I—I—really you are exceedingly irritable. I am not made of wood or iron, that you should use my member so unmercifully; besides, allow me to remark, you will cause the vein to bleed afresh, if your transports are not controlled. Dear me, I thought so—Dennis, the bason again, and another bandage."

Poor Edward pressed his hand upon his brow, through which a throb of pain suddenly darted, and sank back upon the pillow with a deep groan. A few minutes elapsed ere he again spoke, and then it was with an altered look and tone.

"Dickson,—which was the doctor's name—for God's sake, tell me unreservedly what is the result, or do my own thoughts too truly anticipate the tale?"

"My boy," answered the other, "now that you are more reasonable, I will relate all that

I know about the affair you mention." Here the doctor applied himself to the contents of a capacious snuff-box, with much formality and self-gratification, before he resumed the thread of his discourse.

"It might have been noon, or perhaps a half hour later, while engaged in an interesting discussion upon the chemical affinities, with my coadjutor from Massachusetts, which was rapidly approaching a climax, whence unquestionably I should have borne off the victory wreath '*vincit veritas*,' for, between us, these provincials are lamentably deficient in natural philosophy—just as I was about advancing in support of my hypothesis, a most remarkable instance of complex attraction between bodies in solution, that the abrupt explosion of a gas estranged our minds from the subject under consideration. On hurrying to the ramparts, we were quickly informed of the alarming cause, which you can imagine affected me in no small degree, as, upon occasions of such nature, I was well aware that professional services were indispensable. Therefore, after the men had left the fort to render assistance in your extremity, I followed with the operators, *et cetera*; and on reaching the field commenced an immediate examination of the bodies, for the enemy was no where to be seen, but unfortunately, though many could not have at first received mortal injuries, yet, yourself excepted, I found them all *in articulo mortis*, for with that barbarous, and, I may say, unscientific propensity, inherent in the savage mind, the integument covering the head and to which the hair is attached had been stripped entirely off; internally, they were scalped—therefore any effort of intellectual skill was useless. So true is it, that *littera emollit mores, &c.*" Here the doctor, with a look expressive of contemptuous pity for those unsophisticated essayists in the science of anatomy, paused awhile to indulge in another modicum from his capacious box, ere he rolled on again the river of his words.

"But," asked Edward, almost exhausted with overstrained attention to the torturing prolixity of his companion, "what of Miss Forbes? 'Tis of her I spoke."

"Very good," continued the doctor, "I was coming to that point. When it was found that the lady had been taken prisoner a party instantly went off in pursuit, and for some time they were guided by the prints of her horse's feet, until the course of her captors deviated from the valley, assuming a western inclination over the high grounds, where all further traces were lost, doubtless from the unyielding nature