

and he was thrown into prison. Here commenced an intimacy that in the result proved not unfavorable to one as yet unborn, Margaret. Whatever points of resemblance might exist between Pluck and the Master, became strengthened by their confinement together, and their contrarieties were forgotten in a sense of common calamity. The cells of the jail were crowded, comforts were not abundant, and whatever relief could be had from an exchange of sympathies, the convicts would naturally betake themselves to; and in the result it appeared that Pluck and the Master became very good friends, and the visits of the latter to the Pond, originating in the double cause which has now been related, were in after years not infrequent. Add to this a deep and ingenuous interest in Margaret, and we shall understand why he came so often to her house, and exerted himself so readily for her instruction. The duration of these two recusants lasted no more than two or three months. Pluck, as being of less consequence, was released almost on his own terms. In the Kidderminster Chronicle appeared the following which relates to the Master:

"Whereas I, the subscriber, have from the perverseness of my wicked heart maliciously and scandalously abused the character and proceedings of the Continental and Provincial Congress, Selectmen of this town, and the Committees of Safety in general, I do hereby declare, that at the time of my doing it, I knew the said abuses to be the most scandalous falsehoods, and that I did it for the sole purpose of abusing those bodies of men, and affronting my townsmen, and all the friends of liberty throughout the Continent. Being now fully sensible of my wickedness, and notorious falsehoods, I humbly beg pardon of those worthy characters I have so scandalously abused, and voluntarily renouncing my former principles, do promise for the future to render my conduct unexceptionable to my countrymen, by strictly adhering to the measures of Congress, and desire this my confession may be printed in the Kidderminster Chronicle for three weeks successively.

"BARTHOLOMEW ELLIMAN."

"Test,

Abraham Stillwater,
Josiah Penrose,
Nathan Hadlock."

"Livingston, Nov. 23d, 1775."

CHAPTER VIII.

MARGARET'S OLDEST BROTHER, NIMROD, COMES HOME.—HE PROPOSES
A VARIETY OF DIVERSIONS.

NIMROD made his annual visit to his father's. Where he had been, or what he did, none asked, none knew. His appearance would indicate the sailor and the horse-jockey; he wore a tarpaulin and blue jacket, a pair of high-top boots with spurs and leather trousers; he flourished a riding stick, commonly known as a cow-hide, a pair of large gold rings dangled in his ears. He rode a horse, a cast-iron looking animal, thin and bony, of a deep grey color, called Streaker. He seemed also to have money in his pocket, as he evidently had brandy in his saddle-bags and humor in his soul. He brought one or two books for Margaret, to whom he showed great attachment, and whose general management seemed surrendered to him, while he was at home. These books were Mother Goose's Melodies, National Songs and Bewick's Birds with plates. He gave her, in addition, a white muslin tunic with pink silk skirt. Nimrod was tall in person; he had bluish, lively eyes, light hair and a playful expression of face. All the family seemed delighted with his return; Pluck, because his son's temper was congenial with his own; his mother, for some presents; Hash, because of the brandy; Chilion was happy to see his brother; and Margaret for obvious reasons. He leaped from his horse, as he rode up to the door, and ran to Margaret whom he saw working on her flower-bed; raised her in his arms, kissed her, set her down, took her up again, made her leap on his horse, caught her off and kissed her a second time. "Can you spell Streaker?" said he, which she did. "Ah, you little rogue!" he added, "you are spruce as a blue-jay."

"Has the Indian come yet?"

"Yes, he was here last week."

"An't you afraid of him?"

"No. The little girl that was with him gave me some apples."

"That's you, for a broad joe! Never be afraid of any body, or anything, two-legged or four-legged, black, white, blue or

grey, streaked or speckled, on the earth or in the air. I have learned that lesson. How is our other Margaret, the Peach tree?"

"Don't you see what beautiful red peaches there are on it?"

"Yea, verily," as the Master says, "this is like a wood-chuck in clover. These are sweet and luscious as your cheek, Margaret."

Nimrod ran into the house, and out to the cistern, and towards the Pond, and up the Head. He shook his father's hand heartily; to his mother he made a low bow; Hash chuckled and grinned at sight of him, and Nimrod laughed harder in response. Chilion greeted him cordially, but said little. Bull he held up by his paws, made sundry bows and grimaces to the dog, and talked to him like an old friend, so that Margaret declared the animal laughed.

If Nimrod were enjoying a furlough or vacation, or anything of the kind, it seemed to be his purpose to make the most of it. He talked of the meeting in the woods, a turkey-hunt the next moon, a husking bee, thanksgiving ball, racing and a variety of things. In whatever he undertook Margaret was made his constant attendant; and at some risk even, he carried her into all scenes of wildness, exposure and novelty; nor can it be said she was loth to go with her brother.

The meeting in the woods was the first in order of time. This practice, imported from England, began to flourish incipiently in our country. From the suburbs of old cities, from church-yards, court-yards, gardens, the scene was transferred to pine forests, shady mountains and a maiden green-sward. Heptenstall Bank was revived in Snake Hill. The scoffing Kentishmen appeared in the "Injins," No. 4's and Breaknecks. What lived in Europe must needs luxuriate in America. The jumpers of Wales were outdone by the jerkers of Kentucky.

The meeting was to be held in the district we have before spoken of as Snake Hill, lying four or five miles north of the Pond. Nimrod started off horseback, with Margaret behind him on a pillion. Hash and Bull went afoot. At the Widow Wright's, they found that lady with her son mounting their horse,—a small black animal resembling the Canada breed, called Tim,—and just ready to proceed on the same excursion. The Widow was solemn and collected, and she greeted Nimrod, for whom she had no strong affection, with a smile that a susceptible eye might have construed into coldness. Tim, the horse, had a propensity for dropping his ears, biting and kicking, when a stranger approached. He began some demonstra-

tions of this sort as Nimrod came up. Whether Nimrod regarded this an insult on Streaker, or was nettled at the manner of the woman, or to gratify his own evil taste, he dealt the horse a smart blow with his cowhide. Tim darted off at a full jump; insomuch that Obed and his mother, with all their use to his back and manners, had much ado to keep their seats. Nimrod ambled forward, about a mile, crossed the intersecting west road from the village, and came to a house known as Sibyl Radney's, where he overtook the Widow and her son, breathing their horse. Sibyl lived alone with her mother in the woods, cultivated a small farm, kept a horse and cow, mowed, cut wood, and did all her work without aid. Her face and neck were deeply browned, her arm was like that of a blacksmith. She was also getting ready for Snake Hill. Nimrod contrived to stimulate the three horses into a race, which was executed in a manner a fox-hunter might have envied, through brambles, over stumps, across ditches.

The spot to which these riders directed their way was in a forest on the crown of a hill. A circular opening had been cut among the trees for the purposes of the meeting. At one end of this amphitheatre was the pulpit, constructed of rough boards; about the sides were arranged the tents or camps, made for the most part of hemlock boughs. Seats of slabs, logs and stumps were strown in front of the pulpit. In the centre of the whole was a huge pile of wood to be kindled in the evening for warmth, if need be, or for light. There were also booths on the outside for the sale of cider, rum, gingerbread, and the practice of various games. Here were assembled people from twenty different towns. Nimrod fastened his horse to the trees amongst scores of others. The Widow reminded Nimrod of the circumstances of the place, admonished him of his recklessness. "I kalkilate God is here," said she, "and you had better not be pokin your fun about." Compassionating the dangerous situation of Margaret, she requested that she might be delivered to her care. Nimrod, who thought he should find entertainment in a manner that might not possibly be agreeable to the child, consented to yield her to the woman. He and Sibyl went towards the booths, and Mistress Wright, leaning on the arm of her son, leading Margaret, entered the encampment. Three men in black occupied the pulpit, their heads powdered, with white stocks and bands, and straight square-cut collars. One of them, a tall bronze-complexioned man, was addressing the people, hundreds of whom filled the seats. The Preacher was pro-

ceeding in the way of narration. "The sacred flame," said he, "has spread in Virginia. Brother Enfield, the assistant in the Brunswick Circuit, conjectures that from eighteen hundred to two thousand souls have been converted since the middle of May. Twelve hundred experienced the work of grace in Sussex; in Amelia half as many more. Many christians had severe exercises of mind respecting the great noise that attended this work of God. Some thought it was not divine; yet from its effects they dare not ascribe it to Satan; but when the Lord broke in upon their own families, they saw it at once, and began to bemoan their own hardness of heart. Many gospel-hardened, old, orthodox sinners, have, as mighty oaks, been felled; and many high-towering sinners, as the tall cedars of Lebanon, bowed down to the dust. As many as fifteen or twenty commonly gave up in a day under Brother Staffin's preaching, who is indeed a Samson among the Philistines. It is no strange thing now for children down to seven years of age to give in."

The Preacher then digressed in a strain of exhortation designed to reproduce effects similar to those he had recounted. A thunder cloud gathered in the sky, and buried the woods in darkness. "That," said he, "is the shadow of hell. It is the smoke of torments that ascendeth up forever and ever." The thunder burst upon the camp, its hollow roar reverberated among the hills. "Behold!" he exclaimed, "God proclaims his law in fire and smoke!" It began to rain, "What!" continued he, "can you not endure a little wetting, when you will so soon call for a drop of water to cool your parched tongues?" The lightning flashed upon them, it blazed through the trees. "The great day of the Lord is coming," he went on, "when the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the heavens also shall pass away with a great noise, the earth also shall be burned up." There was a movement in the congregation; some shrieked out, some fell upon their faces, some flung their arms wildly in the air. "Oh my soul!" "Lord have mercy!" "Jesus save!" "Glory! glory!" rang from seat to seat. "It is the Lord's doings and marvellous in our eyes," exclaimed one of the men in the pulpit. Nimrod and his confreres from the booths ran in to see what had befallen. There sat Obed waving to and fro on his seat, groaning, and calling upon his mother. "Yes, my son," exclaimed the latter convulsively, "its an orful time. God has come, we are great sinners. I han't done my duty by ye. Parson Welles would let us all go teu hell to-

gether." "What a mercy," exclaimed another, "we can come where the gospel is preached!" "O Lord, forgive me," cried a third, "for going to the Universalist up to Dunwich; I do believe there is a hell, I do believe there is a hell." "I have been down among the Socinians," echoed a fourth. "God be praised I have found where there is some religion at last. Glory, glory!"

The Preacher, the storm and the effect increased. Some fell away, some foamed at the mouth, some lay on the ground in spasms, the faces of several grew white, others purple and black, one appeared to be strangling and gasping for life, another became stiff, rigid, and sat up like a dead man on his seat; there were groans, sobs, shrieks, prayers and ejaculations. There came a terrific crash of thunder, as if the heavens had split and the earth would give way. There was a stifled groan, a retreating shudder among the people; the Preacher himself seemed for a moment stunned. Margaret shrieked and cried to the top of her voice, which sounded for the instant like a clarion over an earthquake. Nimrod impulsively rushed among the people, dashed Obed from his seat, seized Margaret and drew her out. The Preacher recovering himself as he observed this movement. "Son of Belial!" he broke forth, "thinkest thou to stop the mighty power of God? Will he deliver that child into thy hand as he did the children of Israel into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim? Stop, on thy soul, and repent, lest ye die."

"I guess I shan't die before my time," retorted Nimrod, "nor any sooner for your croaking, old Canorum. The child is gittin wet, and she is sca't. I han't lived in the woods to be skeered at owls, I snore."

"A scoffer!" "A scoffer!" one or another exclaimed. The people began to look up, and about them. The tide of feeling was somewhat diverted. "Oh! there will be mourning, mourning, mourning," &c., was pealed forth from the pulpit, and a full chorus of voices chimed in. The Preacher renewed his exhortations, and the attention of the assembly was restored to the subjects that had occupied them. The groans and sobs were renewed. "This beats the Great Earthquake all hollow," exclaimed one of the congregation. "Yes," echoed the Preacher, "what a rattling among the dry bones." "Oh Lord!" cried one of his assistants, "send an earthquake, shake these sinners, send it quick, send it now. There were near four hundred converted at the last earthquake in Boston." "Oh! what a harvest of

souls we should have, brother!" rejoined the Preacher. "Help me with your prayers brethren, as Aaron and Hur did Moses."

In due time these exercises closed. After supper, in the evening, the pile of wood was kindled, pine knots were lighted at the corners of the pulpit; the horn blew and the people reassembled. Margaret ran off into the woods with Bull and laid down under a tree, her head resting on the flanks of the dog, and her feet nestling in the soft moss. Nimrod was drinking and roistering at the booths. Hash was beyond the reach of influences spiritual or temporal. After the evening service was over the people dispersed to their tents. A middle aged man, Mr. Palmer, from the Ledge, happening in the woods, saw Margaret asleep under the trees, took her in his arms, carried her into one of the tents, and gave her in charge of his wife. The good woman with one hand patted Margaret on her head, while with the other she tended her own with a pinch of snuff, and asked her if she didn't want to be saved. Margaret replied that she didn't know.

"The spirit is here mightily," said the woman, taking a fresh pinch, "won't you come in for a share?"

"It won't let me," replied Margaret.

"You may lose your soul."

"I havn't got any."

"Mercy on me!" exclaimed the woman, "Don't you know the devil will git you if you don't come in?"

"No it won't," replied Margaret, "Bull won't let it."

"What will you do when all the little boys and gals goes up a singing?"

"I'll stay at home and hear Chilion play on the fiddle, and read my new books."

"Luddy mussy! can you read? Where do you live?"

"Down to the Pond."

"Hav't they got any of the religin at your house?"

"No, Marm, they drink pupelo and rum."

"A born fool!" ejaculated the woman with herself.—"But she can read, she must be knowing. Wonder if the power an't in her? She will certainly die, and she an't no more ready than our Rufus."

The people began to crowd into the tent, among whom was Mistress Wright and her son Obed. The Widow made immediately for Margaret, who with Mistress Palmer, was sitting on the straw in a corner apart. She heard the latter lady's soliloquy, and added, "Oh no, I'm afeered she an't."

"What's the matter of the child?" asked Mistress Palmer.

"Don't know, Marm," replied the Widow. "I wish suttin could be done for her, she's bred in orful wicked ways. Any sick up your way, Miss Palmer? I've brought a few yarbs with me. If we could only keep the poor sinners alive long enough for um teu save their souls it would be a great narcy."

The speakers were interrupted by noises in the tent into which a large number of people had found their way, who began to sing, exhort and pray. They had Obed down flat on his back. His mouth was open, his eyes shut; he shook spasmodically, he groaned with a deep guttural guffaw. Men and women were over and about him; some looking on, some praying, some uttering "Glory!" The Preacher came in, a bland smile on his face, rubbing his hands; "Good!" he ejaculated with a short, quick snap of the voice. "The Lord is here, Miss Palmer," said he.

"Yes in truth, you told us we should have a great time," rejoined the woman. "But see this gal, I wonder if anything can be done with her."

"Ah my little lamb," said the Preacher, taking Margaret's hand and drawing her gently towards him. "Hope you have found the Saviour, you are old enough to repent." Margaret wrested herself from him. "Why what's the matter, dear?" enquired the man. "You are not one of the wicked children that reviled the prophet, and the bears came out of the woods and tare them in pieces?"

"I an't afraid of the bears," replied Margaret, pettishly.

"A mazed child! a mazed child!" exclaimed Mistress Palmer.

"Don't you want to be converted?" asked the Preacher.

"I don't like you, I don't like you," replied Margaret. "You hollered so and scared Obed, he's scared now. They are hurting him," she said, pointing where the youth lay. Darting from her company, she penetrated the crowd and knelt down by the side of Obed. "Poor Obed!" she said, "don't make such a noise, Molly is here."

"I am going to hell," hoarsely and mournfully replied the boy.

"The arrows of the Almighty are thick upon him," ejaculated the Preacher, approaching the scene.

"If the Lord would only grant him deliverance!" said his mother, looking through the crowd.

"Pray, brother, pray, sister," said the Preacher, addressing

one and another. "Jacob wrestled all night in prayer with God. The Ark is now going by. Three have already closed with the offers of mercy in Dunwich tent."

"Don't cry so, Obed," said Margaret. "They shan't hurt you."

"The devil is in that child, take her away," said the Preacher.

Some one endeavored to pull her off. "Let me alone," she exclaimed, "I can't go, I won't go," and she adhered to the boy, whose arm had become closed about her neck as a man in a fit.

There was a jarring hubbub of voices; men and women reeking with excitement, and vieing one with another who should pray the most importunately.

"What the devil are ye doing here?" shouted a still louder voice over the heads of the crowd. It was Nimrod, who half-intoxicated thrust himself among them. "Bite um Bull, bite um," he rubbed the dog's ears and holding him between his legs, teased him into a piercing yelp and howl that startled the people.

"Bull! Bull!" shrieked Obed. "He's comin, he'll bite me." The lad sprang to his feet and stared wildly about.

"Satan has come in great wrath," cried the Preacher.

"Yes, and I guess you know as much about him as anybody, old cackletub!" rejoined Nimrod. "You set them all a going, and then snap them up like a hawk."

"Hoorah!" shouted another of the scoffers from the other side of the tent. "I hearn him comin down from a tree jest now; look out or he'll be in your hair, white-top."

"I've cotched him by the tail," said another of the fry, twitching the dog, who thereupon renewed his roar.

"Pray, brethren, pray!" said the Preacher, and the people began to pray more lustily. "As with the sound of rams' horns the walls of Jericho fell down, so shall these sinners tremble before God."

"Where's Sibyl Radney?" cried one of the opposers. "She's got the bellows pipe for ye, and will let ye have some of the broomstick too, if you want."

"Oh! oh!" screamed Margaret, "you hurt me. They are treading on my toes. Nimrod! Nimrod! I can't get out."

"Margaret, are you in there, like a mouse among cats?" halloed her brother.

"Yes, and Obed is here too."

"Let Obed go to Ballyhack. Come along out."

"Cast him out of the synagogue," cried the Preacher.

"Back with ye," said a man making up to Nimrod. "The Lord is here."

"Guess you will find somebody else is here too. Take yourself back," replied Nimrod, at the same time rendering the man a blow that nearly levelled him with the ground.

"I can't stay here," said Mistress Palmer.

"Hope the Lord won't leave us yet," responded a woman at her side.

"I fear the spirit will be grieved to depart," said another of the company.

"How many souls will perish for this man's wickedness!" sighed the Preacher.

Sibyl Radney rushing forward, seized Margaret, whom she held like a pup, under one arm, and with the other cleaved her way through the people. The lights were smothered; there was a surging to and fro; the props of the tent broke asunder; some ran one way, some another; others were trodden under foot. Margaret found herself in the woods supported by Sibyl. Nimrod presently appearing, said they must go home. Sibyl helped him mount his horse, and Margaret contriving to keep her brother in equipoise, they returned to the Pond.

CHAPTER IX.

MARGARET SUCCESSFUL IN A NOVEL ADVENTURE.

A FEW days afterwards, there came to the Widow Wright's Mr. Palmer from the Ledge, the man who found Margaret in the woods and delivered her to his wife. He purchased of the Widow a prescription for his daughter Rhody, who he said was not in strong health, and then stated that his family had been troubled for want of water, and intimated a conjecture of his wife that Margaret was one in whom resided the faculty of discovering it, and asked the Widow if she would accompany him to Pluck's, and aid in procuring the