

I must show my gratitude to Mr. Carlos, for all he had done for us, by the most dutiful and obliging behaviour.

This account of our private history was perfectly satisfactory to me at that time. I found it my interest strictly to obey my mother's injunctions, and the alacrity with which I waited upon the Squire and his guests, never failed in securing a harvest of coppers, which gave me no small importance in the eyes of the lads in the village, who waited upon me with the same diligence that I did upon the Squire, in order to come in for a share of the spoils. Thus a love of acquiring without labor, was early fostered in my heart, and led to a taste for show and expenditure beyond my humble means. In due time I was placed at the village school, and the wish to excel my companions, and be the first boy in their eyes, stimulated me to learn with a diligence and determination of purpose, that soon placed me at the head of my class. There was only one boy in the school, who dared to dispute my supremacy; he had by nature what I acquired with much toil and difficulty—an excellent head for learning, and a capital memory for retaining all he learned. It was not learning with him, it was merely hearing for he had only to read the most difficult lesson over and he could go up and say it off without making one mistake. He was the most careless, reckless boy in the school, as he was undoubtedly the cleverest. I felt bitterly envious of him; I could not bear that he should equal me, when he took no pains to learn. If the master had done him common justice I should never have stood above him. But for some reason best known to himself, he always favored me, and snubbed Bill Martin, who, in return, played him a thousand tricks, and taught the others to rebel against his authority. He called me a sneak, and Mr. Bullen, the master, the Squire's Toady.

There was constant war between this lad and me; we were pretty equally matched in strength, and the victor of to-day was sure to be beaten to-morrow—the boys generally took part with Martin. Such characters are always popular, and he had many admirers in the school. My hatred to this boy made me restless and unhappy, I really longed to do him some injury. Once after I had given him a sound drubbing, he called me "a base born puppy—a beggar, eating the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table." Foaming with rage, I asked him, what he meant by such language? and he pointed in my face, and told me "to ask my mother, as that virtuous lady could doubtless inform me better than he could." And I did ask my mother, and she told me that

I was a foolish boy to listen to such lies. That Bill Martin was a bad boy, and envious of my being better off than himself. That if I gave heed to such nonsense, I should make her miserable, and never know a happy day myself.

I felt that this was true. I loved my mother very much, her affection for me, and her kindness was boundless. She always welcomed me with a smiling face, and I never received a blow from her in my life.

She had been a very pretty woman, her countenance was mild and gentle, and she was always scrupulously neat and clean. I was proud of my mother. I saw none of the women in her own rank that could be compared with her, and any insult offered to her, I resented with my whole heart. I was too young to ask an explanation of the frequency of the Squire's visits to our humble home, and had the real explanation been given, I would not have believed it.

Mr. Carlos had no family, but his nephew and niece came twice a-year to spend their holidays at the old Hall. The boy who was to be his heir was a fine manly fellow, about my own age, and the girl, who was two years younger, was a sweet child, and as beautiful as she was amiable. I had just completed my twelfth year, and was tall and stout for my age. During the time that these young people were at the Hall, I was dressed in my best clothes, and went up every day to wait upon them. If they went fishing, I carried their poles and baited their hooks; if they wished to follow their sport down the river, I managed the light row boat, and found out the best places for them. Often we left boat and fishing tackle, and had a scamper through the woods and meadows. I found Miss Ella birds nests, and hazel nuts, and we used to laugh and chat on terms of perfect equality, making feasts of wild berries, and telling fairy tales and ghost stories. Often we frightened ourselves with these ghost stories, and would run back to the boat, and the bright river, and the gray sunshine, fearing that the evil spirits we had conjured up were chasing us through the dark wood; then, when we had gained the boat, we would stop, and pant, and laugh at our own fears.

Walter Carlos was a capital shot, and very fond of all kinds of field sports. His skill with a gun, made me very ambitious to excel as a sportsman. Mr. Carlos was very particular about his game. He kept several gamekeepers, and was very severe in punishing all poachers who dared to trespass on his guarded rights; yet, when his nephew expressed a wish that I might accompany him in his favorite sport, to my utter