

**THE ADVENTURES  
OF A VIRGINIAN**

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The Adventures of a Virginian by Oliver Thurston

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## THE ADVENTURES OF A VIRGINIAN.

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### INTRODUCTION.

AT the opening of the present century, Colonel Seaton, who had served with distinction in the Revolutionary War, and who, as a member of the Assembly of Virginia, was well and favorably known in the politics of the State, was living on his plantation, called Stanwick, in the neighborhood of Charlottesville. He had inherited this estate, together with Oaklands, a plantation on the Rappahannock, a few miles below Fredericksburg, from his father. Possessed of good sense and business sagacity, he had been prosperous in his affairs, and his house had long been renowned

for a generous hospitality. Mrs. Seaton, his wife, was neither handsome nor brilliant, but she was kind, genial, and cordial, and a great favorite with all classes. But, at the time of which we write, a cloud rested upon this hitherto happy household. Bad crops, bad markets, and one or two unlucky speculations, had involved Colonel Seaton in pecuniary embarrassments. This was a new and irritating experience to the Colonel, and he determined, at whatever sacrifice, to be free from debt and the humiliations that attend it.

Accordingly, one morning early in the year 1804, while seated at the breakfast table, he suddenly announced to his wife his purpose to sell Oaklands. This was a blow to Mrs. Seaton. She felt mortified that her husband should be compelled to part with any portion of his patrimony, and particularly Oaklands, which he had always said he intended to give to their

only son, Arthur Seaton, when he attained his majority. But suggestion and remonstrance were alike vain. The Colonel had made up his mind, and while, on all occasions, he consulted his wife, and listened to her opinions with respect, he, nevertheless, in all important matters decided promptly, and would have his own way. Mrs. Seaton knew the Colonel's peculiarity, but in this case it seemed so hard to her that Arthur should lose what she had come to regard as his property, that she could not help prolonging the discussion, hoping that some other method might be suggested by which the Colonel could be extricated from his difficulties without the necessity of this distasteful sacrifice. "My dear husband," she said, "why not mortgage your property instead of selling it? You know my brother raised money in that way when he was pressed; why cannot you?"



"My dear," replied the Colonel, "it is not temporary relief that I want, but permanent. Debt is a millstone around a man's neck, and a mortgage is debt. The interest must be paid, and a failure of the crops, which may occur any year, would produce general embarrassment, and instead of the interest the principal might be called for; and this would be followed by a foreclosure, and at a time when money could not be obtained, and my ruin would be sealed. No, I must preserve Stanwick at all hazards, and to do that, so that we may have a shelter for our heads when age has whitened them, I must sell Oaklands."

"But how do you propose to settle Arthur? He is now twenty, and will soon be through his college studies, and I looked forward with so much pleasure to his planting at Oaklands. Besides, you know of the attachment between him and Nellie Peyton."

"Nonsense," said the Colonel. "These school-boy and school-girl attachments are as evanescent as the morning's mist. Young men must see something of life and society, must form their characters, before love can make a durable impression. And as for settling Arthur, there is the army, the bar; the young gentleman, in one or other of these professions, must work his way to fame and fortune, if his fibre is equal to the attainment of the prizes of life. I think it is; and I am going to Richmond to consult my friend, Mr. Wickham, and determine what is best to be done with him."

Mrs. Seaton did not pursue the conversation, and, apparently convinced by the Colonel's reasoning, she resigned herself to what she saw was inevitable. In a day or two afterwards the Colonel set off for Richmond. Arrived there, he repaired, on the following morning, to the office of the courtly and accomplished

lawyer whose fame was a part of the treasures of his native State. After the usual greetings and civilities, Colonel Seaton stated to Mr. Wickham, plainly and frankly, the condition of his affairs. The latter, while expressing his regret, concurred in the wisdom of the former in parting with Oaklands; and, by a lucky coincidence, he knew a gentleman who was desirous to purchase a plantation, and readily undertook to put Colonel Seaton in communication with him.

As we wish to get rapidly over this part of our story, we may here say that the gentleman referred to visited Oaklands, was pleased with the place, and, the price being agreed on, purchased it with all the stock, negroes, and farming utensils. The sum realized, we may add, relieved Colonel Seaton of debt, and left him the unembarrassed possessor of the fair domain of Stanwick.