

drowy effects of the large wood-fire had mingled his thoughts or his wants with his story of the birds.

For some time after we reached the house, there were several arrivals from the country, among which was the stage-coach from Illenoco, which had been upset more than once, and the top broken to pieces. All the passengers spoke of the latter part of their journey as one of greater difficulty and more danger than any they had ever experienced. On the following morning we found, to our dismay, that it was not only snowing and drifting as fast as ever, but that there was not the slightest appearance of a change.

"We must make up our minds," said Barclay, "to remain here for a day or two. It is impossible for us to leave this place in the present state of the roads, and equally impossible for any others to arrive. I will go and see who is in 'the keeping-room,' and what amusement it can afford us; for it would be quite absurd for a traveller like you to be shut up all day at an inn with such an old cynic as me, while there may be many persons here well worth studying and knowing."

The house at Mount Hope was inconveniently situated, being on the top of rather a high hill, but was very well arranged for the accommodation of the different classes of persons that frequented it. It was a long, narrow, two-story building, forming two sides of a square, and having a double entrance, one at the side and one at the front. Besides the apartments appropriated to the use of those who preferred to be alone, there were two large rooms, one of which was devoted to teamsters, pedestrians, and people of that description, connected with which was the bar. The other was called the keeping-room, and generally reserved for the use of the family, but where old patrons, friends, and acquaintances, were not considered as intruders. In the rear, and attached to this, were the kitchen, larder, pantry, &c.

Barclay soon returned, accompanied by Miss Lucy Neal, the manager of the

household, a fine, hearty, blooming, good-natured country girl, of about thirty years of age, to whom he introduced me. After chatting a while about the storm and other indifferent matters, she said she feared I must find it dull to be confined so long to the house; and added, that if I felt inclined, she would be glad to see me after dinner in the keeping-room—an invitation which I most readily and cheerfully accepted.

As soon as she retired, Barclay said—

"I have arranged it all for you. I have ordered dinner at two o'clock, so as to enable us to spend the whole afternoon below, where you will see one of the oddest fellows in this country, Stephen Richardson, of Clements, in the county of Annapolis. There is some drollery about him, inexhaustible good-humor, and, amid all the nonsense he talks, more quickness of perception and shrewdness than you would at first give him credit for. Take him altogether, he is what may be called a regular character. If I can manage it, I will set him and others telling stories; for nothing illustrates the habits, manners, and tastes of a population more than these, their favorite topics."

About four o'clock we joined the party of travellers assembled in the privileged room of the family. This apartment was about twenty-five feet in length, but disproportionably narrow. The floor was painted, and not carpeted, and the walls covered with a yellow wash. The fire-place, which was of huge dimensions, was furnished with a back-log that required the efforts of two men to roll it into its bed; and surmounted by a mantelpiece that was graced with one of Mr. Samuel Slick's clocks, the upper half being covered by a dial-plate, and the lower portion exhibiting a portrait of General Washington mounted on a white charger, with long tail and flowing mane. The sides of the room were ornamented with a sampler worked on canvass, and some coarse gaudy-colored prints, among which the most conspicuous were two representing George III. and Queen Charlotte, wearing their crowns, and severally holding in one