

FEARFUL ADVENTURES
IN PENNSYLVANIA'S WILDS;
OR, THE
STARTLING NARRATIVE
OF
ADELAIDE LANE.



Just then I saw a large panther crouched beneath some bushes close by he was just going to spring. "See there!" I cried, just as he sprang upon me. In an instant his claws were fastened in my shoulders, and his teeth buried in my arm.

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"I am going to have you die, and put you in this coffin!" and opening a door by my side, he set a new, cherry-colored coffin at my feet!
Overcome by horror, I closed my eyes to shut out the dreadful scene, and found that I could not open them.

STARTLING
AND
FEARFUL ADVENTURES
OF
ADELAIDE LANE.

I AM the only child of Earl Elwood ; he was a stern looking man, and every one seemed to stand in fear of him : but my father could not have been more kind to a child than he was to me, until I reached my seventeenth year ; at this time I was a wild and rather romantic girl, a little proud, I fear, for my mirror told me that I was very beautiful.

Among the many visitors at our mansion was William Lane, a young man of talents, though far beneath us in rank and wealth, for whom I had acquired an ardent attachment which was as warmly returned. We were aware that my father would disapprove of our love, but who can command the affections of the heart ? We met often and were engaged to be married. My father soon discovered this and in wrath turned William from his door—threatening to disinherit me unless I left his company for ever. But true love is not banished by harshness ; that evening we met again, and a week from that time were privately married, at the house of a mutual friend. It was rather a lonely wedding for the daughter of an English nobleman, but I was united to the man of my heart—I was happy.

Great was the rage of my father when he heard of this. William, on some pretence, was thrown into prison, and I was not allowed to leave the house for many weeks. At length my father told me that my marriage with William, as I was not yet of age, was unlawful, and if I would forsake him he would get him released from prison. This, finally, I consented to do, still resolved in my heart it should not

be forever—that the hearts and hands we had joined should not long be divided.

One day my father entered my room with a smiling face, and taking a seat said, "My dear child, you well know it has ever been the wish of my heart to remove to America; all things are now favorable and within one month we leave England for a new home among the wild scenery and lofty trees of Pennsylvania."

When he was gone I wrote a line and dispatched it to William by a servant, and at midnight I met my husband again but to part; "Go, my own dear wife," said he at length. "I will soon follow you, and may God preserve you from danger by sea or land until we meet again."

The next morning I accompanied my father and mother on board a steamship, bound for New York, and soon the land that held him so dear to me was fast receding from sight.

We had been two days at sea when my dear mother was taken sick, and the seventh day after I saw her laid to sleep under the deep, dark waves. I trust her gentle spirit is in a brighter world, and our loss is her gain. After a long and unpleasant voyage we at length reached New York, and soon after Harrisburg, which was the place selected by my father for a residence.

Here I found myself placed in a handsome mansion, with every luxury that wealth could procure. Six months passed away. I had written several letters to England, but had not heard a word from William. About this time my father married a wealthy Catholic lady. Madam Eunice Landau was a widow whose gentleness and kindness of heart amply made up for her rather plain looks. Her only son, a young man preparing for the priesthood, came often to our mansion—sometimes accompanied by a priest named Paul Searl, who was my stepmother's confessor. I had been brought up a firm Protestant and did not like Catholics; therefore, though I treated them with respect, I was always very reserved in their presence. One day I was sitting alone in my father's parlour, reading, when I heard the door cautiously opened, and looking up the confessor stood before me. He was a tall, dark complexioned man, perhaps thirty-five years of age, and might have been handsome but for a nose which had been broken, and which, with a large mouth, gave his countenance a repulsive look. He was dressed in a suit of black, with highly-polished boots; and as he stood there, I saw that his large black eyes were fixed on my face with a glistening gaze I could not comprehend. I offered him a seat, which he refused, and seating himself on the sofa by my

side passed his arm familiarly around my waist. I started as if stung by an adder, and would have left the room, but was forcibly detained by him reseating himself and holding me, despite my struggles, to his hateful bosom.

He said: "Dear Adelaide, perhaps you did not know that I loved you—that I have even loved you since I first saw you; I have tried hard to banish you from my heart, but cannot—you must be mine."

"Release me wretch!" I cried.

"I will not, cannot, you must hear me; I will leave the priesthood, be anything, do anything you wish—without you I will not live."

"Then without me you will die," I said, and then it occurred to me to ring a small bell that chanced to stand near me.

"Mine in life or death you shall be," said he, releasing me as a servant entered the room.

"Bring lights!" I said, for it was getting quite dark, and hurried to my room. Paul Searl came no more, indeed I heard that he was dead, and inwardly rejoiced, for I both hated and feared him. One evening as I stood upon the portico before the house, watching the sun, as he sank to rest behind the forest trees, a female approached, and coming close to my side, said in a low voice:

"William Lane is at my house, and wishes to see you."

"And where do you live?" I asked.

"Not far from here, follow me."

Unsuspecting of evil I ran for my shawl and bonnet, and with her left the house, alas, never to return! We passed through one street, and went about half a mile from the city, when my guide stopped at the door of a vine-clad cottage, and knocking entered. The entry was quite dark, and as I followed her into a room, equally dark, a vague fear came over me; striking a match she lit a small lamp, saying "He has gone out, but you are weary, take a seat and a glass of wine, he will soon return." As she spoke she poured out a glass of wine from a decanter on a table; I drank a little, and set it down on the table.

"As he is not here I will go home," I said rising.

"You will not," said a voice behind me, and my arms were instantly bound down to my sides by Paul Searl the confessor! he had been concealed behind a curtain. I tried to scream for help, but a bandage was tightly drawn over my mouth.

"A little more condescension would have saved you this," he remarked. "Now," said he, addressing the woman who all this time had stood looking on with fear plainly depicted in her face, "you may go—here is your pay." and he gave her a handful of gold. "Mind,"

he added, "you say nothing of this!" and as she went out he locked the door, removing the key. You may imagine my horror and despair on finding myself in the power of this monster in human form. In vain I tried to release my hands or even to make a loud noise, while his wretch stood smiling with a calmness Satan might have envied, at my efforts to get free from my bonds.

"Be peaceable, my love," he said at length, "and I will tell you all about it; you see, Ada, we are going to take a long ride, and as I fear I might lose you, I am going to have you die and put you in this coffin!" and opening a door by my side, he set a new cherry-colored coffin into the room at my feet! "You see, Miss Elwood, it was your dying wish to be buried with your friends in McKean County; I have undertaken to fulfil your wish, and the heat of the weather (it was June) will excuse my driving by night, and stopping in some cool place by day!" Overcome by horror, I closed my eyes to shut out the dreadful scene, and found that I could not open them; my breath seemed leaving my body—the awful remembrance of that moment will never leave my mind till death. The wine I drank was mixed with some fearful drug, which, though it did not render me insensible, benumbed my whole body beyond the power of action. I could hear all that passed, but could not move or open my eyes. Taking me in his arms he laid me rudely in the coffin, saying with a low laugh:

"You are dead enough now, and a few drops of that wine poured in your mouth now and then, will keep you so." How long I remained in this awful situation I do not know. Many days, over rough roads, I was conscious of being borne along. Real death can be nothing to the anguish I suffered, both mentally and bodily, in my narrow prison. Oh! how I longed for death to release my soul from this dreadful nightmare.

At length the coffin was taken out of the cart and carried by men—. I could not guess whither; I could hear them talk, and sometimes distinguish Paul Searl's voice. Oh! how I hated the sound of that voice; and then the thought of a fearful revenge arose in my heart; yes, I resolved that he should die, if it was ever in my power. After a long time I was taken out from the coffin, and laid on what seemed to be a bed, and something poured in my mouth. I opened my eyes, and found myself in a small room formed of rocks, surrounded by men with fierce-looking countenances; two women were bathing my face, and hands, and Paul Searl stood near, laughing and talking in high spirits with a person of such frightful appearance, that as I looked on his face, I involuntarily shuddered! and the cold chills crept over my

flesh; he was a short thick-set man not more than thirty years of age. His full red face was surrounded by long dark hair, which parting on his forehead, descended to his shoulders—a long, hooked nose, and a broad forehead, beneath which burned two of the largest and blackest eyes I ever saw; he turned them toward me, and the light that flashed from them was truly demoniac! I turned my head away in horror, and tried to arise; I was very weak, but assisted by the women I sat up in the bed. It was a small apartment formed by nature in the rocks; the floor of stone had been levelled and a rich carpet put down, cushioned seats were around the room, and on one side a long row of bright knives, daggers and dirks were stuck in a narrow frame attached to the wall; many rifles were standing in corners, and each man had a brace of pistols in his belt.

“And how do you like your new home?” said Paul Searl advancing to the bedside. I did not reply. “Come!” he said, “you must get up,” and lifting me in his arms, bore me through this room into another, larger apartment and seated me in an arm-chair before a blazing fire.

“Where am I?” I asked. “With your friends in McKean County,” he replied with a laugh that seemed to shake the roof of stone!

“Release me!” I said, “from this horrid place and I will bless you forever.”

Taking a seat close by my side he whispered, “You scorned me once; I have you now in my power; from this place you will never go; in life or in death you are now mine; I have risked all, even my hope of heaven for you, and shall I resign you now that I have you safe? No, your fate is sealed. But, Adelaide, I hope you will learn to love me yet. It will be far better for you than to live with one you hate,” and he fixed his dark, penetrating eyes on my countenance, as if to read my inmost thoughts. I turned away with a look of scorn and replied:

“Impossible! I love one man, my husband, and cannot love another—much less you, who have treated me with such insult and abuse.”

“It was love for you, strong undying love, that has caused me to do as I have; you may forgive me or not, mourn away if you will, and make yourself miserable, but remember my bright bird, you are now fast in my cage,” and he left the room singing happily. My heart died within me at his words, “from this place you will never go!” But still the angel Hope would not forsake me. The day passed slowly by; night came, and with it came seven or eight more men. They seemed to regard me rather suspiciously. But the man I de-

cribed when I first opened my eyes in the cave, and whom I now found to be the king or chief of the robbers, said something in a low voice which immediately quieted their apprehensions; but the few words that I caught were anything but consoling to me—"Some fancy of the priest's—not be here long," and he drew his finger across his neck with a significant gesture!

A small furnace was now produced, and some curious looking instruments, from some dark corner, and soon the jingle of money told me that I was among a band of counterfeiters; this was at length removed, and supper announced. Paul Searl came and led me through a long rocky gallery into another apartment where the robbers, having preceded us, were seated at a large table eating. Leading me to another table, where the women sat, he went and sat down with the men, but in such a position as to watch my every movement. Did he fear I would attempt suicide? If so he was mistaken, for I still had hopes of life and liberty—though they were faint and distant. I could not eat, though the food was rich and good; after what I had gone through this will not cause surprise. After supper, cards and liquors of various kinds were brought on, and drinking, gambling and quarreling began, and before midnight many were asleep. I myself was drowsy, and soon fell into a sound sleep. As day dawned I awoke; the lights had gone out, and all was darkness except an occasional ray of light that stole through some crevice in the rocks. All was silent save the breathing of the men, as stretched on the hard floor they slept soundly; something gleaming on the floor caught my attention, it was a small dagger! I seized it and hiding it in my dress arose from my seat, and feeling my way, soon found the passage to the other part of the cave, whence I hoped to escape. After a long search around the room, I at length found another passage that seemed to terminate in the light of day; along this I hurried, but found to my despair, that it was only another part of the cave; seated on either side of the table, I beheld Paul Searl and the chief of the band. They were in a high dispute, and as I turned to flee I heard my name pronounced! Just then Paul arose, and throwing his chair to the other side of the room, came toward the passage. I retreated with speed, but hearing my footsteps, he quickened his pace. On, on I fled; his hand was on my shoulder—my hand was on the hilt of my dagger!

"I knew your footstep, love," he said, "why do you flee from me?" and he seated himself on a low couch and held me to his heart. "My dearest Adelaide," he said,—"*yes mine—mine in life or death—mine forever,*" and his warm breath was on my cheek. They were the last

words he ever uttered, for even as he spoke the blade of my dagger entered his heart! The last word was followed by a groan—he fell from the couch to the floor; bearing me with him still locked in his arms—just as the chief entered the room with a light, on his way to awaken the sleepers. He gave a shrill whistle which rang through the cavern, sending back echoes from all sides, and I was quickly surrounded by half-awakened robbers, armed in haste with whatever came to hand.

“Take her to the cell,” said the chief, “to-night we will dispose of her,” and his large eyes flashed with excitement. They obeyed and I was let down by ropes into a deep, dark place, many feet deep, and so dark. Seated on the damp, cold earth alone, the scenes of my life passing before my mind, I spent many bitter hours; and William, where is he? Oh! if he knew my peril, he would save me, if it was in human power. To-night I thought I must die. I bid adieu to all of life and freedom, and silently committing my soul to my Maker I awaited my fate with as much composure as possible. Night came and I was drawn up and taken to the largest apartment, where the chief sat upon a raised seat dressed in savage splendor. A row of robbers stood on each side; near him sat the two women, before him in a rude coffin lay the corpse of Paul Searl. They led me forward to the foot of the coffin and I stood alone, beneath the flashing eyes of the robber-chief; and now I saw that each man held his rifle by his side.

“You killed this man,” said the chief: “he was a member of our band; you must prepare to die! Kneel.” I did not move, but fixed my eyes on the face of the chief; fear and horror had well-nigh deprived me of reason; I scarcely heard the next order, “present rifles,” but I plainly saw that each man’s rifle was raised to his face. Still I did not quail, but stood anxiously awaiting the word ‘fire,’ which, I knew would end my misery, when a deep voice said: “Will you join this band, or die?” I was still silent—overcome by contending emotions. I could not reply, much as I wished to be free; I feared to die. Again the voice, and this time in tones which shook the rocky vaults: “Will you join the band of far-famed Burdick?” When roused from my stupor, I bowed my assent. The guns were lowered, and music rang through the rocky arches; a ring was formed around me; music and dancing continued for some minutes. Then the chief said in the same deep tone, “Come forward and take the oath!” I obeyed, and kneeling by the corpse of the wretch I had slain, repeated after the chief a fearful oath, to be true to the order and every member on pain of death. My lips pronounced the words, but not my heart.

"And now," he said, "you will remain thirty days in this cave, after which you are free to go and come at your pleasure." The night was spent in carousal. In the morning, a watch being left at the cave, the men dispersed in various directions.

I soon became quite familiar with the two women, and they told me their histories. The eldest had been in the band, with her husband, ever since its was organized. The youngest, Marietta, was a fair young creature scarcely twenty years of age—but hers was a sad history—I will give you a sketch of it. She was betrothed to a young gentleman of wealthy pretensions, living near Brookville. For reasons which will become apparent, I shall withhold his name, and call him Davis: it was here Marietta's father resided. By some misfortune Davis lost his property, and soon after left the vicinity, occasionally returning to see Marietta. One day he came telling her he had prepared a home; and claiming his bride, they were married and he brought her here. Poor Marietta, she was well-nigh broken-hearted when she arrived and found what a fearful gloomy fate was hers; still, so strange a thing is the human heart, she loved her young husband though he had so cruelly deceived her; and it was this love that kept her from despair through scenes of violence and blood, for many months. And so time passed on with Marietta, in grief and sorrow with her husband—in drinking and robbery—and now, when in liquor, he would brutally abuse his gentle and too-confiding wife, whose love for him was fast giving way to fear and hatred. But now Marietta was a mother; a sweet little boy was now her only care and hope: if she could only escape with her child.

Ere long the news she had long expected came. Davis was taken for horse-stealing, tried and sent to the penitentiary for five years. She could not grieve for this, for she had brought it on herself knowingly, but she did grieve for her blighted hopes and for her worse than fatherless child.

The police, once on the track of the robbers, seemed determined to ferret them out. The woods are full of strangers was the report every night, of the spies. The chief sent out with the utmost caution during the day. One day several strange men were seen in the vicinity of the cave. Orders were given for none to leave the cave, or to speak aloud. It chanced that Marietta's child was sick: in vain the young mother tried to silence its cries. The chief and several men were keeping watch through a crevice in the rocks of the forest below that they might not be surprised. Suddenly one said, "There is a man I see, he stops to listen!"

"Marietta, you must still ~~that~~ child's noise," said the chief.

"I would, but cannot," she replied.

"Then I can," said he. Quick as lightning he sprang forward, drawing his dagger, and plunged it in the breast of the babe as it lay mourning in its mother's arms. One wail of agony and all was still. Marietta lay senseless on the rocky floor, with the dead babe locked in her arms; when she recovered it had been removed; she never saw her child again. "It was a long time before I recovered from this sad blow," she said in conclusion; "sometimes I think I shall go mad, when the frightful scene recurs to my memory. But the chief says I must try to be happy and forget what is past, and I will," and she laughed—her voice was low and hollow, it sounded like the laugh of a maniac. How like a fiend seemed the chief to me after I heard this tale; his black eyes seemed to flash more spitefully than before. He told me to call him Devil Burdick, and I thought him rightly named. I could not help trembling every time I met him. And so the time wore on a month in gaming, counterfeiting and fighting, and now poor Marietta was missing; the chief said she had escaped—more likely he had murdered her I thought. One day the chief brought home a pair of very small bright pistols; he gave them to me, and learned me to load them; then springing back a few paces told me to fire. "At what?" I asked. "At my head," he replied. Taking as good aim as I could, I pulled the trigger—he stooped quickly, but not quite far enough—the ball grazed his head, causing a crimson stream to fall down his long hair, which was soon wet with blood.

"You are quite a markswoman," he said, "but you shall not shoot again at me." I shuddered, for though this was spoken with a smile, vengeance seem pictured on his countenance. I had now learned the entrances to the cave, and sought for an opportunity to escape; but I think the chief suspected my designs, for I was watched more closely than ever. I could not go far from the cave without encountering, as if by chance, some one of the band, who was always ready to escort me back, fearing I might get lost; and this was the liberty I enjoyed as a member of the band. It was a lovely morning in August that I left the cavern alone for a stroll, hoping I might not be missed and followed as usual. I took a different course, this time, over the hill, and wandered on for some distance. There had been rain the night before, and the drops which hung upon the trees and bushes sparkled like diamonds in the rays of the rising sun, and the air was filled with sweet odors. At length I descended a hill into a beautiful

little valley, through which ran a small clear stream. Near the bank of the stream I observed two small mounds, lying side by side—they were graves—at the head of one was a rudely-formed gravestone, on which was inscribed, in large letters, the Indian name "Talanga," but what I thought rather mysterious, was, that at the head of the other a white rosebush flourished! It was full of blossoms and the perfume was delightful. As I stood gazing on this scene the thought occurred to me, "They must be the graves of deceased robbers. But a white rose is a strange emblem to wave over a murderer's grave," I said, thinking aloud.

"Rather strange," said a low, deep voice, and the demon Burdick stood by my side. "The being that was laid here to sleep was no murderer. But sit down and I will tell you of those who lie in these lonely graves, and you will say it is a fitting emblem." I obeyed, and as he stood near me with his eyes resting on the mounds, he began: "You may think it a strange thing for a wretch like me to be sad, but when I gaze on that grave, I feel as though I would give all, even life itself, to be as innocent as she that was laid here. It was my mother. My father was an Indian! Nay, do not start and tremble, he was not worse than myself, and his body has turned to dust in that other grave. When the Indians were driven from their fatherland, he stayed behind. Many years he lived among these hills and rocks alone; at length, during a visit to a settlement, he saw a beautiful white girl. If your dark hair was brown, you would be the very image of that mother, that I remember so vividly, though she has been long dead. He loved this girl and tried a long time to get possession of her, and at length succeeded and brought her to his home in the forest, she mourned and pined for home and liberty, until I was born; then her spirit was quite broken, and she wished only for death—but death comes slowly to the broken-hearted; or perhaps the God she used to tell me about had some wise purpose to fulfill by her means.

My father was a man of blood—many were the bloody scalps that adorned his cavern walls; they lie in the grave with him. Nothing vexed him so much as it did for my mother to try to learn me about heaven, and to do right. I loved her, but still thought, with my father, that she was in the wrong about this. If she was right, and I sometimes fear she was, fearful will my reckoning be, for many hearts have I caused to bleed—many souls have I sent unprepared to eternity. Gold, gold, was the idol of my father, and it has been mine. In vain my gentle mother pleaded with me. It was grief that caused her death; she died when I was twelve years old. It is useless to tell what scenes I have passed through since; it is enough to know that I am a devil; but my love for my gentle mother remains. Sometimes, when I think of her, I am tempted to forsake this mode of life. It was in such a mood as this that I set that rosebush where it now stands."

It was truly fearful to watch the changing expression upon his face during his story; sometimes frightfully savage, sometimes melancholy



and now he stood gazing silently on the two graves, when the report of a rifle caused us both to start.

"Come," said he, "you must return to the cave, and see that you do no stray so far again; and what I have told you, as you are a member, must never pass your lips again."

We started for the cave: by this time the sun was high in the heavens, and though our way led us under thick hemlocks, whose branches shut out much of the sun, still the heat was almost insupportable. As we crossed a clear stream I stopped to drink, where the water fell from a high ledge of rocks. "I should like to know the occasion of that shot," said the chief. Just then I saw the shape of a large panther, crouched beneath some bushes close by; he was just going to spring; a deep wound in his head showed the effect of the shot we had heard. "See there!" I cried, just as he sprang upon me. In an instant his long claws were fastened in my shoulders and his teeth buried in my arm! Through pain and fear I sank fainting to the ground.

When I recovered I lay on my bed in the den. It was a long time before I could walk or stand, and I often wished I had been alone, that the creature might have killed me and released me from my prison; as it was, I owed my life to the wretched Burdick. When I had gained strength enough to go out of the cave and saw the yellow leaves of autumn strewing the ground, my heart sank within me for I thought I could not survive a long winter, in such a place, with such companions; but this trial I was to be spared, though more severe ones awaited me.

One night I lay in a remote part of the cave trying to sleep, but in vain. Thoughts of my home, my father, husband, and the many friends I had known in happier days, filled my brain, mingled now and then with laugh or song, from another apartment, where fifteen or twenty of the band were busily engaged in the common employment of making counterfeit silver coins. The full moon shone through the chinks of the rocks, lighting up the room sufficiently to distinguish the robbers' garments and deadly weapons, hung in various parts of the apartment; several portraits also hung against the wall, and some of them seemed like so many wretches gazing upon me from holes in the wall, watching until I should sleep. I tried to banish such thoughts and compose my heart in prayer to God, to save me from despair.

"And must I live and die here?" said I in a low voice, in fact thinking aloud. "Is there no way of escape?" A low rustle near the foot of the bed caused me to start and seize my pistols! Silently and long I sat and listened. Was it imagination, or did some evil-minded wretch lurk near me? Finally a low soft voice said:

"Would you be free from this horrible place?"

"I would do almost anything to be at liberty," I answered.

"You shall be free," said the voice, in the same low tones, and then from the rocky floor a form arose—a female form—dressed in a white garment like a shroud! It slowly approached me; I don't know what it was, but it seemed to me that this was a spirit, and the spirit of my mother!

"Blessed shade," I said, "tell me in what way shall I be freed living or by death?"

"You shall go hence to your home and friends, only obey me."

"I will!" I replied. The shadow leaned forward and listened intently; footsteps were heard approaching; raising its finger to its pale lips the shade departed as silently as it had come. A man entered the room with a light.

"Mrs. Adelaide, the chief requests your presence." I arose and followed him into the apartment where the robbers sat in council. Taking my accustomed seat near the chief, I cast my eyes around and saw that there had been a new arrival—a prisoner had been brought to the cave—before the chief knelt a tall, graceful young man, with light-brown hair; his hands, which were bound with a strong cord, were raised to his face, and though I could not see his features I thought the form was familiar to me.

"As you are a member," said the chief, "you have a voice in the disposing of this prisoner. Our law is; no prisoner shall leave the cave alive; they must join the band, or die. He will not join us; the votes for a respite and those for immediate death are now equal; what do you say?"

"Let him live," I replied; many curses were heard from all sides at my decision, but a motion from the chief silenced every voice.

"Then hear your sentence; you will remain in the cell ten days; then, if you will not join us, you must die; from this there is no appeal; conduct him to the cell." As he arose from his knees I saw that it was Frederick Landau, my stepmother's son.

"Frederick, can it be!" I exclaimed; he turned his head but did not recognize me, and passed on.

"Is that young man a relative of yours?"

"Only a friend of my father's," I replied, for I thought, if I did not excite suspicion, some way might be found to save his life. The cheering words of the spirit, "you shall be free," were ever in my mind. The days passed on, and as they roll away, I will describe our situation, that the reader may have an idea of the difficulty of escape.

The cave is situated in the side of the rocky hill that rises from the East Toby creek, in McKean County, about fifteen miles from Johnsborough, on the left-hand side as you ascend the stream. To the cave, from the exterior, there is no visible entrance, but by parting a thick clump of laurels a small opening is visible, just large enough to admit a man. Just within this entrance is a niche, where a sentinel was posted, relieved once in three hours. All who entered or left the cave by night were challenged. I had no steady employment about the cave, as the work was done by three colored boys who had been taken prisoners and compelled to serve for their lives. Two of them seemed to like their situation, but their mischievous dispositions were ever an annoyance to the more sober-inclined robbers. To parade the apartments, armed with all the weapons they could get hold of, and fight mimic battles, was their delight; and many a severe wound did they give each other.

They had been still for several days, as one of them had received a

severe flogging for some misdemeanor. The chief thought he had found, at last, a way to subdue their roguish spirit. I thought their revengful gestures and whispers would bring some event, but said nothing. One day we were gathered together in one of the rooms around one of the boys who had fallen down in a fit; his spasms were truly awful, but we soon found they were assumed, for at a signal from his companion, who stood grinning with delight in the doorway of the room, he sprang up and darted away, just as a tremendous crash shook the cavern; fragments of rocks and limbs of men fell on all sides of me, but I fortunately escaped unhurt. Burdick lay groaning with a broken arm near me. Two or three men sprang after the boys, who had hid in another room, and soon a wild yell told that they had paid for their trick with their lives. They were seen no more. A hole beneath the floor had been filled with powder, and a slow match applied, and then the little wretches enticed us directly over it with the means and consequences I have described. The robber chief lay tossing with pain upon his bed; to beguile the long, weary hours he requested me to read to him. The book he selected was a very interesting novel, entitled "Rosa Dane." I read the words mechanically, without understanding a word of it; for down in the cell, not far off, lay a fellow-being awaiting his fate. A groan now and then, or a prayer, showed that his proud, honest heart was striving with his hard destiny—hard whether life or death awaited him. At length he said: "No! they may take my life, but I will keep my hands free from guilt—I will never join a band of murderers." I paused in my reading, and saw that the chief slept; his arm had been carefully splintered up by one of the band, and the pain was leaving it. I silently arose, and approaching the pit kneeled by its edge and looked down. Though it was mid-day and the light penetrated the cave in many directions, yet not a ray lighted up this place, where the poor young man lay bound awaiting his death. In a low voice I pronounced his name. "Who are you, that knows my name?" he asked. "It is Adelaide Lane, your stepfather's child, a prisoner as hopeless as yourself," and I explained to him the incidents relating to my introduction to the cave. "Then you don't know that your father and my mother are both dead?—but what of that," he continued, "we shall soon join them in another world—a peaceful abode, where the murderers cannot come." He paused and I could not reply, overcome by powerful emotions, as I was. At length he asked: "Is there no way of escape?" "As yet I have found none," I replied. A slight movement of the chief caused me to start, and resume my seat by the bedside. He stretched out his well hand, and grasped mine.

"Adelaide, I have had such a sweet sleep, and such a sweet dream." Though I loathed his touch, I allowed him to retain my hand, which I feared to withdraw from his, and ventured to ask:

"What did you dream?"

"It was a strange dream, you will think, and I must tell you first, the feelings which produced it. You will be surprised, when I tell you that I love you—love the very echo of your sweet voice, though it is too seldom that I hear it. You scarcely suspected that the heart

of the wretch, the murderer Burdick, was inevitably yours; that while I could calmly plunge my knife in the bosom of one human being a warm, lasting affection, burned in my heart for another, and that other you; yet so it is. It was after the encounter with the panther as your beautiful head lay on my breast, and we were endeavoring to recall you to life, your dark hair lying in waves around your snowy neck and bosom. It was then the thought arose—would to heaven I might hold you there forever—that this might be the resting-place of that loved head," and he laid his hand, still retaining mine, upon his breast. I shrank back and turned aside my face to avoid his large, flashing eyes, which rested on me with a glance which frightened me; "'Tis even as I feared," he resumed, "you hate me; but oh! Adelaide, did you know how essential to my life and happiness your love has become, you would pity me, if you could not love me."

My feelings can be easier imagined than described, at this sudden and unexpected burst of passion from this usually stern and hard-hearted man—this wretch in human form—whom I both hated and feared as one might fear and hate a scorpion or an adder. "I can never reciprocate your love," I said calmly, "you know, perhaps, that I have a husband, though I may never see him again; still, while life remains I will prove faithful to him."

"Adelaide," he cried, and he pressed my hand still closer to his cruel heart, "beware how you blast all of my dearest hopes forever; unsay those words; give me some hope, however faint, and all my future life shall be spent in promoting your happiness."

"Impossible," I answered, and tried, but in vain, to release my hand from his powerful grasp.

"I have gold—many millions of dollars—and do you spurn both my love and wealth?" said he.

"As for your love, I can never return it, and your gold, is it not the price of blood! of pain and death?"

"I have much for which I never harmed any man—it was the gift of my dying father—still it may be the price of blood. But you are one of our number, you have taken human life, and do you shrink from the murderer's gains?"

"True I have killed a man," I said with a shudder, "but by despair I was driven to it, to preserve my innocence, which is dearer to me than life."

"Perverse woman," said he, letting go my hand; and drawing a pistol in rage, he levelled it at my head, but it sank upon the bed by his side. "Forgive me, Adelaide, but this mad passion has turned my brain. Go," he said, "try to school your heart to love me, for from my heart you can never go. I shall expect a more favorable answer to-morrow—until then farewell! I shall dream the while of you and love, see that you do not think of me with hatred." I sought my pillow early that night and then, for the first time, tears came to relieve my bursting heart. Far, far from friends, a prisoner in a dark gloomy cave, surrounded by frightful murderers and dreadful scenes, and now, as though the cup of misery was not full, had no alternative but to become the wife or mistress of the arch fiend whose will kept

this fearful band together. I will sooner welcome death, I thought, and with an effort to calm my feelings I at length slept.

While I slept I thought my father stood by my bedside, in the dark gloomy cavern, and said: "Fear not, you shall soon be free." A soft hand, laid on my shoulder, awaked me; a low voice that I remembered hearing before, said: "Adelaide, do you not know Marietta?" I raised my head and saw the white form I had seen before. It was Marietta!

"Listen to me," she said. "From my place of concealment I can hear all that transpires in the cave, and my plan of freedom is this. I heard the chief declare his undying love for you, and to-morrow you must consent to become his wife."

"Never!" I exclaimed.

"Listen," she said, "and do not interrupt me again, you must set some distant day for the wedding. You will have greater liberty as the expected wife of Prince Burdick. Then I have a vial of poison, which you can easily mingle with their food, and then we will soon be free. Do you understand?"

"I think I do, but will not this be dreadful?"

"Is it not dreadful to remain here in bondage to these wretches? Ask the poor prisoner in the cell—to-day is the eighth—the tenth he must die."

"He must not die," I said. "Marietta, I will do as you bid me."

"Farewell until to-night," she said, and silently disappeared. The slow moving of a stone, in the wall, when she was gone was all the evidence that a living being had left the room. Summoning all the fortitude I was mistress of to my aid, I calmly waited the dawn of day, resolved to use every means, however disagreeable or deceptive, to forward the great plan of escape. Still my heart would almost fail me when I thought of taking the lives of so many wretches. Some months before, I would sooner have died myself, but by despair my heart had become hardened, and I determined that if possible all should die.

Oh, what a long, long night it was, as I sat, or reclined on my hard bed; surely time never passed so slow. At length day dawned; with daylight the chief came into the apartment, his broken arm was slung in a handkerchief, fastened around his neck, and the knife-hilt, which projected from his belt, was deeply stained with blood! I could hardly restrain an exclamation of horror; but making an effort to smile, I told him I had resolved to become his wife, on condition that he would disperse his band of lawless men, and, in some other place, live an honest and peaceable life.

"It shall be as you say, love," he replied, "but not now; there are some plans that must be carried out New Year's Day; then we will leave this den and be lawfully married. Until then you shall be mistress of my heart and this cave, provided you don't interfere with our business," and he placed a valuable gold ring upon my finger.

"And will you not grant me one favor?" I asked.

"Anything that is in my power," he replied; "what is it?"

"That you will free the prisoner that dies to-morrow!" As I spoke a dark cloud gathered on his face.

"Adelaide, it cannot be, you well know this to be against our laws, and if I do contrary to my own laws, my control over these lawless men will cease."

"And I must stand by and see an innocent man murdered, and not dare to show my resentment of the vile deed!" I said.

"Adelaide, you are unreasonable, much as I love you I cannot now do as you wish. And yet you may try, you might get him away by caution, and a proper disguise; if you can I will not prevent you. If you fail do not blame me, and we must have a new supply of provisions and liquors for the feast to morrow, for when a prisoner is disposed of we always have a revel. I will leave the cave and send away as many as possible of the men, this is all I can do to favor your plans."

"And in what direction lies his safety?"

"Towards the south; and now dear Ada," said he, "am I not generous as possible. When my dream is fulfilled and I find myself in a snug little home surrounded by plenty, and my own dear Adelaide, the presiding genius there, then you will credit me with lending you my aid in this affair." And with eyes sparkling with pleasure the murderer imprinted a loathsome kiss upon my brow and left the room.

After assuring myself that the robbers had left the cave, I went to the cell and told my plan to Frederick; I also told its dangers; he replied:

"Only help me out of here, that is all I ask, you shall not remain here long." I then got a strong rope from a box in the apartment and let down first a knife, with which he managed to sever his bonds, then a suit of clothes, suiting his size, and then fastening one end of a rope firmly round a piece of craggy rock, lowered the other into the cell, and he soon stood by my side, to all appearance a tall robber, the disguise being complete. As I showed him the way about the rooms, he whispered, "It cannot be more than ten miles to a village. Before I am missed, I hope to return with aid and set you free." "God grant you may." I looked on his face as we passed where a ray of daylight fell on our advancing forms; his features were deathly pale.

"Farewell, I hope not for ever," he whispered, as we parted, near the entrance, and I soon saw him past the sentinel; five or six savage-looking ruffians lay sleeping in the outer room, but they did not awake as we passed them, and when I returned they still slept. Hastily replacing the rope, I went to another part of the cave where the other woman lay sick; she was asleep and I seated myself by her bedside, anxiously listening for every strange sound; my heart misgave me now that I had time for reflection. The chief will not allow him to escape, and thus endanger the safety of his band, his gold, everything; but I will hope for his success, he can but die, and if he remained here death was certain—thus I thought.

At length my head drooped upon my hands, as I sat with my elbows

resting on a stand near the bed-side, and I slept, and for awhile forgot my anxiety. A long shrill whistle, which was answered by those left at the cave, awoke me; slowly the act I had lately done came to my mind, and then a pang shot across my heart.

Soon the band were assembled in the largest room of the cave around the lifeless and bloody body of Frederick Landau; many were the conjectures of how he escaped from the cell. "That rests with those I left to guard him," said the chief; "Or with Mrs. Adelaide," suggested one. All eyes were turned on me as I stood, with clasped hands, gazing upon a livid wound in the forehead of the corpse, and inwardly vowing vengeance on his murderers. I turned on them a look of scorn and defiance.

"Impossible," cried Burdick, "by that ring which glitters on her hand she is my betrothed wife." "And I will swear she has been in my room ever since you left the cave," said the sick woman, who had been brought hither on her bed; she saw the anxiety of the chief and hesitated not to utter a falsehood to secure his favor.

By this time I had recovered my composure and said: "Do my companions suspect me of this foul deed?"

"No! no! a long and happy life to Mrs. Burdick!" was echoed from all parts of the cavern. I thanked them, though you may believe, with an ill grace."

But there was one whose voice was silent, one whose eyes flashed with rage. It was Davis, the husband of Marietta, he had just escaped from prison, and returning to his old haunts, found his lovely wife gone, his infant son dead, and it was whispered he had sworn vengeance on the chief. Poor Frederick was buried in the hill side, that very night, with no prayer for the rest of his soul, save a silent one which arose from my heart, as the robbers heaped the sods upon the rude box which held his lifeless remains.

From this time the respect of the robbers towards me was unbounded, for they all feared Burdick as much as I did. Many a costly gift did I graciously receive—gold rings shone on my hands, the finest of silks were my dresses; did I forget my revenge, or Frederick Landau?

One day the chief was taken suddenly and violently ill, and soon almost every man was writhing with pain—many of them died immediately. I had given them the dose I contemplated. Oh, how I wished for more to complete the work, but wished in vain; to prevent suspicion from falling on me, I had to pretend sickness also; soon those that had escaped gathered round the chief, a council was held and the deed of poisoning the whole laid to Davis, who happened to be one of the few on whom the poison did not take effect. On being asked if he was willing to own the deed, he replied: "I did not do it, if I had I should die happy; I should have had my revenge! But I will have it yet. Where is my wife and child?" and he sprang upon the now helpless Burdick, knife in hand, but was caught by the bystanders; he fought bravely; one of the men that held him received a mortal wound, when he fell pierced to the heart by two dirks! Wild was the yell of the dying Davis, but wilder was a shriek which sounded through the rocky arches as a female form sprang from some dark corner into the

light of the torches that burned round the chief. A long white robe but poorly concealed her lovely form, and the pale, yet beautiful features contrasted strongly with those of the frightful, dying wretch that she knelt beside.

"Spirit of my beloved wife!" he mourned, and his eyes closed forever.

"Farewell, loved one," she said, "may God be more merciful to you than you were to others," and she sank fainting on the corpse of her once loved, though erring husband. It was evident that she did not know of his return, until she saw him arraigned for the deed she had planned, and I had executed; then all her love for the man she had given the affections of her youthful heart returned, though it had long been estranged by cruelty. She was taken away insensible, and it was several days before her reason returned. The dead men were buried by their companions beneath a tall hemlock tree near the cave; no stone marks the spot where they lie; Burdick did not die, though it was some time before he recovered, and now, as he lay on a sick bed, he really resolved to do that which he had promised, and leave the cave forever. All the gains of many years he divided among the few men that were left, reserving nothing except his father's gift, that the men of the band had never seen.

One bright autumn morning, a little group left the cave, and forever. It consisted of Burdick, Marietta and myself; the remnant of the band had left us the day before, departing in various directions. I cannot describe my feelings when I left this horrid abode of so many days. I was like a bird that has long pined for liberty, let loose from its cage. The earth never looked so beautiful, though the trees were almost bare, and the ground was strewn with dead leaves; neither can I describe the emotions which played over the features of the chief, as he filled up the entrance to the cave with loose fragments of rock. Sometimes he would stop and stand lost in thought, and then with a start he would proceed with his task, faster than ever. At length he had done, and swinging his knapsack, heavy with gold and jewels, upon back, we started on.

Pausing but a moment at the graves of Talanga and the White Rose, Burdick's parents, we kept on our way over hills and vales, and about noon reached a small village. Here Burdick purchased a carriage and pair of horses, and we immediately proceeded on our way; he had resolved to take Marietta to her father's home, but where he intended to go then, I do not know. I had determined to leave him as soon as we arrived in any place where I might be secure from his vengeance. The distance between the villages, in this part of Pennsylvania, is considerable; large tracts of fertile land lie wholly unoccupied—tall hemlock, beech and maple trees tower to the skies—in their branches innumerable birds find repose, and thousands of squirrels, of all varieties, at this season of the year, are busily employed in storing a winter's stock of provisions. As we passed along the road many a beautiful deer started up from his resting-place, and bounding a short distance would stop and watch us until out of sight. At length night came on and found us in the forest, still several miles from a village!

There was no moon, and the stars gave but little light; still we kept on our way. As we passed through a little valley and began to ascend a hill, covered with thick hemlocks, a dark object was seen in the center of the road directly before us! Stopping the horses, pistols in hand, Burdick sprang from the carriage to see what was in the way: he was instantly seized by three men—a short struggle and all was still again. In a moment I saw his body borne by two men, while another held the horses, to the roadside; but where they put him I did not stop to see. Springing from the carriage into the thick bushes on the opposite side from the robbers, I hid myself beneath the trunk of an upturned tree, and watched their motions in silent terror!

After disposing of Burdick, they made a light, and I recognized them as members of Burdick's own band, who had left us the day before! Marietta had fainted and lay still and motionless in the carriage; the robbers restored her to consciousness, and assured her no harm should befall her, and that she should be carried to her father's.

After a short search for me, during which one of the men came within ten feet of the place where I was, they seated themselves in the carriage, and urging the already jaded horses to their utmost speed, were soon out of hearing.

And now I was free! such freedom! Alone in the deep dark forest—near midnight—far from any human habitation—not far from me lay a half murdered man, as now a long stifled groan told that he was not dead.

I arose and was reëntering the road, hoping to soon reach the next village, when a deep howl rang upon the still night air, waking the old forest echoes for many leagues around.

A dark shadow, which crossed the road, towards the dying wretch, told the fearful tale. A wolf prowling near, had scented blood, and was calling his companions to the prey! The howl was answered by many distant voices. I thought this was no place for me, and fled, I knew not, cared not whither; my only care was to escape the wolves that were now flocking in numbers to the spot where the dying man lay. After I had gone some distance I stopped and listened, and what I heard seemed to freeze the blood around my heart.

The wolves were fighting over the prey! Such howls and yells as one might imagine to proceed from the infernal pit! And now, as the contention had in a degree subsided, I thought I could distinguish a groan of mortal anguish.

Horror-stricken I hurried on, as fast as my trembling limbs could move, through brushwood, over fallen trees, over hills, through swamps, like one deranged.

At length, exhausted, I sank insensible to the ground. To this day I am surprised that the wolves did not follow and devour me as I lay like one dead. When I recovered, the sun was shining brightly through the trees, birds were singing, all nature was bright and gay. The adventures of the night came slowly to my memory, like a frightful dream, and so I wandered on. I was completely lost and knew not which way to go! Hours passed by, noon came, and found me still moving onward, looking, but in vain, for some sign of civilization.

Trees, rocks and brooks were all that met my eyes; night came, and with it came hunger, for I had not eaten for many hours.

Faint and weary I laid myself down on a side hill, beneath a thick tree. It was a very cold night, and so still not a breath of wind stirred the branches overhead—not a sound was heard, save now and then some old solemn owl would disturb the silence with his hoarse voice, or the sawwhet's rude melody for a moment be heard. Silent as it was I could not sleep. With hunger preying upon my vitals and the horrid scenes I had witnessed passing before my mind, I lay through the long, long night. O! how I wished for daylight; would it never come! surely this night was the longest and most fearful I ever passed. If I tried to slumber I was sure to be roused by an owl or some other night-bird, with a noise which my numbed senses would convert into a groan, or a death yell. Starting up, I would sit and stare into the darkness, until weariness caused me to lie down again, but to be roused in a similar way. Toward morning I fell into a kind of stupor and then perhaps slept—whether it was sleep or not I lay a long time, indeed until roused into consciousness by a crash that seemed to shake the earth. Starting up, I was struck by the unusual looks of the forest—was I deranged by my sufferings, or was it real? Fire seemed to run along the ground, while here and there tall trees, on fire, sent the forked flames into the very skies! Near me a burning tree had fallen, and it was this that roused me from my death-like sleep.

It was real; the woods were on fire; and a grander and more terrible spectacle I never beheld! I began to ascend the hill, and found that the fire, while I slept had surrounded me. Burning limbs were falling all around, and the heat was becoming insupportable. The skies were soon shut from my sight by thick clouds of smoke.

At length I reached the summit of the hill, and fired both my pistols, faintly hoping some one might hear them, for if I escaped the fire I knew I must soon die for want of food.

I listened earnestly, and above the roar of the fire I heard the report of a rifle, and then another one, and yet another, in quick succession—they sounded near, and I called out as loud as I could. Soon I saw three men ascending the hill toward me; with coarse garments and long rifles; they might have been mistaken for Indians, but I did not fear them—I was past fear.

As they approached, I glanced at my own dress, my beautiful silk dress, the gift of the robber chief, was frightfully torn; many fragments had been left by the way, the night that I fled from the wolves; but this was nothing; I was saved from a fearful death. We soon left the fire, and as we slowly pursued our way through the forest, many questions were asked and answered.

They were hunters, and the fire had spread from their shanty, which had burned down while they were away attending to their traps, that morning. Just as the sun went down behind the western hills, we arrived at the hunter's home. It was a clearing of six or seven acres, in the midst of which stood a small but substantial log-house. At the door we were met by a neat looking old lady, the wife of one of the

hunters; she started at the sight of a stranger, but welcomed me right heartily to the hunter's cottage, as her husband introduced me as a lost lady, whom he and his companions had rescued from the burning forest. A well loaded table awaited the hunters, who had been expected, and I soon sat down to the most delicious repast I ever partook of.

Fresh smoking venison, cooked in the most approved style, corn bread, butter, and maple sugar—this, with some good tea, completed our repast. My hunger was soon gone, and seated by the broad hearth before a blazing fire, the dangers and trials I had passed through were for a while forgotten. I was free, and soon found myself making calculations for the future.

Soon my attention was arrested by a familiar name. It was the old hunter, who inquired: "Has Mr. Landau returned for his papers?" his wife replied; "No, I fear some harm has happened to him. I did not like the appearance of his companions, and now I am persuaded they were in fact some of the thieving rascals with which our woods abound of late."

"I hope not, wife; he may yet return, though it is now a week past the time he set to be back." By inquiry I soon learned the circumstances of his capture, which I had often wished to know.

He was on a journey and had fallen in with three young men, the day before he arrived here. It was most likely they found that he had a large sum of money about him—be this as it may, they persuaded him to go deer hunting with them, so leaving some articles here, where they stayed over night, he set out with his supposed friends, for a two days' hunt, and had not returned. His fate I knew but too well, but I resolved not to tell it to these rude people, whom the knowledge could not affect.

I wished to see the papers, and after a few moments' thought said: "My name is Adelaide Lane, of Harrisburgh; my stepmother's name was Landau. Her son Frederick, was a tall, light complexioned young man; does this answer the description of the man you spoke of?"

"Exactly—the name and all," was the reply.

"Will you allow me to see the papers?" They were brought—a package and a single letter, nicely folded in a silk handkerchief. The letter was directed in the well-known handwriting of my husband! "To Adelaide Lane, Harrisburgh." It had been opened, and unfolding it, I read as follows:

Harrisburgh, July 10th, 1855.

"DEAR ADELAIDE:—

"I have at length arrived in this city, and find that you have left your father's house and gone, no one knows whither; leaving this letter here I shall hasten to visit every place where I might hope to find you, and wishing to hear from you,

"I remain your true and affectionate husband,

"WILLIAM LANE."

The package contained my father's will, and many other valuable

papers; his vast property was bequeathed to me, if found within five years; if not, Frederick Landau was the inheritor.

Poor Frederick! far in the depths of the forest he is laid, by cruel hands, to sleep the long sleep that knows no waking. Let him lie; his murderers are laid around him; he is revenged!

If I have done wrong, God will judge me. I will not brave the judgment of men. In some distant clime I will try to forget the horrors of my long sojourn, my captivity, trials and murders, in the forest of Pennsylvania. These thoughts and many others passed through my mind, as I lay on my bed, in the hunter's cabin, and I soon slept sounder and longer than I had for months. It was late in the morning when I awoke. My first business, after breakfast, was to write a letter to my husband: this I gave to the post-boy as he passed the door. Strongly invited by the kind people of the cottage, I resolved to remain here until the arrival of my husband, which I expected would not be long.

The old hunter, whom I shall call Hewett, had an only daughter, a fair young girl named Annette, and as is generally the case with pretty girls, Anne had a lover.

Bob Winter was a tall, rather good-looking young man, and one of the best hunters in the woods.

"And why do they not get married?" I asked of old Mrs. Hewett, one day when Annette, being absent, the conversation had turned upon this subject.

"The reason is soon told. Robert is poor but proud; he will not marry until he has saved enough to have a home of his own." This I resolved they should not lack: he was one of the three hunters that had saved my life.

At length, one morning, a carriage rolled up to the door, and the next moment I beheld my husband! my own William, from whom I had been so long separated; you may be sure the meeting was none the less joyful on account of the hardships we had both endured; for William also had experienced hard fortune, indeed nothing had prospered with him for some time after our marriage. But now he had come into possession of a large estate in France, by the death of an uncle, and thither we now resolved to go. We could not prevail upon the honest hunters to receive any recompense for their kindness, but after some persuading, Annette received a small sum as a gift. And now it was decreed by good Mrs. Hewett that the wedding should be celebrated before our departure. Annette, with blushes, consented, much to the joy of Robert and ourselves, for we had a desire to witness the hunter's bridal ceremonies before we left them forever.

It was a lovely evening, late in October; the ground was still bare save a thick coat of many-colored leaves which covered it—the beautiful garment which a dying year had thrown off, to be clothed for awhile in pure white. This would be a mournful sight, did we not know that the returning spring, like the resurrection, will clothe all with beauty again.

But to return to Annette; the young moon was shining brightly

and the sky seemed almost too full of shining stars, perhaps they guessed what was going on, and had to come out to try and get a peep at the lovely bride. And she was a beautiful one, as arrayed in spotless white, her brown hair hanging in rich glossy braids around her fair neck, she stood by the side of her lover, and vowed to love and cherish him evermore. It reminded me of the time when I was an actor in a similar scene, and I inwardly hoped that her morning of life might be fairer than mine had been thus far.

They knelt, and the minister poured out a long and fervent benediction on the youthful pair, just at the close of which a loud knock upon the door caused every one to start! The person who opened the door returned, saying, "a strange, wild-looking man wished to see Mrs. Lane alone!" I arose to go, but paused; I feared, I knew not what.

"I will go with you," said William, and we left the room. Before the door, in the soft moonlight, stood a short, thick-set man - as we approached him he recognised me, and said:

"Adelaide, do you know me?"

I gazed on his pale face in terrified surprise, and saw one whom I had believed dead! one whom I had often, in imagination, seen torn in fragments by a pack of hungry wolves. Could it be, and still it was, the robber chief--Burdick! but how altered; his face, no longer red and full, was ashy pale—a deep gash in his neck, which was bare, showed some fierce encounter.

"Adelaide," he said, "it was for your sake I left my childhood's home, among the rocks and forest trees. For your love I abandoned my sinful career, and now am dying! Long have I wandered through these wilds, in search of you. Since that fatal night, my search until now, has been in vain. My sands of life are almost run, but I could not die away from you." He seemed weary, and seated himself on a small bench near the door. In vain we urged him to go into the house.

"How did you escape the wolves?" I asked; he replied in a low, trembling voice:

"When I left the carriage, you know I was seized by the ruffians; two knives entered my chest and the other did some execution here, on my neck," and he pointed to the ghastly wound I had noticed, "but owing to the darkness, none of the blows were immediately fatal. They laid me behind an old log, near the roadside. Raising my head with difficulty as they struck a light, I saw that you was gone, and by their searching for you knew you had escaped. They left me there to die and went on, carrying my gold with them. And then came the wolves, such howls and yells, as with all my remaining strength, I would strike at them with a limb which chanced to be in my reach. At length one of them seized my arm, this roused my seemingly dying powers, and regaining my feet, though with great pain, I managed to crawl up a leaning tree; daylight dispersed the wolves. I came down, and after some time found your track in the soft earth; this I have tried to follow ever since—sometimes in my distress I have been tempted to end my wretched life. But I wished

to see you once again, and thought death would lose its pain with your hands to close my eyes, your lips to whisper peace to my soul."

Here he was taken with a short painful cough, and the warm blood gushed from his mouth and nose. He was taken senseless into the house, and the merry wedding turned into watching, beside the death-bed of the murderer! And here I will remark that the name of Burdick was one he had assumed, as it was easier spoken than his Indian name, which I had never heard.

Just as the first faint morning beam stole in through the window curtains, he raised his head and fixed his large eyes, over which the film of death was fast appearing, on me, as I stood with William, beside his bed; he seemed to wish to speak, but in vain, his head sank slowly back, and with a deep sigh the wretch was dead! The next day the setting sun shone upon the coffin that held all that remained of the most desperate of men as it was lowered into the earth, which was open to receive it. As the clods fell on its lid, the deep tones of the man of God arose; "Dust to dust, earth to earth, may God have mercy on the undying soul that has gone to be judged for the deeds of this life."

Slowly and sadly we returned from the grave. If his sins have been great, so has his punishment.

It was at the request of this clergyman, and in his house, I undertook to write this condensed narrative of my adventures in the wilderness. If any one is inclined to doubt the truth of these pages, he has but to repair to the spot, and he will be sure to find many evidences; and I doubt not; that by careful examination, the entrance to the cave might be discovered.

As for the gold and silver—the hidden treasure of Burdick—I hope it may never be discovered. It is the price of blood! A curse will be sure to go with it.

I pen these pages while William is settling my business in Harrisburgh, and on his return we shall leave Pennsylvania forever.

I could not repress a wish, once more to see Marietta, the companion of my captivity; and accompanied by a friend, set out for Brookville. It is a long day's drive from the place, and it was quite dark when we entered the town; by inquiring we soon found the residence of Marietta's parents, and here all was silent and gloomy, for a fair and lovely inmate had just departed for the land of spirits! Marietta was no more, her lovely corpse lay robed in white—her features only a shade more pale than when she came to my bedside, in the cave; the expression of fear was gone, and in its place a holy calm rested upon the dead countenance; she has gone to meet her angel babe beyond the reach of mortal woe. Why is it that blighted hopes and a broken heart so often attend the fair and innocent?

And now, kind reader, I must take my leave of you. If I have told you a strange, and fearful tale I can assure you it is no less true! I could bring evidences of many of these circumstances, which could not be disputed, but that is not my intention.

I do not wish to bring public notice upon those of my characters who are living, and the dead—let them rest. If my little work can

beguile some idle or weary hour, it is all I wish. I shall be far from here before this meets your eyes, and if I am counted an impostor, or not, I care not. But this I will own; there is one face which haunts my soul almost to despair. It is the face of a young mulatto boy who fell, with many more, victims to the poison I administered in the cave. When he knew he must die, it rent my soul to hear him pray to his Maker, for forgiveness, on his unknown murderer.

Go where I will this prayer rings in my ears, and this face is before my sight!

Shall I ever again know peace of mind! or will this vision follow me till death? But I will try to banish such gloomy thoughts, and in some sunny land, amid different scenes, forget my wanderings and adventures in Pennsylvanian wilds.

THE END.





"I am going to have you die, and put you in this coffin!" and opening a door by my side, he set a new, cherry-colored coffin at my feet! Overcome by horror, I closed my eyes to shut out the dreadful scene, and found that I could not open them there.

