

CANADIAN CASSET.

NEC DESIT JUCUNDIS GRATIA VERBIS.

VOLUME I.

HAMILTON, MAY 19, 1832.

NUMBER 13

SELECTED PAPERS.

"To hold the mirror up to Nature."

FOR THE CASSET.

THE LOVERS OF THE FOREST.

(Concluded.)

Though the night dragged heavily on, yet it passed away, and by the morning light on a marshy piece of ground near the creek, he discovered the direction she had taken. Journeying on for several hours he arrived at the summit of a hill that overlooked a wide extended valley, in the midst of which rolled a broad and noble river; following along the brow of the hill, he found a path formed by deer or other wild animals, which led down to the valley, and on this path he found the footsteps of her he sought. On arriving at the river he beheld with dismay, the hat his Fanny had so often worn, the basket in which she had gathered the currants, and a copy of some verses he had presented her a few weeks before. A groan of horror issued from his inmost soul, and he exclaimed, "Oh God, she has destroyed herself in the waters!"

Full of this melancholy idea he followed along the banks, searching for all that remained of a being so lovely and beloved. But the dying embers of hope were again rekindled by observing her footsteps near the river, which rolled on the left, while on the right at a considerable distance, rose a range of hills which bounded the valley.

Anxious and wayworn, he travelled on till the day was nearly spent, when he found that the stream which had gradually inclined towards the hills, now reached their very base, and formed a craggy and precipitous shore, which prevented his farther progress. Here he had hoped to find her, but was again disappointed, and now he sat down in despair. Soon however, he was aroused by the sound of a human voice, and looking through the trees he beheld a form with disshvelled hair advancing towards him. Transported to ecstasy, he uttered a shout of joy, at which the figure started—then fled with precipitation. Almost confounded with surprise, he pursued, overtook

and clasped her in his arms, from which she madly endeavored to escape; and to his endearing expressions, she returned only the shrieks of the maniac, and the terrified stare of incomprehension. Now the awful truth broke upon him—terror had deprived her of reason. In wild and incoherent wailings she called upon him who was near her, though she knew it not, to rescue her from the hands of violence. This swept over his heart-strings, and their vibration was agony: in that single hour he suffered a concentration of misery, which if expanded would have spread the gloom of sorrow over a year of ordinary existence. By degrees she became more calm; he offered her the bread which in despite of his own hunger he had preserved, and she devoured it with famished eagerness. It was now that he was obliged to do, what nothing but the energy of despair could have enabled him to perform—to bind her with his handkerchief to a tree that she might not escape, while he went back in search of his rifle, which he left on the margin of the stream. Having found it he returned, and with difficulty kindled a fire: and as darkness gathered around, he collected a quantity of dry leaves, on which, partly by constraint and partly by persuasion, he induced her to repose; taking off his coat he threw it over her, and she soon sunk into a peaceful slumber.

While watching by her side, he had leisure for contemplating his situation. He was above thirty miles from home, "in the midst of a howling wilderness," with the being whom he loved more than life, a wild and almost uncontrollable maniac. How was he to convey her home? and to return without her was impossible! Sleep at last overcame him, and buried his sorrows in repose.

When he awoke the sun had risen, and Fanny was gone. Starting up he gazed wildly around, but no Fanny could he see. This was more than his feelings could support: uttering a cry of despair, he threw himself on the earth, but soon he was raised from his prostration by a well-known voice: it was Fanny's. This time she did at-

tempt to fly from him, and in a moment he clasped her in his arms. Unable to speak, they sat down on a fallen tree. When her agitation had partly subsided, she faltered, "Oh, William, how are my dear parents?" "Fanny," said William, "think not of their misery; think only of their joy on your return. Thank heaven," he continued, "that calm eye assures me that reason has resumed her empire." "What? William have I then been wandering in my mind, as well as in the forest?" "Ah, Fanny! you know not *then* the situation in which I found you."

He then related the means by which he had traced her—his feelings on arriving at the river, and the manner in which he found her. During the recital, floods of tears flowed down her lovely cheeks, and when he had ended she raised her eyes to heaven in thankfulness, for having been relieved from the most terrible of all calamities, the deprivation of reason. Then turning to William she said, with a look which expressed more strongly than her words, "Oh William, what do I not owe you!" "Fanny," said he, "speak not of it; that look more than repays me for all that I have suffered. But tell me when and how you lost your recollection."

"I need not relate," says she, "what I felt when I found that I was astray. Towards evening, I found a path that I fondly hoped would have led to some habitation; but woful was my disappointment on arriving at the river. Almost dead with terror and fatigue, I sat down and recommending myself to Divine protection, and endeavored to reconcile myself to my melancholy fate. Here I remained perhaps only a few hours, but to me it seemed an age, when I heard in the distance the cry of wolves; they came nearer and in a short time the hill above resounded with their dreadful howlings; I tho't they were coming to devour me, and was going to plunge into the stream to avoid a death still more terrible.—But Providence in mercy preserved me from such impiety by a suspension of reason: A strange wildness came over my brain and I recollect no more