

Creeper, which spread its clinging arms high over wall and window. A plain square house it was, with windows comparatively small, as was the fashion of those days, but looking home-like and substantial—a place for family life to develop and run smoothly in, from childhood to old age. Behind it, towards the lake, were more bowery orchard trees in bloom, and on the farther side, a luxuriant garden extended its thriving rows of vegetables—interspersed with the substantial old spring flowers, such as columbines, peonies, heart's ease, that are not apt to be ashamed, like the modern summer flowers, to flourish in the company of neighbours more useful than ornamental. A little in the background were the substantial barns and stables, some of them being the original log buildings first put up for that purpose.

As the stage approached the gate, Percival could distinguish two equestrians advancing rapidly from the opposite direction, one of them being apparently a robust elderly gentleman, riding with an upright military air, and the other the slight, graceful figure of a young lady in a dark blue riding habit.

"The Major and his daughter, I suppose?" said he. "The young lady trots well; better than most English girls."

"Aye, that she do! You see, she rides so much with her father that she has learned to ride at his pace, as well as he does himself, and that's saying a good deal! He sees us, and he'll stop till we come up, you'll see, sir."