

LITERATURE, &c.

The American Magazines.

From the Louisville Journal.

MR. CATCHPENNY'S FIRST CAMP HUNT IN ARKANSAS.

THE LAST DAY.

Night has drawn her black curtain closely about us; chill and piercing blows the wind; not a twinkling star is seen to relieve the utter darkness through which, lost, cold, and hungry, we grope our uncertain way. Being lost at any time produces no very convivial feeling; but, in a cold night like this, it was especially dismal and cheerless, as all the little comforts of camp rose in tantalizing array before us. Our melancholy procession moves in 'Indian file,' and preserves a profound silence, which is only interrupted by the agonized 'oh!' of some unfortunate individual, rudely saluted by a pendant limb or a too familiar briar—or by the chorus of anxious shouts we often sent up, with the vain hope that some response from 'camp' might indicate the direction of the much wished for haven. But the roaring winds are our only answer, and they seem, as they whistle past us, only to mock our noisy efforts to make ourselves heard. Sullen and dispirited, we labor on through the thickening gloom; our horses, jaded with a long day's travel and the heavy burdens they bore—we packed two large bear between us—do but stumble when we attempt to arouse them with the spur; and the very dogs, seeming to know from instinct that something is wrong, all closely follow at our heels, never offering to run ahead.

At last, when the most sanguine of us were beginning to indulge in mournful anticipations of empty stomachs, and of the damp ground as our couch, a shout, so faint as to resemble a distant echo, is heard in reply to one of our energetic signals of distress. Never did lungs do such good service as ours did then; every man rose in his stirrups, shouting with an intense earnestness that only lost men could feel. This time the answer is more distinct, and in addition several guns are heard in quick succession. The letting off of these firearms was certainly a phenomenon, as we left but one gun in camp with our servant; but hungry men being the very worst philosophers in the world, we pushed more eagerly forward without once troubling our brains as to the mystery. Soon the far distant light of our camp fire breaks upon us.

Have you ever, during a frosty winter's evening, been benighted in the country? and do you remember your sensations, when at a sudden turn in the road, the first twinkling light from the house flashed upon you? For if you do not you cannot conceive of the glowing feeling of exultation that stole over when that light first became visible, struggling through the gloom. Brightly it now glimmered in the distance. And never was the late winter's sun hailed more gladly by weary sentinel than was that uncertain light by Mr. Catchpenny. For with it came luxurious visions of rest and warmth—of roasted bear's meat and venison steaks—which made our lone tent in the wilderness as welcome to his soul as if 'bright eyes' and 'honest watch dogs' had thrown about it all the poetic charms of home. That merrily blazing fire had its effect upon us all. I felt 'thawed,' and new energy was aroused within me as if I had awakened from a long and refreshing sleep. Our horses, too, improved their gait, and, pricking up their ears, loudly neighed in recognition of their journey's end, and the dogs once more ran on ahead as they now perfectly knew their ground.

As we draw near, unknown forms are seen gliding about the fire, but before we had time to determine the meaning of all this, a number of fierce dogs rushed out upon us, and a general battle is instantly commenced between our own pack and them. In an instant three men are among our noisy assailants, plying their clubs so vigorously that the fight is soon ended, and when the tumult was somewhat quieted, who should shake us by the hand but old 'Uncle Nathan' and two of his friends, regular bear hunters, that we all knew well, who, guided by the buzzards hovering over our camp, had found their way in and promised to spend the night with us. These birds with an unerring acuteness of smell, are attracted by a taint so slight as to be imperceptible to the nicest of human noses, and never fail to be seen sailing at a great distance above a 'rich camp.' They are the old hunter's surest guide to his tent when he becomes 'bothered' of a cloudy day, and to them we owed the pleasure of this meeting with our friends so far from home. To me it was both strange and delightful. Hospitality is a feeling which increases as opportunities of its indulgence are diminished, and I have rarely felt more pleasure from the reception of a visit than I did in welcoming these rude hunters to our tent in the woods.

Soon after an exchange of salutations, we are all assembled round the fire for supper. There was something so bewitchingly cheerful in the huge blazing logs, and gaily singing coffee pot—there was such an air of comfort and plenty about the immense pyramid of bear ribs piled up on a dish of cypress bark, and the brown bread scattered through the company—there were such delicious odours rising from the roasting venison steaks, the roasting kidneys and spiced liver, that Mr. Catchpenny's foolishly soft heart dilated at the prospect. Regarding the eatables with a tender leer that eloquently spoke his affection, he impatiently suggested the propriety of beginning, and forthwith fell too most earnestly. Fierce and unrelenting was the onslaught, and terrible were

the suffering of the tempting dainties before us. Long after the rest of our party had fallen back, Mr. Catchpenny reluctantly ceased, from repletion, his prolonged attack, and, casting many a longing glance upon the remains of the feast, he sighed to think how much more had been cooked than we could possibly consume; but he had then never seen Uncle Nathan eat, or he would then have been troubled with no economical regrets of that sort.

He had indeed heard of the 'dilating powers' of Ichabod Crane and the anaconda—was a pretty fair feeder himself—but he had no conception of the abdominal capacity of human nature in the shape of a hungry bear hunter. Uncle Nathan was a long, slim individual, considerably rounded about the shoulders, who stepped about a yard and a half at a stride, and who always wore a keen hungry look, that might induce the belief that he was training, on low diet, for a foot race. But the unsuspecting stranger little dreamed of the roomy accommodations which that lank frame afforded to everything in the shape of food. Like frost work before the sun, the big pile of ribs vanished before the perseverance of the old hunter, and his unceasing applications to the coffee pot were becoming as alarming as they were astounding to the innocent Catchpenny. That gentleman seriously ruminating upon the necessity of cautioning the old man against the dangers of excess, for already the waistband of his linsey-wolsey pants was visibly tightening under the influence of his continued potations, and his white horn buttons seemed troubled with a decided inclination to bury themselves altogether from sight.

The old man had a way after he had completed the substantial portion of his supper, during which he was always much too busy to talk, of drinking coffee and telling stories to an almost unlimited extent. And in all around him there was a savage beauty and a wildness that greatly enhanced the interest of his hunting yarns. The white tent half bathed in the silver light of the moon that now shone forth, and half lighted up by the ruddy glare of the fire; the dogs equated beyond the circle eagerly watching for their part of the meal; and the strangely attired hunters themselves, as they carelessly reclined round the crackling fire, gave the whole scene an air singularly picturesque—and, when a fitful blaze higher than the rest would flash upon the bearded faces, long hair and glittering knives of the men, one might readily imagine it some bandit scene. And for me it possessed all the charms of novelty. I cannot describe my feeling of entire contentment whilst sprawling at full length; I looked up to the stars, or in deep reverie intently gazed into the red embers, or allowing my eyes to wander to our well stocked larder, formed by four upright forks with cross pieces, thickly hung with all the varieties of wild meat.

Uncle Nathan continued his devotion to the coffee pot, and the eyes and wonder of Catchpenny are enlarged in proportion. The old hunter having completed one story poured himself out another cup, and after a prolonged drink, commenced a new one.

'Well, stranger, you like this rough life in the woods, do you? Fine hunting and lodging, ain't it? But the time has been, and it ain't so mighty long ago neither, that men could not camp out here in the wilderness without having a regular guard at night to keep off the 'varmints.' Some feller was always awake to watch and give the alarm; for these ugly devils of wild beasts would very often come into our very camp for meat, when they were raving mad with hunger.

'I remember one cold dark night like this one, I was sitting up on guard. The other fellows had been snoring away for many a long weary hour, and in spite of myself I felt drowsy too. I got up two or three times and put wood on the fire to make things look cheerful-like, and to keep myself awake by moving about, but it was no use. I was tired, and every minute I got more sleepy; the fire began to look dim and shaky like; them regular long snorts from under the blankets gradually sounded to my dull ears like a band of music long-ways off; and afore I know'd it I was fast asleep setting bold upright again the tent pole. I don't know how long I slept, but I was waked up by an awful troublesome dream. I dreamt I heard a little rustle noise behind a log, I looked up, and I see big painter come creepin' along, with his wicked, hungry eyes fixed on me. I could hear the rustle of every leaf he turned as he slowly trod along. Every now and then he'd stop, fixing his burning eyeballs on me, and waving his long tail he'd sniff the air and lick his lips like he was impatient to get hold on me. He kept cautiously dragging himself along, every minute stoppin' to listen, and when he would crouch down and raise his ears, I verily thought them shinin' eyes of his would pop out of his head—he looked so eager at me. At last he got into springing distance, and his eyes looked fiercer than ever, he raised high his tail, and shook it for might, then dropt it between his legs as he equated himself down to dart on me—uttering a cry of horror I jerked up my rifle, and woke up, with the cold sweat standing in great big drops all over my face.

'My friends war still making their musical developments around me—the fire had nearly burnt out—and I found my 'horrid vision' was all too true. For sure enough by the glimmerin', unsartin light of the fire, as it sometimes blazed up, I could plainly see them same green eyes about fifteen steps off, glarin' at me thro' the darkness. I could see him, but his eyes war sufficient; they told me, by bein' so close to the ground, that he was ready to make his spring; and though they seemed to burn into my very marrow, I could not look away, but by some strange fascination my gaze was still riveted on his.

'Stranger, that war a mighty tryin' time—it makes me cold now to think of it. My hair stood on end like young switch cane brake, and raised my cap clean off my head. My flesh seemed all loose on my bones, and crawled about on 'em with an uncomfortable feelin', just like they were rusty iron, and strange, on-accountable shivers ran up and down my back as I thought what I should do. I had 'nt time to wait that was clear, but that I could 'nt be in a hurry was equally certain, for I might miss him, and then I knew I was a gone 'coon-skin' sure. So without gettin' up, I sorter split the difference, and takin a good aim right between his shiners, I fired. I tell you what, them eyes went out like snuffin' a candle, and the way I did holler was a caution. At the shoot-in and the noise the men all came tumblin' out of the tent in a heap—some draggin their blankets after them, and some with their guns and all lookin as wild and skeered as I felt. I told 'em I had slaid a painter, and jerkin up a blazin' chunk I called on 'em to follow. We all rushed up to whar the dead varmint lay, and it was pre-haps, the d—dest, biggest 'possum I ever saw caught in these swamps.' Catchpenny joined in the mirth excited by the unlooked-for conclusion of Uncle Nathan's story, but this laugh was dry and evidently forced, his mind being preoccupied by far weightier matters. Fierce was the contest between doubt and determination going on in his bosom. It was evident that he must either sit quietly by and see a fellow creature wilfully incur, by excessive coffee drinking, the danger of self explosion, or else he must violate, by interference, the right which every American freeman has of blowing himself up if he pleases. What should he do? Every source of philanthropy is stirred within him—the tenderness of his nature has been touched—for already have those horn buttons disappeared entirely from view, and that tightened waistband is only indicated by a sunken rim about the top of the copperas-coloured breeches. The common feelings of humanity demanded that he should interfere, for Uncle Nathan attributing the stranger's restless manner and staring eyes to a half frightened interest in his stories, now reached over and poured out another cup in preparation for a new story.

After a long, sonorous sip, during which he knowingly regarded our friend over the top of the cup, he commenced: 'Wall, stranger, that last adven'ter war 'nt a patchin' to one'—but the story is violently interrupted. There was a slight explosion, and a sharp whizzing sound passes Mr. Catchpenny's ear. Uncle Nathan has fallen back and a little sea of coffee threatens to inundate everybody about the fire.

'I knew that cup must pop him,' exclaimed Catchpenny, in frantic excitement. 'I felt confident that he could not stand it, for nothin less than an India rubber bottle could.' The hobnob had subsided; Uncle Nathan has been picked up, and it is found that he had only fallen down in leaning against an unsteady stake; that he had split that waistband, spilt his coffee, and burst off a button, but he had received no bodily injury.

THE BEAUTIFUL.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER, OF AMERICA.

A few days since, I was walking with a friend, who, unfortunately for himself, seldom meets with anything in the world of realities worthy of comparison with the ideal of his fancy—which, like the bird in the Arabian tale, glides perpetually before him, always near, yet never overtaken. I felt my arm suddenly pressed. 'Did you see that lady, who has just passed us?' he inquired. I turned and threw back a glance. 'I see her,' I replied; 'a good figure, and quite a graceful step—what of her?' 'Why, she is most beautiful—in fact, very nearly perfect,' said my friend. 'I have seen her several times before, and were it not for a chin slightly out of proportion, I should be obliged to confess that there is at least one handsome woman in the city.' 'And but one, I suppose,' said I, laughingly. 'That I am sure of,' said he; 'I have been to all the Churches, and in all the Corporations, and there is not a handsome woman here, although she whom we have just passed comes nearer the standard than any other.'

Just as if there were any standard of beauty—a fixed, arbitrary model of form and feature, and colour! The beauty which my friend seemed in search of was that of proportion and coloring; mechanical exactness; a due combination of soft curves and obtuse angles, of warm carnation, and marble purity! Such a man, for aught I can see, might love a graven image, like the girl of Florence, who pined in to a shadow for the Apollo Belvidere, looking coldly on her with history's eyes, from his niche in the Vatican. One thing is certain; he will never find his faultless piece of artistical perfection, by searching for it amidst flesh and blood realities. Nature does not, as far as I can perceive, work with square and compass, or lay on her colors by the rules of royal artists, or the dunces of the academies. She eschews regular outlines. She does not shape her forms by a common model. Not one of Eve's numerous progeny in all respects resembled her who first culled the flowers of Eden. It is in the infinite variety and picturesque inequality of nature, that her great charm and uncloying beauty consists. Look at her primitive woods—scattered trees with moist sward and bright mosses at their roots—great clumps of green shadow, where limb entwists with limb, and the rustle of one leaf stirs a hundred others—stretching up steep hill-sides, flooding with green beauty the valleys, or arching over with leaves the sharp ravines—every tree and shrub unlike its neighbor in size and proportion—the old and storm-broken leaning on the young and

vigorous—intricate and confused, without order and method! Who would exchange this for artificial French gardens, where every tree stands stiff and regular, clipped and trimmed into unvarying conformity, like so many grenadiers under review? Who wants eternal sunshine or shadow? Who would fix for ever the loveliest cloud-work of an autumn sunset, or hang over him an everlasting moonlight? If the stream had no quiet eddying place, could we so admire its cascade over the rocks? Were there no clouds, could we so hail the sky shining through them in its still, calm purity? Who shall venture to ask our kind Mother Nature to remove from our sight: any one of her forms or colors? Who shall decide which is beautiful, or otherwise, in itself considered?

There are too many like my fastidious friend, who go through the world 'from Dan to Beersheba, fading all barrea'—who have always some fault or find with nature and providence, seeming to consider themselves especially ill-used because the one does not always coincide with their taste, nor the other with their narrow notions of personal convenience. In one of his early poems, Coleridge has beautifully expressed a truth, which is not the less important because it is not generally admitted. I have not in my mind at this moment the entire passage, but the idea is briefly this: that the mind gives to all things their coloring, their gloom or gladness; that the pleasure we derive from external nature is primarily from ourselves:

'From the mind, itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous mist,
Enveloping the earth.'

The real difficulty of these life-long hunters after the beautiful exists in their own spirits. They set up certain models of perfection in their imaginations, and then go about the world in the vain expectation of finding them actually wrought out according to pattern; very unreasonably calculating that nature will suspend her everlasting laws for the purpose of creating faultless prodigies for their especial gratification.

The authors of 'Gaieties and Gravities' give it as their opinion, that no object of sight is regarded as a simple, disconnected form, but that an instantaneous reflection as to its history, purpose, or associations, converts it into a concrete one—a process, they shrewdly remark, which no thinking being can prevent, and which can only be avoided by the unmeaning and stolid stare of 'a goose on the common, or a cow on the green.' The senses and the faculties of the understanding are so blended with, and dependent upon, each other, that not one of them can exercise its office alone, and without the modification of some extrinsic interference or suggestion. Grateful or unpleasant associations cluster around all which sense takes cognizance of; the beauty which we discern in an external object is often but the reflection of our own minds.

What is beauty, after all? Ask the lover, who kneels in homage to one who has no attraction for others. The cold on-looker wonders that he can call that unclassical combination of features, and that awkward form, beautiful. Yet so it is. He sees, like Desdemona, her 'visage in her mind,' or affections. A light from within shines through the external uncomeliness, softens, irradiates, and glorifies it. That which to others seems commonplace and unworthy of note, is to him, in the words of Spenser,

'A sweet, attractive kind of grace,
A full assurance given by looks,
Continual comfort in a face,
The lineaments of Gospel books.'

'Handsome is that handsome does'—hold up your heads, girls! was the language of Primrose in the play, when addressing her daughters. The worthy matron was right. Would that all my female readers, who are sorrowing foolishly because they are not in all respects like Dubule's Eve, or that statue of the Venus 'which enchants the world,' could be persuaded to listen to her. What is good looking, as Horace Smith remarks, but looking good? Be good, be womanly, be gentle—generous in your sympathies, heedful of the well being of all around you, and my word for it, you will not lack kind words of admiration. Loving and pleasant associations will gather about you. Never mind the ugly reflection which your glass may give you. That mirror has no heart. But quite another picture is yours on the retina of human sympathy. There the beauty of holiness, of purity, of that inward grace 'which passeth show,' rests over it, softening and mellowing its features, just as the full, calm moonlight melts those of a rough landscape into harmonious loveliness. Hold up your heads, girls! I repeat after Primrose. 'Why should you not? Every mother's daughter of you can be beautiful. You can envelop yourselves in an atmosphere of moral and intellectual beauty, through which your otherwise plain faces, will look forth like those of angels. Beautiful to Ledyard, suffering in the cold of a northern winter, seemed the diminutive, smoke-stained women of Lapland, who wrapped him in their furs, and ministered to his necessities with kindness and gentle words of comeliness. Lovely to the homeless heart of Park seemed the dark maids of Szeg, as they sung their low and simple song of welcome beside his bed, and sought to comfort the white stranger, who had 'no mother to bring him milk and no wife to grind him corn.' Of him milk and no wife to grind him corn?—talk as we may of beauty as a thing to be chattered from marble or wrought out on canvas—speculate as we may upon its colors and outlines—what is it but an intellectual abstraction, after all? The heart feels a beauty of another kind—looking through the outward environment, it discovers a deeper and more real loveliness.

This was well understood by the old pair