

In his joy, George caught the fair girl to his breast, regardless as to who might witness the happy scene. "Then you love me, Mabel? Oh, my darling! I did not dream, when I came here, that such great happiness awaited me. And you love me, and will be my wife, Mabel?" he asked, fearful that he had not understood her aright.

"I have never loved any one else, George, and I will wed you, and then I shall be a sister to dear, darling little Dess, whom I love so much. Oh, let me go, please; you forget how near we are to Mr. Kingston's," the happy girl said, releasing herself from the young man's ardent embrace.

"So we are, but it makes no difference. I shall introduce you as my future bride, if you will let me," George said, as he took his fiancée's hand and pressed it fervently, as he led her to the door.

As they entered, the scene that met their gaze was a most happy one—Mortimer Gray seated by the side of Dessie Watson, with her pretty little head reclining on his broad, manly breast, while Trapper Dan and his wife looked on, apparently happy in seeing their happiness. Old Bruno was evidently much pleased with the state of affairs, as he lay before the fire, now and then looking up into his mistress' face to assure himself that she was content. We will not endeavor to describe the meeting between brother and sister, who had been so cruelly separated for more than two years, or how cordially George was received by Mortimer Gray, as well as by the old trapper and his wife. But when Dess had kissed and embraced him to her heart's content, Mabel crept slyly up to her side and whispered—

"Haven't you a kiss for me also, just one?"

Dess kissed her tenderly, but was surprised when her brother said, as he took Mabel's little hand in his—

"Allow me to introduce your future sister-in-law, Dessie. Mabel has promised to be my bride, which I hope will be at no distant day."

"Oh, Belle what a sly little minx you are! Stoop down quick, and let me kiss you again and again, you dear little darling."

"And this is the hopeless love you spoke of, is it?" Mortimer laughed, as he clasped Mabel's hand in his own.

"Wall, now, folks, I mus' say things is runnin' mighty cur'ous, somehow or other," the old trapper

put in, stretching his long legs toward the fire. "I'm mighty glad to see you all so happy like. Here, two weeks ago our little savage never wanted to look on Mortimer Gray's face agin, an' now it appears she can't look at it enough. Mortimer was goin' to marry one gal, an' now he's goin to marry t'other. Mabel, that used to go pokin' about, lookin' like a ghost, is the happiest little mortal I ever see; an' George Watson looks like the world only held one purty pusson, an' that pusson was Belle Randall. It all seems plagued queer, somehow or other. Come, ole woman, give us a buss, jest to start the ball rollin', you know." So saying, the old fellow caught the "ole woman" in his arms, and, despite her efforts, succeeded in capturing the desired "buss," as he called it.

Before dark, the house was filled with people, who, having heard of the return of little Dess, came flocking in, two, three, and sometimes as many as a half dozen at a time, to assure themselves that it was the genuine Dessie Watson, and not her ghost, that had so mysteriously appeared. Among the number were Harry Randall and his father, who were not content to retire until they had heard the girl relate the story of her captivity and adventures among the savages.

"It all sounds like a story, by Jove!" Harry declared, as the girl concluded her narrative. "The way that old chief got smitten with your charms on the day of your strange encounter in the forest, and then that he should have been the means of saving your life on the day of the massacre. Your youth, beauty and daring evidently warmed the old fellow's heart; and he was going to marry you, whether you liked it or not, which so aroused his wife's jealousy that she was only too glad to aid you in your flight."

"Yes, an' the way she came in upon us one night, rigged out an' out like a squaw, an' frightened the ole woman near out of her senses; an' had got to be sech a savage that she positively refused to ever look on Mortimer Gray's face agin," the old trapper added, with a mischievous glance at Dess and her lover, both of whom enjoyed the joke immensely.

We will pass over the few happy weeks following, when Oak Dale was favored with a double wedding; and the couples thus happily united are still living in the little valley.

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