

LITERATURE.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

A STORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER.

Toward the close of the last century, there lived on the western frontier of the State of Pennsylvania, two families, bearing respectively the names of Mayne and Waters. Though dwelling within a couple of miles of one another, and double that distance from another, it so chanced that these families were on the worst of terms. Both had taken part in the war which gave independence to their country, but they had chosen opposite sides. William Mayne had thought it his duty to maintain his loyalty to the British sovereign, while Waters had been one of the most ardent supporters of the revolutionary party. Perhaps the mere circumstance of having adopted different sides would not have excited the hostility alluded to, had not Waters been the instrument of procuring the imprisonment of Mayne at an early period of the contest. Waters had conceived himself to be but fulfilling the part of a true lover of his country in doing so, and declared himself free of all feelings of personal enmity. Mayne's confinement proved in the end rather a fortunate event than otherwise, for at the close of the war he was found to have incurred so little guilt that both his liberty and his property were restored to him, which might not have been the case had he been allowed to have entered more largely into the contest.

William Mayne, however, was far from considering himself a debtor on this score to his countryman, and when they removed after the war, to the same district, on the western border of Pennsylvania, relations the reverse of friendly, existed between them. It must be owned that the hostility lay chiefly on Mayne's part, for Waters felt the consciousness of having been actuated by pure motives in the transaction at which Mayne took offence, and was rather anxious to conciliate his loyalist neighbor than to nourish any feelings of dislike towards him. Neither of them were bad hearted men, and it is probable, had they conversed freely together, they might have attained a better knowledge of each other's characters and become good neighbors. But, near neighbors as they were, no intercourse was kept up between them.—Their families, too, shared in this estrangement, with the exception of two members of these retired households.

Mayne had one only son, Hugh, who had just reached the bloom of early manhood at the period when the incidents we have to relate took place. Hugh loved the daughter of Waters with his whole heart and soul. Often had this pair met on the lonely mountain side when no human ear was near to listen to the outpourings of their simple affection. Mary Waters did not conceal these meetings from her parents, who, if they did not approve, at least did not check or forbid them. On the other hand, Hugh, knowing the dislike that rankled in his father's mind, did not for a long time venture to reveal the attachment that had sprung up in his breast. Blinded by the strength of his passion, he at last ventured to speak on the subject to his father. The astonishment of the elder Mayne at the disclosure was only equalled by his anger.

"Again and again," he said, "have I told you of the cause I have to dislike that man and all that belong to him. He inflicted on me an injury, for which he has not deigned ever to make an atonement, even in words. You knew this, and yet you have—Hugh Mayne, you have ever been a dutiful son, and I now lay my commands on you never to—"

The son interrupted his father.

"Do not pronounce a command," he said, "which it will be impossible—which it will destroy my peace—to obey. And not my peace only, but that of another will be ruined by it."

"You are too simple, Hugh Mayne," replied the father; "you know not the temper of that man and his whole breed. Mary Waters can have no true affection for a son of mine. Hate to all of our name would be instilled into the minds of that family from their cradle. It is our money they look to."

"You are wrong, father," returned Hugh, "this is your own prejudice that speaks."

"And have I not cause to be prejudiced?" said the father, warming with the recollection of his wrong; "did not I suffer imprisonment for years through his means? I have ever been a kind parent to you, Hugh, but I know not but that I would sooner see you wedded to a negro slave, than to a daughter of Henry Waters.—Never will one of that man's offspring be a good and loving wife to a son of mine."

Though conscious in the depths of his soul of the erroneous nature of his father's assertions, Hugh saw the necessity of giving up the point, for the time at least, before his father should be irritated into a more positive expression of his anger or discouragement. With a sigh he turned away to put on his hunting gear, feeling that solitude would be most congenial to his present state of mind. Ere long he was on his way to the hills, with his hunting-belt across his shoulder, and his rifle in his hand—a weapon which the half farmers, half hunters seldom went without.

It was verging towards noon when Hugh Mayne left his home. On the evening of the same day, Mary Waters sat in her father's cottage, with her knitting on her knee, working, and at the same time conversing with her invalid mother, who lay upon a small bed in the same apartment.

"I hear the dogs barking, Mary; why has not your father taken them with him to the hills to-day?" asked the old woman.

"He thought, mother, that their noise would bring the Indians on his track, if the savages have really returned to this neighborhood, which I pray to heaven may not be the case!"

As the young woman made this reply, she rose from her seat, saying, "the dogs know his hour—my father should be coming home now," she went to the door of the cottage. After an affectionate inquiry into the state of comfort of the old woman, the young woman turned once more to her lonely labors.

Her anxiety did not permit her to sit long, ere she again went to the door to look along the hillside in front of the cottage for the form of her returning parent. On her third visit, her mother was greatly startled by a wild shriek from her lips, followed by her hurried re-entrance into the cottage.

"Merciful Heaven!" she exclaimed, in an agony of alarm; "Hugh Mayne is pursued! The savages are at his heels! Oh, mother, mother, what is to be done?"

The powerless invalid to whom this vain appeal was made, fell back on her couch, while the daughter rushed again to the door. A dreadful sight indeed was before her eyes. Along the side of the hill already mentioned, her lover was seen making at full speed for the cottage, trusting, doubtless, to receive assistance, or to effect a stand there at some advantage against those who pursued him. These were three in number, dusky sons of the wild, terrible with their war-paint, and uttering fearful yells, as they bounded, at short distances from one another, like deer-hounds after their prey. Hugh had the advantage of them by not more than thirty yards, a distance that seemed fearfully short to the straining eyes of poor Mary. All parties were armed, the Indians both with gun and tomahawk, and Hugh with his rifle only. But, as it appeared, the fire-arms of the savages chanced not to have been loaded when they first set eyes on their victim. The weapon of the white hunter, fortunately, was in a different condition; and while he was still a considerable way from the cottage, he turned round, raised his rifle with instant and unerring aim, the foremost of his pursuers tumbled on the sward a lifeless corpse.

Some time was lost by this act, rapidly executed as it was. In truth the loss seemed likely to be fatal to the white hunter, who recommenced his flight with the distance between him and his surviving foe alarmingly diminished. But help was at hand, and from an unexpected source. Being more than six miles distant from any other settlers, and neither her father nor any others of the family being at hand, Mary Waters had spent some time in maddening anxiety, hopeless of all aid, until she bethought her of one chance of help, such as it was. She flew to the place where her father's two dogs for the reason noticed, had been temporarily shut up, freed them, and led them

in the direction of the chase, exerting all the speed which her limbs were at the moment capable of. The faithful creatures, of a powerful breed, and accustomed to bear hunting, speedily recognized the approach of strangers and enemies, and needed not the cries of the maiden to send them at full speed in the required direction. They reached the spot just as the Indians seemed to be gaining and closing on Hugh. The wily savages had not seen the advance of the dogs without some preparation for their reception. Poising his tomahawk with scarcely a momentary abatement of his speed, the foremost of the two Indians threw the weapon at one of the advancing animals, when a few feet from him, and buried it in the creature's body. The other Indian was not fortunate in a similar aim at the other dog.—The tomahawk missed its mark, and in an instant the animal had sprung at the throat of the savage, and pulled him to the ground.

A single glance behind him told Hugh that the dogs had effected a change, and rid him for the time of one pursuer. Panting and exhausted, he resolved to make a stand against his now single foe, and terminate the contest, if possible, by a struggle hand to hand, ere the prostrate savage could free himself from the dog, and come to his companion's aid. With this determination he suddenly wheeled round, grasping the barrel of his musket with both hands. At this instant, the pursuing Indian was not ten yards distant. On seeing the white hunter's movement, the savage also made a sudden stop, and assumed the same attitude. Each equally fatigued, and with breast heaving high with toil and excitement, the two adversaries stood gazing at each other, as if by mutual consent, to regain breath for the deadly struggle. Both of them were men of tall stature, and with forms combining in an extraordinary degree, power with activity. After a pause, the men appeared at one and the same moment to think of loading their guns as the preferable mode of determining the contest, in the exhausted state in which they were. Their hands moved simultaneously to their powder-horns, and a most momentous trial of quickness in loading began. Both of them handled their arms with the dexterity of practiced hunters. In the same second of time they rammed their cartridges, and threw their ramrods on the ground. With the quickness of lightning the Indian applied his powder-horn to the priming, and in a moment of fearful import it is not surprising that his hand trembled, daring as he was. But Hugh did not apply his horn to the same use. He staked his life upon a chance. Striking the breach of his rifle violently upon the ground, he raised the weapon, aimed, and his bullet went through the heart of his enemy! By the plan he had adopted, he had trusted to his rifle priming itself, and the second of time which he had thus gained had decided the struggle. It was but a second that he had gained, for as the Indian fell, the bullet from the mouth of his ascending rifle touched the very hairs upon Hugh's head!

All this had passed before the eyes of poor Mary, who had continued in the unthinking agony of fear and love, to fly in the direction in which her lover's danger lay. She reached the scene of the contest we have described, before Hugh had raised his eyes from the body of his fallen adversary, and she fell into his arms with an exclamation of mingled terror and joy. Her presence, which would have been fatal to both at an earlier moment, now reminded Hugh of the necessity of preparing his arms for the possibility of another encounter. He laid the insensible form of his mistress gently upon the grass, and loaded his gun carefully but quickly. Seeing no movement, however, on the part of the prostrate Indian, who lay at no great distance, he concluded that the faithful dog had mastered the savage, and held him still in his power. Hugh then applied himself to the task of recovering Mary from her swoon. She opened her eyes with a shudder, and on seeing the well known countenance of her lover bending over her, she murmured, "Has this been a dream—a fearful dream?"

"No, my dearest Mary," replied Hugh, "it is no dream that you have been a preserving angel to me this day! It is no dream that you have snatched me from the brink of the grave."

A glimpse of the dark body of the Indian did

more than these words to bring back to the young maiden's mind a sense of the reality of the dreadful scene that had passed, and the remembrance was so terrible that for a time she relapsed into a state almost of insensibility.

While Hugh was endeavoring to restore her to perfect consciousness and composure, by the use of every endearing term that love and gratitude could suggest to him, a third party, breathless and exhausted came up to the spot. This was Hugh's father, who had seen from a distance the danger of his son. The agitated parent's first question was if Hugh "was unhurt?"

"That I am, and alive at all, father," was the reply, "you have to thank, after Heaven, this dear girl's love for me, which made her regardless of her own life when I was in danger."

"I partly benefited what she did, and I do thank her," said the elder Mayne, with tears in his eyes.

"May God bless her for this day's act. I have been unjust to her, and, for her sake, I will be the first to drown all unkindness between her father and myself."

Mary Waters was sufficiently recovered by this time to hear these words, and a blush of pleasure suffused her cheek as she raised her head from the arm that had for a time sustained her.

Hugh had kept his eye occasionally on the spot where the dog and his adversary lay, and after the conversation with his father, the young man went up to the spot, with steps rendered cautious by his knowledge of the cunning of the savages. No motion appeared on the part of the Indian. In truth, he was dead. The dog also was lifeless, having been stabbed repeatedly with the long knife of the red man; yet, even in death, its teeth relaxed not their hold of the bare throat of the savage, who had been choked, as it appeared from the ground, only after the most violent struggles. On ascertaining this fact, which put an end to all danger for the moment, Hugh Mayne and his father, at the desire of the latter accompanied Mary Waters to her home. Her mother had passed the moments of Mary's absence in a state of great anxiety, proportionate to which was her relief when the happy result of the adventure was made known to her. Her husband, as has been said, was from home, but he returned before the elder Mayne's departure, and a reconciliation took place, which was a blissful sight to the youthful pair, to whose happiness the previous estrangement had been so obstructive.

No long time afterwards, Hugh Mayne was united to Mary Waters. To them, therefore, this perilous adventure with the Red men became a still more memorable occurrence than it would otherwise have been, and was rendered a retrospect as much of joy as of terror.

How Jerry Marlinspike was cured of Fast Travelling.

"Why, you see," said Jerry Marlinspike, "I had just returned from an eighteen months voyage to Calcutta; and being an India blade, with plenty of shiners in my pocket, I thought it but right to cut up a few shiners on shore just to astonish the natives, you see. So on the morning after I got ashore, I felt all alive for a spree, and determined to have a ride. 'That's right,' said Jim Wilder, hire a hack, and I'll go with you."

"Avast there, shipmate," said I; "I intend to ride a horseback." At this determination they all laughed, and asked me if I was ever on a horse in my life. I told them no, but that was no reason why I should never mount one; that it was never too late to learn; that riding on horseback was good for one's health; that I wanted exercise, and felt convinced that a good rattling gallop would do me good. And away I posted down to a livery stable.

After a long confab with the stable-keeper, and depositing a hundred dollars to pay for the horse in case I killed him, or he ran away with me, the horse was brought out. He was a strapping fellow, and had a sharp and roguish eye. I believe the rascal knew that I was a green hand at such business. I did not like his looks. The owner told me how to hold the reins, and steer him, by pulling one to starboard or port, as occasion might require—"but," said he, "he is a high-spirited animal, and you must look out that he does not run away with you."