

down the steep bank; but he still kept choking, and growing black in the face. I then saw that it was a piece of the flesh of his throat that had been carried into his wind-pipe. So, what do I do, but puts in my finger and thumb, and pulls it out, and bound up his throat with my handkerchief, dipping it first in the water to stanch the blood. I then took him, neck and heels, and threw him into the bottom of the boat, and pushed off for the tavern. Presently, he came to himself a little, and sat up in the boat, and, would you believe it? made several attempts to throw himself into the water. 'This will not do,' says I: 'you've done mischief enough already, by cutting your wizzard: if you dare to try that again, I will kill you with the oar.' I held it up, threatening him all the while; and he was scared, and lay down as quiet as a lamb. I put my foot upon his breast. 'Lie still now, or you'll catch it.' He looked piteously at me, but he could not speak; but he seemed to say—'Have pity upon me, Ned; don't kill me.' Yes; this man, who had cut his throat, and who, twice after that, tried to drown himself, was afraid that I should knock him on the head, and kill him. Ha! ha! I never shall forget the work F—— and I had with him.

"The doctor came, and sewed up his throat; and his wife—poor crater!—came to nurse him; and he lay bad there for six months; and did nothing but pray to God to forgive him; for he thought the devil would surely have him, for cutting his own throat. And when he got about again—which is now twelve years ago—he left off drinking entirely, and wanders about the country, with his dogs, hunting. He seldom speaks to any one, and his wife's brother carries on the farm for him and the family. He is so shy of strangers, that it is a wonder he came in here. The old wives are afraid of him; but you need not heed him: his troubles are to himself; he harms no one."

Layton departed, and left me brooding over the sad tale he had told in such an absurd and jesting manner. It was evident, from the account he had given of Brian's attempt at suicide, that the hapless hunter was not wholly answerable for his conduct—that he was a harmless monomaniac.

The next morning, at the very same hour, Brian again made his appearance; but instead of the rifle across his shoulder, a large stone jar was suspended by a stout leathern thong. Without speaking a word, but with a truly benevolent smile, that flitted slowly over his stern features, and lighted them up, like a sunbeam breaking from beneath a stormy cloud—he advanced to

the table, and, unslinging the jar, set it down before me, and in a low, gruff, but not unfriendly voice, said:

"Milk, for the child," and vanished.

"How good it was of him!—how kind!" I exclaimed, as I poured the precious gift, of four quarts of pure new milk, out into a deep pan—"and I never asked him—never said that the poor babe wanted milk. It was the courtesy of a gentleman—of a man of benevolence and refinement."

For weeks did my strange friend steal silently in, take up the empty jar, and supply its place with another, replenished with milk. The baby knew his step, and would hold out her hands to him, and cry—"Milk!" and Brian would stoop down and kiss her, and his two great dogs lick her face.

"Have you any children, Mr. B——?"

"Yes, five; but not like this——"

"My little girl is greatly indebted to you for your kindness."

"She's welcome, or she would not get it. You are strangers; but I like you all. You look kind; and I would like to know more about you."

M—— shook hands with the old hunter, and assured him that he should always be glad to see him.

After this invitation, Brian became a frequent guest. He would sit and listen with delight to M——, while he described to him elephant hunting at the Cape; grasping his rifle with a determined air, and whistling an encouraging air to his dogs. I asked him one evening what made him so fond of hunting?

"'Tis the excitement," he said: "it drowns thought; and I love to be alone. I am sorry for the creatures, too, for they are free and happy; but I am led, by an impulse I cannot restrain, to kill them. Sometimes, the sight of their dying agonies recalls painful feelings; and then I lay aside the gun, and do not hunt for days. But 'tis fine to be alone, with God, in the great woods—to watch the sunbeams stealing through the thick branches—the blue sky breaking in upon you in patches; and to know that all is bright and shiny above you, in spite of the gloom which surrounds you."

After a long pause, he said, with much solemn feeling in his look and tone:

"I lived a life of folly for years—for I was well born and educated before I left home for the woods, and should have known better; but if we associate long with the depraved and ignorant, we learn to become even worse than them. I felt I had become a slave to low vice and sin. I hated myself; and in order to free myself from