THE

ROVING RED RANGERS,

OR

LAURA LAMAR,

OF THE SUSQUEHANNA.

A THRILLING ROMANCE OF THE OLD COLONIAL DAYS.

BY C. A. ROBINSON,
CHIEF OF THE WENONAHS,
G. S. D. 411.

PUBLISHED BY
THE AUTHOR,
GREENFIELD, IND.

TO MY LOVING DAUGHTER

Without whose tender devotion, patient forbearance and unfailing endeavors, this book could never have appeared, it is

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

L[illegible] Lamar, of the Susquehanna.

PRESS OF
D. H. GOBLE, GREENFIELD, IND.
1902.

LAURA LAMAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADVENTURE.

"Well, well, Miss Gayrider, you appear to be in something of a hurry this morning. What seems to be the matter? Has the dusky son of the forest been trying to extend to you his courtesies?"

"Of course I'm in a hurry, daddy, and you'd be the same way I'm a thinking, if you had been in my place. These red rascals are becoming entirely too polite to persons to whom they have never been introduced. I wish they would be just a little more circumspect in their conduct toward those with whom they are not acquainted. This is the third time within the past few days that they have shown a disposition to become uncomfort-

ably familiar with me, and one of them was so very gallant that I suppose he thought Blackbird was running away with me, for he rode right up beside me and attempted to grasp my bridle rein, and, I really believe he would have done so if a bullet from my little rifle had not gone singing to his heart."

"Why, my child, you are remarkably cool and sarcastic in your manner of describing a horrible incident which so nearly cost you your liberty, and, it might have been, your life. Did you not know that the Indians are on the war path at this time?"

"Well, yes, daddy, I had heard you make some such remark a time or two."

"Then how did it happen that you were so reckless as to take your life in your own hands in this manner?"

"If you'll take this deer off the shoulders of Blackbird and let me sit down on the mossy spot under that hemlock tree, I'll tell you all about it as soon as I get rested a little, for I'm awfully shaky just now."

"Yes," said the father, "that's just like a woman; she'll fight like a tiger while she's at it, and when the danger is over, she will utterly collapse. Bring her some milk, mother."

The mother hurried away to the spring-house and in a little while, returned, bringing a gourd full of fresh new milk, which the daughter drank eagerly and was soon much refreshed.

"You see, daddy, it was this way. I heard you say a few days ago that your rheumatism was giving you a great deal of trouble, and, as we were running short of provisions, I knew it would be a task for you to go on the hunt, so I just saddled up Blackbird, loaded and primed my rifle, got together a supply of ammunition and started out to do a little hunting on my own responsibility. I soon caught sight of the trail of a deer, which I followed for some time, and before I knew it, I was five miles away and the sun was sinking rapidly in the west. I had just turned Blackbird's head toward home and had gone but a short distance when I heard a

voice utter a low call in the bushes behind me. I at once concluded that there was danger about me and gave Blackbird the rein and he came over the hills like a whirlwind, while two young Indians followed in full pursuit. I tell you it was a merry chase and it was jolly fun to see those dirty scamps urge their ponies to their utmost speed, but they were not in the race with Blackbird, and he soon brought me home safely."

"Didn't they offer to fire upon you?" anxiously inquired the father.

"Not a single time, and that was what surprised me greatly."

"Ah, my child, too well do I understand the meaning of their actions. Their intention was to capture you and carry you away to their savage home."

"And where is their home, daddy?"

"Their principal place of resort is a large Indian town by the name of Sandusky, situated far beyond the Allegheny River."

"What would they have done with me when they had taken me there?"

"You would have been compelled to lead a life that is worse than death."

"Well, then, I'm really glad that the noble sons of the forest did not overtake me, for I am not quite ready to leave my cozy, little Pennsylvania home, on the banks of the Two Lick and under the shadow of Chestnut Ridge."

"But tell us, Laura," said her mother, "of the second day's adventure, as you say this is the third."

"So I will, although I had a closer call the second day than I did the first. You see, I did not bring in any game the first day, and I was determined not to be outwitted by two greasy savages, so, about three days afterward, I started out again and this time, not only did I carefully load my rifle, but I slipped out your hunting knife, daddy, and put it in my belt to use in case I needed it."

"Well, I declare," said her father. "A great fight you would have put up against half a dozen burly Indians."

"That's just the very thing I did and they did n't get my scalp, either. But

I promised to tell you how it was, so here goes. I had not gone more than three miles from home, when I heard the sound of a wild turkey calling its mate. I had failed to bring down the deer three days before, so I concluded to try my luck turkey shooting, for I knew if I were successful, we would have plenty of food for awhile. I followed the call of the turkey but it kept moving farther and farther away, and so rapidly, that I was not able to overtake it."

"You were being led into the same death trap that many others have entered, and that, too, in spite of my repeated warnings against the treacherous turkey call of the Indian."

"You are right, daddy, you are right. While riding along, I suddenly remembered having heard you say that Indians sometimes imitate the call of the turkey so cleverly, that even flocks of turkeys themselves have been deceived and decoyed into easy shooting range; so I whirled Blackbird around, and there I saw, full in my path, three burly Indians

on foot and all of them approaching me rapidly.

"As soon as I faced them, they uttered a wild yell. I instantly realized my perilous position and well knew the decoy Indians would come up behind me, so I raised my rifle and fired directly at the foremost one, killing him instantly. Grasping the gun by the muzzle and raising it in the air, I determined to sell my life as dearly as possible. I intended to crush the skull of one of the wretches as I passed them and take the chances of being killed by the other. What was my surprise, when I approached them, to hear one of them call in clear distinct English: 'Stop, you wench, or I'll send a bullet through your brain.'

"Instantly I knew the speaker was a white man, and I really believed the well disguised villain would carry out his threat; instead of halting, however, I urged Blackbird forward and brought the butt of the gun down with all the power that was in me, hoping to crush his skull, but he pushed my gun aside with his, as

I dashed along, yet, to my great surprise, not a shot was fired at me. Instead of this, I was so astonished to hear him call my name twice, 'Laura, Laura,' that I stopped suddenly, wheeled around facing him, when he put both hands to his mouth and said in a loud voice:

"'Don't fail to tell Loco that I am still camping on her trail.'"

Scarcely had Laura finished the last sentence, when her mother, placing her hand over her heart, uttered a loud scream and fell to the earth insensible. Quickly the father raised her up and carried her into the little log house, where he placed her on the plain but comfortable bed.

During the remaining portion of the day and through the long, weary night, both father and daughter sat beside the bed of the stricken wife and mother, administering to her such simple restoratives as were found in their humble home. In silent eagerness, they gazed into her face, earnestly longing to catch the slightest sign of returning consciousness. The wolves, attracted by the scent of the blood

of the deer, which had been hung up in the little shed room that adjoined the cabin, made the night hideous with their ceaseless concert of dismal howling, while the dog whined piteously in his terror as he curled himself up in a heap in the darkest corner.

Becoming completely exhausted by the long watch, the father finally yielded to Laura's persuasion, and, turning down a chair, and placing his coat on it for a pillow, stretched himself on the floor and was soon fast asleep.

Laura sat holding her mother's hands in hers, and just as the day began to break, the latter drew a long breath, shuddered a little and opened her eyes. For an instant the expression in them was a vacant one, then closing her hands around those of her daughter with the grip of a giant, she said in a hoarse whisper:

"Where is he?"

"Where is who?" asked Laura, quickly.

"Where is Henry Anson? I mean—where is—where is—your father?"

"Here he is lying on the floor, mother; he became so tired; I'll just wake him."

"No, no, let him sleep on. I think —I believe—it seems to me that I have had an awful dream. Will you give me a little water?"

"Certainly mother," and, as she turned suddenly around, the shadow of a human figure seemed to dart past the little window, but, when she looked out, she saw nothing, and, dismissing the matter from her mind, she brought the water to her mother, who drank it, then fell into a calm and quiet sleep.

When she awoke, the sun was high above the crest of the ridge, and shone down in loving splendor upon the little, cabin home situated on a high bluff along the right bank of Two Lick Creek, just below where it is joined by the rolling, dashing Yellow Creek, in what is now Indiana county, Pennsylvania.

She could hear the low voices of father and daughter as they moved quietly about the fire place, at the opposite end of the cabin from where she lay, preparing

their morning meal. Slowly opening her eyes, she looked around, and her mind at once became perfectly clear, and she remembered what had transpired on the day before. She was surprised to find herself much stronger than she seemed when she first awoke, and, as she lay and listened, she heard her daughter ask in a low and earnest tone:

"Daddy, what do you think made mother get sick so quickly, yesterday?"

"I think it must have been heart trouble, my child."

There was a pause for a few moments, and Laura asked again:

"What did that man mean, daddy, do you suppose, when he told me to tell Loco he was camping on her trail?"

He did not reply for a moment, but presently said:

"When mother gets well, perhaps she can tell you, but come, my child, let us go to the shed and I will cut a nice slice of venison for her breakfast," and the two passed quietly out of the room.

His answer was quite a relief to the

mother. Rising from the bed, she dressed herself, took a seat in the plain, splint bottomed rocking chair, which her husband had made, and was sitting there when she heard Laura say to her father:

"Well, you finish cutting this, daddy, and I will see if mother is awake. I expect she is very hungry by this time, and if she is, we will surprise her with a fine breakfast, pretty soon."

She raised the wooden latch of the door between the two rooms, very carefully, and, as she opened it, her mother said in a cheerful voice:

"Yes, indeed, my child, I feel like I could eat an entire venison ham and a whole corn pone this morning."

"Well, daddy," said Laura in great astonishment, "did you ever?"

"What is it, Laura?"

"You just come in here and *see* what is it."

"What do you think of that now? Here is a woman who was nearly as dead as a door nail two or three hours ago, sitting up in a rocking chair and ordering a breakfast fit for the Queen."

"The Queen be blowed. She's better than all the Queens in the world. How do you feel, mother? Had a pretty tough job on your hands, didn't you? But I thought you'd come around all right, especially for the sake of John Lamar," said her husband, as he leaned over her and looked tenderly into her eyes. He was always fond of referring to himself by his full name when speaking to his wife in time of trouble or distress, for she had often told him it carried her back to the days of their youth and their courtship. The name seemed to impress her very deeply on this occasion, for she placed her arm around his neck and drew his face close to hers, as she whispered:

"Yes, for the sake of John Lamar."

The family gathered around the plain little table and ate their morning meal, while their laughter and gaiety expressed a state of supreme contentment and domestic happiness, which is not always found in halls of stone or palaces of marble.

Nothing was said of the unwelcome incident which had occured, during the entire day. But in the afternoon of the next, while the husband and wife were sitting beneath the overhanging boughs of the same old hemlock that had shaded them so often in times that were past and gone, Laura came riding up the hill from a short canter, looking the perfect picture of health and beauty.

"Here comes that daring, reckless girl," said the mother; "I hope she has not been out chasing red skins again."

"No, indeed, mother, I know when I have had enough sport for one time, but I really think you are showing too much concern for my welfare. I don't believe I am in any immediate peril, as I infer the red rascals have concluded by this time, that I'm a pretty dangerous quantity to fool with. Really, mother, I am getting to be a crack shot, here lately. Now just watch me pick that crow from the top of that tree across the creek," and putting her rifle to her shoulder, she fired, when the ebony hued bird dropped

instantly into the stream and floated downward out of sight.

"But tell us, Laura, about your last day's adventure, you didn't finish your story."

"Well, no," said the daughter, "our last little confab was slightly interrupted, and I doubt very much whether the company would be greatly edified by any further reference to what has taken place recently."

"Oh, you need not be afraid that I will be seized with any more conniption fits," said the mother, laughing, "but I'm really anxious to find out how my daughter succeeded so well in her third adventure."

"Come, come, mother," said her husband, "seems to me that your curiosity is aroused to a higher pitch than is best for your present physical condition. Don't you think we'd better let the tail go with the hide and drop that subject?"

"Oh, no, I want to hear all the fun from beginning to end, so please proceed, Miss Laura."

"What do you say, daddy?" said Laura, looking at her father.

"Well, go ahead, and if she goes to cavorting around here again, I'll give her a double dose of camphor and hartshorn."

"Well, you see, mammy, after the experience of the first two days, I concluded that my anatomy would be a little bit safer if I were to go out hunting in another direction, and, as I had still brought in no game, I was determined to make one more effort, for I have often heard it said, that the third time is the charm, whatever that means. So I crossed the creek down at the lower ford, and was soon on the trail of another deer which I followed, this time with more caution than I had observed before. I came in sight of the game two or three times, but was not within proper shooting distance until the animal had crossed the Ridge, had made a circuit and was coming back down the slope toward Yellow Creek. For a time I lost the trail and was just about to give up the chase, when I noticed Blackbird turn his ears

forward, and, as I peered through the bushes, I saw the creature standing, with its head down, at the salt lick just above 'Lucky Hit.' I raised my rifle and fired, shooting it through the heart. I rode to where it was, and with some difficulty, lifted it up and laid it across Blackbird's shoulders in front of my saddle, then mounted and started home.

"I had lost all thoughts of danger, as none had appeared, and was riding along leisurely, feeling very proud of the result of my efforts, and planning a genuine surprise for the old folks at home. I had not gone far, however, when Blackbird suddenly lifted his head, gave a loud snort and started off at such a rapid rate as to nearly tumble myself and the game to the ground.

"I let him have full rein, for there was nothing else I could do, as I was quite busy just then, holding on to my game, which I felt I could not afford to lose. A loud yell told me that I was pursued, and something whispered that my pursuer was gaining on me. Although I had

but little chance to turn round to see who was behind me, I soon discovered there was no necessity of doing so, as I saw a young Indian gradually passing me, and I was instantly convinced that his intention was to capture, and not to kill me. When this thought flashed over me, I was just on the point of dropping the doe, for the load was too heavy for poor Blackbird, but at this moment, the Indian gave a triumphant shout and urged his horse to greater speed, while Blackbird was doing all he could. I don't know whatever made me think of it, but just as the villain reached out his hand to take hold of my bridle, I threw my right foot across the neck of the doe, drew up my rifle and fired, as his fingers were touching the rein, and the noble red man fell to rise no more.

"In my excitement, I almost dropped my rifle, but Blackbird sprang forward with new life, and I heard that same English voice behind me say in bitterest tones:

"'Curse you, if I can't capture you,

I'll kill you,' and he sent a bullet after me which plowed its way through my hair and left such a furrow behind it, that I fear I will lose all my charms for the handsomest young man in the Conemaugh valley. But I got away, game and all, and I'm as good as a dozen dead girls." And, indeed, she seemed the very soul of womanly courage and beauty, as she stood there, the long, glistening curls dangling about her shoulders, her right hand resting on the bridle of her pet steed, while, with the other, she grasped the muzzle of the rifle which had lately served her so well.

CHAPTER II.

THE OUTLAWS.

It has been stated that, in the twilight of the morning which followed the long and ceaseless vigil that Laura kept over her stricken mother, the girl, while performing her duties, turned her face toward the solitary window that admitted light into the cabin, and, as she did so, imagined she saw the shadow of a human figure dart suddenly past it, but she was so absorbed in the work at hand, she persuaded herself it was merely a passing fancy and dismissed the matter from her mind. She was not mistaken, however, for a pair of leering eyes had gazed earnestly and maliciously upon the scene within, and when she turned, the figure had glided swiftly among the leaf-clad bushes that covered the side of the hill

upon which the cabin stood, and disappeared. Although this man was attired in the complete garb of a full blooded native, it required but a glance from a practised eye to discover that the contour of the face and the broad, full brow impressed upon him the features of a white man with such indelible clearness, that the paint he had made from the brown berries of the wood, and with which he had thickly smeared every portion of his person that might be exposed, could not disguise him.

As the reader may reasonably infer, he was none other than the one who had shouted the words to Laura, which seemed of such horrible import to her mother. It was Henry Anson, whose name the poor woman, in her half stupefied condition, had unluckily pronounced in the presence of the girl. Why he did not enter the cabin at the time he was prowling about it, is, as yet, a mystery. He certainly had all its inmates at his mercy.

Two hours later he sat in a silent and sullen mood on a decaying log near

the salt lick where the girl had shot the deer. Upon the ground a little distance from him, were three, vicious looking individuals, whom the merest novice could not mistake for thorough-bred savages. The party seemed to have no fear of danger, either present or remote, for, before them was a smart, blazing fire, in front of which, on a bed of live coals, lay some of the choicest cuts from the ham of a splendid deer which had lately been shot, roasting to an appetizing turn. No effort was made to conceal the dense mass of blue, curling smoke which ascended unmolested above the tree tops and was lost in the ether beyond.

When the venison steak was done, the young Indian who had the preparation of the meal in charge, thrust a sharp stick through each cut and dipped it into the salt laden waters of the pool which lay within a few feet of a clear, limpid spring of fresh water, thus both cooling and seasoning it. This done, the three Indians fell upon their portion with the voracity of their nature, while the tempt-

ing slice which the young native had placed upon some clean leaves that covered the log beside the disguised white man, lay untouched.

The somber silence which he steadfastly observed, the terrible contortions of his dark and villainous features, the sudden rush of blood to every portion of his face and the lurid light in his jet black eyes, all too plainly told of a flame of anger within, that was consuming his very soul.

Rising from his sitting posture and drawing himself up to his fullest height, he stamped the ground vehemently and said:

"Curse that woman, I will yet possess her in spite of every opposition. I have not been on her trail all these years for nothing. Too often have I braved the dangers that surround a known outlaw to release the game which is within such easy grasp as she now is;" and as he paced back and forth, his whole frame trembled like the leaves of the quaking aspen at his side, while the frenzy of an

overmastering madness held him fast. Presently he took a seat upon the log without noticing the food before him, although apparently having recovered from his fit of anger. Observing a change in his demeanor, the oldest of the three natives ventured to remark, in the English which his white leader had taught him:

"Rattlesnake is troubled to-day. He has tasted nothing for almost two suns, and, though the singing of the birds in the forest and the glistening of the sunlight on the hills beyond the river, plainly tell him the morning is here, and though the prepared venison lies before him, he touches it not. Surely must his heart be sore within him."

"Yes, Jumping Fox," said the man addressed, as he looked earnestly into the eyes of the savage, "the heart of Rattlesnake is troubled."

"And for what?" asked the Indian, respectfully.

"Jumping Fox," said the other, lowering his voice and speaking in tones almost tender, "child of the Great Spirit,

brother of the fierce blazing sun and softly smiling moon, the Red Man knows the secrets that are whispered by the wind as it softly moves through the yielding bushes and murmurs its low, sweet words into his ears when the night-dews moisten the grass beneath his feet and the vines that trail beside his pathway wind their clinging tendrils about the spreading branches of the bush and the bramble. In the morning he sits, silent and motionless upon the solid rock, from whose white bosom the clear waters burst forth, and he understands the song they sing as they go laughing and dancing over the rugged stones, down to the beautiful stream at the foot of the mountain. His eagle eye pierces the foliage of the forest and watches the noble deer, as he jealously guards his mate from the attentions of all intruders of his kind. The alert ear of the Red Man catches the soft notes of the dove, as, swinging in the overhanging boughs of the swaying hemlock, he sings his love-song to his feathered

sweetheart in the balmy beauty of the morning of the springtime.

"With his rod in his hand, the son of the forest wends his way to the side of the beautiful mountain stream, that leaps from rock to rock, and there, in the eddying pools, which now and then he finds along its course, he discovers the spawning fish and he knows that the springtime is here. Into the burrow he watches the sly fox enter with the consort of his choice, and the whistling call of the Bob White in the bushes, tells him plainer than words that the downy beauty knows the one he loves, but woe unto the creature that attempts to steal away the chosen one of any of these children of the wood. All these things are known by the Red Man because he sees and hears them; but the burden which weighs so heavily upon the heart of the painted pale-face, that miserable creature must bear alone, for the Red Man knows not of its nature."

When the person addressed as Rattlesnake had ceased to speak, the savage rose and walked slowly and deliberately

to where the placid pool of the spring lay motionless and glassy and gazed intently into the depths of the water, as if seeking some treasured object.

"What sees the Jumping Fox, now?" inquired Rattlesnake, noting the absorbed manner of the Indian.

"Jumping Fox sees his own face as clearly as the lark sees the sunshine breaking over the hill-tops at early morning, and"—said the Indian, as he looked steadfastly downward in front of him, "he sees something else."

"What is it?" said Rattlesnake, eagerly, half rising as if fearing danger.

"He sees the secret of the heart of Rattlesnake," said the savage without moving a muscle.

"Ha, tell me that secret, thou dusky wizard of the Alleghenies," said Rattlesnake, laughing.

"My first look tells me that he is in love."

"What else!"

The Indian gazed long and intently without replying, then said slowly and distinctly:

"My second look tells me his heart has been crushed."

Leaping from the place where he sat, Rattlesnake stepped hastily to the side of the Indian, and, grasping his arm tightly, whispered hoarsely:

"Look again, Jumping Fox, look again. Who crushed the heart of Rattlesnake?"

"A pale-face."

"How?"

"By stealing his white squaw."

"And how did he do this?"

"By the lying flattery of his tongue; the panther has lured her to his den and now keeps her there."

"Where is the den, Jumping Fox?"

"In the wigwam on the rock where the two rivers meet."

"Sorcerer, wizard, prophet;" exclaimed Rattlesnake as he seized the Indian by the shoulders, turned him around and looked him squarely in the eyes, "tell me by what means you have made this discovery, for the red pale-face well knows you did not see it in the spring."

"Ugh!" grunted the savage, as he took a seat on the log from which Rattlesnake had risen, and motioned the latter to a place beside him, "does the shiny Rattlesnake really wish to know?"

"He does."

"Does Rattlesnake remember the words he spoke to the beautiful white squaw but three suns ago?"

"He does."

"Jumping Fox did not know their meaning then. He does now, and, to-day, Rattlesnake told the rest when he narrated the love-story of the dumb children of the forest."

"And so he did," replied the other, "but, if we are to believe what has been often told us by the white race, the Indian is unacquainted with those tender sentiments of love and affection which stir the heart of the pale-face and which, in many cases, shape his entire destiny."

For a few moments the Indian stood and gazed into the blazing fire before him, then, rising to the fullest height of his giant form, he scowled viciously and

struck himself upon the breast, yet uttered not a word. Resuming his sitting posture, he leaned toward the white man and said in a low, plaintive tone:

"Pale-face, the trouble of many great suns has made us brothers. When we were young and strong and active, each trod his little path many leagues away on the banks of the Susquehanna. Since then, the cursed law of the pale-face has driven us into the wilderness where each must share the fortune of the other. It is well, therefore, that we should meet our joys and sorrows together.

"Listen, Rattlesnake, the pale-faces declare the Indian youth and the Indian maiden know not what is love. Let every child of the forest keep silent; let the wind cease even its lowest whispers while the Red Man tells his pale-face brother the love-tale of his youth. Many great suns ago, more than Rattlesnake can count on his hands and feet, the home of the tribe to which Jumping Fox belonged was situated beside the great rolling river. In that tribe was an Indian

maiden, whose smile was sweetest and whose words were softest when she spoke to Jumping Fox. Her skin was as smooth as the skin of a new born Indian babe; her eyes were like the darkest midnight and her hair was more glossy than the coat of the blackest raven in the wood. Her form was erect and graceful and her step was as light and airy as the fawn that treads the bank of the murmuring stream.

"When Jumping Fox was away on the chase, she sighed constantly for his coming, as the winter wind among the bare branches of the leafless trees sighs for the warm breath of the springtime. When he returned, she ran far out of the village to meet him and tears of joy fell fast as she reclined her head upon his manly bosom. Hand in hand we would enter the villiage and in her own wigwam, together we would eat the venison which I had killed and the corn she had roasted by her own fire and raised with her own hands. This corn, all the tribe declared grew faster than that of any other maid,

because, as she said, she bathed the ground in which it grew with her tears at midnight.

"The beloved old chief of the tribe saw that Jumping Fox loved the maiden and he smiled upon them as they passed him beside his wigwam door. Then, when another sun had come and gone, Jumping Fox took courage and asked the old chief to give him the young maiden for his wife. The father of his people smiled again and said:

"'Go upon the chase, Jumping Fox, and when you return will I answer you.' The youth was glad and went out upon the chase. When he returned, he was laden with the choicest game. Then did the chief tell him that when the spring-time came, he should wed the dusky maiden.

"In an evil hour, there came from the land of ice and snow a number of Indians to visit our tribe and when they went away they carried her with them, and, though my tribe followed theirs and fought for her many long weary suns,

we could not take her, for that tribe was like the wild pigeons that swarmed the woods in the springtime and its arm was as strong as the hurricane, while my tribe was small, only to your knee, and our arm no stronger than the arm of a babe. They carried her to the land of everlasting snow, and through all these great suns the heart of Jumping Fox has been crushed. Since then his hand has been against all men. Pale-face, I have done."

Leaping from the place where he sat, and grasping the hand of the swarthy Indian, Rattlesnake said:

"We are brothers indeed, Jumping Fox. Swear to me you will help me secure the woman I love and I will help you secure the one you love."

Without raising his eyes from the ground, the Indian replied slowly and softly:

"Jumping Fox will be happy when he sees Rattlesnake in possession of the woman he loves but he will never more see the squaw who was the light of his early youth."

"And why not?" asked Rattlesnake, quickly.

"She is dead. Rattlesnake spoke truly when he said that the Red Man understands the language of the streams in the mountains, for, to Jumping Fox, they sing the love-song of his Indian maiden, who is now roaming the evergreen forests of the happy hunting grounds and chanting her songs to the river of life. In the roar of the dashing torrents, in the murmur of the little streamlet that glides through the quiet glen and in the mournful sound of the waters of the river, as it winds through the broad, level valley, the song she sings over there reaches the ear of the one she loved and left to mourn in the wilderness of this life. The heart of Jumping Fox is crushed forever, and yet the pale-face nation says the Indian knows not what is love."

For several minutes the whole party gazed in silence at the fast fading fire before them. The morning sun sent its sweetest smile in a profusion of glistening splinters through the trembling

leaves which sung their softest carol to all nature, as they were fanned by the soothing zephyrs that crept slowly and peacefully here and there among the trees of the dense, unbroken forest that surrounded the group on all sides, yet the smiles of the sunshine and the murmur of the winds were not heard. All about them was a grand chorus of the songsters of the wood, each feathered chorister seeming to try to excel every other and all together making the welkin ring with bird-notes of joy and gladness. The music fell upon deaf ears.

A gay little squirrel came down a nearby tree, to what would seem to be a dangerous nearness to the silent figures, and, in bantering audacity, barked vehemently at the unwelcome intruders, yet he was not noticed. A venturesome fox walked boldly out of his den in the rocks, several rods away, and, standing on a high jutting point, in an attitude of combined fear and defiance, sent forth a series of half yelps, half barks, that the creature doubtless imagined would scare

the strange objects away. His presence was unknown. It was not until a huge rattlesnake—a most appropriate visitor—had crawled from a narrow fissure between two rocks and crept so near to the leader of the party, who had resumed his seat, that its slimy skin touched his hand, as it lay flat upon the log across which the serpent wormed its way, that Anson sprang up with an oath of surprise and horror, followed instantly by the remainder of the party.

His terror was only momentary, however, for, when he saw what it was that had so suddenly awakened him from his deep and dark reverie, he laughed heartily at his own timidity.

The revolting creature hurried back to its hiding place, and lay with its head protruding from the crevice in which it sought refuge. From its gleaming eyes came a look of both wonder and resentment and its forked tongue shot forth with lightning rapidity from between its wide open jaws; yet, it seemed neither to desire to attack nor retreat from the

gruesome sight before it. Addressing the serpent, Anson said:

"Well, you slimy rascal, you came very near frightening some one, didn't you? It is not the first time that you have been charged with having evil intentions toward the human race. Ages and ages ago, your ancestors were accused of putting the devil into the first woman that was created and my experience with the deceitful sex leads me to believe that his Satanic majesty finds a lodgment in her heart yet.

"The average human being looks upon you with disgust and hatred, and I, myself, must admit that you are an uncanny object, but, as men are largely the creatures of circumstance and association, I find that even the company of a snake may not be altogether unendurable when one is in the mood for studying animal nature. You are an animal and so is mankind, and, when I consider how much some human beings are like serpents, I am constrained to believe that there is a closer kinship existing, than the so-called

higher animals would be willing to concede. With the eye of an Evil Spirit you charm the timid feathered songsters of the wood until, by some unknown power, you draw them into the death-trap of your open jaws, although they loathe, despise and fear you. I think I may learn a profitable lesson from this trait of yours, for there is a certain bird that I must capture at all hazards, even though I find it necessary to use the subtle arts of the snake to accomplish my ends.

"That you are a creature most hideous in the eyes of the human race, is quite true, yet you remind me of myself, because the hand of every man is against us both. We are outlaws. The civilized world has put a price upon our heads, and some time we will both be likely to pay the price. Knowing this, we are enemies to all humanity, and will strike them a death blow whenever opportunity presents itself, as long as you are able to lift your head or I my arm.

"This Indian," said Anson, continuing to address the snake, as though

it were an intelligent being instead of a mass of dumb animation, and pointing over his shoulder to where Jumping Fox had resumed his seat and was sitting in an attitude of stoical indifference to all about him, "this Indian is one of our number also. Long ago he murdered some defenceless white women and children. He belonged to a tribe of friendly Indians and they delivered him at once to the whites, but he escaped, with my assistance, and to-day is an outlaw also."

Here Henry Anson stopped speaking and gazed steadfastly in the direction of the serpent, for, although all was silent, there came to his ears a still, small voice which inquired: "and what did *you* do that there is a price upon *your* head?"

"What's that you say?" he exclaimed, in a low, hoarse voice, as he riveted his eyes upon the little, shiny balls that glittered on the head of the snake, and which seemed to draw him nearer to the forked tongue.

The still, small voice repeated the question.

"Curse you, you devil. I'll choke the life out of you," said Anson, as he extended his hand toward the slimy reptile before him. The snake drew back its head to strike, but at that instant a simple grunt, "ugh!" was heard, and Jumping Fox seized the extended arm of Anson and gave it such a sudden jerk as to turn him completely around as quickly as if he were a child, while the snake disappeared among the rocks.

When Anson had pulled his wits together, he grasped the hand of the savage who had saved his life, and pressing it warmly for some time, said in a hoarse whisper:

"Come, let us leave this place. It is haunted by the Evil Spirit."

"Ugh!" grunted the savage, "it is the home of Mish-she-Man-i-tou."

"More than that, the pale-faces in the wigwam on the hill will rouse all the people of their race that they can get together and be on our trail soon. We must go far into the mountains for many suns until all is quiet, when we will return and—"

"And what, Rattlesnake?"

"What says Jumping Fox?"

"We will scalp the pale-face in the tepee on the rock where the two rivers meet and then we will carry off the pretty squaws."

"So we will," answered Rattlesnake.

"One will be the wife of Rattlesnake and the other the wife of Jumping Fox," the Indian said with a hideous grin of satisfaction that struck disgust to the stony heart of Anson.

"Gods," he murmured under his breath, "the loathsome creature thinks he will get the beautiful young maiden for his wife. I must have her mother for *my* wife, but before that girl shall be compelled to endure the embraces of that filthy creature, the wolves shall pick his bones and the crow shall make a nest for her young ones of his scalp.

"Let us away," he continued, without apparently hearing what had been said.

When he was ready to start, he noticed that one of the Indians did not

move, but sat whetting his knife on a smooth stone.

"Come, Raccoon, let us go to the mountains," he said.

"Raccoon not go now," said the other, still sharpening his knife.

"And why not?"

"Raccoon get scalp of curly haired squaw."

"Ugh!" grunted Jumping Fox, "what Raccoon say?"

"Raccoon get scalp of pale-face squaw."

"Ugh! what about?"

"She kill two Red Men. She has an Evil Spirit. She must die."

"Did she get their scalps?" asked Jumping Fox, sternly.

"No."

"Did you bury them?"

"'M, hm."

"Raccoon follow Rattlesnake. Curly haired maiden soon be Jumping Fox's squaw, ugh!"

The young man rose and followed in silence.

CHAPTER III.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

During the remaining portion of the week in which the unhappy incident occurred, which produced such a sensation in the family of John Lamar, Laura seemed to be wrapped in deep and serious thought. Although she performed the duties of the household with the same willingness and dexterity that she had always manifested, the mother noticed that she assumed a demeanor more grave than was her former manner, which caused her much apprehension for the future happiness of the girl.

The cabin home of John Lamar, was at least five miles distant from the habitation of any other white man, in consequence of which, the girl had grown up to maturity with practically no other as-

sociates in her later years than those of the immediate household; yet she possessed a refinement in manner and a degree of education which would surprise any one until an acquaintance with the mother was formed, when it could be seen that she had been trained by a well informed, and evenly balanced mind as well as a warm, generous heart.

It was a habit of the girl to stand on a huge rock which constituted the capstone of the perpendicular cliff that rose from the bed of the Two Lick and reached an altitude of more than fifty feet, and, as the sun crept slowly above Chestnut Ridge, which lay to the east and across the stream, she would pour forth in the harmonious blending of the purest melodies, the songs of life and love that were always learned and sung by every girl of the pioneer days. At eventide, too, when all nature was wrapped in slumber, with no companion near her, with only the stars that shone above her and the darkness that surrounded her, she often wended her way to this same spot and

amused herself by answering the plaintive cry of the whip-poor-will, the startling screech of the night-hawk or the mournful call of the horned hoot-owl, in such clear and clever tones of imitation as to draw these children of the night about her in apparent amazement and wonder.

She had always been a girl, but now, she was suddenly transformed into a thoughtful woman. No matter what she might be doing or what manner of conversation might be engaged in by the family, she appeared to constantly hear the echo of those terrible words, "Don't fail to tell Loco I am still camping on her trail."

What could they mean? She had known for some time that the word "Loco" was a pet name which had been given to her mother by someone in the long years of the past. She never knew by whom nor when, though her mother's real name was Laura. She remembered also, that when she was a child, her mother had sometimes addressed her by this name, but it seemed to pain the father and the mother gave it up.

Again and again, had she endeavored to induce her parents to tell her something of her life in the days of her early childhood, for, the older she grew, the more she became convinced that a part of her history was, as yet, unwritten and unrelated, so far as she knew, but whenever she attempted to introduce this, to her, all-interesting topic of conversation, the parents always evaded her questions, which, with the anxiety of a woman, made her more eager than ever to learn the truth.

Her womanly curiosity was now thoroughly aroused. She felt that in some way there was something dreadful about the disguised white man and the influence of his presence over her mother, and she made up her mind to inquire of her about him at the first favorable opportunity. This came sooner than she expected, for, one afternoon, as she was sitting on the old capstone with her eyes riveted on the scene beyond the the creek, and softly singing the favorite song her mother had taught her:—

THE SWEET OLD SUSQUEHANNA.

"I am dreaming now to-day,
Of a cottage, far away
In the shadows of a quaint old water-mill,
Where the sunshine from above
Sheds its kisses sweet as love,
On the merry, laughing ripple and the rill.
Where the moon still softly smiles,
In her dear old-fashioned style,
On the lovers in the halo of her glow.
Oh, why did I ever roam,
From my childhood's happy home,
Where the sweet old Susquehanna flows.

"There 's a song that comes to me,
O'er the mountains wild and free,
And its music falls the softest on my ear.
'T is the song I love so well,
As it echoes through the dell,
To my lonely heart it brings the warmest cheer.
Oh, how often have I strayed,
Through the valley and the glade,
Where the violet and the daisy kiss the rose.
And in fancy now I rove,
In the quiet, shady grove,
Where the sweet old Susquehanna flows.

"Oh, the warble of the birds,
Oh the sweet and loving words
Of my mother, as she kissed her darling child.
At the dawning of the day,
And the twilight, soft and gray,
I can hear her voice, so gentle and so mild.
Oh, the never ending joy,
Of the days, when I, a boy,
Watched the sparkle of the river in its glow.
I can hear the moaning wind,
In the waving mountain pine,
Where the sweet old Susquehanna flows.

"I can hear the river sigh,
As it slowly passes by,
When the night-winds through the green, old hemlocks creep.
I am longing now, to stand
In my dear old native land,
Where my father and my mother sweetly sleep.
When my soul shall fly away,
To the realms of endless day,
When my eyes, with trembling hands, you gently close,
When my heart is cold and still
Let me rest among the hills,
Where the sweet old Susquehanna flows."

Mrs. Lamar stole quietly to her and seated herself beside the startled girl.

Laying her arm about her and drawing her close to her, she kissed her on the smooth, red cheek as she said:

"My daughter seems very much interested in the scene before her, and indeed she may well be, for it is certainly an inspiring one."

"Yes, mother, it seems to be a mirror in which is reflected all the variations of life, a panorama in which are presented to the eye, many strange and beautiful analogies."

"My daughter is both an artist and a poet; will she analyze the picture for her mother?"

"She will," answered the daughter without removing her eyes from the beautiful landscape before her. "Below us lies the clear glassy stream. It is the stream of human life. Sometimes it flows along in quite contentment, singing the sweet song of love and happiness as it moves over the stones which form its bed; it is then the human heart which is enjoy-

ing a peaceful restfulness that promises to live forever. A cloud rises in the sky; rain descends in torrents; the waters roar in the mountains, the stream becomes angry and swollen, dark and muddy, and rushes forward in impetuous haste, dashing itself to pieces upon the rocks or carrying destruction to whatever may be in its way. It is then the human heart sorely troubled."

"And yet," said the mother, gently, "when the storm has passed away, the stream becomes tranquil once more and remains so, much longer than it was troubled."

"It is so much like time, too, mother."

"How so, my child?"

"It is always coming, it is always here, it is always gone."

"And," said the mother, "it is so like the human soul."

"And why, mother?"

"Because it never dies. Its waters mingle with those of the Conemaugh, then with those of the Monongahela, the Ohio, the Mississippi and finally the

Great Ocean; but they are not lost; the form of life is simply changed. They come back again to moisten the bosom of the earth and thus to minister to other living things; but I have interrupted my daughter in her description of the lovely picture."

"'Tis well you have, mother, for the picture I see would be a dark one, indeed, were it not for the gleams of sunshine your words flash upon it. Look beyond the stream, mother, do you see that fox chasing the little, innocent chipmunk?"

"I do."

"See, it has caught and killed the helpless creature."

"And what is that like?"

"That fox was a murderous Indian, killing innocent and helpless white people."

The mother shuddered in silence as she remembered the name of Jumping Fox, a friendly Indian, who, more than twenty years before, had treacherously murdered some women and children far

away on the banks of the lower Susquehanna, and who had been declared an outlaw. He had disappeared and she had often wondered what had become of him.

"Look farther up the slope, mother," said Laura, "there you behold an endless number of chestnut, pine and hemlock trees. Below them may be seen clusters of small bushes. The trees are the Indians, the bushes are the whites and these, the Indians will crush out of existence."

"Let my daughter look again and she will see here and there the towering head of a tall, sturdy oak among the myriads of smaller growth. My prophecy is, my child, that the oak will be standing and strong when the hemlocks have all fallen before it, just the same as the white race will occupy these beautiful hills when the Red Men shall have all passed away."

"Let us hope it may be so, mother, but think of the horrible sacrifice of human life that will take place before that happy time arrives."

"'Tis true, my child, and yet the Red Man is fighting for what he believes was given him by the Great Spirit."

"Mother, I often wonder why the wise Supreme Ruler ever created the Indian race. I can think of nothing that can be more dreadful than an Indian."

"There *is* but one other," said the mother.

"And what is that?"

"A white man."

Laura turned her eyes toward the speaker in blank astonishment, but the latter was gazing steadfastly across the stream at some object which apparently attracted her attention. "See, Laura," said she, "the fox has turned his head toward us, do you notice that one side of it is white, appearing almost bald, while the other side contains a natural growth of hair?"

Laura laughed outright, then said gaily: "For all the world like one of the Indians I encountered in my second day's adventure."

It was now the time of the mother to

be astonished, and, as she drew the girl closer to her, a convulsive tremor ran through her frame.

"Look again, mother, at the picture."

"And what does my daughter see now?"

"I see a hideous rattlesnake crawling stealthily toward the fox, which is greedily devouring the carcass of the chipmunk. The slimy creature is now close to its unsuspecting victim. It coils the lower half of its body into a little circular heap, while it raises the upper half in rigid silence. Note the curve of its neck as it draws its head backward just a little. There, it has struck the fox and sent the poison of its piercing fangs into his veins. With a piteous yelp, he turns to see what his enemy is, and, when he has done so, utters a low, mournful cry and hurries away into the bushes, for he knows that death is near."

Both women sat for some time in silence, with their eyes riveted to the spot where two tragedies had so quickly occurred, and watched the reptile as it

disappeared behind a fallen tree. Then the mother murmured, as if to herself: "I could wish it had been the snake that was killed."

"Mother, do you know that the snake reminds me strongly of the painted white man who uttered those horrible words?"

"The analogy is certainly a fit one, my child. As the rattlesnake is to be more dreaded than the fox, so is that white man to be more dreaded than his Indian ally, whose head seemed to you to so much resemble that of the fox."

"Mother," said Laura, after a long pause, "who is that dreadful white man?"

"Henry Anson, my child."

"And who is Henry Anson?"

"A murderous outlaw, whose hands are dripping with the blood of innocence and who is a renegade fit only for death, in the eyes of the white race."

"You know him then, mother?"

"Would to God I could say I do not."

"Was it the words he spoke to me that caused you so much pain of heart the other day, when I told you of them?"

"Words are sometimes more fatal than the keenest knife," she answered.

"He must be a dark-hearted, dreadful man. Will you tell me of him sometime, mother?"

"Yes, my child, sometime, but the night-dews now fall; let us go into the house and put our trust in Him who doeth all things well. She kissed the upturned face before her and with the arms of each encircling the waist of the other, the two walked slowly up the hill and entered the cabin.

When they had closed the door, Mrs. Lamar took a pair of scissors from a nail and, seating herself, drew Laura down upon her lap, and, without a word of explanation, clipped one of the longest and most glossy curls from her head.

"Why, mammy, what have you done?"

For answer, the mother held the shiny ringlet up in the light for a moment, then kissed it warmly and placed it carefully in her bosom.

"Mother," said Laura, as the tears

began to gather in her eyes, "what does this mean?"

"A lover may claim my baby some day and I do not wish to forget her."

"Why do you trifle with me in this manner, mother? Why keep me longer in such horrible suspense? There is something dreadful that is preying upon your soul; why not tell me your secret? I may be able to help you."

"Your young heart will see enough trouble without being burdened with the sorrows of others, my child."

"I am not a child, mother. A month ago I was a child; a wild, frolicsome, fanciful child, but now I am a woman; a grave, thoughtful, calculating woman."

"A *calculating* woman?" queried her mother, pressing the daughter closely to her.

"Yes, mother, a calculating, reasoning woman."

"A calculating, reasoning woman, is one who, in times like these, is brave enough to meet any fate that might overtake her. Do you believe you have be-

come such a woman in so short a time?"

"I never was a coward, mother."

"The answer is worthy of you. Know then, my daughter, that the time may come when you will be called upon to face a reality compared with which death would be a welcome guest."

"And what is that, mother?"

"The loathsome embraces of a savage."

"Or a renegade white man, mother?" Laura asked in perfect coolness.

Mrs. Lamar turned away with a look of horror. Going to a little box that sat in a corner, she returned, holding in her hand two black cases. Looking the girl squarely in the eyes, she said:

"If the time should ever come when you were face to face with such a possibility as I have mentioned, what would be your course?"

"Self-destruction," answered the girl, quietly.

"Then you might need this," and she drew from one of the cases, a long, narrow, glistening dagger, which she

handed to the girl saying: "Take it and I will keep the other, for I have strange forebodings that there is danger ahead."

The girl seized the knife eagerly. The mother threw the two cases into the blazing fire, and the women secreted the daggers just as the father entered the room.

CHAPTER IV.

A UNION OF HEARTS.

A short time after the thrilling events took place, which have previously been narrated in these pages, John Lamar gathered together the few settlers who were near enough to him to be communicated with, and followed the trail of the marauders, which led directly toward the mountains until they reached a rapid stream, when all traces of the pursued party disappeared. Some of the more courageous desired to go up the stream in the hope of overtaking the miscreants, but Lamar declared that he believed his home would be attacked by prowling savages in his absence, and it was decided to return and abandon any further pursuit.

The events of the subsequent week

seemed to prove that all present danger had disappeared, for no sign of Indians could be found anywhere near the cabin home and the family soon settled down to the even tenor of its way, although it could be observed that an air of dread and apprehension surrounded the members of this heretofore most happy trio.

One bright Sunday morning, Laura was noticed to be more thoughtful than usual. Her demeanor toward her parents was particularly affectionate. Her words fell in accents the softest, yet in tones which betokened a sadness that was foreign to her sunny nature. Again and again she placed her arms about the neck of those she had always loved the best and warmly pressed her ruby lips to the wrinkled brow of one and the soft cheek of the other, while her gentle words fell upon their willing ears like the sweetest music.

By and by, they missed her and when the mother sought her, she saw her sitting on the self-same old capstone, looking intently toward the ridge across the

stream, on the crest of which could be seen an opening which marked a premature road that seemed to begin exactly at the horizon.

She was certainly the embodiment of girlish innocence and rustic beauty, as she sat with her eyes fixed upon the spot where the trail came over the ridge. Presently, a dove alighted upon one shoulder and was followed quickly by its mate, which took its position on the other. They were not strangers to her nor she to them and it is but fair to suppose that she expected them, for she opened her hands, disclosing some crumbs which she had brought from the house. As soon as the pets saw this, they flew down into her lap and began to industriously partake of the morning meal. Stroking the birds lightly, she said to them in the softest accents:

"Yes, yes, here you are again. The one comes never without the other. I have watched your affectionate attentions toward each other with much interest and have often wondered whether, in the

human family, there ever existed such an example of tender devotion between those who have pledged their love to each other for life. I have even dreamed, yes, vaguely dreamed, when looking at you, of a time when I myself might be the happy recipient of an affection which never dies nor ever grows cold. I have dreamed of a little home, somewhere, situated on the top of some beautiful hill, and in the door of which I am standing, and, looking across a beautiful stream, somewhere, I behold the one who alone fills all my heart and soul, and whose heart I alone occupy, as each of you, my feathered pets, seem to fill the heart and soul of the other."

As she uttered these words, she lifted her eyes toward the crest of the ridge, and blushed crimson as she said, beneath her breath:

"There is the one whose image is a part of my very self and with whose heart I sometime hope to see my own inseparably linked. Go, thou gallant fluffy lover and downy sweetheart, to your trysting place in yon densely shaded elm, for I

must greet Walter Vanway, the prince charming who comes my way;" and kissing each gentle dove, she held them on her outstretched hands, then they flew away to their nest.

Turning her eyes toward the place heretofore mentioned, she waved her handkerchief above her head three times in a peculiar manner and was answered by the horseman on the hill, who then gave his animal the rein and rode rapidly down the slope toward the lower ford of the creek. Here he crossed, and when he reached the old-fashioned farm gate, whose creaking wooden hinges could be heard afar off, he found it open and, behind a clump of bushes, he caught sight of a pretty red dress, whose owner he knew quite well, was attempting to conceal herself. Dismounting and dropping the rein of his bridle, he stole to where she was standing, holding the sides of her sunbonnet closely together in that bantering way so well understood by every country boy of that time and this—and city boy too, for that matter—and

putting one arm about her waist, he found it an easy task to push the pretty bonnet back over her head, press a kiss upon her warm lips and receive as good as he sent.

They did not wait for an engagement, any more than lovers in both country and town do in this progressive age, but observed the good old way of those who are in love—till then and now.

"So you thought you would hide from me, did you? Well, I'll just steal another plum while an opportunity presents itself."

"Yes, and look what you've done."

"What have I done?"

"You've gone and left that gate open and let all the geese out and there they go squaaking and flying to the creek for the foxes to eat.'

"Yes, and you've scared my horse until he has gone snorting and flying after them. I wonder what will eat him."

"Oh, that's too bad, now you'll have to—to—"

"To what?"

"To stay all night."

"I'll have to walk home."

"Why, no you won't do any such thing. The wolves would get you sure or some old black bear would meet you at the top of the ridge and give you an embrace you wouldn't enjoy," she said shyly.

"Well, if it is to be a matter of embraces, I guess I'll stay; but come, let us see if we can get those outlandish geese back and let the horse go."

"Let him go to grass, Walter?"

"I wish he would go to grass long enough for me to catch him, but see," he said eagerly, when they had reached the stream. "There is a fox swimming toward one already. The goose sees it and is very much frightened. Where's my gun? Back there by that bush where I left it, of course. Shoo—shoo! Hish there, you thief! Confound that horse; there he stands just across the stream eating grass. There is nothing for me to do but to wade across and get him, Sunday-go-to-meetin' clothes and all,

then ride him after that fox. Hike there, you rascal, let that goose alone."

He dashed into the water forgetful of the stepping stones just up the stream a little way, at the ford, and waded across the creek to where the horse was quietly and contentedly eating grass.

Laura stood at the water's edge below the ford and shouted and waved her apron violently at the fox, as is the invariable habit of a woman on such occasions, but the varmint pursued his game on down the stream into deep water, and, by the time the gallant youth had caught and remounted his horse, the fox had seized the noisiest gander of the flock by the neck and disappeared in the bushes.

After a lot of shooing and scolding by Laura and considerable shouting by Walter as he rode his horse to where the geese were, the bipeds were finally driven back into the lot.

Dripping with wet, Walter went to the house where he attired himself in a suit of John Lamar's wearing apparel, which was enough too large for him to

make him look, as Laura expressed it, "like a stuffed toad."

His own clothes were soon dry and when he had put them on, he presented a very creditable appearance, all things considered, and by this time, dinner was announced.

After dinner the two young people strolled arm in arm about the little home of the hardy pioneer, for some time; Walter chatting quite gaily all the while, although Laura seemed to be in a thoughtful mood. In the course of the promenade, they had reached the place where the capstone of the bluff lay in majestic silence, the spot of all the dearest to Laura, when Walter, noticing her reserved manner, said pleasantly:

"I think there is something of a serious nature on the mind of my Turtle Dove to-day." He always addressed her as his "Turtle Dove" when they were alone.

"Come," said she, taking his hand and leading him toward a rustic seat beneath the overhanging boughs of two

trees that grew side by side and whose crooked branches, like so many curving arms, were twined and intertwined together so completely, that it would have been impossible to remove one tree without injuring the other.

In order to reach the seat, they walked across the capstone and when they had stepped upon it, Laura stopped and pointed to the tops of the two trees just mentioned, and said:

"Walter, do you see how the branches of those two trees twine themselves together?"

"Yes," said Walter, "I have noticed it quite often; especially when you and I have been seated beneath them."

She blushed a little, then went on speaking as if she had not heard his remark. "They have been companions ever since their little, green heads first peeped through the ground."

"So they have," he replied, somewhat mystified.

"Do you know, Walter," she said seriously, without removing her eyes,

"that I see much in nature which reminds me of human life? Are you ever so impressed?"

"Very often, Laura; and I love to picture imaginary human lives, fates and destinies, as I behold nature in its primeval state."

"Do you recall anything in human life that these twin elms resemble?"

"Indeed I do."

"And what is it?" she asked.

"These two trees represent your life and mine. When they were young, they were you and I as we grew up together and were associates in the Conemaugh valley. True, you were transplanted to that beautiful spot from—somewhere—"

"Walter," she released his hand quickly and laying hers on his arm, looked eagerly into his eyes.

"What is it, Turtle Dove?"

"You say I was transplanted?"

"Yes."

"From somewhere?"

"Yes."

"Tell me, Walter," and her whole

soul filled her eyes, "do you know where 'somewhere' is?"

"I do not understand you I am afraid."

"Do you know from where I was brought to the Conemaugh valley?"

"Why, no, nor little do I care. It is enough for me to know that when I was a little toddler, your parents moved to a place near my own home and there your father built a cabin. But I fear you have knocked over the canvas on which I was painting my picture."

"Oh, I am so sorry I interrupted you, but to me there seems to be a deep mystery concerning my early life."

"Of course, there is," Walter answered carelessly. "The greatest mystery in the world is the mystery of human life. It is a mystery that never has been, nor ever will be unravelled by the human mind."

"Oh, you are a Mystery Man, I see. Go on with your picture."

"You will notice, Turtle Dove," he went on, "that not very far from the

ground are several small branches which have grown toward each other and have been broken off."

"Well, what of it?"

"That was you and I when we were playmates. Do you remember it?"

"Indeed I do. It was as but yesterday. I could wish it were now; but what of the broken limbs?"

"They tell us of the time when your father moved away, soon after an Indian scare caused your mother to be taken so suddenly ill. Then our hands were separated."

She drew closer to him and her voice trembled as she replied slowly and softly:

"I remember also, that mother was suddenly stricken down about five years after we moved away from where you lived, and I heard her say to father one night, as I lay in my little trundle bed in the corner: 'Oh, John, take me back to the Conemaugh valley. I can never live here.' I wonder what she meant."

"I suppose she was lonely," said Walter. "But they came back to the

Conemaugh valley, and we were together again, just as the branches that appear a little higher have clasped their leafy hands."

"Yes, yes, go on," said she.

"Look a little farther up, Laura, and you will see that part of a limb of some size has been broken from the tree on the left."

"Well, what of that?"

"That was you, when they separated us five years ago and your parents moved to this place, on the dashing little Two Lick."

"Do you remember, Walter, that we also moved here shortly after mother recovered from a severe illness?"

"Yes, poor woman. I remember that your heart was almost broken because you thought she was going to pass over the beautiful river; but she soon regained her strength and I believe she has been a strong woman ever since, although she seems to me to be just a little pale at this time."

"Well, have you finished painting your picture?"

"There is little more to do. You see that the boughs and the branches and the twigs and the leaves of the trees have become so closely entwined among one another as to remain so, doubtless, through a long life."

He placed his arm gently about her waist and drew her unresisting form closer to him, then led her to a green mossy spot just beneath the trees. Here he paused, untied the string of the pink sun bonnet and tossed it aside. Then he gathered her long curls in his hands, and placing them in front of her shoulders, he retreated a step, and for a full minute, stood enveloped in a dream of love and admiration as he gazed steadfastly upon the charming sight before him.

"Laura," said he, coming to her and taking both her hands in his. She did not answer, but bent her head a little lower, presenting, if that were possible, a still more beautiful picture.

"Laura," he repeated softly, "look above you."

She slowly raised her eyes to where

the long arms of the trees wound themselves together in a manner that suggested an unspoken love that was undying and a silent affection which knew one heart only.

"Laura," and his voice grew low and husky, "as the lives of these beautiful gems of the forest are woven together by a thousand bonds, tell me, shall not our lives also be bound together by the golden cords of love and affection until death?"

The girl did not remove her gaze from the scene above her. The afternoon sun shot a glance through the leaves and beheld a merry twinkle in her hazel eyes as she closed her hands upon those of her lover, just a little, and said:

"The warm breath of the balmy southwestern breeze falls softly upon the quivering leaves and they kiss one another in the ecstasy of their happiness. I wonder if that is like—like—"

"Yes, that is exactly like us," said the ardent lover as he clasped her in his arms and gave her a shower of kisses. "There now, I think it would take a pretty good breeze to beat that."

"A hurricane could," she said shyly, and the hurricane came quickly and effectively, while the dove in the branches overhead cooed his love-tale into the ear of his mate.

* * * * * * *

When the sun had hid his sleepy head behind the fringey crest of the western hills, the full moon rose slowly above the eastern horizon and smiled again, as it had done a thousand times before, and will do a thousand times again, when it sees two lovers bidding each other good night in the good old fashioned way that has never yet been patented, nor perhaps ever will be. Walter had looked well to his firearms and his hunting knife. He was a stranger to fear and an expert horseman, yet he realized that discretion is the better part of valor and acted accordingly.

Another embrace, one more kiss, a wave of the hand, a momentary silence, the sound of the creaking old gate which the maiden was closing and the splash of the waters of the stream the youth was

crossing, all announced the parting of the betrothed lovers.

"When will they meet again?" whispered the soft wind.

"When?" echoed the silent voice of the night.

* * * * * * *

When Laura reached the house, she seated herself beside the open fireplace and soon became absorbed in deepest thought. She had not told Walter of the late adventure with the Indians, nor the dark forebodings that filled her heart whenever she thought of that dreadful, mysterious white renegade and the awful words he had uttered. Her cup of joy had been filled to overflowing and she felt that not one drop of the bitter gall of sorrow should be allowed to profane its sacred contents, so she had permitted her affianced husband to depart in ignorance of what had happened.

The distance from the home of the sweetheart to that of the lover was more than twenty-five miles; and, as the guardian angels of the night looked down upon

the children of the earth at the hour of midnight, they might have seen Walter Vanway approach a farm gate and dismount, just at the moment that Laura Lamar arose and prepared to retire.

Oh, how beautiful are the blissful innocence, the inspiring hope and the noble aspirations of two young hearts that have newly plighted their love to each other for life.

CHAPTER V.

A SON OF THE EMERALD ISLE.

It was well for young Vanway that he went home Sunday night, for Monday morning found a steady rain-fall which increased until about midday, when the sun came out, lighting up the dripping trees with a lustre that made every glistening drop of water that hung to the leaves, look like a diamond of the first quality studding an elegant profusion of emerald dressing gowns.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, a red-faced Irishman came trudging slowly up the trail on the farther side of Chestnut Ridge. On his back he carried a poor excuse for a peddler's pack, and in his right hand was a stout stick which he used, both to assist him in walking and to drive away any snake that might dispute his right to travel the trails. He

was evidently in a good humor at this time, for, as he plodded along, he was singing a song which ran something like this:

"In all av the worreld there's no place like Erin,
In the sea or upon all the dhry land;
The boys are so witty, the gyrls are so pritty,
In counthry an' city in Ireland."

When he reached the summit of the ridge, he stopped and looked about him for a while in silent astonishment, dropped his pack from his back, then mopped his face vigorously with a large, red handkerchief. Being afoot, he could see nothing ahead of him but an unbroken forest, in which the trail seemed to end as it descended the western slope of the ridge. Gazing at the scene before him for a few moments, he broke out with an exclamation of surprise and said:

"Well, now begorry, I b'lave this must be the jumpin' off place or purty fur about it somewhere or other. That was a divil av a bad hill I jist clim an' I think I'll be takin' a little restin' av meself fur a while," and he sat down on

the ground with his back against a tree and was soon fast asleep. When he awoke, the sun was setting and he said to himself as he started up:

"Why, why, I've purty nigh slept myself into the night. A foine pickle I'd a got into if I'd a woke up tomorry mornin' an' a found I'd been ate up by the wolfs last night. 'Tis all the same I'm a thinkin', fur I don't b'lave they's a house in twinty mile av this place.

"Hullo, what noise was that I heerd? Begorry, it was a caf a bawling'. I niver heerd anny thing as swate since me mother used to sing me to shlape in a pig troff.

"'Tis down at the bottom av that hill, an' a divil av a ways it is I'm a thinkin', fur it don't sound much louder nor the squake av a pinchin' bug, so I'll be thravellin' on an' get me head under a roof before the wolfs begin to take their supper from the cafs av me legs."

Away he trudged along the narrow trail and was not long reaching the bank of the Two Lick, just at the lower ford,

but, to his utter amazement, the stream was swollen until it could not be crossed.

"Howly St. Patrick's birthday in the mornin,' if that crick's a foot deep 'tis a hundred or my name's not Barney O' Philligan. May the good St. Belzebub save me. Here I've walked all the way acrost the mountains to be ate up by the wolfs an' the bairs an' the painters in this blasted wilderness."

He ran frantically up and down the stream attempting to attract the attention of someone in the cabin by his shouts, but the noise of the swollen stream drowned his voice as effectually as if it had been the voice of an infant.

The darkness drew nearer and nearer and the clouds, which had risen late in the afternoon, obscured the fair face of the moon as it rose above the ridge. The sullen waters roared in anger and the yelp of a wolf warned Barney O'Philligan that he must seek safety. The proverbial wit of the Irish, which has brought many a son of Erin out of a close place, did not desert honest old Bar-

ney in this extremity. When he heard the wolf, he rose from the rock upon which he was sitting, and said:

"Oy, oy, I heerd a snap av the divil's fiddle sthring, an' that tells me 'tis time fur Barney to begin to stir hisself, or they will soon be a lot av howlin', snappin' dragons dancin' about his corrups. Ah, me hearty, I've done a purty good job av chatin' the divil so far an' I don't think I'll let his imps faast on me carcass to-night. I'll jist climb up this tree an' make me bed in the fork av that big limb."

With some difficulty he ascended the tree, dragging his little budget after him. This he tied to a stout limb so that it would not fall during the night, as it was his entire stock in trade, and, to lose it, meant for an itinerant merchant to go bankrupt.

This done, he seated himself on a limb of the tree, as many a traveler in a new country has done before and since, and prepared to spend the night as comfortably as the situation would admit.

He had not been long settled in his

place, until he heard a yelp followed by another and another, and pretty soon half a dozen wolves in single file dashed by in hot pursuit of his trail.

On they ran, pell mell, until they came to the creek. Here they stopped, and, standing abreast with their front feet in the running waters, pointed their noses toward the opposite bank, then set up a hideous noise which was a combination of growls, howls and barks, that clearly showed their rage and disappointment at the loss of the trail.

Presently one of them turned and walked up the stream a little way, with his nose pointing toward the opposite shore. He stood in this attitude for a moment, then, with a low whine, turned away, apparently giving up the chase. As he did so, a flying night beetle struck him on the side of the nose. He dropped it near the ground and began to rub it with his right paw. Suddenly, he gave a triumphant yelp and started up the stream, followed by the others. The bug had put them on Barney's trail again.

Back and forth, the ferocious creatures ran, just as many times as the peddler had walked, then they came to the stone where he had set down in dismay. Around this they went like mad, then dashed away with a rush, and, in a moment, reached the tree where he sat watching them with amused interest.

No sooner had they treed him than they formed a circle about his castle and set up that well know series of short, sharp barks, which tells every practiced ear that a nocturnal siege has begun. Barney felt perfectly secure, however, and, as the concert was likely to prevent him from sleeping soundly for awhile, he thought to pass the time in conversation with the unbidden serenaders, so he addressed them as follows:

"Hi, yi, ye dirty rascals. This is not the first time yez have sent me to a room in the upper story. I've seen yez before, an' ye got the sore throat thin a splittin' the wind, jist like ye're a doin' now. Jist go on wid yer yelpin' an' I'll be takin' a little nap av me, fur I've a

long road afore me to-morry, I gess."

At that moment, there was a flutter among the leaves above him and a deep, dismal voice said: "Who—wh'—whoo—whoo—whoo—!"

"Who the divil are *you*, thin? I'm honest Barney O'Philligan, born in county Derry, an' I wisht to me sowl I was there now agin," said the poor fellow, thoroughly frightened.

"Who—wh'—whoo—whoo—whoo—," came again, and this time, it seemed a little nearer to the top of Barney's head.

"I tould yes who I was. What makes yez kape askin' me right along? Who are *you*, annyhow? Och, I b'lave ye're the divil hisself, from the looks av yer eyes an' yer horns."

"Who—wh'—whoo—whoo—whoo—."

"Go way, good misther divil, go way. What's a poor crayture to do wid a dozen divils below him an' he don't know how many above? Let me alone, plase do now. I niver harrumed ye in me life. I always tried to be on good terms with the divil, annyhow. There's me pack over

beyant the tree. Take it an' go away, misther divil, that's a good felley, now."

In his eagerness to get away from the dreadful creature, whatever it was, Barney had unconsciously crept farther and farther out on the limb on which he sat, when all at once, it broke with a loud crash and he fell to the ground in a heap.

The wolves were so completely taken by surprise, that they thought the whole tree was coming down upon them, and they scampered away a few rods into the bushes, while the owl flew to safer haunts.

Barney recovered his senses in a moment and said: "As betwixt half a dozen divils down here an' one up there, I'll be goin' back," and he scrambled up the tree again, just as the wolves came yelling back. He was not molested further that night, and when morning came, it found the creek so low that he easily crossed it on the stepping stones and was soon at the cabin of John Lamar.

The door was opened by Mrs. Lamar, and the moment the Irishman saw her, he

exclaimed beneath his breath, "Loco;" but he mentally resolved to conceal his own identity for the present. Upon being invited to enter, he stepped inside, dropped his little pack on the floor, asked if he might buy a breakfast, and received an affirmative answer.

There was something strangely familiar about the man to Mrs. Lamar and she regarded him with deep interest in her effort to recall his name, but in vain. She turned to speak to her husband concerning the peddler, but he had gone out the back way just as the traveler came in at the front door.

During the time the meal was being consumed, there were sly glances exchanged, and once or twice, their eyes met. Barney was fully convinced that he knew the woman and he was also convinced that she thought she knew him. Having finished his meal, he went out and sat on the stone door step and began to smoke a clay pipe. Laura picked up the milk bucket and went away singing in her old time manner, as she had been do-

ing since the meeting under the elms.

Mrs. Lamar began to clear away the dishes but found her attention constantly drawn to the peddler. She walked back and forth past the open door and twice he saw her stop and look earnestly at him. Finally, he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, came into the house and began to open his bundle, saying pleasantly:

"Landlady, whin ye git yer work done, I'd like to be after showin' ye some foine Irish linen table cloths me mother made fur me jist before I started acrosst to this haythenish counthry."

For a moment, Mrs. Lamar looked at him in profound silence, then said, with a half smile:

"I don't believe you have seen Ireland in fifty years."

"Oy, oy, madam, shure I was born in county Derry whin I was very young, an' me mother—"

"Took you to kiss the Blarney stone when you were three days old."

"Now, ye're a makin' a fool av a poor wanderin' orfunt, what's a trying to make

an honest livin' in a counthry where the red divils are thicker'n the snakes an' frogs was in Ireland before good St. Patrick druv them into the sea. Upon the honor av me sowl I'm not shure that I ever saw the Blarney stone but I heerd me mother kissed it onct whin she was a young girrul."

"And that's what makes you such a blarney," said she.

"Shure, me lady, I wouldn't tell ye annything but the truth fur all the world. As certain as me name is Barney O'-Philligan I—"

"Is that your name?"

"That's the name me mother said was mine, an' by the good St. Belzebub—"

"Ah, I know your name now. You are not Barney O'Philligan at all. You are honest Pat Murphy who used to be the coachman for William Monroe, who lived on the lower Susquehanna—"

"Now there ye go off agin' Howly St. Patrick's birthday in the mornin' but I b'lave I'm in a counthry where nine tinths av the paaple is bloody handed

savages an' the other half is ayther loony-tix er crazy. What makes ye think I'm Pat Murphy?"

"Because nobody but Pat Murphy ever made a saint of Beelzebub. Let me tell you something that will convince you that I know who you are."

"Av coorse ye know who I am fur I tould ye me name's Barney O'Philligan born in—"

"Once upon a time you saved William Monroe's daughter from being drowned."

"Murphy did, you maen," said he.

"That little daughter took a gold ring from her finger the next day and put a blue ribbon through it, then tied it around your neck."

"Around Murphy's neck," said he.

"You gave that little daughter a fine linen table cloth which your mother sent you as a present from Ireland."

"Murphy did."

"You said to her: 'Now me little lady, if ye raaly think enuff av the ould mon to remimber 'im, jist work me name in one corner av that table cloth, an' the

first time I come to see ye after ye air married, I'd like if ye'd put that cloth on the table.' The little girl worked the name, and this morning she put that cloth on the table, because she thought she knew you, and you ate your breakfast from it, and there is your name in the corner," she pointed triumphantly to the name neatly worked in the table cloth with green silk thread."

For several moments he looked at the delicate needle work, and which he had not seen for years, while his eyes glistened, as an unbidden tear struggled to the surface of each. Mrs. Lamar fully expected him to acknowledge that he was Murphy, but he only said in a low voice:

"That's Murphy ye're talkin' about, an' a foine mon he must a been. Good luck to the ship that brought 'im acrosst."

"You still deny you are Murphy?

"I tould ye me name onct."

"Listen. The little girl whose life you saved, had a pet name which you gave her. She worked that name in the corner of a handkerchief, which she gave

to you and you placed it in your inside pocket, declaring that you would always carry it near your heart. A few minutes ago, after you opened your pack, you drew from an inside pocket, the spectacles you now have on, and, without knowing it, you also drew out a little 'kerchief, which fell to the floor. Here it is, and there is that old pet name."

She held it up before the astonished peddler, and there in one corner, worked with green silk thread also, was the word "Loco."

The old man hastily drew from about his neck, a faded blne ribbon to which was attached a little gold band much worn from long wearing. Holding the ring, the 'kerchief and the corner of the tablecloth in one hand, he placed the other upon the head of Mrs. Lamar, and, with tears running down his cheeks, said:

"Yes, yes, little Loco, this is the ould mon hisself. I knowed ye the minnet I set eyes on ye. I wanted to see if ye'd remimber yer ould frind afther these many years. I thought ye was

dead an' in heaven good an' safe, an' I niver expected to see ye agin. Ye're the same little darlint to me ye was whin ye used to run the reddin' comb through me thick, bushy hair fur an hour afther I tuck ye a ridin' on me shoulders. But tell me, baby," and he stroked her hair as if she were a child. "What air yez doin' in this wilderness?"

"I have come this far from the home of my childhood, in my efforts to escape the persecutions of Henry Anson."

"Well, I reckon ye're safe from him out here to the very inds av the the urth."

"No, indeed," said she, shuddering with fear. Then she told him all that had happened during the years she had been moving from place to place in her efforts to evade Anson, including the incidents with which these pages have already made the reader familiar. When she ceased talking, he stamped his foot vehemently and said:

"Nabocklish avick aroo! There's not a furnace in all the infernal ragions that is hot enuff fur him. The murtherin'

blackguard. Don't I know him like a book? He has done enuff durty thricks to kape him in purgatory a thousand years. Wasn't I hidin' in the bushes the night he shtole his own father's horses an' took them off, the pyrut; an' didn't I hear yer brother a pladin' wid 'im to come back an' b'have 'imself; an' didn't I see 'im stick that knife into the poor boy, an' say, 'there, now, ye meddlin' cuss, I guess ye won't bother nobody else soon;' an' didn't I see that red divil av a Snaakin' Fox, er whativer his name is, av a Indian run past yer father's barn down tords the river wid the little gyrrul he shtole fur Anson from Anson's own sister? An' the scamp pirsecutes little Loco yet. But where is he now?"

"I believe he is in the mountains somewhere."

"Then I'll go peddlin' in the mountain's, begorry."

"No, you must not do that, Pat."

"An' why not, me darlint?"

"Because you know so much about him he would murder you in a moment."

"He don't know as how that I know annything about 'im an' I can niver rest ashlape in me grave as long as that kidnapper is alive."

"Here comes my baby," said Mrs. Lamar, as Laura approached, carrying a bucket of milk. "Her name is Laura, too. Laura, this old man was your grandfather Monroe's coachman, and he has accidentally found us while travelling over the country as a peddler. Here is her father, also. John, this is our old friend, Pat Murphy."

The greetings which followed were profuse and sincere. Old time recollections were recounted, much to the interest of Laura. Murphy was all wit and jollity, and complimented Lamar and his wife often on the fine looks of their daughter and concluded with: "But I don't see where she gits her beauty. She don't look a mite like aythor av yez." At this, he, Lamar and Laura all laughed heartily, but the mother only smiled a little.

By much persuasion, Murphy was

induced to remain until the next day, but he could not be turned from his set purpose of going on the trail of Henry Anson. "I'll show the black-hearted villain," said he, "that somebody else will go campin' on trails."

When he started away, John bade him goodby at the house, and Mrs. Lamar walked a little farther with him, while Laura went ahead to the gate. Presently the mother extended her hand and said: "Goodby, Pat. Remember, I may need you worse now than I did when I was a little one."

"That's right, me darlint, that's right. I'll sthick to ye tighter nor a beggar louse in October, an' if we can git John Lamar to stiffen up his back bone a little, I b'lave we will come out all right. John was always a good felley, but a little timid fer a new counthry. "He's good to yez, ain't he, darlint?"

"No man could be better."

"That's foine, that's foine. Well, goodby, Loco, put your trust in God an' he'll kape yez safe," and he left her weeping bitterly.

At the gate, he extended his hand to Laura, but she said, playfully, "I am going to the creek with you."

"All right, me baby, come along."

When they had reached the stream, Laura took the rough hand of the honest hearted Irishman in hers and pressed it warmly as she said anxiously:

"Mr. Murphy, you know all about my mother's early life. Can you tell me anything about my own?"

"Why, bless the child, I'm sorry I don't know as much about ye as I do about yer mother, but—"

"I am sure," interrupted the girl, "that there is a deep mystery surrounding my life and the lives of my parents. Sometime, when I see you again, will you tell me of our history?" and she pressed her lips to his old red hand:

"Sometime, baby, sometime, but I must be goin'; goodby," and he crossed the stream on the stepping stones and was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VALLEY AND THE SHADOW.

It was not an uncommon thing for the early pioneers of this country, to live many miles from any place where the necessary supplies for the family were to be had. These supplies were few in number, it is true, yet, the hardy yeoman of the time thought it no heavy task to travel long distances in order to secure them.

On the morning the Irish peddler crossed the Two Lick and started up Yellow Creek on the fast fading trail of the outlaws heretofore mentioned, John Lamar threw a bag of shelled corn across the back of the sturdy family horse, and started for the mill, which was fully forty miles away. He was a man of peaceful intent and reflective mind; so much so, that he had been called "a day

dreamer," which appellation was not at all foreign to his nature and his tastes. He was one of those creatures who believe that what is to be will be, and that no human agency can prevent it, hence, he was no match for either the wily, persistent Indians nor the apparently totally depraved Anson, who for some unaccountable reason, seemed intent upon bringing evil to himself and his household.

He crossed the Two Lick, waved an adieu to his wife and Laura, then turned to the right on a half hidden trail that led down the stream and was soon lost to the sight of his loved ones. He rode slowly along and mused as follows:

"Man is powerless to shape his own destiny. He is an infant in the clutches of the giant Fate, and to struggle is but to waste his dwarfish energies and to render him weaker still. There goes a log floating down the stream. It moves peacefully along on the smooth surface of the water. It is borne wherever the water will and it is powerless to choose its own course and follow it. Now it is

thrust into a clump of briers along the bank. They tear its sides; next, it is whirled around and dashed against a huge rock in the middle of the current with a force that almost breaks it in two; now it is knocked about among the stones in the bed of the stream in a manner most merciless, and, again it floats out into the calm, smooth water. The analogy is clear. It is perfect. The water is the stream of life and the log is a human creature.

"My soul is much distressed about the conduct of Henry Anson, and I would fain set myself and mine free from his persecutions, but if it is to be it will be, and no effort of mine can prevent it. Mother seems to believe that some dreadful calamity is to befall us, and Laura, poor child, has been constantly pleading with me here of late to tell her something about our early history. I would to God I could do so, but I can not. She, too, is a child of destiny and must abide by its decrees, whether they be gentle or stern.

"It may be that some unexpected

sorrow is to visit my home. God forbid that it should come, but, if come it must, I pray that he may impart to me the fortitude to bear my affliction as becomes a humble believer in the wisdom of the unknown and unknowable Infinite."

On Saturday morning, Laura saddled Blackbird and told her mother she would canter across the ridge to the home of the nearest neighbor, which was distant only a step of five miles, and that she would return by noon. The mother requested her not to remain away late, as she felt very lonely.

The noon hour arrived, but Laura did not. One o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock, but still no Laura came. Her mother was becoming alarmed for the safety of the girl. She walked down to the capstone where she could see her if she appeared at the top of the ridge, and where she could also see her husband come up the creek. She gazed intently, first in one direction and then in another, in the hope of seeing those she loved best, but their familiar forms did not appear.

Becoming tired, she seated herself upon the rock, and just as she did so, a human head appeared above the brow of the hill behind her. The figure advanced cautiously to the cabin window and peered in. An expression of disappointment rested upon the copper-colored countenance, as it turned away. The creature crouched low and moved about with a tread as noiseless as that of a cat, while he carefully scanned the surroundings. Suddenly his eyes fell upon the silent figure. He dropped to the ground and muttered with a fiendish chuckle:

"Rattlesnake, the bird that was in the bush is now in your hands. Escape for her is impossible. To attempt to pass me is to fall into my open arms, and to leap from that rock to the stream below is certain death. Cast your net, and the partridge flutters helplessly at your feet."

He began to steal noiselessly toward the prize he had so much coveted and had so long pursued. No panther ever crept with more silent tread toward its prey,

than did this human panther creep toward the unsuspecting woman. His whole body trembled with the insanity of his villainous desire. The muscles of his face twitched and contorted in such rapid succession as to give his countenance the hideous expression of a demon which is overwhelmed with a feeling of exultation in its infernal anticipations of ages of supreme pleasure tormenting the soul of a fallen saint. His eyes fairly started from their sockets, as, inch by inch, he approached the quiet figure. He paused, rose to his feet, and folding his arms across his breast, gave a long, low whistle.

Mrs. Lamar turned at once, and, full in the path that led to the cabin, stood the man who had been the ever present evil spirit of her later life—Henry Anson.

Rising to his fullest height, he said: "At last Loco, at last."

For a moment she stood as dumb as a statue. She opened her mouth but not a sound escaped her lips. She moved her tongue but not a word did she utter. She attempted to raise her hand but it

remained paralyzed at her side. Such a degree of absolute terror is seldom seen. The trees began to move, the rocks to roll and the stream to reverse the course of its going. She knew that it meant another attack of unconsciousness, such as she had undergone heretofore, every time she felt the presence of this evil creature near her. But she knew more. She knew that if she fell in a faint this time, she would awake the captive of the man of all men she most despised.

By an almost super-human effort she threw off the dreadful feeling, and, stepping to the very apex of the capstone, she looked the intruder full in the eye, and said:

"Henry Anson, why are you here?"

"And so you recognize me, do you?"

"I would to God I could say I do not."

"Since you know me, you know my mission."

"Yes, I know you. But I can not imagine why you should follow me, like a trailing bloodhound, all these years, and why, at last, you should steal up to my

home, like a prowling wolf, when I am alone."

"Loco—" he began.

"Please call me Mrs. Lamar."

"Mrs. Lamar!" he exclaimed with a sneer. "No, I will *never* call you Mrs. Lamar. I will call you Loco, the sweetest name ever possessed by woman. Loco, the name you loved so well when we were children together, playing along the banks of the lower Susquehanna. Loco, the name you loved to hear best on that warm summer night when you placed your hands in mine, as we stood by the river, and you promised to be my bride. Loco, the name which has supported me through all my wanderings in search of my old time sweetheart. Loco, the name alone by which you are known, now that I have found you, and the name that alone shall be yours during the happy years that we will spend together. Loco, I am here because I love you."

"Stop, Henry Anson, stop. You forget that I am the wife of another."

"No, you are not the wife of another.

You gave me your heart many years ago. I hold it yet and shall continue to hold it until death. By the troth you plighted when you were heart-whole and fancy-free you are mine and mine only."

She noted the determined look in his eyes and resolved to parley with him as long as possible, believing that at any moment Laura or Lamar would return and rescue her. After a pause, she said:

"Yes, I well remember the happy days of childhood, that I spent beside the dear old river—"

"Oh, that we could call them back," said he.

"I well remember," she continued without heeding him, "that the farms of William Monroe and James Anson lay side by side and that the beautiful river ran along the front of each.

"I remember that in each family there were two sons and two daughters. These children were almost constant playmates. They went to school, to church, boating and riding together, and a happier quartette of little ones, I suppose, never lived."

"That was long, long ago," said he.

"That was long, long ago," she repeated slowly. "Yes, yes, I remember very well indeed that an Irishman lived with my father. I wonder what ever became of him?" and she eagerly awaited his answer.

"I have not seen him for years," said Anson, in a tone that told her he spoke the truth.

"I remember also, that as the four children of these families approached the years of maturity, there sprang up among them a double attachment, the nature of which, the child-mind never knew.

"I remember that I pledged my love, an honest, pure, sincere love, to the son of my father's neighbor, and—please remain where you are, Mr. Anson, I have not yet done," said she, suddenly changing her tone and manner as he took a step forward.

"How foolish I am not to clasp her in my arms at once," he muttered, "but I will humor her dreamy whim, as I believe when she recalls the happy days of

long ago, she will abandon Lamar and go with me." Then he said aloud, "I beg your pardon, go on."

"I remember, too," she resumed, "that the son of my father's friend pledged to me a pure heart, an honorable life, a character unsullied by deceitful word and a hand unstained by disgraceful deed."

"Woman, do you insinuate—?"

"I insinuate nothing. I remember also, that my only brother and the only sister of my fiance plighted the self-same troth and kept it until death."

Anson was becoming agitated. He stamped his foot, and his painted brow grew darker as he said fiercely:

"I care for no more of this. Come, my time is precious. Five miles from here, my band awaits me. We must be going, come," and he took a few steps toward her.

"Stop right there, Henry Anson, and wait until I have finished."

"Well, be quick about it. I am not the person to accept the dictations of the

woman who has broken her vows to me."

"I remember," she went on, "that a time was set for a double wedding, which was to unite in the holy bonds of wedlock, the children of these two families. The hand of providence was placed upon me and I was stricken with fever, but my brother and the sister of my fiance were happily married.

"I recovered slowly. A year went by and I was my old time self again. My lover, however, was not so arduous in his attention as he had been. He pleaded a pressure of business matters, as many another man has done under similar circumstances, and I, as many another woman has also done, believed him."

"I could not be with you always."

"Suddenly he disappeared," she went on as if meditating.

"Who disappeared?"

"My lover disappeared."

"Why don't you say I disappeared?"

"Well, then, *you* disappeared, and when I heard of you six months later, you were secretly aiding a band of smugglers who came up from the bay."

"It is false. Who told you that?"

"One who hears none of your curses."

"But I say it is false."

"I would to God it were; for I loved you as only a true woman can love, and when I heard it, I would not believe it, but wrote to you to come to me, as I was heart broken."

"Did I not answer you?"

"Yes, and such an answer. It read in part: 'I will come to you by and by. Broken hearts, like torn garments, are easily mended.'

"I loved you yet, poor, blind, deluded creature that I was, and I would not give you up, even when I knew you had chosen such a life. After that, you joined a gang of river pirates—"

"Woman, that is a lie and you shall die with it on your lips." He raised his rifle as if to fire, but the woman cooly said: "Put that down, you might hurt someone."

Lowering the gun in surprise he said: "Why are you so cool in the presence of such danger?"

"Because death by the bullet in that

rifle would be more to my taste than such a life as you offer me. Besides that, only a coward would brandish such weapons in the face of a helpless woman."

He drew his knife from his belt with a jerk, and threw it and the rifle over the precipice into the stream below. "Go on," said he "you are at my mercy, however your fairy tale ends."

"Yes," she repeated, "you joined a gang of river pirates and one dark night you stole six horses from your own father's barn. When my brother Frank, your sister's husband, followed you to the river's bank and pleaded with you to give up such a life, when he told you it was killing your parents and mine, and when he declared to you that he would keep the secret of your life from the world, even from me, what was your answer? A knife went to his heart and the blood spurted over your right hand. The stain is there now, hidden only by the paint that covers it," and she pointed her finger toward his right hand which he attempted to conceal.

He became furious and said:

"Curse the moment I threw that rifle away. If I had it now I would soon end this matter. But I will end it anyhow. You shall go with me and you shall go *now*;" and he rushed toward her.

Suddenly he stopped; for, quick as a flash, Mrs. Lamar had drawn the dagger from the folds of her clothing and stood pointing it directly toward her own heart.

"Advance another step, Henry Anson, and this matter will be settled right quickly."

"What? Would you take your own life?"

"The glittering steel shall rest *within* my heart before the head of Henry Anson shall rest above it."

"I believe you would defy all the demons of Inferno, but my admiration for you increases with your spirit of defiance."

"Listen, Henry Anson, my fairy tale, as you are pleased to call it, will soon be finished, and when I have done, you will be at liberty to go your way."

"Go my way, that's cool, I must confess."

"After the murder of my brother," she continued, "your hands were almost constantly dripping with blood. You gathered about you a band of desparadoes, Indian and white, chief among them being the outlawed friendly Indian, Jumping Fox, who so nearly lost his scalp at the edge of a tomahawk thrown by a white man pursuing him, after he murdered the women and children left in his care while the settlers up the river drove off a hostile band of savages. Your crimes are written in the book of fate by the score. You have been a pirate, a brigand, a murderer, a thief—"

"Stop that, or I'll send this stone through your skull," said Anson.

"Yet, your crowning infamies I now hurl into your teeth and defy your darkest vengeance. You sent two Indians to kidnap and take *me* on board your piratical craft, but worse, a thousand times worse than this,

"*You stole your sister's baby when she*

was but two years old, and sold her to Eagle Eye, the Sagamore of the Hurons for a thousand beaver skins, Jumping Fox being your henchman."

Without a word, Anson threw the stone at her with all his might. She made a quick motion to dodge it, and stepped off the side of the capstone, nearest the creek. As she did so, she threw out her hand and—unconsciously opened it, when the dagger fell over the precipice and rang as it struck rock after rock until it reached the bed of the creek.

Anson now became the soul of sarcasm and said: "Really, my lady should be more careful where she steps. May I not have the pleasure of assisting you back to your former position?" and he started toward her.

For answer, she caught the limb of a bush in her hand, and, placing her foot on a ledge of rock that jutted out over the stream, swung back and forth above the yawning chasm, and said:

"It is written that man shall have dominion over every living creature,

which, I suppose, means woman also, therefore, allow me to suggest that you come and take your prize."

"My God, woman, are you crazy? Don't you know that if that slender twig were to break, your brains would be dashed out upon the rocks or you would be drowned in the stream at the base of the cliff?"

"Better death a thousand times on the ragged edges of the rocks or in the bosom of the stream than life in the arms of Henry Anson," she replied.

He turned and walked to where she first saw him, and she resumed her seat. Again and again she cast her eyes, first toward one trail then the other. Anson noticed this and said:

"You seem to be expecting some one."

"My husband and daughter will soon be here, and then you will pay dearly for your conduct," she answered.

"They are late, are they not?"

"They may appear at any moment."

"You expect the daughter to come over the ridge, do you not?"

"Yes."

"And the husband to come up the creek?"

"Yes."

"Well, madam, I will inform you that neither of them will be here, for they are my prisoners and are now on their way to my camp."

Without a moment's hesitation, she cried out: "You are a lying villain."

"Please don't lose your temper until I state the facts to you. I have but one purpose in life and that is to possess you as my wife. For this purpose I have followed you, no matter where you have gone, nor how long the journey, until I have overtaken you. This I warned you I would do, when I called you to your father's garden gate on the evening you wedded John Lamar. You scorned my pleadings then, I return the compliment now. Ah, see there!"

He pointed across the stream. Mrs. Lamar turned her eyes that way and saw Blackbird come dashing out from among the bushes, with flying reins but bearing

no rider. The pet steed ran down to the edge of the water at the ford, then stopped suddenly, looked toward the trail that ran down the creek, and neighed loudly. At once an answer of its kind was heard and a little later the old family horse slowly approached bearing neither rider nor meal sack. The two then crossed the stream, went to the gate and stood neighing for those they had learned to know best.

No further argument was needed to convince Mrs. Lamar that what Anson said was true, and her heart sank within her. Life was now to her but the blackness of darkness and she half wished she had not dodged the stone hurled by Anson, or that the twig of the bush had broken off as she swung in mid-air.

Noticing her demeanor, Anson said:

"Will you go with me now?"

Slowly she raised her head and, resting her face in her hand, she answered:

"Henry Anson, the echoes of the dying groans of your father and mother come over the Alleghenies in the mournful

wails of the night-winds that creep through the mountain passes. You are their assassin. Back of my old homestead, among the broken-limbed trees of the orchard, are two white marble slabs, silent reminders of the untimely death of my father and mother. You are their assassin."

Anson seemed riveted to the rock on which he stood. His whole frame trembled as though he were standing at the judgment bar of Jehovah. The woman held him with the power of her steady gaze, so firmly that he mentally compared her to the snake while he was becoming the victim.

But she went on:

"Over there, on the bank of the old river," and she pointed away to the southeast, "sits a trusting young girl, waiting, waiting. Come and sit by her side. Hark! What noise is that? There! Did you hear that body fall? Catch that faint groan. That is the voice of my dying brother. See the woman approach him. Now she falls upon her knees at his side.

She places her ear to his heart—all is still.

"See, she rises. What a blood curdling scream! Do you hear it? Indeed vou do and it sounds to you like the yells of all the demons in the infernal regions."

"Sorceress, witch, she-devil, fiend incarnate; I will no longer submit to this," he cried.

"Let us tarry amid the old scenes but a moment longer," she replied. "The stricken woman is your sister. She buries her husband and goes to his grave every evening to weep. Mark you, Anson, what we see. The twilight deepens as she sits by the grave holding on her lap a little child, her last and only comfort in life. Darkness approaches. She starts home. The little one walks by her side. It stops to pluck a flower while the mother walks on reflectively. See there, Anson, see there! Do you notice that dusky figure behind them? It approaches with the stealth of a fox. It is an Indian. My God! he has caught the babe, and, placing his hand over its mouth, disappears.

"The mother turns but the babe is nowhere to be seen, and her screams pierce the heart of the night as your knife pierced the heart of her husband. 'My baby! Oh, where is my baby!' she cries. See, she is running directly toward the river. She is wild. Can nothing save her? Nothing. She rushes over the cliff and her body is picked up from the rocks below.

"On the same bank overlooking the broad bosom of the sweet old Susquehanna are two graves, side by side. There sleep your sister and my brother, whose deaths are charged against you on the record of high heaven. The cheerful joy-song of the river is changed to a funeral dirge as it passes that point. You are their assassin and the kidnaper of their child.

"Henry Anson, my fairy tale is done. Go! and remember, the hand of a woman can crush the venomous head of even a Rattlesnake, such as you choose to style yourself. Go! I say, or I hurl myself from this rock instantly."

"Hold! hold!" he cried. "A dead woman is not what I want. Listen to my parting words. Today my braves captured your husband and daughter. The former I shall kill."

"But would you add another murder to the long list already against you?" she replied in dismay.

"I would kill John Lamar as freely as I would kill a snake. He is a coward. He is not worthy to live, much less to be the husband of a woman of your spirit."

"But the child?"

"The body of a captive belongs to the captor to use as he desires. I will keep the lamb, for when the mother hears its cry, she will come to it," and, turning on his heel, he strode up the hill and past the cabin.

She followed him until she reached the house, then stopped and gazed at his retreating figure. Suddenly he turned and said: "I will send for you to-night."

For answer, she called in a tone that could not be mistaken:

"*I will camp on your trail till death.*"

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHASTENING ROD.

When Mrs. Lamar entered her cabin home, she sank upon a plain chair at hand and burst into a flood of tears. For the moment, she felt that life was a miserable failure and that death were a welcome guest. At the next instant, she was herself again, and rising to her fullest stature, she said in a terrible tone: "No, Henry Anson, I will *not die* until you have paid the penalty for your misdeeds. I, too, from this moment, have a mission in life and I shall never be contented until that mission is fulfilled."

She rolled together some household effects, which she loaded on the two horses, and was soon across the stream on her way to the nearest settlement. Going up the creek to a point opposite

the cliff, she saw Anson's rifle and knife in shallow water, and soon had them in her possession. A little further down stream, she saw the dagger and secured it also. She arrived at the home of the nearest neighbor, just as the sun was going down, only to learn that Laura had left there before noon.

She related her story, and would have led the settlers on the trail of Anson that night, but she was suddenly stricken with a pain in the head that rendered her unconscious until after midnight.

The next morning her friends urged her to remain with them, assuring her that the men would pursue the culprits. To this she only answered: "Collect your party, then come to me."

When this was done, what was their surprise when she came out of the house wearing a belt in which was Anson's knife and carrying his rifle on her shoulder. She leaped into the saddle when Blackbird was brought and said sternly:

"Follow me."

"Are you going with us?" said one.

"I certainly am."

"You will surely be killed."

"What is to be will be, come on."

The company followed her in silence. When they reached the crest of Chestnut Ridge, they looked toward the Lamar homestead and saw nothing but a burning mass of ruins.

"Ah," said Mrs. Lamar. "I expected it. They came for me but I was not there, so they have destroyed my home."

They rode down the slope, and crossed the creek and were soon on the spot where the pioneer home was fast turning to ashes in the angry embraces of the dying flames.

True to his threat, Anson sent Jumping Fox and Raccoon to capture Mrs. Lamar that night, but not finding her, they set fire to the house, drove away all the stock, and shot the dog in the hind leg. When they returned, Anson was waiting for them and a cloud appeared upon his brow when he saw not the woman, though he scarce expected her.

"Where is the squaw?" he demanded.

"The night-bird flew away when she heard Jumping Fox come. He could hear her wings flutter among the bushes across the river."

"The Jumping Fox has lost his cunning," said Anson.

"As the Rattlesnake has lost his charms," replied the savage.

"The Jumping Fox can catch a dove in the nest when it is too young to fly, but he permits the old bird to escape."

"Yes," answered the Indian in most cutting tones. "Jumping Fox once stole a little bird from the nest of her mother for the Rattlesnake, who sold her to the Hurons for a thousand beaver skins. She die among Indians, I guess. To-day Jumping Fox catch a pretty little white bird to be his squaw, but the Rattlesnake give his gun and knife to the sweetheart of his youth, and tell her to fly away, I guess," and he laughed loudly.

"I command you to go and get that woman, and not to return without her."

"Jumping Fox take her and tie her

to a tree, sometime, then Rattlesnake may capture her, but Jumping Fox now go to his tepee and see his white squaw," the Indian replied.

"She is not there," said Anson.

"Where is she?" asked the savage, drawing his knife.

"She is in my wigwam," answered Rattlesnake, as he leveled a rifle at the breast of the Red Man.

"Rattlesnake steal her from me."

"No, she went to my wigwam of her own accord. I have not seen her."

"But she is mine."

"Not yet."

"When?"

"When we capture her mother."

"Ugh! Then Jumping Fox take white squaw for Rattlesnake now," and he turned as if to go back in search of Mrs. Lamar.

"Wait awhile. You wonder where my gun and knife are. I threw them into the river."

"And why?"

"They had an Evil Spirit. They would not kill the white squaw."

"Then Rattlesnake never get her and Jumping Fox never get his pretty, young, white squaw," said the latter, after a long pause.

"Oh yes, he will," said Anson, uneasily. "We must keep the cub safe from harm for a little while and the old she-bear will follow it, then we can easily take her."

"Raccoon wants the scalp of the pale-face," said the other Indian.

"Raccoon must be patient," said Rattlesnake. "If we kill the pale-face now, the maiden will die of grief and we will never get her mother."

"Ugh!" said Jumping Fox, "Raccoon wait," and the other lapsed into silence.

"Jumping Fox," said Rattlesnake, "We must leave here to-night."

"Where we go?" asked the other.

"We will go to the land of the Setting Sun, until the white squaw shall grow tired following her little one, when we will take her and she shall be mine forever."

"Then Jumping Fox get his pretty, young squaw, sure," said the other.

"The panther will pick *my* bones before you do," said Anson to himself. "When the moon reaches the first branch of that hemlock, we will go," he said aloud as he entered a wigwam adjoining his own.

CHAPTER VIII.

NO ROSE WITHOUT A THORN.

When Anson was alone, he walked back and forth across the wigwam in silence for a short time, then broke out in a low tone and said:

"Well, well, the task I so earnestly hoped would have been done by this time, I fear is scarce begun. I knew that woman had a spirit of her own, but I did not dream she could outwit me; yet here I am, routed, horse, foot and dragoon. I walk boldly up to my prey with the assurance of a lion and come back like a sneaking cur. I advance to the fray armed like a knight and return leaning on the staff of a beggar, while my lady hurls a sentence of death into my retreating ear. Gods! I am half afraid she will carry out her threat. She seems

to have a charmed life. I wonder how she learned so much about my past life.

"Ah! I have it. John Lamar has told her, in order to win her away from me. John Lamar! The mewling, purring, sanctimonious saint. His carcass would vomit the hungriest wolf an Scalp Level. What right has he to a woman of such splendid parts as she is? I see but one way out of this dilemma, and that is to decoy her into the wilderness of the west so far that she can never escape me, then capture her.

"I think, however, that I will become acquainted with the gentle maiden who possesses so much of the spirit of her mother. Heavens, but she's a beauty, although she does not resemble either her mother or the slimy eel who claims to be her father. She is the very picture of —of—, but that could not possibly be. Oh, no, that is out of the question."

Going down to a little stream that ran by the camp, he applied some kind of juices to his face, after which, he easily washed off the brown coloring he used for

a disguise. This done, he walked to the wigwam where the captives were, guarded by Lizard, and entered, without ceremony. Laura was sitting on the ground at the farther side holding her father's head and did not observe his entrance. He carried the rifle that had been captured with her, and which he had drawn on the Indian a little earlier in the evening. For a moment his heart softened and he whispered: "How I wish she were my daughter and it were my hair her soft hands were smothing back." The flame flickered only for a moment, then, like a match in a hurricane, was extinguished. Addressing the Indian guard, he said:

"She is a dutiful daughter."

These words had the desired effect, for, in an instant, Laura ceased stroking the old man's hair and looked up. The father rose to a sitting posture. Anson did not so much as notice Lamar but fastened a dangerous look upon the girl and went on, as if talking to the savage:

"And so we have trapped the nestling at last, and a beautiful bird she is.

Not a partridge in all the wood is more plump, not a red bird is more beautiful, and not a lark is a sweeter singer. She is a most desirable addition to our company and will, no doubt, elevate us all to her own exalted station."

"She be Jumping Fox's squaw," said the guard."

Laura felt her blood run cold.

"Silence, Lizard," said Anson, "until I order you to speak. Listen to what I say. Your duty is to guard that girl from all harm and to do with her as I command you. Go to your tepee and wait until I call you."

The savage walked silently out of the tent. When he was gone, Anson turned toward Laura and found her standing with eyes opened to their fullest wideness, and gazing with some hidden interest directly into his face, while John Lamar sat with his head bowed to his bended knees, his long gray hair falling about his face in such a manner as to present him a picture of despair.

It would have been difficult to define

the meaning of the look which the girl fastened upon her captor, and more difficult to describe its effect upon him. She seemed overwhelmed with a feeling of combined wonder, sympathy, disdain and veneration. Anger and fear were both absent from her. She spoke not a word, but her eyes never left his countenance. He withstood her look for a time, then became restless and walked back and forth across the tepee, muttering:

"By heavens, I am confounded. It can not be, and yet I seem to see it in every feature she possesses. It is impossible; still, there is a silent voice which tells me it is true. I never saw a woman whose look I could not meet calmly, until I faced this girl and her mother. They possess some hidden power which makes a child, a squaw, a coward of me. I, who boast of having shed more blood than any other white man that ever lived, stand here, a mumbling pappoose in the presence of a frail woman. I will not harbor the thought for a moment. I will be myself, assert

my authority and claim my own, whatever may be the result."

He had wrought himself into a fury, and, with it, returned his waning courage. He strode up to where Laura was, and, standing directly in front of her, demanded roughly:

"Girl, who are you?"

Quick as a flash came the answer, and that, too, without a tremor of the voice:

"And who are *you?*"

"Did anyone ever see such impudence," said Anson under his breath, then aloud: "Woman, you know not with whom you trifle. It is mine to command and yours to obey."

"If I am to be a servant and handmaiden, I presume it no wrong for me to learn the name of my master," she answered meekly but bravely.

"Ah, I didn't think of that," he returned with mock politeness. "Your request shall be granted. My name is Rattlesnake, and I am the chief of a band of Roving Red Rangers, to whom the air is as free as it is to the eagle."

"A band of freebooters?" she asked.

"Well, now, that word is not exactly to my taste but let it go at that. We are a band of men, bound together by the ties of common interest;" and he laughed a little.

"The common interest of outlaws?" she again asked in a simple hearted manner.

"Really, you possess not a little of the diplomacy of your mother, but, seeing you are wholly at my mercy, I am inclined to humor you. Answering your question, we are a band of free-lances who go wherever and whenever we will."

"*Wherever* you will?"

"Wherever we will."

"Your *will* does not often lead you among civilized white people, does it?"

"What do you mean?" he asked, flushing.

"Nothing improper, I am sure. You seemed willing to gratify my desire to know who you are and now you become nettled at my innocent inquiries."

"I told you who I am, that is enough."

"You have not told me the name given you by your father and mother, have you?"

"What do *you* know of my father and mother?"

"Nothing, I am sorry to say."

"Do you know what name they gave me?"

"I do."

"What was it?"

"Henry Anson."

"Who told you this?"

"My mother?"

"Who is your mother?"

"The wife of John Lamar."

"John Lamar! Bah! What else did she tell you about me?"

"She told me you are an outlaw."

"What else?"

"Nothing else, I regret to say. I tried to persuade her to tell me more, about you but she would not."

"Ha, ha, say, girl. I'll tell you something you don't know. What would you say if I should tell you that your mother was once a sweetheart of mine?"

"I should say, if that be true, that you were a different man then from what you are now, or she was a poor, deluded and basely deceived girl."

"Ha, ha, ha, and what would you say if I should tell you that I am your father?"

"*I should say you are an infamous liar*," she almost screamed, as she shook her little fist before his face.

"And you would be telling the whole truth," said Lamar, in a half protesting tone.

"Shut up, you dog," said Anson, angrily addressing him. If you were not so contemptible, in my sight, I would kill you in an instant."

Turning to Laura, his manner changed as he said: "No, child, I am not your father. I only wish I were. There is something about you that draws me very near to you. I can not tell you what it is, unless it be the fact that you are the daughter of the only woman I ever loved, and whom I have sworn I will capture and wed before I die."

"Is that why you spoke those awful

words to me on the day your savages almost decoyed me into your trap?"

"Exactly so. I have been camping on her trail ever since she married John Lamar and I shall continue to do so until she is mine."

"And what do you want with me?"

"The track of the fawn will lead the doe anywhere," he answered.

"Then the panther will keep the lamb until he captures its mother?" said she.

"You have the thought."

"And if the mother is never caught?"

"He will never release the lamb."

"And what of my father?"

"I will attend to his case in due time."

"Will you kill him?"

"Not yet."

"When?"

"Not yet."

"When you have captured my mother?"

"Hold your tongue, you talk too much."

"Henry Anson—" she began after a slight pause.

"Please call me Rattlesnake."

"Henry Anson, I believe there is a mystery connected with the early life of my parents and myself. I believe this mystery involves you in some way. My mother utterly detests you, but there is something about you that awakens the sympathy of my heart. I do not know you, but I do know that you bear a strange resemblance to the picture of one of the dearest girl friends of my mother's youth."

"What was her name" asked Anson nervously.

"I never learned her name. It was one of the secrets of my mother's heart, but here is the picture. Do you know it?"

She thrust her hand into her bosom, and, drawing forth an old faded tintype, stepped to his side and held it directly in front of him.

In an instant, his eyes flashed fire and his face was livid with rage. He snatched the little memento from her hand, dashed it to the ground, and, with the hob-nailed heel of his boot, crushed

out the last vestige of a resemblance to the sister he had so cruelly wronged, years before. He raised his foot again to stamp the picture into the earth, when Laura seized it, just as his heel came down and bruised her hand so horribly as to cause her to cry out with pain. Seeing this, John Lamar rushed at Anson, who, with one blow, sent him tumbling back to where he came from, then turned and left the wigwam, after calling the guard with the caw of a crow.

As Lizard came back through the darkness, he encountered Jumping Fox at the rear of the wigwam of the captives, where he had been watching and the latter whispered lowly into his ear:

"Jumping Fox steal white squaw. Lizard keep still."

"Tonight?" asked the other.

"Not to-night, but soon," and he was gone.

CHAPTER IX

NO RIFT IN THE CLOUDS.

When the moon had reached the height designated, the little party began its long, weary march through the unbroken wilderness. Anson gallantly assisted Laura to mount a seedy looking pony, and apologized because he could not offer her her own pet, Blackbird. She was not bound in any manner, but Anson rode in silence on one side of her and Jumping Fox on the other, while John Lamar was turned over to Raccoon and Lizard, with instructions to brain him if he attempted to escape. They crossed the many now beautiful ridges which form the foothills of the western slope of the Alleghenies, but which were then enshrouded in a tangled mass of trees, bushes and briers.

Through day and night, this gloomy cavalcade kept on its weary way, and halted but once each day for food and a short rest. At last, they reached the banks of the Allegheny River. Here, the party found two canoes which they had used on former occasions, and had secreted. In these, Anson and Jumping Fox placed the captives and took them across the stream, while Raccoon and Lizard swam the horses over.

Having landed, Anson seemed to have no fear of their being overtaken, for he led the party up a ravine toward the north-west a few miles, then halted and ordered the tepees erected on a little elevation just off the trail a short distance and behind a dense growth of shrubbery around which it was necessary to pass in order to reach the place.

The journey had been a long and wearisome one for the captives, and when they were shown the wigwam assigned to them, they entered it, threw themselves upon the ground and were soon fast asleep.

The flight had been rapid, as the band was small, and their leader well knew he would now be pursued by one in whose heart the fire of vengeance burned with a brilliant glow; therefore he had observed every artifice known to the savage of the time in order to conceal his trail and throw his pursuers off it entirely.

Whenever a stream was reached, they rode in its bed upward or downward for some distance, then Lizard and Raccoon were sent off to break the bushes on a false trail, after which they returned to their companions. Where it was possible, they rode over the flat stones that lay in their pathway, in order to make their chosen route more difficult of discovery, and often the very leaves which they rumpled up with their feet and those of the horses, were replaced in a manner so deft as to deceive any but the most experienced observer.

Having established his camp, Anson decided to remain there a few days, and ascertain whether he was pur-

sued, and, if so, by how strong a force.

* * * * * * *

When the pursuing party, headed by Mrs. Lamar, reached the ruins of her home, a counsel was held, at which it was decided to follow the outlaws. Every effort was made to induce her to return to the settlement but all to no purpose. Her one answer was: "I have a mission in life to fulfill and must be about it."

The pursuit was slower than the flight, as the pursuers were often thrown off the trail and much time was consumed in regaining it. Finally, they reached the Allegheny River, and here the hope of the entire company, except Mrs. Lamar, of overtaking the outlaws, vanished. They were now much farther in the wilderness than they had ever been before, and the instinct of self-preservation began to assert itself quite strongly. Moreover, the trail disappeared at the water's edge, and reason taught them that the retreating band had crossed the river. Not being familiar with the stream, they felt that to attempt to cross

it would be little short of folly, since the fate of their families depended upon their safe return.

This conclusion was reached during a consultation in the absence of Mrs. Lamar, at the close of which, she was informed in the most pleasant manner, of the decision, and was urged to rest herself for a time, when they would all return together. When she heard this, she shook hands with them, thanked them for their kindness and bade them farewell.

"What!" said the leader of the party, "are you not going to return with us?"

"Can the eagle fly away to a place of safety, while she hears the cries of her nestling that is being torn to pieces by the wildcat?"

"Why, woman, what can you do to release your husband and daughter from the clutches of this fierce renegade?"

"I know not. I shall know later on."

"You will only be captured by the man you say you have successfully evaded all these years."

"No, he shall never take me alive. On the contrary, I believe I shall fulfill my mission to its completeness.'

"What is your mission?"

"To kill Henry Anson and rescue my husband and daughter, and on this I am determined."

"Poor woman! How I pity you. May God help you to succeed."

"God helps those who help themselves," was her cool reply.

Turning aside and speaking to another, the leader said: "If John Lamar had more of that spirit, things might be different with this family now."

Extending his hand to her, he said:

"I can not help admiring your courage, but I doubt your judgment. I am confident this man heads a large force of Indians and that you will fall into his hands only to see your husband shot or sold as a slave. Our best wishes are with you, though we feel that when we leave you this time, we will never see you again."

"It may be true. God only knows,

yet, the heart strings which bind my loved ones to me would snap asunder were I to take a step backward. There is but one thing for me to do and that is to pursue my chosen way until the end."

Mounting their horses, the men, with one voice, tried again to persuade her to return with them, but finding all their efforts unavailing, they waved her a friendly adieu and turned sorrowfully to the trail that led them back to their homes, and, as they fastened their last look upon the heroic woman, many a rough hand brushed away the watery crystals that dimmed their eyes.

She stood like a statue with her eyes upon the retreating figures, until the last one had passed out of sight behind a clump of bushes at the crest of a low ridge. For some time, she was as one fixed to the earth. Her look was riveted to the great, green bank of forest leaves before her. What her thoughts were, no one knew. How long she would have remained in such a position, could hardly be conjectured, had not the loud neigh of

Blackbird roused her from her reverie. Going up to the horse, she patted him on the neck and said:

"Well, well, my darling is restless and lonely. Indeed you have reason to be so. I know another heart that is lonely too, and that is growing more and more so, since the departure of those whom you so vainly call. You and I are truly alone in the world, so we must love each other the more dearly until we find those with whom we are so eager to share our affections.

"But, Blackbird, you should not call so loudly or you will inform our enemies of our presence, and that must not happen, since we shall have to accomplish by strategy what we can not accomplish by force."

However, Blackbird failed to see the point, for he continued to neigh in a most distressing manner for the horses that had taken the returning trail, and as long as they could hear him, their answers came back through the foliage of the forest in ever decreasing clearness, until at last, they died away entirely.

The lonely woman felt that unless she could quiet the horse there would be great danger of her being discovered, and, for a full hour, she talked to, pleaded with, and petted the animal; finally, it ceased calling and began to eat the luxuriant growth of wild grass at its feet.

Night came on, and, after tying the horse, Mrs. Lamar sought refuge in a friendly hollow tree near at hand. The entrance to this rude lodging place, she closed by leaning a chunk of wood against it. So completely exhausted was she, that she fell asleep at once and did not awake until a gleam of sunshine crept through a crevice between the side of the entrance and the log that closed it, and told her it was time to be stirring. She removed the log and crept out. The first thing she thought of was her horse, and, hastening to where she had left him, to her utter dismay, he was gone. Only a piece of the rope with which he was tied, was left, and the fringed end told her that he had chewed it in two during the night. Pursuit was useless. What could

she do? She could do what any other woman could have done under the same circumstances. She could sit down and have a good cry, and she did.

When her cry was over, she discovered she was desperately hungry. She sought the little buckskin pouch, in which she had placed some dried venison and corn bread, and found that her stock of provisions was still safe. Her weapons of offense and defense, she had taken into the hollow tree with her, and these were also safe. When she had ascertained this, she ate a hearty breakfast, quenched her thirst at a nearby spring, and felt better. Then she began to search for a place of temporary safety, until she could collect her thoughts and determine what to do next. She had decided to swim Blackbird across the river, after her companions left her, and let the future take care of itself, but this was now out of the question. The instinct of self-preservation which had overtaken her friends, now asserted itself quite strongly in her, hence her search for a place of shelter and protection.

While she was walking along on the river bank, she stopped and peered through an opening in the bushes, that admitted a view of the stream for some distance, when, to her surprise, she saw an Indian emerge from the tangled foliage, and, without the least hesitancy, run down to the water's edge, half dragging a young girl, whom she at once recognized as Laura. Across the girl's mouth and around her wrists were bandages to keep her from screaming or escaping, though she struggled very hard to free herself from his grasp. It was Jumping Fox, attempting to escape with her. He cut one canoe loose, and then almost threw the girl into the other, and, leaping in himself, pulled vigorously down stream and toward the opposite shore. If he should cross, he would land within easy range of the rifle Mrs. Lamar held and which she had rescued from the stream after Anson had thrown it over the cliff. A second look convinced her that he did not intend to land, but was headed down the middle of the river.

A moment later, the bushes at the mouth of the ravine parted, and Anson and Raccoon appeared. At sight of the fleeing savage, they uttered a wild yell of triumph, which was quickly changed to rage, when they saw the other boat drifting rapidly away. Anson raised his rifle to fire but the cunning Indian was too quick for him, and, seizing the girl, held her between himself and the angry muzzle of the outlaws's gun, and shouted:

"Rattlesnake go back and get old pale-face. Jumping Fox take his pretty squaw to Chillicothe."

Anson did not reply. He rushed his horse down the stream with all possible speed, holding his rifle to his shoulder, in order to get a sure aim at the savage.

It was useless, for the Indian shifted the struggling form of the girl around so as to keep it just where he wanted it. Anson now raved with excitement and anger. He was not aware of the fact that a female figure was cautiously dodging from bush to bush, trying to get a little nearer the water's edge, unseen. She

halted. A new danger appeared. She could shoot the Indian from where she now crouched, but if she should do so, Laura, with her hands tied and mouth bandaged, would certainly fall into the stream and be drowned. Another terror confronted her. If she should fire, Anson would at once discover her wherabouts and capture her.

The white renegade and his savage follower tore up and down among the bushes like madmen. Jumping Fox shouted taunts of defiance at them. The girl fought for her liberty. The boat drifted down, down the river. It was now at a point where the hidden woman could kill the Indian without injuring her daughter. The struggle in her breast was but for a moment. The mother instinct prevailed. She raised her rifle and fired, just as Anson and his follower darted behind a clump of bushes, in their efforts to go farther down the river. The Indian threw up his hands and fell dead into the water, while Laura dropped apparently lifeless to the bottom of the

boat. She had seen the face of her mother, just as the latter fired, and, as she thought of her certain capture by Anson, it was too much and she fainted.

At that moment, Anson emerged from the bushes, but so great was his excitement that he did not notice the fast vanishing curls of smoke that crept swiftly back among the bushes as if to conceal their origin. The woman crouched a little lower, then began at once to reload her rifle, as she reasoned that she could now shoot Anson. Her disappointment knew no bounds when she found she had left her bullet pouch back where she had camped the night before, fully half a mile away, and she was compelled to see him swim his horse to the middle of the stream, seize the boat and draw it, with its still unconscious occupant, to the further shore and disappear with her behind the bushes at the mouth of the ravine. Anson believed the rifle of Jumping Fox had been accidentally discharged, killing him instantly, and Laura asserted as much.

With a heavier heart, if possible, the lonely woman retraced her steps to the spring, and there in the wet sand, she saw a very peculiar track, evidently made by an animal strange to her. She was somewhat alarmed when she heard a rustle among the leaves behind her, but, upon turning around, her fears vanished, for she saw the old family dog wagging his tail and hobbling along on three feet.

"You poor, old creature," she said, as she laid her arm about his neck. "How has it happened that the wolves have not eaten you up? My friends are all gone but you, and I see you are not all here. Only three fourths of your running gears. Somebody has shot off one leg. Better a three-legged dog than no companion at all. But come, Brindle, it looks like rain. We must search for shelter."

The brute seemed to understand her, for he started off. Without knowing why, she followed, and he had gone only a short distance when he came to the mouth of a clean, dry cave, to which the scanty effects of the two were removed,

and not a moment too soon, for, just as they entered it, the thunders roared among the hills and valleys and the rain descended in torrents.

* * * * * * *

About the same time of the same day, Walter Vanway, soaking with the rain, reached the old familiar crest of Chestnut Ridge and stood spell-bound, gazing at the ruins beyond the creek. He had but lately heard of the sad fate which had befallen his chosen sweetheart and had hastened to her relief. He paused but a moment, then rode down the slope, swam his horse across the lower ford and went up to where the cabin of John Lamar had stood. Everything was gone. No, not everything. There stood the twin elms erect and unharmed. The one on the right was himself and the one on the left was Laura. Inanimate types of two lives that, he declared, should never be separated. He stepped upon the old capstone to get a better view of the interlocking arms of the trees. At that moment, a flash of lightning appeared which blinded

him, instantly followed by a clap of thunder that deafened him, and, before he could recover his senses, he found himself almost buried beneath the boughs, branches, twigs and leaves of the tree that stood on the left, while the other was badly injured.

Extricating himself as quickly as possible, he hurriedly left the place, mounted his horse, and said: "Not even the fury of the universe shall separate us," then started home to take his final leave of his parents and friends before setting out to search for the captive girl.

CHAPTER X.

THE FURY OF A WOMAN SCORNED.

The rain fell in a steady pour for several days. The river continued to rise for some time, and went down so slowly that it was a month before it was back in its banks. Even then, the condition of Mrs. Lamar was no better, for she had no means of crossing it. One morning, she shouldered her rifle, and, followed by the three-legged dog, she went hunting down the stream. The dog soon started a rabbit, which sought shelter in what appeared to be a pile of logs, limbs and leaves on the bank of the river, but which, upon further investigation, proved to be the upturned canoe that Jumping Fox had cut loose in his efforts to escape with Laura. She lost no time in getting it out from under the brushwood and into

the river, where she fastened it, went back to the cave, gathered up her meager effects, then returned and placed them in the boat.

Securing a long pole, she stepped into the rickety craft and shoved it out into the stream, intending to cross it, and seek Anson's trail. The current was too strong, however, and took her down with a speed that made her dizzy.

On, on, she went, nobody knows how far, and just as night was coming on, she saw an island ahead of her. As she neared it, she discovered that it separated the stream, the portion going to the right being much the narrower and less swift. Into this she guided the canoe and, with the greatest difficulty, directed its course in such a manner that it passed near some bushes, when she at once grasped an overhanging bough and swung herself to the bank, while the boat and its contents drifted on down the stream. The dog, seeing the situation, leaped into the water and swam to the shore, then came running back to her and shook himself so

vigorously as to send a shower all over her.

The only earthly possessions left her were the three-legged dog, the little steel dagger and the curl she had clipped from Laura's head. She did not seem, just at that time, to be a dangerous factor camping on anybody's trail.

She was so thoroughly exhausted and careless of what became of her, that she sank to the ground in a clump of willows and closed her eyes in sleep, just as darkness o'er-spread the earth.

When she awoke, the sun was up, and there sat the dog before her; beside him lay the carcass of a rabbit which he had just caught for their breakfast.

"Well, well, Brindle," said she, "you are a noble scion of your race. But how can we cook it? Let us see if we can find a flint. Yes, here is one, and now for some dry leaves and twigs. But how will we strike a fire from the flint? Ah! I have it. Here's the dagger. Now we will have a fire soon. See that spark, Brindle, that fell among the leaves when

I struck the flint with the dagger? There, it has caught among them and the blaze starts up.

"Yes, yes, we are a long way from the dead-house, Brindle. You just hold the hind legs of the rabbit in your teeth and I will dress it. A pretty good job, I must say. See it sizzle and stew and sputter over the fire. Here's a piece, old friend, help yourself. It is a little flat without any salt, but it beats none.

"There, that does very well. Now for a home. Come along, come along. Why, what's that I see? A hovel, I declare. Let us go to it. Here we are and it is deserted. We will just take up our abode in it for the present. No, no, I do not care for that Indian trail over there. I have made up my mind to color my face and hands and turn witch. The Indians never kill witches—that is—ah—the right kind of witches.

"Come in, Brindle, come in. It is not such a bad place after all. Over there is a corner for you and here is one for me, and the floor being of earth, is

just to our taste; we can cook our meals right here, and the smoke—well, it can find its way out between the logs. We are hidden away safely, I am thinking, and here we will abide in peace and fare sumptuously every day."

Having delivered this speech to her dog, she took formal possession of her latest acquisition.

* * * * * * *

"Did ye ever go into an Irishman's shanty?
'Tis there where ye'll find yer good whiskey in plinty.
His nice little shtool an' a table to match,
An' th' door av th' shanty is locked wid a latch."

This, Mrs. Lamar heard about a week later, as she sat one warm evening, at the door of the hovel.

"Boo—woo—woo," went old Brindle.

"Hush, Brindle, I know that voice and it sounds like the voice of an angel to me. Its owner is a friend who has never failed me," said his mistress.

"The divil fly away wid the roof av yer jacket, now," came from the trail at the foot of the hill.

"Boo—woo—woo—."

"Begorry, I b'lave I've heerd that shape-killer before but I'd give me granny's nightcap if I could tell jist whin an' where. Who the divil are yez, anny way?"

For answer there fell on the ears of the astonished Irishman the low, plaintive cry of a whip-poor-will.

"Loco, begorry," said he, and was soon at her side.

"What in the name av the howly Saint Belzebub are ye doin' here, me darlint?" said he excitedly.

With a tremulous voice, she narrated all that had happened since she saw him last, and concluded: "but you didn't find Anson in the mountains, did you?"

"No, but I found 'im out av 'em."

"Where?"

"Up among the gulches, the divil blow 'im."

"How long ago?"

"About three wakes."

"Did he know you?"

"To be sure he did."

"What did he say to you?"

"Well, it was this way. I didn't find 'im in the mountains an' I shtruck out for the Senekys because I always drive some bargins wid 'em, an' what should I do one night about dark, but run right into the camp av Anson, the divil ride 'im. Soon as he saw me he said: 'Who the divil are *you*, now?'"

"'An' who the good Saint Belzebub are you, thin?' says I."

"'Ah, I know you now. You're Pat Murphy. I'm Henry Anson. I suppose you have heerd av me,' says he."

"'I b'lave I have, but I can't tell jist where, me mem'ry's so short,' says I."

"'What are ye snaakin' around here fur?' says he, lookin' bad."

"Thin I thought it was time to be a lookin' afther Barney, and I said, jist as aisy:

"'Ever since I was turned out av house an' home to starve, by ould Bill Monroe, I've been peddlin' fur a livin'."

"'How did he happen to turn ye out?' says he."

"'He wint an' died, the rascal,' says I. Thin he laffed an' asked me: 'Do ye know anny thing about that girrul av his 'n that was named Lorry?'"

"'The divil a bit,' says I, an' I don't niver want to see nor hear av her, ayther.'"

"'Why not,' says he."

"'She was intirely too shtuck-uppish fur a poor divil av an Irishman loike me, an' I hate 'er,' says I, but it was an awful big lie, Loco, I tould 'im whin I said it."

"'Well, thin,' says he, 'I want ye to help me git her alive an' if ye'll do it, I'll give you a thousand baaver skins. Shure, I knew he was a lyin' fur he didn't have a single baaver skin, unless he'd shtale it, but, says I:

"'I'll take her alive meself,' an' that's what I'm here fur, now. I'll take ye alive, but not to him, fer a minit. If I do, it will be whin the crows have scratched all the hair out av me bald head."

"But what of Laura?" asked the mother.

"She's all right, but a little unaisy wid her livin'. I talked wid her a good dale an' pretinded she was the young wife av Anson."

"And John?"

"Bless me sowl, he's doin' well, I reckon. He says whatever is to be trottin' around here will git along by an' by, an' they aint no use to worry; an' bless yer sowl he aint a worryin' a bit more nor a snale."

"How does Anson treat him?"

"He don't trate 'm at all. He niver looks at 'im. He says he's goin' to kape 'im till he gits you an' thin he'll git away wid 'im. He tried to swap 'im off to some Senekys an' they offered to give a dead horse fur 'im, but they wanted to buy Lorry at anny price."

"But how do you happen to be going up the river?"

"I wint down to The Fort to fill up me pack a little, an' I was on me way up and was goin' to cross an' go after ye."

"Where is Anson now?"

"He is on his way to the Great

Council av all the haythen savages in the counthry. It is to be at Sandoosky on the lake. There, he's goin' to thry to git rid av the ould mon an' go away to the west somewhere. He tould me he was goin' to thry to git in wid the Winnonys. They have a childish ould chief by the name av 'Blow Aisy,' or somethin' else, an' Anson wants to git a sthand in wid 'im."

"My God! I shall never see my loved ones again. Why did not the raging river swallow me up, for my last hope is gone," said she in great agony.

"Now that's jist where ye're mistaken, me little one. I know the whole counthry from here to Sandoosky an' if ye'll go wid me, I'll take ye to a place where ye'll be safe from 'im an' on his track too."

"Let us go at once," said she.

"Let us wait till mornin' fur I'm as tired as a shlave under Faryo. Oy, oy, Loco, I almost forgot meself. Did Lorry have a lover?"

"Yes, why do you ask?"

"Too bad, too bad."

"Why do you ask," she repeated anxiously.

"Too bad, too bad."

"Come Pat, please don't keep me in suspense. What has happened to him?"

"What was his name?"

"Walter Vanway."

"Yes, that's the chap Lorry tould me about. The poor felley wint to where yer house was burned an' started back home to git ready to follow Anson, but he got off the trail in the night an' whin mornin' came, he found hisself at the camp av a lot av murtherin' red divils that he thought was friendlys, an' they's got 'im now."

"How do you know this?"

"I was peddlin' in their camp yisterday an' seen 'im an' he tould me his name an' that from what he could hear, the band was headed for Chilly Cothy, way down on the Ohio."

"Poor Laura, her heart will surely break when she hears of it."

"But she mustn't hear av it yit.

The first thing is to git rid av Anson. I tould the young mon to kape his backbone as stiff as a crowbar an' we'd land Anson yit. But come, baby, git the ould mon a bite to ate an' he'll turn in, fur we've a long road afore us."

Mrs. Lamar soon cooked her guest a rabbit for his supper, as this was all she could offer him, but her heart was glad when she saw him draw from his pack, two large "corn dodgers," one of which he gave to her.

The meal was eaten in silence, and, at its conclusion, the old man said: "Good night, baby, be up airly in the mornin'," then he made his bed at the roots of a tree and the woman went into the cabin.

* * * * * * *

It was a long, wearisome journey, indeed, that they undertook, but they reached the designated place after a time and Mrs. Lamar took up her abode in the family of an old trader.

The time for the meeting of the Indian clans arrived, and, with it, there

came to the great village of Sandusky, anybody and everybody who cared to attend. It was indeed a motley crowd, composed of every grade and variety of human nature which at this time, roamed the wilderness in the central portion of the new world. Indians, high and low, intelligent and ignorant, friendly and warlike, clean and dirty, were there. White men, some trappers, some hunters, and some renegades who had turned against their own people, prominent among the latter being Henry Anson. There were also large numbers of traders of all classes and conditions, including Pat Murphy, with his little pack. He had hurried to the scene to watch Anson, as soon as he had Mrs. Lamar safely concealed.

At this meeting, a general traffic of barter and sale in furs, horses, colored fabrics, and, especially in captives, was carried on. The owners of captives always exhibited them to the best advantage, and it was not long until the whole assemblage knew who possessed the

most desirable pale-face of either sex.

Anson had pitched his tents along the principal trail or street that ran through the village, the lake being just back of them. He desired, first, to dispose of Lamar, and second to ally himself with some chief in the interior. The conduct of Laura led him to believe that she was becoming accustomed to her surroundings and he also reasoned that now, if Lamar were dead, she would aid him in inducing her mother to come to him.

Accordingly, he told Lizard that he would give him Lamar, to sell or trade off to the best advantage. The latter grinned and replied: "Ugh! Lizard trade him for a dog."

"What Raccoon have?" asked that savage, looking on.

"Raccoon must wait," said Anson.

"Raccoon have pale-face squaw," said the other, rather boldly.

"The pale-face maiden will be the squaw of some great chief," replied Anson, haughtily.

Raccoon turned on his heel and walked away.

With an eye to the main chance, Anson conferred with several chiefs from the west, and finally persuaded "Soft Wind," chief of the Wenonahs to become interested in Laura. This chief was very old and was so named because he was so gentle in manner and mild of speech.

"Ugh," said he, when Anson had mentioned the matter to him. "Where is white squaw?"

"In my tepee," answered Anson.

"Soft Wind go see her."

They walked to the tepee, and Soft Wind said: "Bring her out."

Anson ordered the girl to come forth and when she did so, Soft Wind looked at her carefully and said slowly:

"She pretty, but Soft Wind is afraid she is too tender. He does not want her."

"She is my daughter and I want her to be your wife," replied Anson.

"She pretty as a red bird—," came a voice from behind them, and, turning

around, Anson saw Eagle Eye, the fierce Senior Sagamore of the Hurons, looking Laura over, critically. Without further ceremony, he went to her, and, roughly pulling her dress down over her right shoulder, disclosed a red spot, which had been made by a hot flint arrow-head and showed its exact shape.

"I take her. How many beaver skins?" said he.

"I will not sell her now," said Anson, amazed beyond measure at the sight.

"Ugh! you offer her to Soft Wind."

"But I have changed my mind." He was greatly perplexed and felt that he must discover the origin of the mark if possible.

"Ugh! take her to the Great Council," said Eagle Eye.

When two or more persons could not agree, as to the disposal of a captive, the matter was referred to the Great Council and settled by a vote of the chiefs, so, to the Council House, Laura was taken. Her extreme beauty attracted such uni-

versal attention among the assembled chiefs, that they could not decide whose property she should be, and the debate continued far into the night. Finally, it was arranged that the matter be referred to Soft Wind, whose decision should be final, since he had taken no part in the discussion, and that he should render his judgment the next morning. Then all present, retired to their wigwams for the night.

Two hours later, Anson came out of the wigwam of Soft Wind, with a smile on his face. This smile was changed to a dark frown when he entered his own tent and found Raccoon and Pat Murphy in a death struggle in which the Indian was rapidly getting the better of the peddler. Raccoon was on top of the Irishman and did not see Anson enter. The peddler did, and said to the savage:

"By all the saints in purgatory, I'll be dyin' right here afore I'll let ye shtale the pretty white squaw from Rattlesnake."

Anson understood the situation in an

instant, and quietly stepping up behind Raccoon, drew his hunting knife across the back of his neck and he fell dead. Next he jerked the bandage off, which the Indian had tied over Laura's mouth.

"Well, Pat," said he cooly. "When did you get into camp?"

"About four days ago, an' a unlucky dog am I, too."

"What's the matter now?"

"Why, matter enuff, begorry. I was walkin' along wid me pack on me back whin what should I do but run up aginst a lot av bucks an' buckesses sittin' round a fire a smokin'; thin I said to one av thim: 'Have ye anny soft tobaccy about ye're pants? I've been thravellin' round fur six months an' havn't had a single whiff at a pipe in all that time. The dirty blackguard niver said a word, an' thin I said to another one: 'Would ye lind me a pipe an' tobaccy. I've a mouth av me own.' Why, the divil fly away wid me jacket pocket if he said a word ayther.

"Thin what should happen but a

grazy ould squaw come runnin' an' grabbed me round the neck—Bah! 'Tis enuff to puke a buzzard to think av it—an' say: 'Me hunter, me brave, me warrior, come to tepee. Me love ye,' an' thin she got a lot av ould hags an' bucks afther me, an' they run me into a hut of a tint an' there, sittin' on the ground, lookin' like a cross-eyed monkey, was a spalpeen of a pappoose."

"Well, what of that?" said Anson.

"Why, that ould hag took me by the arrum an' pintin' to the little divil said: 'Ye boy, ye pappoose.'"

"What did you say to that?" said Anson, after a hearty laugh, in which Laura could not refrain from joining.

"Ah! alackadaisy, it broke me heart, it did, an' I pinted to the little baste an' said, in good ould Irish:

"'That dirty slobberin' brat me boy? Bah! That stinkin' little muddobber? Now look at the little blister. Aw—waw—waw—! Do I look like that now? *Do I? Do I*, I say, an' if I do, why, thin I'll jump into the lake an' dhrown meself.'"

"What did they say to that?" said Anson.

"What did they say to that? Say nothin'. Whin I got through blastin' the little dirty mussrat, I turned around, an' ivery he-divil and she-divil av 'em was gone an' me pack along wid 'em, an' left me a poor wanderin' orfunt agin. I set out a huntin' yez an' jist happened to poke me head in here, whin that bloody haythen had your lady there, bucked an' gagged an' was gittin' ready to git away wid her."

Lizard then came in, followed by John Lamar, and Rattlesnake said, pointing to the body of Raccoon: "Throw that into the lake."

He complied without a word. He was very ill tempered, for he had been around trying to sell or trade Lamar off, but had failed.

"Pat," said Anson, taking him aside, "have you heard anything of the woman?"

"I heerd as how she stharted afther yez to the big river."

"To the Allegheny?"

"Yes'n I heerd as how she shot Jumpin' Fox, whin he tried to shtale the girrul—"

"Why, Jumping Fox was shot by the accidental discharge of his gun, for the girl herself told me so," said Anson, loudly.

"Yes, I told you so," interrupted Laura, with a smile, "but I told you a lie, for I saw my mother shoot him from the bushes on the opposite side of the river."

"Why did you not tell me the truth?" demanded Anson sternly.

"Because I was afraid you would capture her," she answered, quietly.

"You wench, if I had known that, I would have given you to Raccoon."

"I fear it is too late, now," she said, sweetly.

"But what else did you learn, Pat?" whispered Anson.

"Hsh, be aisy an' don't let the girrul hear anny thing else. I learned that doorin' the flood, she found the boat Jumpin' Fox had cut loose an' tried to

cross in it but wint down the river about six thousand milds, an' was captered by the—the—, what the divil is their names? The Kiowas."

"How did you learn this?" said Anson.

"I was peddlin' among thim, an' I tried to buy her fur yez but they wouldn't sell her."

"Good!" exclaimed Anson. "The Kiowas are the neighbors of the Wenonahs and, as I am going with the Wenonahs, I will soon be in possession of her. Now, Pat, take a drop of fire water, and stretch yourself out there and take a nap."

When the Great Council assembled the next morning, the astonishment was very great when Soft Wind announced that he had decided to take the white squaw himself, to comfort him in his old days.

This was the last day of the meeting, and was to be devoted to foot racing among the male captives, the winner to be granted his liberty. Anson had placed

Laura in charge of the peddler, to which she pretended to object. While they were sitting in front of the wigwam, waiting for the race to begin, Murphy told her all about her mother and assured her that the end was not far away, now that he knew the future plans of Anson. While they were thus engaged, a wild yell told them the race was on, and that the runners would soon pass the place where they sat. Laura kept on talking to her mother's old friend until they were nearly opposite her. When she looked up, she saw, to her amazement, that the foremost was Walter Vanway. Instantly, and without a second thought, she uttered that same peculiar cry of the whip-poor-will, which her mother had taught her, and which Murphy had heard her mother utter as he trudged up the Allegheny. Her lover recognized it at once and turned to catch a sight of her. As he did so, his foot suddenly slipped and he fell to the ground, and, consequently, lost the race.

With a cry, she sprang up and ran to him. She dropped to her knees and he

drew her head down, kissed her lips quickly and asked hurriedly: "Where are they going to send you?"

"To the Wenonahs," she answered, in a whisper.

"And where are they?"

"I know not. Away to the southwest, somewhere. But what of you?"

"If I had won the race, I should have been set free—"

"My God! I have sent you back to captivity," she answered.

"Never mind, let us hope. I am to be sent to the Oshwanees, who are also somewhere in the southwest. Good by, they are after me," and the lovers parted again.

The next day, everybody broke camp, Anson and his captives going with the Wenonahs. When they were ready to start, Murphy went up and, extending his hand, said: "Well, good by, Misther Anson Rattlesnake. I see ye're a goin' wid Misther Blow Aisy."

"Why, are you not going with us?"

"Not now, me hearty."

"And why not? You must stay with me until I capture that woman."

"Shure, I'll be wid ye soon enuff, me boy, soon enuff, but I must be goin' back to The Fort to git meself another pack to go peddlin' wid. But I'll be along wid yez soon enuff," and he trudged away, muttering: "soon enuff, an' sooner too, fur him, I'm a thinkin'."

Anson and his party turned and went with the Wenonahs, although Lizard was very sullen, because he had been unable to dispose of John Lamar.

During the journey, Anson endeavored to learn from Laura the cause of the mark on her shoulder. She did not know it was there, and was now more than ever convinced that there was, to her, an unknown history of her early life.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LONG LANE HAS A TURN.

One of the most beautiful of the many beautiful streams that flow across the dear old state of Indiana, is Blue River. From its source to its mouth, it presents, to the eye of the appreciative beholder, a panorama of ever-changing scenery and inspiring beauty. No lover of nature can fail to be enamored of the fine, old stream. Indeed, if we may judge by the number of little white tents that dot its borders every summer, it has many loyal devotees.

Now it goes laughing and dancing in one continuous ecstasy of rippling hilarity over the shiny pebbles that have been made smooth and glassy by its smiling kisses in the centuries gone by. Leaving the ripple, it steals silently around a

bend, to a clump of bushes, and seems wonderously surprised, when it discovers two lovers sitting very close together and who, an hour ago, may have been fishing for bass but who are now fishing for—hearts.

Between a double line of magnificent old sycamores that stand in somber silence and stately dignity, with bowed heads and arms stretched over its glassy surface, it moves on with the calm deliberation that becomes it in the presence of these white-limbed monarchs of the forest, cooling the bodies of the quiet cows, as they chew their cuds in silent contentment at noon day, or tickling the toes of the boy who has been sent to the field with a jug of water for the thirsty harvesters, but who is now totally oblivious to the existence of anything else beside himself and the beautiful river.

Now it finds the way of its going hindered by a huge dam, which it slowly approaches, then separates, when one stream sends up a shout of triumph as it leaps over the rocky barrier, while the

other passes through the old water mill, whose busy wheels at once set up the jolly song of contented industry. Bounding away from its captors, it joins its fellow, and the river then flows along in its merry mood of glittering gladness adorning the breast of the beautiful valley, as a woven strand of sparkling diamonds adorns the bosom of love. On, on, it flows, singing, laughing, darting, dancing, until it meets its brother, the White River, when the two unite in an inseparable embrace and soon spring into the open arms of the grand, old Wabash, which speedily carries them to the bosom of the majestic Ohio, where they sweetly sleep, as they move slowly onward toward the deep, blue sea.

THE BONNY BIG BLUE.

There 's a river in old Indiana,
That flows through a valley of gold;
On its bosom are glittering diamonds,
In its laughter is pleasure untold.
It is singing a song as it wanders
Through the woodlands of emerald hue,
Oh, the song that to me is the sweetest,
Is the song of the Bonny Big Blue.

The nightingale sings in the wildwood,
And the whip-poor-will cries in the glen,
On my ear falls the lay of the blue-bird,
And the twit of the shy, little wren.
Oh, the robin swings high in the orchard,
And the dove courts his sweetheart so true,
And the gay, little children are playing,
On the banks of the Bonny Big Blue.

There's a voice coming down through the valley,
From the cottage that stands on the knoll;
There is music to me in its echoes,
For they whisper sweet peace to my soul.
'Tis the voice of my sainted, old mother,
As she stood where the red roses grew,
And sang like a lark in the morning,
On the banks of the Bonny Big Blue.

When the honey-dew falls on the flowers,
When the stars woo the heavens above,
When the violets blush in the shadows,
And the daffodils whisper of love;
When the crickets chirp low in the meadow,
And the moon smiles her kisses to you.
Let us walk neath the leafy, old maples,
On the banks of the Bonny Big Blue.

On the right bank of Blue River, about fifty miles from its source, is situated a solitary elevation, which local tradition has christened, "Hanover Hill," although no one knows just when. It is the only elevation of its kind along the entire course of the stream, and it stands a silent monument to the dead past, whose annals would soon be forgotten, but for those noble men and women, who consider it a sacred duty to collect, compile and preserve all the information they can obtain concerning the peculiar people, who flourished in the now fast vanishing ages, yet, who have practically disappeared from the fair face of the land the Great Spirit gave them.

A little, narrow green-sward spreads out just along the bank of the stream, back of which rises the beautiful breast of the hill, in emerald loveliness and enchanting splendor before the astonished eyes of the fascinated beholder. Beyond its summit is a great hollow, which has evidently been scooped out, at some remote period, and its contents used in the

construction of the hill, for it is clearly a child of that unknown race, the Mound Builders.

Beginning at the northern extremity of Hanover Hill, and extending northward, is a row of hills and bluffs, which, at this time, overlook a broad, beautiful and highly cultivated valley, but which, at the time of which we write, were inhabited by the Wenonah Indians. To these hills, Soft Wind and his followers, including the renegade white man, went, from the Great Council at Sandusky.

On the side of this large hill, nearest the rising sun, and not far from its base, is the entrance to a cave, which has never been explored, and, concerning which, a mystery has always existed. So deep has been this mystery, that the stoutest-hearted Indian always passed the place after dark with silent tread and bated breath; and no one could be induced to enter it. Since the advent of the pale-faces, they too, have felt a superstitious dread of the place, so much so, that only one man has ever ventured to crawl into

its narrow mouth, but he returned in great haste and has always kept the secret of his discovery. Around the entrance to this cave, is a composition of gravel and stone, so compactly cemented together that not the finest tempered steel pick can break it, and it has been said to even resist the power of dynamite.

Into this cave, Mrs. Lamar, followed by the three-legged dog, crawled one dark night, not many days after the Wenonahs had returned from the Great Council, and, just as she stooped down to enter it, holding in her apron a bunch of fagots, a voice said gently:

"Kape up yer spirits, baby, an ye'll come out all right. The ould mon'll niver lave ye now, me darlint. Jist go in there an' make ye up a fire to warm yerself by an' thin lie down and shlape every hour ye can, aven if ye haf to shtay awake to do it. Good bye, baby, I must go peddlin' among Misther Blow Aisy and his Winnonys, 'cause I tould Anson I'd be along soon enuff, and he'll find out I will, too, but I'll not be lavin' ye long, good

bye," and away he went and was soon busy trading red calico for beaver skins by the light of the fire in the Indian camp.

The woman knew nothing of the superstition of the savages concerning her hiding place, and if she had, she doubtless would have taken up her present abode there anyhow, for it was the only retreat she could find. Something told her the strife was soon to be over, the race was soon to end. She knew not how nor cared but little, as she had almost exhausted her physical powers in her efforts to liberate her loved ones, and her hope of seeing her persecutor punished. She had been guided hither by the Irish peddler and on him she must rely for the present.

* * * * * * *

When Walter Vanway arrived at the villiage of the Oshawnees, he began at once to inquire about the location of the Wenonahs. He found them to be about fifty miles to the northwest, and secretly resolved to reach them if possible. He

had gained the confidence of his captors, by asking to be made an adopted son of the Tribe, which was done.

So skillful was he in his riding, that he was ordered to teach the young men of the Oshawnees the art of horsemanship. One day he told them that, at the setting of the sun, he could start and ride a distance equal to the length of the two rivers which united in the center of their hunting grounds, and he would return when the hoot owl called the hour of midnight. Upon receiving permission to try it, he set out, but instead of returning, he headed straight for the land of the Wenonahs, but lost his way and came so near running into a band of Kiowas out hunting, that he was compelled to hide for a time, in Flat Rock cave.

Shortly after the arrival of the Wenonahs at their own village, Henry Anson held a long consultation with Soft Wind, during which he told the kind-hearted old chief that he had just learned that the Kiowas had captured his wife

and he desired to visit them and endeavor to purchase her. The chief gave his consent, and Anson disappeared, being next seen in the camp of the Kiowas. He was confident that he would find Mrs. Lamar there and decided to purchase her, if possible; failing in this, he would steal her. She was not there. However, he was somewhat relieved when he was told that there was one hunting party out yet and that she might be with them. He waited several days for her arrival but she did not come and he departed for the camp of the Wenonahs.

Soon after Anson's departure for the camp of the Kiowas, the old Wenonah chief was stricken with a malignant fever. The journey had been too long for him, and, despite all his medicine men could do, he continued to grow worse, day by day. In this extremity, he sent for the raven-haired, pale-faced captive, and it happened to be the night that Anson returned from his visit to the Kiowas. As she entered the wigwam, the chief dismissed every one else, and,

when they were alone, requested her to be seated near him. When she had done so, her back was toward the entrance of the wigwam and she did not notice the figure of a woman which glided silently in and squatted upon the ground behind her. The face of the visitor was colored brown, but it was too fine a face for an Indian squaw. A smile lit up the dark countenance, and her whole frame trembled as her eyes drank in the girl before her. The old chief took the maiden's hand in his and said:

"Pale-face maiden, Soft Wind would be glad to make you his wife. Such was his will and pleasure when he saw you at the Great Council, but he felt that he was too old. You are young as the fawn and fair as the sunshine. Soft Wind told Rattlesnake he would not take the maiden. Rattlesnake say, 'she is my daughter. Her mother was captured by some evil ones, and I want her to be the wife of Soft Wind.'

"When the Great Council separated at midnight, Soft Wind went to his wig-

wam. Rattlesnake follow him and say again: 'Soft Wind, take my daughter and marry her and I will give you this gold locket. When Soft Wind weds her, she will wear it to please his heart.' Here it is, pale-faced maiden. Soft Wind can not make you his bride but he gives you the trinket and hopes you may remember him forever."

The darkness increased intensely. The skins that covered the wigwam of the chief were seen to raise, just a little, on one side, and a pair of wicked eyes peered in upon the scene, but only for a moment, then the face drew back unobserved and a smile of satisfaction crept over it.

The chief placed the locket in Laura's hand. She opened it and suddenly started, for, in one side, she beheld the picture of a woman; the same face that Anson had trampled into the ground in the tepee, away back in Pennsylvania. In the other side, was the picture of a man she had never seen or heard of, so far as she knew. Turning the shiny

memento over, she read aloud: "From Frank to Mary. I wonder who they are."

The creature behind her uttered an almost audible groan and stole silently out of the wigwam, then paused and heard the chief say feebly:

"Pale-face maiden, beneath my head lies a necklace made of bear's teeth, which is worth many fathoms of wampum. Place it about my neck. Now press your warm lips to my forehead and call my warriors and braves."

With an inward shudder, she complied with his request, as she secreted the locket in her bosom.

When the warriors and braves had assembled, they formed a circle around the chief while Laura resumed her former position. When this was done, the fire in the wigwam was almost extinguished. The two figures outside had glided in opposite directions while the warriors and braves were assembling. Now, they crept close to the tent, but on opposite sides, and heard, from the lips of the kind hearted old chief of the Wenonahs,

THE LAST WORDS OF SOFT WIND.

"Warriors and Braves, you have assembled in this tepee to hear the parting words of your father. 'Tis well. As the eagle watches over her young and tender brood, so have you watched over the father of your tribe. As your father, I have gathered you about my knee and taught you the lessons of peace. The Wenonahs were ever a peaceful people, and never went to war unless compelled to do so. The wind never blew softer than when it whispered words of love into the ears of the Wenonahs. The sun never shone brighter than when it pressed a warm kiss upon the dark cheek of the Wenonahs. This dear, old river never sang a sweeter song than the song of peace, love and justice that it sings as it flows beside the village of the Wenonahs.

"When I was a babe, I was weak and rested in my mother's arms. When I grew to be a man, I was strong. I was the swiftest in the race, the surest in the test of skill in the use of the bow and the rifle, the foremost in the chase and the

strongest in battle. Then it was, that the Great Spirit made me to be the father of my children. Then was Soft Wind as powerful as the old river when it reaches from foot-hill to foot-hill, across the broad bosom of the valley. Not more strong than he was the big wind that sweeps away the forests when the evil spirit of some pale-face troubles it. My children, always open the door of your tepee to the good pale-face but turn your back upon his evil brother and cast him from your camp.

"As tender as the warm kiss of the sun or the soft smile of the moon, is Soft Wind among his children. They love him because he is their father and he loves them because they are his children.

"The Great Spirit is good. He has stocked our forests with the choicest game. He has filled our streams with the finest fish. He has made our fields of maize to groan beneath their burdens, so that the Red Man, with his wife and little ones, might pass the winter without cold or hunger.

"The Great Spirit is powerful. He speaks and his voice is heard in the sound of the deafening thunder, the roar of the mighty cataract and the beating of the angry waves of the sea against the stubborn rocks, and his eyes sparkle in the flash of the lightning.

"The Great Spirit is lovely. His voice is heard in the sweet and solemn songs that are sung over the graves of of those we love, when the night-winds move softly and silently through the village of the departed. He gently reproves our wrong doing in the words of our beloved prophet, and his voice is sweetest when we hear it in the innocent prattle of our little ones.

"The Great Spirit is wise. He makes the rose to blush crimson in the tangled foliage of the forest and, from her scented lips, the honey bee gathers the delicious sweets, which he stores away in some tall poplar against the blasts of icy winter, which the instinct given him by the Great Spirit, teaches him must surely come. Yet the blooming

rose fades and withers away and the honey bee dies and is forgotten.

"The grass puts forth its tender shoots, when the winter is over and gone. Nourished by the warm spring-time showers which quench the thirst of its parched roots, it grows higher and higher, until it has reached the stage of complete development, when the moistening sap returns to the earth or is wafted away on the morning breeze, and the grass lies dead upon the cold bosom of its mother.

"The rush and the daisy, the reed and the violet, the strong, sturdy oak, undisputed monarch of the boundless forest and the tender, trailing honeysuckle, all obey the same law, enacted and executed by an all-powerful, yet unseen hand.

"The sun comes forth in the smile of the morning and is lost in the frown of the night. The dew-drops sparkle for a moment, then vanish away. The corn shoots up in the dawn of the spring-time and withers in the evening twilight

of the winter. The flowers blush under the kiss of the blue sky in the summer and fade 'neath the angry blasts of the winter. So is it with the children of the Great Spirit. They come from the land of the Mystery Man, and they go where the Great Spirit directs their footsteps.

"My children, listen to the prophecy of your father. Beside me sits a pale-faced maiden, the fairest of her race. She is innocent, pure and good, and is, within herself, a helpless, harmless creature, but the prophecy of Soft Wind is that the time will come when the forests which now know the Red Man, will know him no more forever, for they will be occupied by the pale-face nation.

"Many, many Great Suns ago, the foot of the first pale-face trod the land of the children of the forest. Like the bees that leave their hives in the tall sycamore, when their number has grown so great that they no longer have room to live as they desire, the pale-faces left the land they had always known. Their canoes dotted the troubled bosom of the great

waters of the east, as the wild ducks dot the lakes in the forest.

"From the land of the rising sun, they swarmed into our forests like ants, seeking new worlds to conquer. They brought with them their speaking books, with whose mysterious tongues they are able to speak to their brothers a thousand leagues away; and, it is by the aid of these speaking books that they will sometime rule all the worlds in the universe of the Great Spirit. Such are my truthful words. They have gone from me and shall not return. May the Red Man and the pale-face be friends.

"My children, the days of Soft Wind, chief of the Wenonahs, are numbered. The Great Sun of his life is rapidly sinking behind yon forest fringe, which hides from his dimming eyes, the happy hunting grounds where he so much longs to be. Upon his ear, the song of the woodbird and the cry of the panther fall unheeded. The broad, blue river will sing its sweetest songs to the children of the forest just the same, when the spirit of

Soft Wind has flown away, but he will not hear them. The meek-eyed moon will go on in her way through the Great Suns of the future, just the same as in the past, but her smiles will no longer cheer the heart of the chief of the Wenonahs.

"The mightiest oak in the forest is falling. Its leaves, blasted by the icy chill of death, are floating away, slowly, slowly, on the silently sweeping winds, to the bosom of mother earth. The fountain spring of his youth has run dry and the stream of his life is fading away.

"My last battle is fought and my last chase is ended. I must leave you and go to my fathers. Keep uppermost in the hearts of the Wenonahs, the eternal principles of Freedom, Friendship and Charity, that you have learned at my knee. Bury me on the crest of the Great Hill with my face toward the rising sun. May the Great Spirit bless and comfort you. My children, I have done." The chief of the Wenonahs was dead.

At that moment, the woman outside disappeared among the bushes, but not

quickly enough to evade the searching eyes of Henry Anson, for it was he who had also witnessed the death of the chief.

"Ah, ha, my lady," said he, "my prophecy is being fulfilled. The doe has followed the fawn and will soon find herself in my trap. I'll just see where you lodge to-night."

He followed her until she entered the cave, then said to himself:

"Very well; I could not wish for you to have chosen a better hiding place. I will leave you alone until that greasy, old Indian is buried, then I'll come and invite you to my wedding."

The next day, the body of the old chief was buried on the summit of Hanover Hill with great pomp and ceremony. A few years ago, a party of road makers, while hauling gravel from the hill, unearthed the skeleton of the old chief. The neck was encircled by the necklace of bear's teeth, which is now in the possession of a friend of the author.

* * * * * *

Slippery Eel was installed as the

successor of Soft Wind, amid shouts of joy. Anson at once held a long private conference with him and seemed satisfied with the result.

It was high noon when the festivities, incident to the installation of the new chief into office, were concluded. While Anson and Slippery Eel were conferring in the latter's tent, a white man crept cautiously through the bushes on the opposite side of the river, and when he reached the edge of the thicket, he lay flat upon the ground and stealthily surveyed the surroundings, then said to himself:

"And this is the land of the Wenonahs. Over there, just a little way from that big hill, is the wigwam of the chief, and beside it a smaller one, which, I imagine, holds all that is dearest on earth to me. Gods! How I wish I were a thousand men; but I am only one, and, it may be, a foolhardy one, yet I am determined to set that girl free if it costs me my life. I wonder if I could find a hiding place over there." His eyes ran

along the scene beyond, then he said suddenly: "Ah, there is a cave in that hill, I think, and when night comes on, I'll swim across and go into it. It may be full of red devils, but they have a superstitious dread of dark caverns which may be to my profit in this instance.

"Well, now, look at that western sky away out yonder. It has a most peculiar appearance. I never saw anything like it before. I wonder if western skies have that appearance often."

The day wore gradually away and the haze in the sky deepened as night drew near. At twilight, it began to rain just a little, then it ceased and a heavy, murky atmosphere, so stifling as to almost take one's breath, settled upon the earth. The dogs in the Indian village went skulking here and there, whining and yelling in the most abject terror. The horses tugged at their rawhide tethers in their efforts to break loose. A stalwart warrior rushed up to Murphy and said:

"What make it?"

"Begorry, they's a divil in the camp, an Avil Spirit."

"What it like?"

"It is more loike the divil hisself nor anny thing I know. It is a painted pale-face."

"It Rattlesnake?" asked the other.

"That's the chap, me hearty."

"Then me take his scalp."

"Do it, me buck, an' ye'll git as big as a mountain an' I'll give ye a whole yard of red calliky."

"Ugh! Me go now."

"Go on, go on, me lad."

He started away in a run, but an unlucky gust of wind blew a limb from a tree and it struck him on the head and killed him.

Darkness came on and it was absolutely impenetrable. By and by, there came from the southwest a sound which at first appeared to be the rustle of the wind among the leaves of the trees and bushes. The noise grew louder and more distinct. A huge, black cloud, shaped like a funnel, and seeming to extend from earth to heaven, appeared. The whole village was in a state of the wildest excitement.

There was not a clap of thunder to be heard nor a flash of lightning to be seen, yet it was clear that some dreadful calamity was impending.

Just then, a figure stole from one of the tepees. It was Henry Anson. He passed the wigwam of the chief. Beside it, and nearer the water, was the tepee where Laura and her father were confined. As he neared the latter, he saw the faintest outline of a woman dart away from it and run toward the stream. He recognized her at once.

She hurried to the cave and entered. Hark! What was that? Nothing, perhaps, although it sounded like the faint tinkle of a piece of steel striking a stone. With a quick step Anson followed her to the entrance of the cavern, as he reasoned she would go there. He crouched low and listened. He gazed into the darkness but all to no purpose. He placed his ear to the ground and heard only the deafening roar of the hurricane. He listened intently for any sound in the cave but none came. Crouching low, he

crawled into it just as a stout figure, armed with a heavy club crept along the side of the hill and concealed himself among the bushes.

All was darkness within. Anson was reasonably certain that Mrs. Lamar had preceded him, but he dreaded the possibility of her being concealed in some convenient corner where she could easily deal him a death blow. He was just getting ready to retreat, when the dog set up a loud barking.

"Why, Brindle, what is the matter now?" said Mrs. Lamar uneasily. She stirred the embers that lay on the ground into a blaze, and when she looked up, she again faced her persecutor.

He crept a little farther into the cave, then dropped to the ground. Just as he did so, another man cautiously drew near from the river, feeling his way with the greatest care. It was Walter Vanway. He groped toward the entrance of the dark cavern, and, placing his hand upon the ground, he touched something cold that startled him. A moment later, he

grasped a thin, narrow blade. It was the dagger Mrs. Lamar had carried with her all these eventful months. It had been her sole reliance in her determination to destroy her own life, rather than become the captive of Anson, and now, she was in his presence, totally unarmed.

Hearing human voices within, Walter mentally exclaimed:

"Just as I expected. I have reached my journey's end, only to find myself in the very midst of a horde of blood-thirsty savages, and what is far worse, in the clutches of that villain Anson." The hurricane grew louder and louder. The trees, limbs, and twigs began to crack and fall before the wind, like so many straws. Giant oaks, monster poplars, strong walnut, and other trees, were uprooted faster than one could count them. Flying limbs fell everywhere and devastation was spread about in the wildest confusion in the track of the storm. A horse was carried across the river. A squaw was pinned to the earth by a falling limb. An Indian babe was blown

into the top of a tree and two dogs were hurled into a hollow log. Such a cyclone was never seen in that locality before nor since and even to this day, the route of that terrible hurricane is pointed out by the local dweller as "The Windfall."

Walter crowded himself a little way into the aperture and listened. Instantly, he recognized the voice of Mrs. Lamar and a moment later, he knew that Anson was there also, for he heard him say to her:

"Ah! My charmer, and so we meet again."

"Not by my choosing," she replied.

"Quite true, quite true, and yet, I dare say you do not object to my presence."

"Most certainly I do."

"Come, come, where's the use of being so obstinate? While the storm rages without I see no hindrance to our making love within, I hope. Call that dog back, or I'll stick this knife into him."

"Oh, I see you are well armed again."

"Indeed I am and I shall not make such a fool of myself as I did the last

time I met you. I have tracked you to your final hiding place."

"How did you know I was here?"

"I followed you from the wigwam of Soft Wind last night."

"Then you know all that happened there?"

"I do."

"You saw him give Laura the locket containing the pictures."

"I did."

"What are you going to do with my husband?"

"Your husband! Bah! You have no husband."

"What, have you killed John Lamar?"

"No," he replied cooly, "I have not killed him but I intend to do so."

"And what about the girl?"

"Well, that depends."

"Upon what?"

"Upon how you treat me."

"What do you propose?"

"I propose to marry you and that we live here in the west, the happy lives of honest pioneers."

"But that can not be."

"It must be. It shall be."

"It shall not be."

"By heavens, it shall be. Hear me once for all. I hold your daughter a captive. She is the idol of your life. Marry me and she—"

"I will *never* marry you."

"You *shall* marry me. I will take you now or leave you here dead. Draw your dagger and slay yourself if you like but not a second time shall you escape me."

He sprang toward her like a demon. She thrust her hand into her bosom, as she had done at the old capstone, but no friendly dagger met it. She had dropped it at the entrance of the cave as she came in. The blanched look on her face told Anson, plainer than words, that she was now in reality at his mercy. Raising her hand before him, she said softly:

"Wait a minute."

"Well, what have you to say."

"But little."

"Are you willing to go with me?"

"Not yet."

"You propose to parley a while

longer, do you? Let me tell you something. You are at my mercy. I can station Indian guards at the entrance of this place *and starve you to death.*"

"You have done worse."

"It matters not. I can do this, but I shall not. Here is what I *will* do. I will leave you now. At that opening in the hill, I will signal my guards. They will keep you here the remainder of the night. To-morrow morning at ten o'clock, I will send for your answer. If it be yes, well and good; if it be no, *I will burn John Lamar and your daughter at the stake before your eyes.*"

"Burn *my* daughter at the stake?" she walked directly up to him as she said this and a strange light came into her eyes which Anson did not understand.

"Yes, burn your daughter at the stake," he said, fiercely.

Her eyes were now ablaze and she answered:

"No, you will *not* burn *my* daughter at the stake."

"But I say I will."

"But I say you will not."

"And why not?"

"*Because I have no daughter.*"

"What's that?" said he, staggering backward.

"You heard what I said."

"Do you mean to tell me that the girl, Laura, is not your daughter?" he asked in desperation, as a vision of the interview with her the first night after the capture, came before him.

"She is *not my* daughter."

"Then who is she?"

"*She is the girl you stole from your sister Mary and sold to the Hurons for a thousand beaver skins,*" she almost screamed.

"My God! woman, is that true?"

"*As true as the gospel, and if you doubt my word, go to the girl, and, upon the back of her right shoulder, you will find a red spot, made by a hot arrow-head in the hands of Eagle Eye, when she was a captive of the Hurons.*"

He threw up his hands and fell to the earth insensible. Instantly, Mrs. Lamar

drew from her bosom the curl she had clipped from Laura's head and placed it in his hand, when his fingers closed tightly about it. The recovery was as sudden as the seizure and he rose to a sitting posture, then saw the curl. Raising it to his lips, he kissed it tenderly, stroked it gently for a little while, meditated a moment, then sprang to his feet and said:

"What have I done? Just to-day, I promised to give her to Slippery Eel for his wife if he would help me capture you, and all the demons in the bottomless pit could not persuade him to release her. She is my own flesh and blood. How can I rescue her?"

"Perhaps you can steal the gold locket from her and exchange it for her as you stole it from her mother and bribed Soft Wind with it," said Mrs. Lamar with the bitterest sarcasm.

"Woman, I believe you lie. I believe that girl is your child."

"No, she is your sister's child."

"How did *you* get her?"

"The Hurons sold her to honest Pat Murphy for a bolt of red calico, because they said she was grieving herself to death for her mother. Murphy brought her to me, thus preventing another murder being charged against you," said she.

"That deceitful Irishman is in the camp now, and he shall die."

"More than that," she went on, "he guided me to this place. The girl told him at Sandusky where she was going and I have camped on your trail ever since."

"So you and the girl and the Irishman have been in a conspiracy against me?"

"So we have."

At this, he became as furious as a tiger and said fiercely:

"For which she shall become the wife of the Indian chief, no matter who she is, and you shall become my wife. In due time, I shall send for you. Good night," and he turned away.

Her heart sank within her as he passed out, but her fears were ground-

less, for, just as he emerged from the opening in the side of the hill, Walter Vanway plunged the dagger into his heart and he fell dead without a groan.

A hand was placed upon the young man's shoulder and he drew back the knife to strike again, but a friendly voice said:

"Well done, me boy, well done. I seen the bloody divil shnakin' down this way whin it was darker nor a shtack av black cats, an' I got me a shelalah an' wint afther 'im. Whin I got here, I saw yer hind legs a shtickin' out av the hole an' I thought it was Anson an' I was jist about to begin a batin' them, but all at onct ye begun a crawlin' back'ards an' I said, 'the bloody divil is comin' out like a crawfish,' but whin ye got out, ye was too little, aven in the dark, fur Anson an' I waited half a minute an' he come, thin ye fixed 'im. Good boy, good boy. Cart 'im away an' throw 'im in the river, an' I'll be goin' in an see if he kilt me darlint." He crawled in, muttering: "A knife's all right in the hands av some paaple, but whin ye want me to do a job

up brown, jist give me a good shelalah, anny time."

Through the darkness, Walter carried the body and threw it into the river and it floated away. He hurried back to the cave and found that Murphy had told the woman what had happened. When she saw Laura's lover and heard the welcome intelligence, she clasped her hands together, then raised her eyes to heaven and said:

"Thank God! I have camped on his trail till death." She was almost overcome, but soon recovered and said: "We must rescue the others at once."

"But where are they?" asked Walter.

"Follow in the footsteps av yer pree-deesesser," said Murphy, going ahead.

They crept out of the cave and found that the storm was over. "The Windfall" had disappeared quickly, as is the habit of such storms in that latitude, but the havoc they work is terrible, as the author can testify from having been in the track of a milder cyclone that passed over the same hill.

With difficulty, the party reached the top of the hill just as the clouds rolled by and the full moon came out. They looked to the north and a sight presented itself that froze their blood. Not a living being was to be seen and the entire village of the Wenonahs seemed to be swept from the face of the earth. Another cloud now obscured the moon and with all possible speed, they hurried to where the tepee stood that contained the captives. It was gone. The soul of the woman sank in despair and she was just about to abandon the search when a faint groan was heard which they all recognized as coming from her husband. She hurried to him and whispered, hoarsely:

"John, John, come, we must escape."

"No use to try. Whatever is to be will—"

"John, it is your wife speaking to you."

This seemed to rouse him into life and he clasped her in his arms.

"John, where is Laura, tell me quick?"

"Over there's the tepee, blown almost into the creek."

With a bound, Walter reached the spot, and, pulling aside the skins which formed the covering of the tepee, he found his sweetheart, all silent and unconscious.

He clasped her to his bosom and hurried back to the cave, followed by the others, Pat and Mrs. Lamar supporting the still half stupefied old man, and a happy reunion then took place.

By and by, the clouds all vanished and the moon shone brightly. Walter crept silently back to the camp of the Wenonahs. Caution was unnecessary for the village was one mass of ruins and entirely deserted. Driven from their chosen hunting grounds by the evil spirit that always followed the painted pale-face, Rattlesnake, they wandered in the wilderness for many, many Great Suns and finally pitched their tents to the north-west and not far from the classic, old stream of Brandywine, in the state of Indiana, where they live and flourish to this day.

Walter and Murphy now secured the weapons, ammunition and canoes that the

Wenonahs had abandoned, then made their way down Blue River and White River to the Wabash. They then went up that stream until they reached the old fort at Vincennes, where they found themselves safe from further harm, the Peankishaws, having made peace with the whites.

Walter and Laura were happily married by the chaplain of the fort. The strain on poor, old John Lamar had been too great and, in about six months, he died, surrounded by his family and friends.

The remainder of the party then returned to the grand, old Keystone state, and when they had become comfortably settled, Mrs. Lamar told Laura the story of their lives, but she never disclosed to the young wife, the relationship existing between her and Henry Anson.

THE END.

SOMEBODY.

Somebody's cheeks are burning
With the fire of a feverish heat,
Somebody's lips are yearning
For the kiss of an angel, sweet.
Somebody can be the good angel,
That comforts the sorrowing soul,
Some one can breathe just a whisper,
That will make a poor sufferer whole.

Somebody's brow is throbbing,
Somebody's hand is cold,
Somebody's heart is aching,
Somebody is growing old.
Somebody's voice is feeble,
Somebody's steps are slow.
Somebody's eyes are dimming,
For the lights are burning low.

I know a nice little somebody,
That climbs upon somebody's knee,
And lovingly says to somebody!
"Have you dot any tisses for me?"
Some little body is longing,
The sunlight of heaven to see,
And some little body is waiting,
For a smile of affection from me.

Somebody, I know of, is happy,
For somebody came, one day,
And placed in her thin hand a paper,
That drove the old mortgage away.
Somebody smiles, when she kisses
Her own little darlings, three,
And somebody blesses somebody,
Are those blessings for you and me?

Somebody else is sitting
In a cottage by a stream;
Watching the flight of the shadows,
And the dawn of the morning's gleam.
In that cottage are four little orphans,
Surrounding a poor widow's knee,
And their sad, hungry eyes are imploring
A brotherly kindness from me.

Somebody else should be happy,
Somebody else should be true,
Bask in the sunshine of plenty,
Even as me and you.
Some one is earnestly trusting
That some one is willing to be
A friend in the midnight of sorrow,
That friend should be you or me.

THE ROVING REDRANGERS

OR

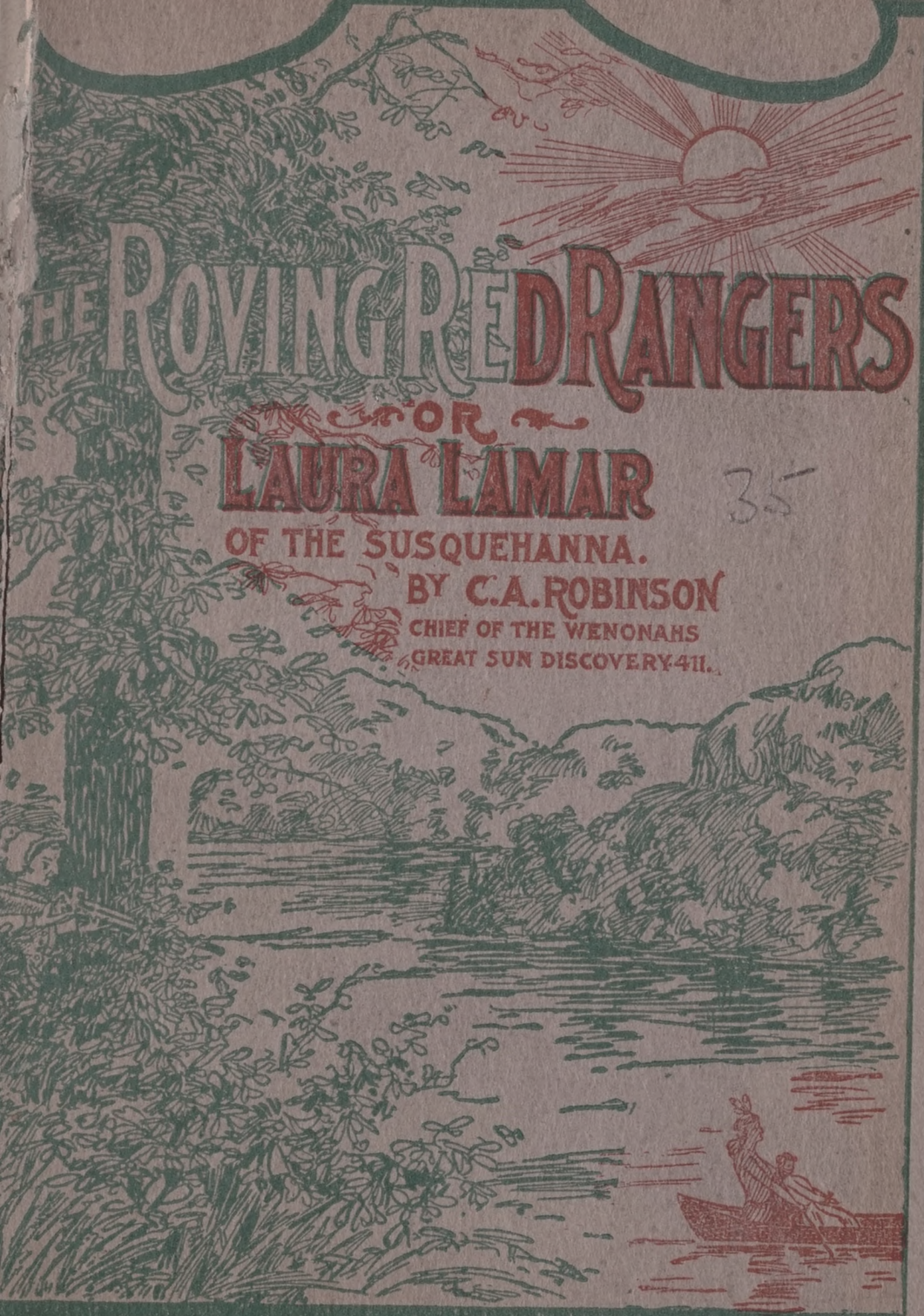
LAURA LAMAR

OF THE SUSQUEHANNA.

BY C. A. ROBINSON

CHIEF OF THE WENONAHS

GREAT SUN DISCOVERY 411.



Dramatized by C. H. ROSSKAM and Presented with Universal Success

THE ROVING RED RANGERS, OR LAURA LAMAR, OF THE SUSQUEHANNA.

A THRILLING ROMANCE OF THE OLD COLONIAL DAYS.

BY C. A. ROBINSON,
CHIEF OF THE WENONAHS,
G. S. D. 411.

PUBLISHED BY
THE AUTHOR,
GREENFIELD, IND.

Price, 25 Cents, Postpaid.

SEE PAGE 32.