

# WICKLY'S WOODS

By H. W. TAYLOR

## CHAPTER V.

The depth of the wide ravine and the phenomenal height of the great trees of this primeval forest of Indiana, together constituted an inclosure so high walled as to shut out all sights, save itself and patches of sky, black-veined with the great oak limbs, and mottled with bunches of green leaves.

The moist, cool sides of the long "hol-low," and the dense canopy of over-hanging leaves, layer above layer, had prevented the two explorers from feeling to any noticeable degree the stifling heat and "unbreathableness" of the atmosphere, as Mr. Mason put it.

Now that they had reached the very crest of the "ridge," and come upon a spot of "open" ground, perhaps two or three acres in extent, in which there were from some unknown cause but a few large oak trees widely scattered, they were suddenly aware that they could run no longer, and both walked silently and languidly toward the large round tent now quite conspicuous. At the door they paused, looked in each other's faces, and laughed.

"I'm afraid you are an alarmist, Mr. Mason. See! Not a drop of rain has fallen yet. And there is not even the most distant mutter of thunder, although that cloud is black enough as to its wings, and—but isn't it breaking up before it can reach us? See what a light space right in the middle of the cloud. You can almost see the blue sky through it. Now I know you are an alarmist."

She looked round at Mr. Mason, and was positive that he had not heard her. With his yellow straw hat pulled hard down upon his brown-gray locks—worn decidedly too long, she thought—he was standing with face slightly upturned and his rather heavy, broad chin thrust forward in the attitude that is interpreted to mean determined resistance or fierce attack.

His face was pale, or the darkness made it seem colorless, and his blue eyes were widely opened as if to take in the whole scope and meaning of the heavens without in the least altering that pose of determined resistance.

Looking at him thus, there came upon Lizzy Wickly a new and strange sense of great dread of something—she had no notion what—and with it a compensating sense of reliance in the strong, determined, defiant man before her.

He even seemed in that instant to be revealed to her in a totally new and imposing phase, as if revealed by the greenish glare from the strange, swift cloud that was now coming down upon them from the west, with a frightful velocity faintly indicated in the sprays of grayish ash vapor that flew before it like great gray birds fluttering in a wild, vain agony of terror.

Mason turned suddenly and ran into the tent, and in a moment came backing out and dragging a confused mass of heavy two-inch rope and canvas tarpaulin after him.

"Help me with these," he said in a low, clear voice; "take this end of the rope and get it out of the tangle, if you can."

He dropped it at her feet, and once more plunging into the tent, came out backward again, carrying this time a heavy sledge and a mass of large iron-ringed tent pins.

Carrying these with him, dropping a pin here and there, as he ran a little way down the eastern slope of the hill, she saw that he stopped at a pile of the reddish-yellow clay that indicated the location of one of the pits.

A dim perception of his purpose began to glow in her mind; and she took the end of the cable and dragged it, uncoupling from its tangle like the dun gray serpent of the storm, down toward him.

He was already swinging the great sledge as a child would whirl a top hammer—driving the long, stout stakes deep into the firm clay with ponderous strokes whose heavy sound reverberated up and down the many converging ravines like the beating of the wings of the storm upon its torn breast.

Even in the silent horror of anticipation, she could not fail to note the practical skill and precision of the man. She saw him seize stake after stake exactly at the right point with his veined and muscular left hand just below the iron ring that encircled the head of the pin; then with one light tap of the sledge the stake was standing slanted smartly outward, the strong man with a fierce, even vengeful look in his face, was standing back whirling the heavy hammer in wide, perpendicular circles, bringing it down with a force that soon sunk the ironed pin deep in the clay. Then a step would bring him to another pin; and so the process went on until the pit stood bedged with strong stakes.

"Now, help me with this rope, Miss Lizzy," he said in the rapid, absorbed tone that indicates intense mental action.

She did not ask what she must do, as at other times she certainly would; but she seemed to be able to take her direction from the glances of his glittering eyes as he moved with surprising rapidity and strength, drawing the heavy cable in mysterious knots about pin after pin, and so weaving a network of the strong rope across the opening of the shallow pit whose bluish looking floor she could see eight feet below the edge. Then the tarpaulin was rapidly drawn two-thirds of the way across the hole and fastened by the tying of many small cords reeved in close set eyelets along its edge.

"Now," he said, after taking one rapid glance at all the surroundings, "we have done all that can be done by human foresight in such an emergency as this. The cyclone may veer suddenly to the north

or the south of us. But if not—"

He ceased speaking. She crept up to his side and took his arm in silence, the mute and altogether automatic tribute and confession of her need of protection and her belief that he afforded it.

He pointed to the widening central, greenish dun opening of the vast black cloud, an opening as symmetrically round as if made with all the elaborate apparatus pertaining to modern civil engineering.

Across the opening nearer the lower edge than the upper, and stretching in a horizontal line from rim to rim of the visible heavens, flew what looked most like an innumerable flock of wild pigeons, such as used to fly twice in a year across the whole western continent in an almost unbroken line.

"What is it? What are they?" she asked, in a terror of curious wonder.

A vast low-noted roar began to make most twigs of the tallest poplars, the hills tremble. High up in the top-broad leaves began to be whirled about in a growing fury.

"Look! look!" he said, pointing to the edge of the wood. "There is the answer to your question."

As he spoke a cloud of brown, dead leaves seemed to rise up from the edge of the forest like a mighty covey of whirling quails frightened at the approach of the hunters of the upper air, and flew away to the hills for safety. Then, too, the air was filled with green leaves. Little twigs of poplar and oak, and pieces of the iron-like covering of the shellbark, dropped about them.

Lower bent the trees, as if preparing for a mighty leap, an attack upon all the harshest powers of sound, and then the whole universe seemed smitten with one roaring, stunning crash that filled all space with the darkness of flying leaves and twigs, and branches, and dust, and stinging gravel, and the crushing, and rending, and splintering of mighty trees.

Shouting something in her ear that she was utterly unable to distinguish, he seized her about the waist and literally dropped her into the pit below the flapping and beating tarpaulin. In an instant he was at her side, and here his shrillest tones could be distinguished even in the awful roar of the cyclone, and the redoubled crash of splintering trees.

"Keep up against this side of the pit! It is safest here! Don't try to move, no matter what happens! I will stand between you and the worst."

She knew that he took her in his arms and pressing her to his breast, held her immovable against the side of the firm clay wall with her whole figure almost welded into his own. She knew it, but she made no protest. She saw that this was the very extremity of devotion and courageous self-interposition against an imminent and appalling death.

She thought of it as with crash after crash great trees thundered down to the reeling, resounding earth, whipping their smaller topmost branches down upon tarpaulin and taut cable netting, with stunning report like the crackle of rifles in the roar of artillery. One great splintered oak branch tore through the tarpaulin and pinned it against the opposite side of the pit at the very bottom of the wall.

Then there came a mighty dash of falling waters, and the fury of the cyclone had whirled away to the north-east. She did not realize that the awful peril was over, until he gently and almost stealthily unclasped his arms from about her, and drew back a little way.

"I will get up and see if I can draw the tarpaulin far enough over to keep the rain out," he said gently as he reached up and drew himself along the sturdy oak branch that the storm had hurled upon them in its rage at their escape. Presently he came back. "I couldn't move it an inch," he said, with a faint smile. "But the rain will be practically over in half an hour, and I think our cavern of refuge will not be deluged by that time."

Nevertheless they were compelled to abandon their cavern of refuge, as he had named it—some minutes before the rain had entirely ceased. Again he climbed up, and lying down upon the unbroken cable netting, he reached down and took both her hands in his own.

"See how apparent evils work out for our good," he said laughingly. "If the cyclone had not hurled this ragged oak limb into our cavern, I should be compelled to make a rope ladder for you. As it is, you can walk up it with my help. There, put your boot upon that little snag. It's as hard as iron and will support twice your weight. Now, let me take you, so. There! You are once more above ground, and safe. Look around you and judge of the awful force of a real cyclone, and the saving grace of a pit that I assure you was not dug for my neighbor, although fortunately she fell into it at the right moment."

"Or was cast into it by my jealous brother," she said with an effort at gaiety. And then seeing the sudden shadow upon his face, she hastened to say: "Look at this path through the forest, Mr. Mason. Every tree cut down as if by the blows of some titanic ax. Nothing but the slender saplings and dwarfed bushes remaining. Actually, I can see straight down into the Argus-eyed village of Sandtown. And if I can see clearly, there isn't so much as a roof lifted off."

"No! The storm teaped over that portion of the river bottom—a long leap—probably from the opposite bluffs, alighting just in the edge of your property, Miss Lizzy. Look! Yonder are your Argus-eyed villagers trooping up here to make search for us. You see what an interest they take in you. I believe that

is your father in the lead there—picking his way through the debris of the storm. Wave your handkerchief! Or does he see us already? Well, I will resign you to him while I undertake a tedious hunt after my tent and a certain heavy chest of valuable instruments that must be somewhere in the ruins. I will see you and make comparisons of mental notes, this evening or to-morrow afternoon, Miss Lizzy. Sorry for the spoilation of that pretty dress and lovely hat! But I did my best."

He was gone before she could even begin to form a fitting reply. Hours afterward she accused herself of genuine Sandtown rudeness, in not thanking him in some fitting phrase.

## CHAPTER VI.

On the morrow there was the congregation at Mount Zion as usual, to hear "that air feller" lecture on some everyday theme, when the regular preacher was not there, and what happened two Sundays out of the four or five in each month.

After a little waiting everybody was seated in the new, white little church, save and excepting a dozen godless boys of fifteen to twenty years, who came galloping up like a troop of wild Indians, and sat in their saddles or rode about under the long, drooping limbs of the sparsely growing beeches that cast their cool, quiet Sunday shadows over Mount Zion Church.

Even they ceased their ordinary occupation of switching each other's horses to make them jump, and knocking off each other's hats to compel the unfortunate hatless to dismount in order to recover that portion of his Sunday attire.

In fact, all this "wild set" of boys who came here from a distant neighborhood paused in their gambols when it was whispered about that "the new preacher" was not only absent from his post, but absent from all the purlieus of Sandtown.

At first there was much speculation and many various opinions as to the probable whereabouts of Mr. Mason. He had gone away from his work on several other occasions, it is true, but never before had he gone without telling "Coonrod" Redden just where he was going and precisely when he would be back.

Lizzy Wickly was greatly annoyed at this unforeseen impediment in the way of the prompt amends that she had so fully contemplated making on that very day. She remembered now that she had always treated Mr. Mason a little brusquely, even maybe patronizingly, when she wasn't teasing him.

This she knew, grew out of her vast respect, and even reverence, for his employer—which feeling she was compelled at last to confess, had its origin and whole growth in the mystery with which Prof. Huntley chose to surround himself.

She had been driven to think of him as so earnestly devoted to the one noble calling of patiently wringing out of Earth the secrets of the ages, for the instruction and elevation of mankind, that he could find no time, even if such a man could have the inclination, to mingle with the common people of the village.

And taking another view, was not Mr. Will Mason himself, responsible for Prof. Huntley's decidedly distant attitude toward all the people of Sandtown? Had not Mr. Mason deliberately misrepresented her father's family to Prof. Huntley?

If he had told his employer that the Wicklys were educated people, and far above their surroundings in all mental acquirements—if he had said to him what he had said to her on yesterday afternoon, only, when she had been unusually respectful and considerate toward him?

If he had done this, would not Prof. Huntley have sought and obtained an introduction—an undertaking so easily achieved in Sandtown? And then! Well then, candidly she would have done her very best to interest and impress him.

For she might as well confess to herself now as to evade self-questionings, as she had done for a month past, Lizzy Wickly was in love with Prof. Huntley!

Now do not sneer at the notion of this really capable young woman being in love with a man she had not seen. Have any of us, who have loved and loved again, had so much the advantage of this romantic young woman? Have we really seen the people we have loved?

On the other hand, have we not been more effectually prevented from seeing them than if a mere few thousands of yards of green summer woods lay perpetually between them and us? Have not all of us awaked from the trance of love to find that our fingers had been caressing asinine ears? And is not this the meaning of the Midsummer Night's Dream?

(To be continued.)

## The Retort Vicious.

"I suppose you missed me last evening," said the first boarder, with a superior air; "I was up at Swellman's house."

"Yes?" remarked the other, rather frigidly.

"Yes, I dined out last evening."

"The idea! It was so cool last night I should think the cook might at least have asked you into the kitchen."—Philadelphia Press.

## Slight Mistake.

"You have a pretty tough-looking lot of customers to dispose of this morning, haven't you?" remarked the friend of the magistrate who had dropped in at the Police Court.

"Huh!" rejoined the dispenser of justice, "you are looking at the wrong bunch. Those are the lawyers."—Chicago News.

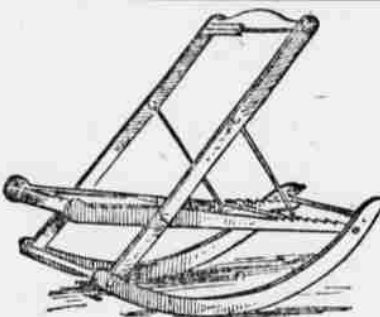
## Her Advantage.

Stubb—Eve was the first woman and the mother of feminine blunders.

Penn—Yes, and I bet if trolley cars had been running then she would have stepped off one backward.



**Morris Chair and Rocker Combined.**  
Rocking chairs and Morris chairs are both useful pieces of furniture, especially when a person does not feel tired enough to go to bed, but at the same time needs rest. Either is suitable for the purpose, but a New York man thought it would be a good idea to combine the two, making a combi-



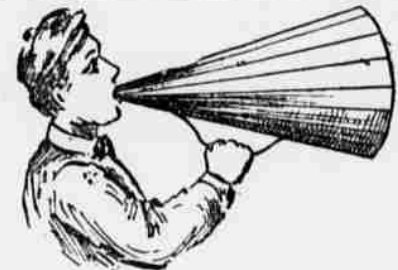
ADJUSTABLE AT ANY ANGLE.

nation Morris chair and rocker. An illustration of the frame is shown here, the rockers being connected by a rod in the rear and a bar in the front. The frame for the back is journaled to the front ends of the rocker, and also with an intermediate frame, the latter being movable and provided with a ratchet mechanism. A rod or pawl depends from the back frame, this pawl engaging with the ratchet mechanism, the arrangement being such that the frame can be disposed at different angles to suit the user's wishes.

David Holcke, of New York City, is the patentee.

## Collapsible Megaphone.

The invention of the graphophone brought the megaphone into more extended use, until now it can be obtained in all sizes and shapes. Some of these megaphones are made large enough to produce sounds that can be heard in any part of a large hall. College students especially find them useful in cheering for their teams in athletic games, as the volume of sound produced by a hundred megaphones with as many students on the other



FOLDS UP INTO A CANE.

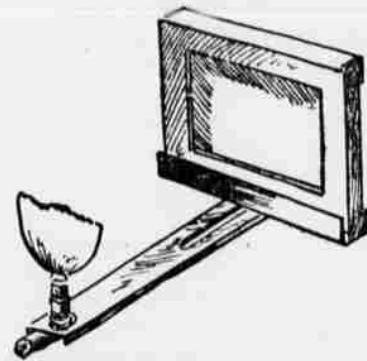
end is enormous. The only difficulty is the carrying of these large megaphones, they being unwieldy and clumsy. A New York man has invented a collapsible megaphone, which, when not in use, can be folded up in the shape of a cane and easily carried in the hand. When open the body is in

the form of a cone, a ring in the apex serving as the mouthpiece. The body is made of a number of slats hinged together, a locking and unlocking device holding the slats in position. A handle is secured to one of the slats for holding the megaphone up to the mouth when in use.

Hollister Sturges, of New York City, is the patentee.

## For Developing Negatives.

Ten years ago only professional photographers and those skilled in the art were considered competent to take photographs, but the camera has now been so simplified and so many improvements made to it that with a little practice and experimentation any intelligent person can take pictures. This simplification has brought the camera within the reach of all, which accounts for the large increase in the number now in use. Taking the picture is, of course, only the first stage in photography, and the more difficult part of developing the negative and the printing are not so easy. As few people have the leisure time during the day when the sun is shining to print from their negatives, they have to resort to gas light. Holding the

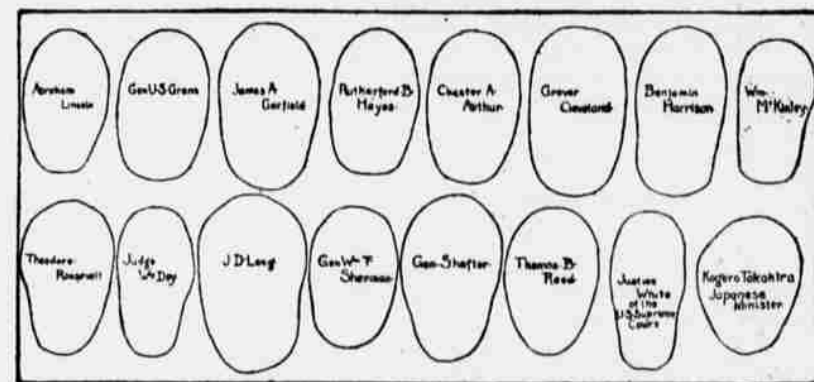


HOLDS THE PRINTING FRAME.

printing frame up to the gas light is rather tiresome, another disadvantage being the uncertainty as to whether an equal amount of light is reflected to all parts of the frame. A New York man has patented the exceedingly simple and useful attachment for gas light printing of negatives shown in the illustration. It can be attached to any gas jet and anyone can easily make one. The holder for the printing frame is arranged transversely on an arm, this arm having a small opening in one end to fasten it to the gas jet. In the other end of the arm is a longitudinal slot, through which the holder slides with means for clamping the holder at a desired point of adjustment on the arm. Provision is made for printing frames of different sizes, a spring in the holder holding the frame rigidly in place. By the use of this attachment a good print is assured, as the negatives can be adjusted in a position to secure an equal amount of light on all portions.

George W. Harse, of New York, N. Y., is the patentee.

## STRANGE SHAPES OF GREAT MEN'S HEADS.



Many years ago it occurred to a Washington hatter who catered to the choicest trade of the city to keep the outline maps punched in pieces of stiff manila paper by the flexible fingers of the "conformer," the apparatus with which the shape of the hat to be made is obtained. He began with Lincoln and the great men of his time and kept on until he died. Then his son continued the collection, and when he died his son religiously carried on the fad. Thus there has been gathered a most interesting line of mementos of all the Presidents from Lincoln to Roosevelt, most of the cabinet ministers and diplomats of the same period, and an endless number of other more or less distinguished men. Science says the man who wears the biggest hat does not necessarily possess the highest intelligence, but the anatomists keep right on weighing and comparing weights of human brains, and the alienists continue to draw conclusions therefrom. Dr. Albert W. Ferris, a prominent New York alienist, argues that if there is any basis for believing that the external configuration of the skull gives indication of the development of the brain, it is in direct contradiction to the generally accepted theories in the matter.

## Colors of the Sea.

Sea colors are generally unstable. The beautiful sea-plants that tempt us in the rock pools along the shore lose their brilliancy when taken from the water. The dying dolphin shows all the colors of pearls or opals, coming and going on his shimmering side. The sea itself is chameleon-like in its changing hues. One who has ever sat upon the shore and watched the colors coming and going upon its surface will find it hard to tell what is

the color of the sea. As a rule, bright green indicates shoal water, the lighter the tint the more shallow the depth. Dark blue water is a sign of great depth. But even blue water at a distance takes on a dark green hue. Careful observations have shown that even in the deepest water the basal color is some tint of green. In our own experience we have observed that when the lead was thrown in mid ocean, where the surface color was blue, the plunge revealed a flash of brilliant green in the opening water.