

# ATTALA REGISTER.

"TRUTH IS MIGHTY AND WILL PREVAIL."

VOLUME I.

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## ATTALA REGISTER.

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### SELECTED TALES.

#### THE SANFORDS.

"Some wild desire, some sad mistake has cast  
Severe remorse and sorrow for the past;  
Some former fault shall present solace curb,  
Or fair occasion lost, his peace disturb:  
Some fatal chance has ruined every scheme,  
And proved his brightest prospect all a dream."

About the year 18—, there lived in a populous neighborhood, in the state of Virginia, a lady and gentleman named Sanford. They possessed considerable wealth, which was to be inherited by their only son, whom they called Hugh. The life of this worthy couple, was a quiet and easy as an unruffled stream, save when some slight differences of opinion would occasionally arise, respecting the management of Hugh. But one point on which they always agreed, was, that he should never be thwarted in any wish of his heart.

At the time our story commences, Hugh Sanford was twenty, and had just left college. Whether he ever distinguished himself there, I have not been able to ascertain. However, I know with certainty, that he was by nature gifted with good sense, and he had many fine qualities of the heart. I know not whether the reader will think so, from the sketch I am about to write, but he must bear in mind, that Hugh's natural disposition was so wrapped by continual indulgence, that not until the fever of youth had subsided, was it truly developed.

A large party had been invited to spend several days at Mr. Sanford's, and his wife had promised them a little dance. We shall pass over the preparations which were made for the party, and which, in the country, always produce so much bustle and excitement; we will even say nothing of the important business, (to the girls at least) of the *toilette*; but shall follow them all to the drawing room, which was brilliantly lighted.

Among the girls, Mary Linden was the most commanding; her splendid dress and jewelry, gave her quite a *magnificent* air. She was the daughter of a rich widower. Ellen Lorval (the only child of a poor layer), was also much admired. Her light muslin dress and simple wreath of wild flowers were peculiarly becoming.

"My dear Hugh," said Mrs. Sanford, "I wish to speak with you a moment before the dancing commences. Does not Mary look beautiful? Do go and engage her as your partner immediately."

"Not so fast mother," said he smiling. "My son," said she, "I love Mary as my daughter: could I but think that she would be one to me." She looked at him intently, but he appeared not to understand her meaning, and turning the conversation, he went to join a group of young men.

The scene changes. The enlivening sound of the violin is heard; the couples are beginning to take their places on the floor, when Hugh, to the dismay of his parents, is seen leading out Ellen Lorval. Mary Linden is surrounded by beaux, and it seems as capriciously given her fair hand to the least deserving of them, a would-be-wit, whose whole conversation consists of long words and jest, which have been in print for ages. The party went off well and all seemed to enjoy themselves, except some few unfortunate *wall-flowers*, for whom, however, Mrs. Sanford procured partners towards the close of the evening.

Hugh would probably never again have thought of his attentions to Ellen, had not his mother kept him in custody the next morning, while she spoke her mind on the subject. She represented to him "the folly of falling in love with her, when Mary Linden was in the house;" and she even went so far as to say, that "there would be a great impropriety in his falling in love with Ellen." Hugh was greatly astonished at hearing all this, for the first time of falling in love had never entered his imagination. He

since she had put such notions into his head, he could not but see, that if he could be so fortunate as to fall in love, and meet with opposition, it would give a peculiar zest to the monotony of his country life. So he stalked off the drawing room, and began to think Ellen very interesting. The few succeeding days were passed as they usually are by a large party in the country. They read, talked, rode and played at battledoor; but at length the guests departed, and Mr. and Mrs. Sanford returned to the enjoyment of their tranquility; but Hugh did not feel quite at his ease, as he was conscious that he had pained his parents, not so much by his attentions to Ellen, as by failing to fall in love with Mary Linden. Weeks passed on;—Hugh continued to meet Ellen at all the dinners and parties in the neighborhood, and to pay her attention. Mr. and Mrs. Sanford had seen all their hopes respecting Mary Linden laid low, and they had fretted themselves into ill humor about Ellen: a calm was now ensuing, they began to look on the bright side of things, and even to fancy that Ellen was to be their future daughter.

"My son," said Mr. Sanford, "I wish you to consult your own happiness in every thing. You love Ellen; you have now the consent of your parents to address her."

"Really father, I—," he stammered out something that was unintelligible.

"Say no more, I see you are embarrassed."

"Hear me father—,"

"Not a word more at present; good bye."

There is an old saying, that "competition is the life of trade," and I think it is no less true, that "opposition is the life of love," or of something that is frequently mistaken for it by *green-horns*, and very young ladies just from school. Now that all opposition was at an end, Hugh was somewhat surprised to find himself entirely out of love with Ellen; and indeed, he shrewdly suspected he had never been in love with her. The gentle girl had seemed pleased with the attentions of the handsome Hugh Sanford, though she acted with the most perfect delicacy, nor have I ever found out whether she imagined him to be serious. I am sorry to say, that the utmost partiality cannot throw a veil over the conduct of Hugh in this instance; and many will say that he does not deserve the title of a *hero*. "Pshaw!" says a little girl, "I thought all heroes were perfect!" And so they are, in English novels, but not in old Virginia!

Mrs. Sanford had a widowed sister living in the southern part of the state. Her name was Harrington, and she was the mother of two daughters, who were dashing belles and beauties. Thither Hugh now went, to pay a visit. On a bright evening, he came in sight of his aunt's dwelling. It was situated on a smooth green hill, which gradually sloped to the river\* \* \* \* \*, which was not very wide here. A tiny canoe was presently visible in the middle of the stream, and much to his surprise he perceived in it a single female figure. "Can that be one of my cousins?" said he; "what mad freak could induce her to go alone?"—But when he arrived at the house, he found both of his cousins and his aunt sitting together. They received him cordially, and while he was answering their inquiries, a light step was heard in the passage, and an eager voice exclaimed: "Oh, Mrs. Harrington, my pigeon flew away from me to the other bank, and I was so much afraid of losing it, that I went over for it myself." The speaker entered the room, holding the bird triumphantly in her hand; but perceiving a stranger, she was retreating, when Mrs. Harrington recalled her, and she was introduced to Hugh by the appellation of Amy Larone. She was bright as a sun beam, and beautiful as the roses of spring. Her hazel eyes were large; a delicate carnation bloomed on her cheek, and her brown hair was parted over her smooth brow, and gracefully twisted at the back of her head. She was below the middle size, and the plainest suit of mourning was neatly fitted on her slender shape.—Hugh's interest was strangely excited by the air of mystery with which he fancied she was surrounded, and he seized the first opportunity to enquire who she was. Her simple story was soon told. She was nearly sixteen, and was the orphan child of poor and obscure, though honest parents. Her mother died when

to the care of her father, an illiterate, although well meaning man, who had no idea that education was at all necessary: if he could see his daughter neatly dressed, and hear the neighbors say how beautiful she was, he cared for nothing more. Her beauty and modesty were talked of by rich and poor. Her father had not been dead more than seven or eight months; and Mrs. Harrington pitying her forlorn condition, had taken her to her house. Maria and Theresa Harrington were kind to her, and were anxious to repair somewhat the total neglect of the education of the warm hearted Amy. She was grateful, but as her taste for study had not been formed in childhood, it was with reluctance that she now attempted the *drudgery* of learning, and, so far as concerned herself, she wished that the makers of books had never existed.

She seemed, however, to possess an instinctive knowledge of what was right and proper to be said or done, even on occasions that were perfectly novel to her; and when a subject was started of which she was ignorant, she acted *wisely*, and said *nothing*; or if in the course of conversation a few errors were committed by her, her transcendent beauty was sufficient to atone for all. True, her beauty was not of the spiritual kind, "the rapt soul beaming in the eyes;" but it was just such as is always admired by enthusiastic young men.

Company came in, and Hugh obtained a seat near Amy, entered into conversation with her, in which to do her justice, she supported her part quite well. He rallied her upon her excursion after her truant bird. She replied—"It was the last thing my father ever gave me, and I love it for his sake."

Several weeks had been passed by Hugh at his aunt's, and he had become deeply interested in the orphan. Amy appeared dejected, and very rarely joined the family party in the sitting room. This conduct only strengthened Hugh's interest. He was now really in love—"fairly caught," as the young ladies express it. Walking out one evening by himself, he encountered Amy unexpectedly, and a gleam of joy lighted up his handsome features.

"Miss Larone, said he, "why have you deserted us: the time has been too long since we met."

"Three days, sir," said Amy, slightly smiling.

"I can hardly believe it possible," said he, for it seems as many months to me."

Amy assumed a look of coldness, and said she did not understand him; but her countenance betrayed that she did.

They walked on in silence to the bank of the river, and Hugh looking on the beautiful stream and its romantic banks, said, "Could I but think that you would walk here after I am gone, and think of me—Amy, I will confess that from the first moment I saw you, I felt the strongest interest in you. Nay more, that I do now love you most ardently. Will you give me your heart?" She remained silent and agitated, and at length tears came to her relief. "Oh, why do you weep? Say to me Amy, that I may at least hope you love me!" She raised her mild tearful eyes, and that glance betrayed that her heart was his.—"Now heaven bless you Amy, let us record our vows, and you will be my bride ere long." Mr. Sanford, she said "tis true that I love you, but yet I can never be yours. Your parents would never receive me as their daughter." "Hush Amy," said he, "my parents love me too well to withhold their consent," straggling with her emotion, she said, "There are other weighty reasons which I cannot be your wife. No, no, it cannot be." "Amy, you distract me; whatever those reasons are, they shall be overcome." She shook her head, and darted off from him ere he was aware of her determination. Hugh was bewildered; but he resolved to seek another interview with Amy. The next day he entreated her as a last favor, to walk with him. So *reasonable* a request could not be refused. He told her that unless she changed her determination, on the morrow he would depart, whither he neither knew or cared. Her *compassion* was so much excited, that before their return to the house she had permitted him to hope. He told her he would set off directly for his home, and that he would return in a few weeks,—adding that he would write to her immediately. It was not until after much entreaty, that she consented to receive his letters; but when he requested

no bounds. Poor Amy!

The next day he took leave of all; and ere long, a letter fraught with expressions of the most tender regard, was handed to Amy. *She did not answer it.* Another soon followed, gently chiding her for her silence. After this, *all were answered.* Mrs. Harrington and Maria were in arms about the match. His parents yielded a reluctant consent: and at the appointed time they were married. Hugh wrote to his mother to apprise her of it, and to appoint a time for their arrival at the home of his childhood—he now thought himself perfectly happy. The *honey-moon* was nearly past, when one day as he was gazing with rapture on the loveliness of his young bride, Mrs. Harrington entered, saying, "Here is a letter directed to Mrs. Hugh Sanford," from my sister, I think." She handed Amy the letter, with a look of peculiar significance! Amy broke the seal mechanically, blushed deeply, and bent her eyes on the ground.—"Amy," said Hugh, "why do you not read my mother's letter?" She sank down, and could only say, "Forgive me—oh, forgive me!" "For what dearest? You that never in thought or word offended.—Look up, Amy," said he, smiling, "you have no need of forgiveness." "Oh, you do not know; I—" She could scarce articulate; but at length came the terrible confession, that she could scarcely read, and *could not write!*

We have mentioned the total neglect of her education, and the "weighty reasons" which she told Hugh would prevent her from marrying him. All is now explained. But bow, you may ask, did she manage to answer his letters, when she was unable to write? She made Theresa Harrington her confidant; and she without thinking of the consequences, answered them in Amy's name.—The deception was cruel; but Amy's conduct is not entirely without some palliation. Her love of Hugh, and the shame of her ignorance, combatted fiercely in her bosom; and *she did refuse him—partly.*

Hugh had first been won by her beauty and her destitute condition; her refusal of his offered hand had only added fuel to the flame. Absence, "making the heart grow fonder," and the letters he received, all conspired to blind him. Sincerely was he to be pitied, for he possessed many fine qualities, and was nobly disinterested. The veil was now removed from his eyes, and the dream of love was fast deserting him, like shadows of the morning, when the bright sunlight rises o'er the hills. They went to his parents. We shall pass over the various mortifications which Hugh had to endure. Amy idolized her husband, and he was too kind-hearted to be proof against her fondness. He exerted himself day after day to instruct her, but I do not believe she went much beyond learning to read and write legibly. His parents lived only a few years after these events, and his beautiful wife was attacked about four years after they were married with a slight cough, which was soon followed by that bright flush, which is too frequently the harbinger of death. A southern climate, and every possible means were resorted to, for her restoration to health, but in vain! Her last prayers were offered up for her husband and a daughter then two years old.—Hugh never married again. He continued to live at the family mansion occupied almost entirely with the education of Eva. When she was ten years of age, she was sent to New York to school. Her life had been attended with circumstances which are not without romance. Should any curiosity be felt on the subject, I may at a future time give a sketch of the life of Eva Sanford.

Years have passed since these events transpired, and the once young and handsome Hugh Sanford is now an old man. His appearance is very much changed, and his faults and foibles have been lost in his progress through life, or have become softened by the hand of time. Certain it is; he is now a very estimable man, and is looked up to with reverence both in public and private life.

*New process of Counterfeiting.*—The Cincinnati Sun says: "We have heard it asserted that a process of Counterfeiting bills has been discovered in this city by the daguerrotype, which will become a subject for legislation, or the whole country will be flooded with notes that cannot be detected, so perfectly are