

or yourself, either—by stayin' concealed. He may love you best; an' if he does, he'd not be actin' right if he married her."

"I can not view the matter as you do, Mrs. Kingston," Dess said, gazing gloomily into the depth of the great fire. "At all events, my mind is firmly fixed, and you will render me a kind service by withholding my secret—at least, until after they are married."

The old trapper was silent. He could not advise the girl, and, though he was grieved to know that she was suffering, he lacked words to express the great depth of his sympathy. At length, in order to divert her thoughts from her new trouble, he branched off, relating all the incidents connected with the Oak Dale massacre, their subsequent pursuit and encounter with the savages, how Mortimer Gray was wounded and how he lay for several weeks disabled, being unable to join the volunteers in their warfare against the savages. Then he relate the incidents connected with the affray in which George Watson had received an arrow wound in the left arm, and how they had subsequently caused the savages, except a small remnant, to yield up their arms and go on the reservation. He told how they had searched for Watumni, and how Hotiti, who had assured them that Watumni was dead, had maintained ignorance as to the fate of the white captive. The narration was a lengthy one, and it was late in the night when the three sought their beds—if not to sleep, to think over the strange events which had happened within the space of a little more than two years.

"It's almost like a story," Mrs. Kingston said, while the old trapper wondered what he could do or say that would make pretty Dess look and talk as she had looked and talked before hearing of the unfaithfulness of the man whom she had loved so tenderly.

Dess, from very exhaustion, soon fell into a deep, troubled sleep, in which she fancied she saw Mabel arrayed in her bridal robe of spotless white. She had never seen anything half so beautiful as Mabel; and oh, how happy, how joyous she appeared! What surprised the dreamer most, was the unnatural appearance of the bridegroom. He was handsome, happy, and there was something familiar in his face; but it was not the face of Mortimer Gray. Surprised and bewildered, she looked about the room for Mortimer, but he was nowhere to be seen. She saw the ceremony performed, the bride and groom congratulated, when she awoke to find herself enveloped in a hot, clammy perspiration, and her temples throbbing and aching fearfully.

It was late next morning when she arose, and, after making a hasty toilet, joined the old trapper and his wife at the breakfast table. She managed to pre-

sent a very cheerful face to her host and hostess, though it cost her a great effort to do so. But Dessie Watson was not the one to grieve over the inevitable, if possible to avoid it; and she tried hard enough to banish Mortimer Gray from her heart, and to be glad that he was happy in a new love. After breakfast, she penned a neat little note to her brother, the sum and substance of which was as follows:

MY DEAR BROTHER:

You must not faint with joy, please, when you learn that your sister, whom you have long mourned as dead, is living, and wishes to come to you at once. Please send sufficient funds to pay my expenses to your home. Remember that I do not want any one at Oak Dale, save Trapper Dan and his family, to know that it has pleased the Almighty to protect me from the fiendish savages. I have much to say to you, but I can wait until I can sit by your side and tell you all. Address your letter to Dan Kingston, and not to
Your loving sister,
DESS WATSON.

"Now Mr. Kingston," said the girl, as she enclosed the missive in an envelope and sealed it, "I will get you to address this letter to my brother, and then you will oblige me by putting it in the office some time to-day."

"I'll do it, Dessie," the old trapper said, taking the pen in his great, rough hand, "but the mail don't go out agin for nigh onto a week. Le's see, to-day's Thursday—no, it 'll not go out agin until next Wednesday mornin'."

So the old fellow wrote the superscription on the letter, and then put it in the inside pocket of his great overcoat, which hung against the wall.

Scarcely had he done so, ere a light rap was heard on the door, and in an instant Dess had darted into an adjoining room, almost dragging old Bruno after her.

"My gracious! If it ain't Miss Randall!" Mrs. Kingston exclaimed, as the visitor entered. "Take a seat, dear, and—dear me, child! I hadn't noticed afore how white you are. You ain't sick, be you?"

"Oh, no, not sick," Dess heard the visitor say, and she fancied her voice was not so low and sweet as it was in the days gone by, "though you know I have not been real well for a long time past," the girl added, with a sigh.

"Yes, I know; but I thought, bein' as you was goin' to git married party soon, you'd cheer up a bit, an' mebbey git healthier. I'm powerful glad you're goin' to git a good man, Belle. You couldn't 's' done better 'n to take Mortimer."

"No," Mabel answered; and then, as if eager to change the conversation, commenced talking about something else.

Mrs. Kingston was astonished, a few minutes later, when her youngest boy approached Mabel, and, looking her straight in the face, said: "A squaw and