

elers, who light a fire when they go to sleep and neglect afterwards to extinguish it. Little attention is paid them when the woods alone are the victims, but as there are always some cultivated parts, the fire often reaches the fences which surround fields, and sometimes the houses themselves, which is the ruin of the settlers. I recall that during my stay at Monticello, whence one can discern an extent of thirty or forty leagues of forest, I saw several fires three or four leagues apart; they continued to burn until a heavy rain fortunately extinguished them.<sup>29</sup>

I arrived at Mr. Grigsby's a little before five o'clock, having met with nothing on the road but a wild turkey, which rose so far off that it was impossible for me to find it again. The house was not large, but neat and convenient. We found it already occupied by other travelers, to whom we assuredly owed every token of respect, if rank among travelers be measured by the distances they still have to cover. These other guests were a healthy good-natured young man of twenty-eight, who had set out from Philadelphia with a pretty wife of twenty and a babe in arms, to settle five hundred miles beyond the mountains in a recently settled country bordering on the Ohio, called the county of "Kentucket." His whole retinue consisted of one horse, which carried his wife and child. We were astonished at the offhand manner in which he proceeded on his expedition, and took the liberty of mentioning our surprise to him. He told us that good lands in Pennsylvania were too expensive to get, that provisions were too dear and inhabitants too numerous, and that he had consequently deemed it better to purchase for about fifty *louis* a grant of a thousand acres of land in Kentucky. This grant had formerly been made to a militia colonel, at the time when the King of England thought proper to order the distribution of these immense tracts of land, part of which were sold and the rest set aside as compensation to American troops who had served in Canada.<sup>30</sup> But, I asked him, where are the cattle and the farming tools with which you must begin the clearing of your land?

In the region itself, he replied. I am taking nothing with me, but I have money in my pocket, and shall want for nothing. I began to understand the resolution of this young man, who was active, vigorous, and free from care; but I still imagined this pretty woman, only twenty, in despair at the sacrifice she had made. I thought to detect in her features and looks the secret sentiments of her soul. Though

she had retired into a little chamber, to make room for us, she came several times into the one where we were, and I saw, not without astonishment, that her natural charms were even embellished by the serenity of her mind. She often caressed her husband and her child, and appeared to me very willing to fulfill the first object of every infant colony—"to increase and multiply."

While supper was being prepared, and we were talking of travels and finding on the map the road our emigrants were to follow, I remembered that an hour of daylight still remained, that this was precisely the time I had seen the *gelinottes*, and that I had been assured that there were some in the neighborhood. Nor was I unmindful that the gloaming is an auspicious moment for lovers as well as for hunters. So I took my gun and proceeded to the woods. Instead of wood hens, I found only a rabbit, which I wounded, but it rolled down into a hollow, where I lost sight of it. Luckily for me, Mr. Grigsby's dogs came running at the sound of the shot and found me my rabbit, which had got into the hollow of a tree, up which it would have climbed had its leg not been broken. The rabbits of America differ from those of Europe in that they do not burrow, but take refuge in hollow trees, which they climb like cats, and often to a very considerable height [!]. Content with my victory, I returned to the house, but stopped for a time to hear, at sunset, two thrushes or *grives rousses*, who seemed to have challenged each other to song, like the shepherds of Theocritus. This bird ought, in my opinion, to be considered as the nightingale of America. It resembles our European nightingale in its form, color, and habits, but is twice as large. Its song is similar to that of our thrush, but is so varied and so accomplished that, except for the uniform plaintive notes of the European nightingale, it might be taken for one. It is a bird of passage, like the mockingbird, and like it sometimes remains through the winter.

Upon my return to the house supper was henceforth my sole object; Mr. and Mrs. Grigsby were taking great pains with it, while their daughters, about sixteen or seventeen, and pretty as pictures, were setting the table. I asked Mr. Grigsby to sit down to supper with us, but he would not do so because he still had to wait on us. Nor was the trouble he took useless, for we had an excellent supper, although "wheyski" was our only drink, as it was on the three days following. We managed however to make tolerable "towdy" of it.