well worthy of trust, had offered her, and with the blind, heedless, yet sometimes divine impulse of youth, turned from the golden gifts of life, those gifts for which some wretched women are willing to sell themselves into legal bondage, and went her way alone. It had been a struggle, a hard struggle, in both cases; it was a struggle, even after this letter was written, to seal it and lay it aside, saying: "Lie there, happy days, full to the brim of love and content, and soft belongings, and tender care, and glittering pleasure! Lie there, sweet dreams of what might be, of affection ripening into love, and trust growing in sweetness and strength with every passing year! Lie there, words, and looks, and tones, that will never see the light; days possible, yet forever unborn; emotions never to be felt, and the whole current of a life never to be lived!" It was hard to hold out the arms, saying: "Come, weary days filled with toil, uncheered by any smile from kindred lips, or glance from loving eyes! Come, days that lead among the rough by-ways of the world, and toss the living, yearning human heart from one strange household to another, that teach in every hour of your flight how some paths are strewed with roses only that others may be filled with thorns! Come, days within whose very bitter lurks a sweet that only those who meet you willingly can ever taste—a sweet like that grand victory which noble deeds wring from defeat, which come when the spirit has dropped its arms after long conflict, and the divine secret of content begins to steal upon the soul, the first knowledge of good and evil, the first startled, humbled thanks to God that He guided the blind eyes and the faltering hand, and gave at last the leaden casket with the precious jewel shrined within!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A DAY OF MYSTERY.

EVA and I were on our way to Blankton to see Aunt Penelope. From childhood we had paid an annual visit to the old farm-house, and every station, bridge, and village, on the Crossland Railroad was as familiar to our eyes as the pattern of our hall-paper; we could have made a dissected map of the whole route and put it together blindfold. As we stepped out of the stage which had brought us from Plum Corners to Endicott in the early morning, and saw the well-known track glittering in the sunshine, and stretching onward in a straight line between the monotonous cornfields, a weary impatience rose in our minds, and we sighed in anticipation of the dull day before us. Endicott Station was a mile from Endicott Village, and, therefore, the little station-house was unoccupied save by old Abner Green with his good-natured wife, and a telegraph-operator asleep in his den. Owing to a change in the time-table, we found that we should be obliged to wait forty minutes, and, entering the ladies' room, we languidly inspected the familiar furniture—viz., one stove, four spittoons, two wooden settees, and an empty water-pitcher. On the north side of the station-house a branch road came up from the Black Hills and connected with the Crossland Road. We had often noticed this track winding off down the Rocky-River Valley, but knew nothing of its route save that it joined the Grand Central at some point near Northfield. Seeing a time-table hanging on the wall, Eva began studying it to pass away the weary hour. Suddenly she exclaimed:

"Janet, a train for Northfield will leave in twenty minutes; let us take it and explore the valley. Aunt Penelope does not expect us at any particular time; we can sleep at Northfield, return here early to-morrow morning, and reach Blankton before sunset."

In the bottom of my heart I was pleased with this proposition, but, as I did not originate it, I thought it best to make some objection.

"Why should we go to Northfield?" I asked.

"In search of adventures," replied Eva; "something will repay us. I feel the certainty burning like an inspiration within me. Do not put on such a doubtful face, but for once let us do as we please, and follow our own free will."

"A girl's will is the wind's will, and the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts," I replied.

Leaving our trunks in old Abner's care, we stepped on board the one passenger-car, and soon were gliding along the banks of Rocky River in company with homeward-bound farmers and a sprinkling of gayly-dressed maidens with their awkward swains.

After following the shimmering stream for an hour, we came into the confines of the Black Hills; the farm-houses grew rare, the hill-sides closed around us, and, leaving the river, we rolled through a deep glen, and shot out by the side of a beautiful lake veiled in the soft mist of Indian-summer.

At the solitary little station-house on the shore the train paused, and our locomotive went puffing off to the right after some cars loaded with gravel. Hearing that this erratic excursion would take fifteen or twenty minutes, Eva and I strolled down to the beach, and, finding a boat tied to an old willow, we clambered in and rocked our floating cradle in high glee. Gazing down into the water, we saw long grasses waving to and fro, and tiny fish gliding through mossy mazes in merry little shoals; over the stones a fresh-water crab moved awkwardly along, and in a secluded pool two small red lizards lay motionless, apparently enjoying a *siesta*. On the right an army of reeds advanced boldly into the water, and, guarded by these faithful servitors, a fleet of water-lilies rode safely at anchor in a miniature bay, with their white sails and golden pennons gleaming in the sunshine. On the left, under a rude wharf of logs, we discovered a skiff, painted in blue and white, with "Lorelai" inscribed on the bow.

Before us the lake stretched away toward the north, surrounded by high, wooded hills; here and there an opening through a glen showed pleasant intervales beyond, with one or two red farm-houses standing in the brown fields, and up at the head of the lake, six or eight miles away, a bold peak towered into the air, and the white spires of a village gleamed at its foot.

The maples on the hill-side glowed in scarlet and gold, and the blue lake mirrored their gorgeous ranks with such faithful precision that the clear depths seemed a fairy-land, where water-sprites and mermaids roved through the submarine forests, and plucked the painted leaves to deck their golden hair.

Over the hills and in the air lay the purple haze of Indian-summer, the dream-time of the year, when Nature, half-asleep and half-awake, lies motionless under the spell, all unmindful of approaching winter. As we gazed out over the enchanted land, our senses charmed into the universal trance, and steeped in languid pleasure, the whistle of the returning locomotive broke rudely upon our ears and disturbed our day-dream.

We glanced at each other in silence; the same thought filled our minds; sinking back into our places we heard the noise of the moving train, the whistle and bell, the clatter and rumble, growing fainter and fainter, until it died away in the distance, and left us alone on the shore.

Then the voices of the lake awoke, and seemed to call us; little waves broke on the beach, and murmured of the northern strand; a fitful breeze fanned our faces, and brought perfumes from the distant mountain; a bay upon the eastern shore tempted us with its half-concealed beauties, and a long point on the west gave glimpses of richer tints spread over a crowd of low bushes on the bank beyond.

Seeking out the old station-house keeper mending his nets in the sun, we bargained with him for the Lorelai. Paying in advance more than his price, and finding out the time when the evening train was expected, we hurried away lest any prosaic remark should break the charm and remove the veil of mystery that lay over the unknown lake, filling our minds with visions of strange delights awaiting us along its magic shores.

The Lorelai proved worthy of her name, skimming the water lightly under the impulse of our oars, for Eva and I were accomplished oarsmen, and rowed with a long sweep and light, feathery stroke, very different from the short, deep jerks of most young lady-mariners. First we sought out the water-lilies, and decked our hats with their white-and-golden blossoms; then, steering out into the broad expanse, we rowed slowly up the lake until a point concealed the station-house and severed our connection with reality; we felt ourselves adrift on an unknown sea in a fairy bark, like those romantic tales of our childhood, so fascinating because so vague.

It was high noon. The blazing light of the sun was veiled and diffused by the soft mist which lay over the earth, so that the atmosphere seemed filled with a golden cloud, and we breathed rich breaths which spread over our whole being a dreamy pleasure, soft and indolent as the scene. A purple haze rested on the northern mountain, and tipped the hill-tops with a vague remoteness like the confines of cloud-land; the clear water, oily in its noonday stillness, broke in

noiseless curves on either side of our skiff, and, uniting behind us, fell asleep again without a ripple to mark our wake. Letting the oars lie idle, we drifted along, neither knowing nor caring for any thing save the mere enjoyment of existence, steeped in golden warmth, the brain asleep, the heart pulsing slowly, the whole being in a trance of tranquil, drowsy ease.

Thus we floated for an hour or more, until the skiff grounded on the western shore. Waking to life again, we found ourselves stranded on a point jutting out from a little meadow at the foot of a thickly-wooded hill. No trace of a road was visible, but close to the water's edge stood a low cottage overrun with creepers; a boat was drawn up on the beach, and nets and fishing-tackle lay around, but no sign of life animated the spot, although the window was open, showing a half-closed door, through which some sheet-music on a table could be discerned and the upper end of a guitar. The silent house, the secluded meadow, and the guitar, aroused our interest.

"It is a lovely retreat," mused Eva; "the strand with the water washing both sides, the vine-covered cottage, and the boat, are like the description of Undine's home with her foster-parents. No doubt this is a hermitage where some weary soul has sought refuge from the noise and crime of a great city; every thing around it shows taste and refinement, and, if we had happened to pass at sunset, perhaps we should have caught a glimpse of the lonely proprietor solacing himself with his guitar in the little porch."

Retracing our steps, we reluctantly entered the skiff and rowed slowly away from the point, looking back at the cottage with its open window until the overhanging trees hid it from our sight.

Following the curves of the beach, we rowed some distance northward, and, rounding a cape into a little bay fringed with yellow willows and scarlet sumachs, discovered a stream coming down a glen, the trees meeting overhead and dropping their colored leaves one by one into the clear water below. The banks were covered with moss, and, as we pushed our way through the reeds at the mouth, two wild-ducks flew up and away, and a solemn heron flapped his broad wings and sailed slowly up the river.

Rowing under the gay canopy of leaves, we explored the mossy stream far up the glen, watching the gray squirrels frisk up the trees, and the striped chipmunks racing along the ground, disturbed in their nut-harvesting by our sudden intrusion. Coming upon a little spring, we landed and spread our lunch on a flat stone, the carefully-prepared sandwiches, cakes, and fruits, with which we had hoped to relieve the monotony of our journey on the Crossland Railroad.

We lingered over our rustic table, scattering crumbs for the squirrels, and offering a libation of grape-juice to the Naiad of the spring; we wove wreaths of scarlet leaves, and twined the stone, the willow, and our boat, with the gay decorations, and, taking off our shoes and stockings, let the sun-tempered water ripple over our feet.

Embarking again, we pushed on up the stream, and discovered an open glade in a little valley between two hills, where the river broadened so widely as to ground our skiff on the sand.

Stepping on shore, we found ourselves in a meadow with an old wagon-track leading across it; in the centre were the ruins of a log-house, and the decayed, moss-covered beams told a tale of venerable age which filled us with respect and curiosity. As we strolled around the place our feet slipped among the holes and hollows hidden in the long grass, so that more than once we fell prostrate.

"It must have been a ploughed field," said Eva. "I wonder why it was left to decay and solitude?"

Suddenly we came upon a grave, sunken and covered with reeds, but still undoubtedly a grave. Startled and awe-struck, we knelt down and tried to decipher the letters on the low foot-stone; head-stone there was none, and, after some labor, we made out the letters "He—," but the remainder of the name was so defaced as to resist all our efforts. We pulled up the weeds that grew on the mound, and, sitting beside it, talked of the solitary occupant, and mused over the chances of life, so various and so sad. What once blithe heart, what once fair face, now rested under this mound? Was it some disappointed man who had withdrawn to these solitudes to live and die alone, or was it a lovely young wife whose early death had made the pioneer home so desolate to the bereaved husband that he had deserted it forever, and gone forward toward the setting sun.

"He—!" It might be Herbert or Henry, or, if our second surmise was correct, it might be Helen.

"Poor, lonely grave!" I said, as we finally turned away. "No one knows who lies under your sod; your name and history are gone from earth forever."

Subdued and silent, we pushed off our boat and floated down the mossy river, turning for a last look at the sunken stone as the bright trees closed over our heads again, and shut out the deserted field with its venerable loneliness.

Reaching the bay, we left the mossy river behind, and rowed out into the open lake. It was three o'clock, and the shadows already lay on the western hills; a breeze had sprung up, and the blue water was feathered with miniature white caps. The opposite shore, with its sunny bays and glowing capes, invited us to new discoveries, and, bending to our oars, we glided swiftly across the lake, at this point nearly a mile in width from shore to shore.

As we approached the beach, heated with our vigorous exercise, the low gurgle of a brook greeted our ears, and, fastening our boat to an overhanging bough, we knelt down to drink from the tiny stream. But the water had been warmed by the sun, and, entering the glen, we followed its course over the stones and through the tangled underbrush, hoping to find the fountain-head bubbling under some mossy rock and to quench our thirst in its cool waters.

One solitary flower we found, a pale, autumn blossom, but the bushes were glowing in vivid tints; crimson vines clambered up the tree-trunks, and the flickering light came through the painted foliage above in soft, warm hues on the fallen leaves below.

On we journeyed, and the brook grew wild and narrow; a little water-fall barred our progress, but, unmindful of its spray, we clambered over the slippery rocks, and came suddenly upon the spring, with half a dozen bottles of champagne up to their necks in its cold basin!

"This is Wonderland!" I exclaimed. "Bacchus and Pan must be having a picnic with the Dryades. If we listen, perhaps we shall hear their voices."

Moving away from the sound of the water-fall, we stood silently waiting, and soon a heavenly melody rose in the air, now soaring to a wondrous altitude and now falling in exquisite cadence, while a wind-instrument joined in and echoed the strain in penetrating chords. Then many voices took up the air, and, repeating it in spirited chorus, made the forest ring with a harmony so perfect that we stood entranced, nor spoke until all was still again.

"Seraphic!" murmured Eva, as we drew a long breath of delight. "Who and what can it be? Of course, such voices must have bodies to hold them."

"No, we have happened upon Olympus," I answered; "we shall soon see Jove, and all his court, sitting under the trees."

"Do the gods drink champagne?" asked Eva.

"It was nectar," I replied, decidedly.

"Clicquot; I saw the mark," was Eva's answer; "and I doubt whether nectar compared with it."

Advancing cautiously through the forest, we came out upon a high rock, and, standing on its edge, concealed in the bushes, gazed down upon as wild a scene of sylvan revelry as ever the mythical ages produced. Thirty or forty persons, men and women, were gathered together around a rustic table; two or three gayly-tinted hammocks swung in the shade, and musical instruments of various kinds lay scattered around. The feast was delicate and costly; choice game, rare fruits, dainty cakes, and ices, were spread out on the white cloth in glass dishes of fantastic shapes, ornamented with wreaths of autumn leaves; while the various wines—red, yellow, and purple—filled the air with their rich bouquet, and added to the charm of the scene. Conspicuous on a high knoll sat the queen regnant, a beautiful woman of about thirty summers, a vivid Southern blonde of rich, deep tints, as far removed from the cold, colorless blonde of the North as a damask rose from its carved marble fac-simile. Hers was a beauty of color—not that the features were irregular, or the expression inanimate, for in these points there was no fault to find; but every thing else was overshadowed by the marvellous tints, the deep, fathomless blue of her eyes, the blush-rose hue of her skin, and the shining brilliancy of her hair, like waves of spun gold. A simple white robe floated around her, and no ornament sullied her peerless beauty; her head and perfect hands were uncovered, and the slender feet on a velvet cushion were cased in satin slippers, quaintly embroidered with gold in arabesque designs.

In a circle around the table were gathered the rest of the com-

pany—swarthy, vivacious men, and lovely, dark-eyed women, fantastically dressed in rich foreign dresses, and looking like old pictures taken down from their frames to frolic on earth for a while. All this strange assemblage spoke in a foreign tongue, as far as we could judge from the sounds that fell upon our ears; they emphasized their words with rapid gestures and kindling glances, now springing up as if in violent anger, and now sighing and making silent love with their languishing black eyes. At intervals, they trifled with the delicious fruits, but eagerly drank the sparkling wines, glass after glass, laughing merrily, and crowning each other with the autumn wreaths.

While we gazed, fascinated with the scene, the queen took up a guitar, and, striking a few chords, began to sing in the same bewitching voice that we had heard at the spring, so full of velvet softness and thrilling power that it seemed to touch our very heartstrings and vibrate there. Spellbound, we listened, with the tears slowly welling up into our eyes, when, suddenly changing into a wild melody, she waved her handkerchief, and the whole band joined hands and began a fantastic dance, at the same time taking up the chorus and making the woods resound with the exciting strain.

"She is a siren," said Eva, in a whisper; "I am almost afraid of those unearthly blue eyes."

The dance over, the singers scattered through the forest; and, gathering branches of colored leaves and long wreaths of vine, they marched back in graceful order, and threw them at the siren's feet, so that she sat upon a glowing throne. The lady smiled, and, decking herself with the vines, she filled her lap with clustered fruit from the glass dishes before her. Seizing a bunch of grapes, she waved it over her head, and burst forth into a strain of riotous, revelling melody, while all her court resumed the dance and joined in the ringing chorus. Soon we heard the sound of instruments mingling with the voices; a number of the men had formed themselves into an orchestra, and the harmony of the thrilling strings, united with the clear power of the resounding brass, filled the air with music, and, sounding out over the lake, woke up the "echoes flying" back and forth among the hills, "dying, dying, dying."

It was half-past four, and still we lingered on the rock, scarcely daring to whisper our wonder and admiration. The music kept on, and the revellers laughed, danced, and sung, like so many fauns and nymphs; while the siren reclined on her leafy throne, and smiled upon her band. Suddenly Eva pulled my arm violently, and pointed to a dark, fierce-looking man, ascending the hill toward our hiding-place.

It seemed as though his eyes were fixed directly upon us, in spite of the thick bushes; and, filled with vague alarm at the thought of being brought before that fantastic company, we fled back down the glen, jumping from stone to stone, swinging from one branch to another, and reaching the beach at last, breathless and pale, our hearts throbbing so violently that we could not speak.

Pushing off the boat, we rowed rapidly down the lake, steering out into the centre, and putting a mile of blue water between us and the shore before we stopped to rest. No pursuer appeared on the beach, and probably our hiding-place had not been discovered, after all. It was the wine cooling in the spring rather than the young ladies standing on the rock that attracted the dark-eyed bandit. Nevertheless, there was something so weird and uncanny in the siren and her band that we were glad to escape from her presence before her spells had enthralled us, body and soul.

The sun was sinking below the hills, and with the shadows came the cool breath of autumn, whispering of winter, and warning us that the balmy air, the purple mists, the hazy sunshine, and the glowing leaves, would soon be but a dream of the past, forgotten amid the cold rain and drifting snow.

We had still some miles to row before reaching the station-house, and the evening train was due at half-past six; so, bending to our oars again, we shot down the lake, and came suddenly high and dry upon a reef, rising perpendicularly in the water like a submerged mountain. Fortunately, its surface was thickly covered with sand, so that our boat sustained no injury; and, cautiously pushing off, we rowed around the shoal, finding the southern side a gradual slope, with reeds waving above the water. Holding by their strong stems, we looked back up the lake. The red evening light filled the west, and from all the glens and intervales the fogs filed down and marched out upon the water. Here and there the breeze lifted the veil, and, like pictures in a kaleidoscope, bits of the colored hill-side gleamed in the distance; but the northern mountain, which we had named Sentinel Peak, was completely hidden from our sight, and, even as we looked, the night seemed falling over the valley, and, leaving our anchorage, we floated away.

As the water deepened on the shoal, Eva, who had been leaning over the side, watching the sandy floor, suddenly plunged her arm in the tide, and brought up a glittering circlet. It was a ring, a man's signet-ring, of Oriental amethyst, with a coat-of-arms in intaglio. Eagerly we examined the treasure-trove, holding it up to the fading light, and endeavoring to make out the heraldic design; but, having only a limited knowledge of the subject, we were obliged to await our return home, and a consultation with the proper authorities.

"It is certainly gigantic," said Eva, after vainly trying to secure it upon one of her fingers. "The knights of olden times were, no doubt, powerfully built, and able to put to flight ten of our modern youths."

"For my part," I replied, "I think it was dropped in the lake as long ago as the Revolution. We know that the British army passed through this region, and, no doubt, the ring dropped from the finger of some young scion of English aristocracy, as his regiment crossed the water in *bateaux*. How strange that we should discover the gem after so many years!"

Rowing on again, much excited with our adventure, the darkness overtook us, and the fog loomed around the boat like cloudy ranks of spectres.

Passing the mouth of a stream not far from the station-house, a strange phenomenon startled us. Resting on our oars, we gazed at the sight, which seemed to be a flame suspended in the air, darting hither and thither over the water, while every now and then a glitter, as of shining steel, was visible beneath. The fiery torch flared up in the darkness, and sparks and cinders fell into the water, lighting up the dim banks and dusky, overhanging trees; but no boat was visible, and no human form, although the flame moved backward and forward as if possessed with life and volition. Suddenly it seemed to approach us; we rowed away with all our strength, and, when we looked back, it had disappeared. No light could be seen; but over the water echoed a most unearthly laugh.

"This is certainly a haunted lake," said Eva; and, exerting all our skill, we soon reached the little wharf, seeing with secret relief the commonplace face of the old fisherman by his prosaic lamp in his unromantic office.

We were just in time, for in another minute we heard the whistle of the approaching train, and soon, safe in the lighted car, were discussing the adventures of the day. As we approached Endicott, I said, impressively:

"Eva Kempton, never say that the days of romantic adventure are over. Look back and recall the wonders, the mysteries, and the charms we have discovered in the past seven hours—the lake, the Undine strand with its hermitage, Mossy River and the lonely grave, the wondrous siren and her musical court, the reef and its signet-ring, the fiery phantom hovering over the water, and our skiff with its legendary name. What enigmas! what strange and unaccountable scenes! Truly, this has been a day of mystery."

POSTSCRIPTUM.

EVA'S NARRATIVE.

Several weeks after the occurrences narrated above, I went to visit a cousin at Harcourt. Her brother, a Learnington collegian, was spending his vacation at home, and added much to the pleasure of my visit. One morning, on the veranda, we had been discussing the romance and reality of modern life. Harry, with the dogmatism of his class, maintained that prosaic reality was all that was left for us, and that the increase of knowledge had banished romance, which was only another name for ignorance, from the world forever. But I, clinging to my well-loved legends, proclaimed him a rude utilitarian, a living Gradgrind; and, remembering my strange adventures on the unknown lake, I related them, much as they are given above. I will not repeat the story, but merely give the heads, with his comments as I proceeded:

THE LAKE AND THE LORELAI.

"Oh, yes; I know the place—Long Pond, with Rum Hill on the

north. We often go over there fishing from Learnington—only ten miles, you know. That boat used to belong to Jim Caruthers; he's a sentimental chap, and named it Lorelai, after some German song. You must know him, by-the-way, for he often goes to Plum Corners—a fat, red-faced fellow; stammers a little."

THE UNDINE STRAND AND HERMITAGE.

"Black Dick's shanty! He's a queer character, fishes a little, fiddles a little, and drinks a great deal; he fiddles and plays the banjo for picnic parties over at Scoty's Tavern, on the road to Mugtown, just back of the point. I would not advise you, Miss Kempton, to go gazing into the windows of all the shanties you see, and fancying they are hermitages inhabited by remorseful hermits, who play the guitar to assuage their feelings."

MOSSY RIVER AND ITS LONELY GRAVE.

"One-leg Creek! so called from an old fisherman with one leg, who used to live there. There used to be a log meeting-house some distance up-stream, the original church of the first settlers, with the graveyard attached. You must have seen the wagon-track, the old road. It leads back to Scoty's Tavern and the Mugtown turnpike. When the farmers decided to build a new meeting-house at Mugtown, they removed the remains of their relatives to the new cemetery, all but that one grave. Peter Stebbins, a farmer near by, refused to pay the expenses of removal, and, as the grave was that of his great-aunt, no one else felt called upon to attend to it. There used to be a head-stone, a perfect curiosity; I remember the inscription—'Hepsy York, aged fifty-two. She had her faults (excess of liquor and swearing); but she was kind to the poor (giving them freely of a certain balsam, called George Washington cureall), and died, June 2, 1820 (of liver-complaint), suddenly.' Strange you did not know it was a graveyard. Didn't you notice the holes and hollows?"

THE SIREN AND HER COURT.

"You do not mean to say that you saw her! Actually saw Amatira and her troupe? Then she *was* there, after all! We heard that she came over from Belle Springs across the hills, and spent a day on the pond; but we did not believe it. To think that you two girls actually stood there an hour and heard her sing, when any of us fellows would have given hundreds of dollars for the chance! I never heard her but once, and that was in 'Robert le Diable.' How did she look? What did she sing?"

After answering these and many other questions of the excited youth, he at length allowed me to proceed to

THE REEF AND ITS SIGNET-RING.

"So you found it, did you? Well, I am glad. It belongs to old Griddles; he lost it the last time he went fishing over there. It seems his mother was named Campbell, and so he stole the Scotch coat-of-arms, and had the stone cut to match it. He's a good fellow, but dreadfully awkward; a great, splay-footed, loose-jointed creature, with spectacles—studying for the ministry, you know—wears prunella gaiters."

THE FIERY PHANTOM.

A peal of laughter checked my description in the middle.

"This is too good!" shouted Harry. "This is a fit termination for your day of mystery. The nineteenth century has not lost its romance, indeed, when two young ladies meet a fiery phantom on Long Pond!" And again a roar of laughter greeted my ears.

"But what was it, then, Mr. Lawrence?"

"Two darkeys on a log, spearing for eels!"

CONSTANCE F. WOOLSON.

TWO WEEKS IN THE WILDERNESS.

OUR party, three in number, started from New York in the third week of May, went to Albany by boat, and from there by rail to Utica, and from Utica proceeded *via* Black-River Railroad to Lowville, whence we proposed to enter the Adirondack wilderness. At the principal inn our arrival, and that of another fishing-party, produced a great commotion. Guides and travellers came pouring in to offer their services, the news of our presence and the object of our visit having apparently travelled from house to house, and street to street, as the Fiery Cross sped onward among the Highland clans. Having engaged our guides with their three boats, and the necessary cooking and eating utensils, and arranged with a person, who exercised the seemingly incompatible callings of a druggist and keeper of a livery-stable, to send us forward to Fenton's next day, we visited a grocer's, and laid in our supplies, which consisted of tea, coffee, flour, sugar, potatoes, pork, pepper, salt, baking-powder, candles, matches, crackers, condensed milk, and three bottles of oil of tar, with which to saturate our hands, faces, and necks, in case we should be overtaken by black flies, those terrible little pests of the woods—where, after a certain time, as Tennyson said of the world, "each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies."

It was a glorious morning as we drove out of Lowville on our way to the wilderness, leaving our guides to follow in another conveyance. Before reaching Fenton's, where we dined on trout—and such trout, deliciously cooked in cream!—we decided to be driven to the still water on Beaver River, in lieu of walking there, as originally intended. Sleeping there that night, we took our seats next day in the boats, and at once began trolling for trout, our guides rowing slowly up the river, occasionally halting for half an hour where a favorable spot for throwing a fly presented itself. When we pulled up our boats that night on the banks of the Beaver River, near Burnt Lake, where we camped, they contained more trout than six able-bodied and exceedingly hungry men could eat for that night's supper and the next morning's breakfast.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, I will introduce the readers of APPLETONS' JOURNAL to our camp. It consists of a low shanty made of spruce-bark, entirely open in front; while the fringes, cut from the branches of a hemlock tree, and spread on the ground, covered by our simple three-sided edifice, make a soft and comfortable couch for us and our guides. In front of the shanty burns a huge fire, for which a maple-tree was cut down and hewn into logs of a suitable size. Two crotched poles, driven in the ground, with a cross-stick, form a "coign of vantage" from which the pots are suspended. Seated around the mess-chest, which occupies a place in the centre of the shanty, we enjoy our supper of trout, potatoes, and flapjacks, as only hungry hunters can enjoy eating. Our supper finished, the guides occupy themselves for half an hour in the same pleasant manner, after which the smokers betake themselves to pipes or cigars, and all take part in a general conversation, which is confined, for the most part, to the subject of fish and fishing. By nine o'clock all is quiet in our camp, with the exception of the singing of the tree-toads, the occasional cry of an owl or loon, or the distant howl of a hungry wolf.

By seven o'clock next day we were under way, with our flies floating behind us as we moved up the river, making, as on the previous day, occasional halts at a pool. From one of these the writer took a dozen fine trout in less than an hour. Several deer presented themselves to our vision, and a she-bear and two cubs showed very evident signs of astonishment at beholding us, and lost no time in disappearing through the willow and elder-bushes that lined the bank of the river. Tracks of deer and various wild animals were constantly visible on the muddy banks of the stream, and it was a source of constant surprise to the writer to observe how accurately his guide would name the animal whose footprints were left behind, as well as the length of time that had passed since the wolf, bear, fisher, muskrat, or deer, had left its tracks. I may here remark that my guide was a hunter, and the son of a hunter; "born and raised in the woods," to quote his own words, and had never set foot in a city. He had the noiseless step of an Indian, and was a man of marvellously few words, for your true hunter talks little—the habit of his skill is silence. Sometimes half a minute would elapse before a reply would come; and, indeed, for the first day or two, I constantly made the mistake of supposing that Mark (for that was his name) did not hear me when I spoke to him, till at length I learned that his life in the woods, where he was often alone for weeks, had engendered that inertia and torpidity of mind which prevented him from making an immediate answer. When we reached the Little Rapids, where we were to camp for the night, our baskets contained seventy handsome trout. Here we fell in with a fishing-party returning, with whom we made an exchange of magazines and papers of late date for some of their surplus candles, our supply having given out. The elder of the party described one of his companions, a tall, slab-sided, hungry-looking specimen, as a "man who eats more trout than he catches," and added that it was his opinion that the youth would prove an unprofitable boarder to any one who should undertake to feed him.

Next morning we were wading in the rapids with our rods, while the guides were carrying the boats' baggage and *fiambreras*—to use