

Dale. Half doubting, yet hopeful, she offered up a prayer to her Maker, that she might once more be restored to her friends, not forgetting to ask His blessing on poor Nitia, who had delivered her from her much dreaded bondage.

It was nearly dark when she emerged from the deep forest that headed the little valley of Oak Dale. As she approached the ruins of the old log hut, which had once been her home, and in which she had been so happy, she alighted from her pony and gazed about in quest of some little article that might have belonged to the lover or brother whom she mourned as dead. The search was ineffectual, and the poor girl seated herself on the damp ground, where she remained, buried in deep thought, for more than an hour. The grief caused by the supposed death of her lover and brother was refreshed in her mind, and she thought how few were the joys life held for her in the future. No one could ever love her as they had loved her—there was no one living that she could ever love as she had loved them. Surely there was some one living at Oak Dale, who could give her the details of their sad death. But who? Suddenly she thought of Harry Randall and his sister. Could it be possible that they, too, had been massacred? She would ascertain, at all events. She arose, threw the saddle from her weary steed and picketed him near by, where she was sure he would fare well for the night.

"Now come, Bruno," she said, patting the dog kindly on the head, "we will introduce ourselves to society at Oak Dale. What will they think of me?" she soliloquized, remembering for the first time the coarse deer-skin garment which constituted her wardrobe. "They'll stare at me in amazement, I'll be bound. Guess there's no one here, anyway, that ever knew little Dess Watson; if there is, they won't know her now, at all events. Heigh-ho, somewhere here is where the old trapper used to live. Guess he and his little family are safe beyond all earthly cares. Wonder who lives in this neat little frame house? It don't look much like the old log hut in which the old trapper was content to live, does it? We'll go in, Bruno boy, and get a mothful to eat, anyway. It has been some time since we tasted food, old fellow, and I'm inclined to think that a piece of bread and butter wouldn't go bad just now." Accordingly, she approached the house and rapped lightly on the partly-open door.

"Come in," some one said, and the girl was surprised, on entering, to behold the old trapper and his little family seated around a cheery fire, apparently in the full enjoyment of life. The strange appearance of their visitor threw Mrs. Kingston and the children into a very panic of fear.

"Great heavens! the Injuns are upon us agin!" the old lady exclaimed, rising to her feet, her fat face becoming perfectly livid in her excitement.

Dess laughed outright as she advanced toward the old trapper, who sat staring at her, his eyes dilated and his face considerably elongated.

"I suppose you have all forgotten Dess Watson, who used to visit you so often," the girl said, extending her little, brown hand.

"It can't be that she's come to life agin?" the old trapper asked, as he arose and took the proffered hand, while he gazed searchingly into her pretty brown face.

"No, no, it's a squaw!" screamed Mrs. Kingston, as she gathered her flock about her, preparatory to leaving the establishment.

Just here old Bruno, who had been impatiently waiting an invitation to come in, entered and advanced to the side of his amused mistress. They all recognized him.

"Why, ole woman, it's Dessie Watson, jest asartin as I'm Dan Kingston!" exclaimed the old trapper, as he led the girl to a table, and, stooping down, scrutinized her face closely by the light of a tallow candle.

"I'd never 'a' knowed her," said the "ole woman," as she approached the girl and gazed intently at her round, laughing face. "Why, God bless you, Dessie!" she exclaimed, as she folded the girl to her breast in a tender embrace. "Have you been dead, and come to life agin, or what? Why, dear me, I can't hardly believe yet that it's you," she said, recoiling at the touch of the coarse deer-skin garment in which Dessie was arrayed. "Come, take off that nasty, hairy gown and that ugly squaw cap, and let me see if I can see any resemblance to our sweet, bright-eyed Dessie Watson," and the old lady took the candle and almost dragged the girl into an adjoining room.

She was not perfectly satisfied until she had seen her clad in a neat calico wrapper of her own, which, though vastly too large, changed the girl's appearance wonderfully.

"I can scarcely believe it's myself," Dess said, as she gazed at her reflection in the mirror. "I thought I had grown so awfully ugly and black—though, to be sure, I am none too white, am I? I guess I'll have to return to the old deer-skin agin, this seems so light, so unnatural like."

"No, never; why, you're jest as purty as a rose, dear child," the old lady said, as she viewed the girl from head to foot. "Your hair's jest as curly, an' your eyes jest as bright an' merry as they were two years ago an' over. Why, Lord bless you, dear, it seems as how the grave had give up its dead, to see you back agin. But come, now, I jest bet the ole