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# GENA

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# APPALACHIANS

By  
**CLARENCE MONROE WALLIN**



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*To Alma, my wife, and the thousands of other noble  
daughters of the great Appalachian country.*

*John L. ...*





#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

If, in the lines of this humble narrative, the reader should find anything of truth; anything of uplift; anything of human life, then the author shall have been fully repaid for the time employed in writing it.

CLARENCE MONROE WALLIN.



# Gena of the Appalachians

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BURIAL OF LUCKY JOE

It was late in the afternoon of a cold winter's day when they sent for him to go and perform the last sad rites at the burial of Lucky Joe.

Lucky Joe had outstripped the law in his crimes for more than forty years—hence the people had well dubbed him "Lucky." For more than three decades his name had been the synonym of dread and fear among the people of the hills. He had at length whipped them into granting him whatever he exacted of them, whether the thing in itself was right or wrong. But one memorable day, the tardy finger of the law apprehended him, and he stood up before the bar of Justice and heard the court pronounce, "Joseph Filson, guilty!" Quickly he was ushered away to the penitentiary—down to a Southern jail and to hard and endless toil for the remainder of his life. The gates of the prison closed and locked their iron jaws behind him: his keeper admonished him to be obedient, and he immediately chose to work at the blacksmith's forge. Day after day, he swung the sledge in silence. Then the days crowded into months and into years, but he pounded away at the anvil unmindful of the end. Finally death came and knocked at the door of his narrow cell and took him away.

The news of the great outlaw's death flashed back to the hills, and horse and rider took up the message and

sped over the peaks and down into the narrow gorges to tell the mountainfolk of the end. Many a mountain mother and son ran out to the roadside to meet the rider, and received the news with gladness. Men and boys gathered in groups about the forks of the roads and doubted that it could be true. But, when the remains were forwarded to the railroad station nearest the mountain home, doubt and distrust gave way to the evidence, and all were satisfied.

"No, he wouldn't come," said the man at the gate. He sat there, on his horse and fumbled at the horn of his saddle for more than a minute, all the while trying to find words with which to make further known his mission.

"I say, thet we took 'im to the schoolhouse yisterday, but the preacher wouldn't come. Don't think thet he wanted to come nohow, cause you see, Lucky wuz allus a purty bad man. But we've brot 'im back to the school house today, an' we want to put 'im away nice, an' as we knowed that you wuz here, we'd like to git you to come. We knowed thet you wuz not a preacher, but thet you wuz a kinder public Sunday-school speaker—an' we want to put 'im away nice—an' like to git you to come."

Paul Waffington saddled his horse and led him out into the deep snow, mounted, and followed the stranger out into the storm. The way was dangerous, but the two men picked their way along the mountain pass as best they could. The roar and the fury of the storm increased as they went, and the cold wind cut like the blade of a knife. Many times they were forced to lie down in the saddle with their heads against their horses' necks to protect themselves from the cutting sleet and driving snow.

True enough, the man had said at the gate that Paul Waffington was not a preacher. Nor was he engaged in any preparations to that end. But choosing to re-

main a layman, the Sunday-school and the children were the direct objects of his Christian activities. But when some human heart was sore and duty called, he responded without a murmur. Hence throughout the blinding storm of this winter day he rode with the stranger to the burial of Lucky Joe.

Despite the midwinter storm that was raging, he found the little school house overflowing with the people of the hills. Great bunches of mountaineers stood about in the deep snow, on the outside, while the house was crowded to the door with thinly clad mothers bearing in their arms their children. All had come, alike, to get a glimpse of the face of the dead man whose name, to them, had been born of destruction.

All the family were there. The two young sons sat on the front seat with ruined hopes. The little daughter was there alongside the brothers, clinging to them in grief; mother was there by the side of the children, and father was there—in the casket.

It was with great difficulty that Paul Waffington made his way through the throng, to the front. It had not been his lot to meet with Lucky Joe during his lifetime. But now, as he approaches the platform, he turns and looks into the casket. He beholds the face of an old man—past sixty years—with pinched features and a long, white beard, with deep lines in his face that the chisel of sin had hewn with no uncertain hand.

With a warning to the living and words of comfort for the bereaved the little service closed. For hours during the blustering day strong men had worked at the grave. Rough, uncouth mountaineers, many of whom had hated and feared the dead man during his lifetime, dug up the frozen earth and rock in perfect silence. It mattered not to them now, whether he had been a friend or an enemy during his lifetime, their respect now was

for the dead. The infallible rule of the gentle people of the Appalachian hills is to respect and honor the dead, friend and foe alike, and to "let the dead rest in peace;" therefore, when their feet on this sad day became benumbed and stiff with cold, there was not a murmur from any lip or rest from any stroke until the grave was finished.

Kind hands laid away the remains of Lucky Joe. Strong men braved the winter's gale and did their part well. When the last shovelful of half snow and half frozen earth had been placed upon the mound, the people gathered themselves together by families and dispersed in silence. Paul Waffington lingered and comforted the mother and the two sons. Then he took the beautiful hand of the little daughter Gena and held it as he tenderly spoke a few words to her. Her big blue eyes looked up through the hot tears wishfully at him as he finished:

"Good-bye, now. And be a good little girl. I will come back, perhaps. And if—if I come back, I will come to see you and bring you a pretty book. Don't forget now. Good-bye," and he patted her on the head as he turned to go.

The storm increased its fury and night came on as death comes—swift and sure. Then, with a heavy heart and a picture in his mind that shall grow plainer and brighter as the years go by, Paul Waffington mounted his horse and went out into the night towards his own place.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HAMLET BLOOD CAMP

FAR away from the great press of population and the busy throngs, in that part of the beautiful Appalachian country, better known to the tourist as "The Land of the Sky," in the very evening shadows of Mt. Mitchell itself, the mighty Snake lifts its domes. Standing alone and a little above the surrounding mountains, with its sharp peaks pushed up into the eternal blue a little more than six thousand feet, it has for fifty years smiled down upon a little hamlet at its base, and that hamlet is Blood Camp.

A dozen weatherbeaten houses, an unpretentious store, post-office and blacksmith shop was Blood Camp fifty years ago. With few changes, a few faces missing, and a proportionate increase in the number of graves in the little chestnut grove on the hill, Blood Camp is about the same today. In fact, it had been freely circulated "out in the world," as Granny Green would say, by a commercial traveler, that Blood Camp was finished. For three decades he had traveled through the hamlet, and during the time had failed to hear the sound of a saw or a hammer,—hence it must be a "finished" town.

However, that may be, there had been some wonderful changes in the life of Blood Camp since the death of Lucky Joe. Immediately following the burial of Lucky Joe, there had been organized the Sunday-school in the school house by Waffington, who put the school in the hands of a faithful few and departed. At the end of the year, a freshly made grave that lay along by the side of Lucky Joe's told the story of the mother's broken



heart and death. The two sons disposed of all the things that could be found, saw their little sister Gena bound out to old Jase Dillenburger, and departed for the West. Old Granny Green, fortune-teller, conjurer and real local paper, had recently been found dead near her pigsty. Some of the careless ones of the neighborhood had said that "It was sint on 'er. Beca'se she kept bitin' dawgs, an' dawged peoples hogs all 'er life."

Lately the constable with his deputies had come up from the lower settlements and locked up the little store by order of its creditors. The people considered this the greatest blow of all to the neighborhood. For twenty years the dilapidated store had stood on the state line, half in Tennessee and half in North Carolina, with an open door for all Blood Camp. The same lean and hungry face of Slade Pemberton, the store-keeper, had for a score of years looked across the box-lid counter, and dispensed to the natives brown sugar, coffee, tobacco, snuff and "plow pints." The store had been the undisputed meeting-place for all Blood Camp for years. Hence they found it hard to give up their old resort. But since the officers of the law had closed and locked the door, the fathers of Blood Camp resignedly retreated to the shade of the big apple tree by the blacksmith shop, there to play marbles and engage in idle talk on Saturdays and Sundays. Old Jase Dillenburger had openly rebelled against the closing of the store. He had been the bosom companion of Lucky Joe, and together they had "moonshined" at night and quietly disposed of the whiskey at the store during the day,—hence the reason that old Jase liked to linger around the store. In the event that an officer from Tennessee tried to serve a warrant on him, he went into the North Carolina end of the store, and *vici versa*. But the new rendezvous

at the blacksmith shop was situated wholly in Tennessee, which fact made old Jase a little uneasy.

"Don't like this changen bizness much," he growled, as he came up under the apple tree and took his place with the others. "Gimme a chaw terbacker, Fen Green," he continued. Then biting off a large piece from the offered tobacco and handing it back he finished, "Heve you put up any rocks to your mammy's grave yet, Fen? You orter tend to it, Fen, 'fore you fergit it. Some didn't like yer mammy—some sed she talked too much, but I liked her—an' you ort to tend to it 'fore you fergit it, Fen."

"Think maby I will, Jase," replied Fenton Green. "How's Genie a-gitten along, Jase? How's she a-liken her new home by this time?"

"Oh, she' nearly tickled to deeth to git to live with me an' Ann. You know, Fen, thet we haint got no children nor nothin' to bother, an' she's smart too, Fen. Why, she haint but thirteen agoin on fourteen, an' she can bild fires, an' cut wood, an' milk, an' drag fodder, an' cook—an' I left her a-cuttin' wood when I come down here this mornin'. Oh, she's a fine gal, an' you look sharp now, Fen. Of course she takes a few spells a-cryin' an' awantin' to go to them dang brothers away out yander in the West. But I knock that out with about three licks, an' she's all right agin. I'll make a woman outen her, Fen, I will. Lucky an' her mammy is both gone. Course we can't help thet. An' them two boys is gone, an' I'm dang glad they aire. Genie will be fourteen nex' spring, an' a mighty fine hand she'll make next summer with a corn-hoe in my new-ground field up yander under the peak. An' another thing, Fen. She's got a mighty good home, ef I do say so myself."

The marble game ended. The heavy shadows of night began to hang under the peaks of the mighty Snake, and

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the crowd dispersed. After the others had gone, old Jase arose, ran his huge fingers through his red mop, stretched his great limbs, and looked up the mountain-side towards his home. Then giving a last stroke to his woolly red beard, he began the ascent.

Hundreds of nights had been spent by Lucky and old Jase in the moonshining business. In a little secret cove upon the side of the mighty Snake, Lucky would keep the still going while old Jase with his rifle kept the watch for the government raiders. But since the imprisonment of Lucky Joe, and finally his death, the old still up in the cove had been idle for a long time. There was not another man in all Blood Camp that old Jase Dillenburg was willing to take in partnership. But the smell of the mash in his nose and the longing for the old business had led him lately to resume the operation of the still alone.

This very night we see him slowly climbing up the mountainside towards his home. The eye follows him through the twilight as he slowly ascends. But before the eye can wink again, he quickly turns to the left and is lost in the woods. No human eye sees him as he emerges from between two huge boulders just under the dome of the mighty Snake, and drops down into the little cove by the still. He begins his operations for the night, moving about with apparent ease. Removing the burlap covering from the still and brushing aside the dead leaves which had been spread in heaps over the coverings as a blind, he proceeded to build a fire under the copper boiler with great satisfaction.

"Pale moon tonight," he drawled out as he walked over to his gun, and again examining the magazine before replacing it against the oak. Taking a small keg from the hollow of a moss-covered log, he pulled out the corncob stopper, placed in the hole a funnel filled

with charcoal, and put it in place under the end of the worm. Hours dragged slowly away as the still boiled. Old Jase sat at the base of a giant oak, with his gun across his lap, staring into the furnace of fire, thinking, reflecting. Just now he was reviewing some of the gruesome scenes of the past that he knew so well. Yes, there was the first hold-up that Lucky Joe and he had ever made. It was the stage filled with summer guests for Blowing Rock. How clear tonight is the voice of the lady from Pennsylvania still ringing in his ears, as she begged and pleaded with him—but he struck her down with the others. Then the bullet that went through his leg! Drawing up his leg he put his hand on the scar for the thousandth time as he growled out:

“Not well yit. Never has healed up jist right, noway. Mighty sore and tender yit fur twenty year healin’”—then he went on with his thoughts.

It was old Jase in the first place that had suggested to Lucky Joe that they engage in the hazardous business of moonshining whiskey. It was old Jase who laid the plan for the hold-up of the stage. In fact, his cunning brain had laid the plans for all the heinous crimes that had been attributed to the Blood Camp folks. Yet the fingers of the law had failed to apprehend him and take hold upon him.

“Oh, well,” he said, pulling himself up with the aid of his gun and peering about, “Joe’s gone. The ol’ woman’s gone. Them dang boys is gone, an’ I’m mighty glad they aire. Nobody left to do nothin’ but me. I’m agettin’ too ol’ to steal corn an’ pack up this mountain to this still. I guess thet I’ll have to quit—still’en.” He stood by the little furnace and looked long into the dying fire, then continued, “Ef thet Genie wern’t agettin’ almost too big to manage in a bizness like still’en, I’d make her keep the fire agoin’ under this still every night

while I kept the watch. Ef she wuz jist a leetle younger, ef she wuz jist a leetle younger! Well, she's mine by law, an' I'll make'er do it yit. She's got to do as I say—I'll mak'er do it yit!"

He went to the side of the big oak, made a hasty observation and saw that a new day was now at hand. He hurriedly threw a little damp earth into the furnace to make sure that the fire would go out, replaced the coverings on the still, returned the keg to its place in the hollow log, and made for home.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GATHERING CLOUDS

IMMEDIATELY after the burial of Lucky Joe, Paul Waffington had seized the opportunity, when all Blood Camp was seriously reflecting upon the frailties of human life, and organized a Sunday-school in the little school house. The superintendent, Miss Emeline Hobbs, had promised to faithfully stand by the little school and keep the spark of life going until the end of the year, when Paul Waffington had promised to return.

Miss Emeline Hobbs was rather large, with stringy red hair and possessed a deep bass voice. She had been born a cripple and walked on a wooden peg. But a kinder or better human heart never beat than her's. During the long winter and throughout the hot summer she, with a few others, had kept the spark of life going in the little school. Each Sunday morning she went to the little school house, arranged the three classes, balanced herself on the wooden peg and proceeded in a profound way to explain and "teach the Scriptures as I understand them" to the little band.

Aside from the Sunday-school, there had been but one other new thing that stirred Blood Camp during the year, and that was the coming of the old fiddler. Yes, he came. It was just about the middle of the summer, or "corn-hoeing time," as Fen Green would say, that the old fiddler came. Nobody seemed to know whence he came nor did anybody care, so long as he would be sociable with the "boys" and play "Old Dan Tucker," "Shortening in the Bread," "Cripple Creek," "Eliza

Jane,," "Shady Grove" and a half score of other similar tunes. He had told the people at the store that his name was Bull Jones, and that he was an old worn-out man—an old member of a marine band, and that he had once had a brown stone front in the greatest city of the world. But, ah, temptation had come, and nothing was left but his dear old fiddle. He said that his home was now wherever his hat was on his head. This was too much for the fathers of Blood Camp, and with no further investigation they took him in to their homes. He was the center of attraction at the store. Hours at a time he sat on a coffee bag in the store playing the tunes as called for by the boys.

"Greatest fiddler I ever saw, an' I guess the greatest 'ne thet enybody else ever saw," exclaimed Fen Green.

Sometimes the old fiddler went home with a farmer of the hills for the night. On the morning he would go with the others to the field, and pay for his keep with the hoe. Another night he went with the blacksmith and made himself "handy" with the milking and other chore work, as pay for his night's lodging. He was always happy, lodged with all, made a good workman at whatever was needed to be done, and, best of all, he could always be depended upon to play the fiddle, and to play the very tune that each individual liked best.

Bull Jones looked to be a man of some fifty years. He wore a grey beard, a suit of well-worn clothes with patches, and chewed tobacco and "swapped" with the boys. Bull Jones, the fiddler, was soon in great demand in the settlement. The fact is, that he had not been in the neighborhood a fortnight until he had more invitations to "stay all night" than he was able to fill for months.

On rainy days the fiddler took his place on the bag of coffee in the store and played the whole day through.

Those were great days for the folks of Blood Camp. Even old Jase Dillenburger would hang about and whittle on a pine stick and enjoy the music with the others. Then, too, perchance, Miss Emeline Hobbs would come into the store when some such tune as "Sourwood Mountain" had begun, and would fain have thumped her wooden peg against the floor a few times out of sheer delight, had not she recalled that she was the superintendent of the Sunday-school and thereby the leader and example of the community.

Winter had come again, and Emeline Hobbs longed for the day when Paul Waffington would return, that she might tell him that she had "held out" in the matter of the Sunday-school. The expected time of his visit was passing by, and hope gave way to fear and she gave it up.

"I've give him out," she said as she sat down. "Don't think he's comin' back. I've 'splained every Scripture over four times—every one that I can think of, an' I jist don't know no more (but mind that you don't tell anybody that I said so, Aunt Mina). I was athinken' that I'd begin on Jonah next Sunday, if he didn't come. I need a new start, somehow. If I just had a new start! I could run fine for 'nother year, if I just had a new start!"

"Now, Miss Emeline, doan't you pester yo'self 'bout 'im comin' anymo'. He's acomin'. He's acomin' whin he said he would. He'll be he'ar an' do'an you bothar 'bout it any mo'. Lordy bless yo', honey, dat man is a plum po're gentleman, he is. Yo' jist go on holden' dat Sunday-skule an' akeepin' it agoin'. An' my o'le black man, Laz, he'll keep yo' fires agoin' jes' like he promi'se."

It was the voice of good Aunt Mina, the old black woman of the village.



"But he ain't acomin', taint no use," persisted Emeline.

"Now, honey, yo' jes lis'en he'ar. Yo' go right on an' tell 'em Jonah next Sunday. Dat's good. I like dat m'self. I tell yo' he's acomin'. Here, Laz, yo' poke de fire an' put on some mo' bark. Jis' fo' mo' sheets an' three dresses, an' I'll git yo' supper, Laz—best o'le negger man ebber lived! Yess'um I'll have yo' iron'on' done by fo' o'clock fo' yo', Miss Emeline, I'll have it done by dat time sure. Now he's acomin', an' do'an yo' pester yo'self 'bout it no mo'."

True to his promise to Emeline Hobbs and Gena Filson, Paul Waffington went back to Blood Camp. His first promise had been to Gena Filson—to visit her in her mountain home. It was late in the afternoon when he walked up in front of the little cabin that had been the home of Lucky Joe. He drew up by the gate and called out loudly, but no response. He called again and again, but heard only the echo of his own words in answer. Again and again he called, but all was silent.

"Poor Mrs. Filson, not at home. Poor woman! Perhaps she had gone to make her home with some distant relative," he said sorrowfully. Then hailing a passing mountain youth, he asked:

"Where are the people who live here?"

"Nobody lives there," replied the boy.

"Where are the people who did live here?" he again asked.

"Don't know. They're gone. Some dead—some gone off."

He turned in at the little gate, and as he approached the house he noted that everything about it went to prove that it was fast crumbling back to mother dust. There was no inviting gateway, no fence now—in fact, nothing to keep out even the unwary intruder. The wild flowers and vines that had voluntarily entwined

their tendrils about the doorway in the budding spring-time had drooped their feeble, thirsty heads and died, and in this late November afternoon there remained of them little more than a memory.

The house looked as if it had been transformed into a conference hall of spooks and ghosts. But, taking courage, he managed to push open its decaying door and walk through its empty chambers with stealthy steps. Within all was still and deathlike, save the ringing echoes of his own footsteps upon the floor. He looked upon the walls, and they were barren. He turned to the little open window, through which, no doubt, the eyes of hope had longingly gazed upon the world; there, too, was the fireplace, with its broken hearthstone, where mountain love had often gathered in the evening. But, lo! their taper had burned low and gone out!

As Paul Waffington came out and sat upon the doorstep of this deserted mountain home, thoughts came to him that hitherto were foreign, and a feeling stole over him that he will not soon forget. He recalled the face in the casket. He heard again the cries of the sweet little Gena. He again sees the mother as she sobbed and moaned that day over the casket:

"O Joe, dear Joe, dear Joe, I forgive you all—I forgive you all."

As the terribleness of it all comes up before him, and remembering that God does not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, his heart bleeds within him, and he would give worlds were they his to give if it were not so.

He got up from his place and circled the house, but no new discoveries were made. He took another look through the door, shook his head and walked slowly away.

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"A deserted home!" he said, as he took a last look at the house from the gate. A friendly bird called out one note from a tree above. "The very birds of the air seem to say it—a deserted home," he said, as he turned to go into the village, with his hat pulled well down over his eyes.

## CHAPTER IV

### DRIVEN TO ENDLESS TOIL

IN life's glad morning a mother-bird warbled forth her song of praise. The soft and tender notes that she sang were sweet, and their melody told a story of love. The burden of her song today was home, and she worked as she sang. Day after day she flew about, toiling and building at the nest until it seemed that her weary wings would fail to bear her up. The fatigues and the torrid heat of the day were trying, but they failed to rob her of her song. But one bright day the task was done. Then she lifted her tiny head into the blue above and sang were sweet, and their melody told a story of love. when the little birdlings came, how the mother-heart beat with rapture! Day after day, with unflinching strength, she made trip after trip on weary wings to feed the birdlings in the nest. Each time she returned and dropped a worm into a hungry mouth, only to be off again in quest of food for another. But when all are fed she takes her place upon the bough above and begins anew her song.

She is singing her song today to the birdlings in the nest. She is telling them that there is much sweetness in life, and that they must have confidence. Aye, she is telling them of that sad day when mother's wings shall no longer bear her up—the day that each of them shall climb upon the rim of the old home-nest, stretch his little, tender wings, and sail away over life's sea upon his own resources.

The long summer through, happiness permeates the nest. The mother-bird sang, she fed, she cooed and the birdlings grew stronger. But one sad day, "the snare of the fowler" laid low the mother-bird and destroyed the nest.

Not unlike the birds is too often the truth with human life. The morning of life comes to us blooming with glad expectations of youth. Then, as we grow into young manhood and young womanhood, we see no cloud upon the sky, no worm in the bud of promise, no anticipated barriers to the full enjoyment of human bliss. But, alas! if we could lift the veil that hides the future from our eyes the pleasant dreams of youth would pale away before stern realities. Sooner or later we had best learn that which another has well said, that—"life is earnest. That it is fraught with great peril as well as with grand and noble victories. That life is not an idle promenade through fragrant flower gardens, but it is a stern pilgrimage—a battle and a march." How sweet it is to have father's and mother's strong arms about us to protect and bear us up! But one day the father's strong arm shall lose its strength, crumble and fall; the home-nest is broken, and we shall go out into life upon our own responsibilities and resources to fight the battles of life alone.

How little the world knows of the adverse conditions under which a large per cent. of the children of our own Appalachian region must struggle in their earlier and tender years. Too often it falls to their lot to be set adrift—like the birdling from a broken nest.

The lot of Gena Filson, the only daughter of Lucky Joe, was a hard one. Lucky Joe Filson had not been much of a father to little Gena. Nevertheless, he had always been kind to her, even tender in his uncouth

way. But now her father and mother were both sleeping under the chestnut trees on the hill overlooking Blood Camp, and her friends were few indeed.

But true to his promise, Paul Waffington journeyed back to the hills and sought her mountain home. He turned from the deserted home and went into the village and learned the truth. The villagers told him of the mother's death and the subsequent going away of the brothers to the far west, in quest of fortune and fame, leaving behind them the baby of the nest, Gena, aged thirteen, bound under the roof of old Jase Dillenburger, to wear her little body away over the rocks and hills, toiling for him. He met her at the Sunday-school on the following Sunday, and went with her to the cabin on the mountain side, and was introduced to her savage foster-father, old Jase. After a brief visit, he presented the promised book, "Captain January," and departed.

"Good-bye," he said to Jase Dillenburger. "A fine little soul is your adopted daughter, and I know that you appreciate your position to her. Good-bye, Gena. Strive to always keep yourself as sweet as you now are, and I am sure that it will bring happiness to all. Good-bye."

The long summer months had passed away since he who had promised to befriend her had taken his departure from the cabin on the mountain, and the succeeding days brought her only toil and abuse. Through the heat of the summer she had been compelled to go to the field with the others, and work with the hoe. Then, when summer was over, there were scores of unfinished tasks in the cabin waiting for her tired hands.

She sits tonight in the cabin by the side of old Jase's portly wife, darning her part of the huge pile of yarn socks that lay before them. The light by which she works is not an electric burner,—not even the common brass lamp of years ago, but rather a faint light, com-

ing from the end of a strip of cloth immersed in a spoonful of grease. Even though the light is faint and does flicker, the golden head looks shapely and the neck and eyes are beautiful. Long before ten o'clock the short little back grows tired, and the big, blue eyes grow heavy, but she works on with never an outward sign of fatigue. Whenever the last sock is darned, then, perhaps, she will be allowed to go to her hard bed. But her tired limbs are hardly relaxed in sleep until the thundering voice of old Jase commands her to get up.

"Git up, an' git about! The clock's struck four an' no fires built, nor nothin' done. You build the big fire fust, 'fore you go to the cookin'! An' mind that you put the back log on right, too, or I'll tan you up when I git up. Move about now!" And thus, being driven by a hard and uncompromising hand through such drudgery as this, the tender and delicate hands were becoming thin and coarse, the pretty little form twisted and dwarfed, and the rosy-cheeked face growing pale and pinched.

Gena Filson had good blood in her veins. Joseph Filson had been born in the mountains and his father before him. But old Granny Green knew all the facts of how it came about, that Joseph Filson brought his wife into the mountains from the Pennsylvania settlements in those early days. Before Granny Green died, she had taken the Allison's into her confidence and told them the true story of the mother of Gena Filson. When Joseph Filson was young, a drover had employed him as a helper with the cattle on the long trips that were made to the markets of Pennsylvania. In the third year of Joseph Filson's drovership, he brought back with him into the mountains his young bride, "a teacher from the Pennsylvania settlements," as he announced to his friends.

For the first few years of her married life the wife of Joseph Filson was happy. Then her life narrowed down

and became bound by the mountain fastnesses, but never a murmur from her. Years went by and Joseph yielded to temptation, but she was not too harsh. He went to prison at last, but she bore up under it for the family's sake. But in the end, grief overcame her, and tenderly she was laid to rest in the chestnut grove along by the side of the mountaineer whose name she bore.

In the bright afternoon sunshine Gena Filson sits in the door of the cabin on the mountainside, and looks off over the thousands of peaks and wonders what will be the end of her. Hard labor is driving the red from her cheeks. She looks at her hands and notes the thinness and the corns in her palms. If she were only away over on the other side of that great peak over there, she thought! Oh, it would seem rest to her! Who lives over there, she knows not. But just to be away, to get away from the hard knocks of old Jase, would be rest to her weary limbs! But the hawk-eye of old Jase was always upon her. He had lately bound her world by the yard fence, which was some thirty feet square, unless she was sent into the field for something, and then always with another. Twice she had asked if she might visit her mother's grave on a Sunday afternoon, and received all but a flogging for the asking.

"Go to your mammy's grave? I'll go ye to somebody's grave. You let the ded alone. Nobody is goin' to bother yer mammy's grave. We got no time to spendin' on ded uns. It's hard for us to keep the livin' agoin'. My mammy never had a flower on her grave, an' I haint seed it in twenty year'. Your mammy warn't no better than my mammy wuz, if she did come frum Pinsilvaney. I'm your boss now. You git about pullin' weeds down thar in the garden or sumthin'. An' ef I hear of ye aspeakin' of sich foolin' agin, I'm agoin' to tan ye up," and with



a shake of his huge fist old Jase turned and went down the mountainside.

After the old mountaineer had gone, she ventured to go out to the yard fence and look down the mountainside towards the village of Blood Camp. It was now late in the Sunday afternoon, and she saw the people returning to their homes from the little Sunday-school that Paul Waffington had organized two years before. Her young heart was full now at the sight of the Sunday-school scholars. How she longed to be with them. True, old Jase had permitted her to attend for a time. But then she came home one day with Paul Waffington with her, and the old man had been miserably persecuted for an hour or more by the presence of a good man in his house. Since that time old Jase had told her that it was best for her to stay near him, and that he himself didn't go to "sich doing's as Sunday-skules."

She stood and looked down upon the dispersing scholars and wondered why she could not be as free as they. Why had she so few friends? Why had her two brothers deserted her so? Why had they never written to her? Perhaps they did, but the letters never reached her.

"But Mr. Waffington said that he would come back to see me again, and that he would be my friend," she finally said aloud. She sighed as she looked away out over the domes and peaks of the Blue Ridge, saw the long golden finger of the setting sun kiss the hills good-night, turned and went into the cabin.

That night Gena Filson went to her hard bed with her heart full—it was heavy. She well knew that the morning would bring her nothing less than another solid week of hard and continuous toil, and, oh, could she endure it! As she lay in her dark corner and thought of her place in the world, and of her hard master, old Jase, she wished

that she might be dead, and wondered, if such were the case, if he would allow her the privilege of being buried by the side of her dear mother under the chestnut tree.

"Nobody thinks of me! Nobody cares for me! Nobody loves me!" she cried, in the late hours of the night. Then turning on her hard bed she fell asleep to dream. She dreamed of a beautiful country where people are gentle and kind, where everyone is friendly and just, and where little mountain girls never grow hungry or cold. And as she went forward in that land, Paul Waffington was the first to meet her. And together they went into the fields and wove garlands and coverlets of daisies, and stood at her mother's grave, and Paul Waffington bared his head and laid the coverlet on the mound and tucked it with all but a feminine hand.

What a pity that our Gena could not always dream on and never awake to her hard material surroundings! But perish the thought; and let her dream on in peace now, for the morning will dawn, aye, too soon.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SHEPHERD OF NOBODY'S SHEEP

PAUL WAFFINGTON was a Kentuckian. He was of that old Scotch-Irish type, of good blood, honest and poor, who, combining tact and skill, have always forged their way to the front. He had been bred and born in a cabin near by the town of Hazel Green that was made famous in the story of "Jonathan and His Continent," by Max O'Rell.

When he was but a boy, hundreds of times he had followed in the footsteps of his father,—gone out on the ridges and gathered his load of fat pine-knots, that father and son alike might have a light by which to pursue their study. Then when circumstances changed a bit, and a half opportunity at a college course was offered him, he accepted it with a will.

Even when in college he had been called "sissy" and "girlie" by many of his classmates, for the simple reason that he was compelled to pay his way with the labor of his hands. But Paul Waffington cared not a straw for such proffered titles. Therefore, with a firm jaw and a determined heart, he rolled up his sleeves each evening and went into the mountain of dirty dishes before him with confidence, believing that reward was at the end. And if, after darkness comes light and after toil comes rest, then so it ever will be, that diligence and perseverance must bring reward.

One day college life was over with Paul Waffington. There was much bustle and hurry to get away, and he was leaving with the others. Around the old hall

with its ivy-covered walls they lingered as they cheered and comforted one another and said good-bye. Amid those last moments of parting a little, frail, old man pushed his way through the crowd, and taking young Waffington by the hand led him away. Out through the long hall they went together, and into the little classroom through which the young collegian had passed a thousand times before. It was dear old Professor Goff that had singled him out and led him away. Such a dear old man, reader, from whom you turned away on that other day when you yourself went away from college. The old man shut the door and took his student's hand in his own bony palms and held it long. Then came the parting message and the benediction and then the final handshake—and the aged man tried to say good-bye, but the words were never spoken.

The real commencement of Paul Waffington's life began when he turned away from the old man, went out and shut the door. Everyone knew that Waffington had not only won the college honors—a gold medal, but that he had won and was carrying away with him the heart of the grand old man of the college.

Since college days he had for a time pitched his tent with the "lumber jacks" of the north—there to learn the true worth of honest toil. Then followed a couple of years of "roughing it" among the sandhills of New Mexico, that taught him to look the world in the face with confidence and courage. Finally, he returns to a certain city in his own southland and there established himself—to work in the interest of the children of the Appalachian hills.

We see him now as he steps from his car with traveling-bag. Five feet nine; twenty-two years,

straight, and walks a little fast for most men of his age.

Blood Camp had been but little in the mind of Paul Waffington of late. In fact, demands upon him in other directions had taxed his mind and body to their capacity. More than a year had elapsed since he was in Blood Camp, but, after all, the time had not seemed long to him. But now, as he turned in at his headquarters for a few days' rest, Gena and the people of Blood Camp comes sharply up before him.

During the past few months he had had conversation with two or perhaps three commercial travelers who had passed through the village recently, but they could give him no information of little Gena or old Jase. He settled at his desk and began going through his mail. After dashing off his answer to the last letter of the stack of accumulated mail, he turned from the desk and settled back in his chair with a breath of relief. But no sooner done, a feeling of apparent fear or dread possessed him.

"It is a little strange, though, that Gena has never written one single word," he at length said, as he studied the floor. "I gave her some postcards and merely asked her to drop a line now and then, that I might know that she does well. Yes, I asked Jase to write, too. How long has it been? November is twelve, and June is seventeen months and never a word! Then I sent her a little Christmas present, too. But who knows if she received it? Jase may have taken it from the post-office, torn the little silk scarf to shreds and put a match to it for all I know. Oh no, he didn't. Jase Dillenburger is too old a man to treat a sweet girl like Gena Filson in such a manner. His own adopted daughter? Oh no, he took the package to her. She simply has been too busy

with the work that her tender hands find there to write," he finishes. Then for a full ten minutes he sat thinking it all over. "Don't like this protracted silence, though. Something might be wrong at Blood Camp," he murmured.

Walking to the door of his room he looked out into the street. Darkness was coming on. He sees the street-lamps flash out their first rays for the night, and watches the carbons jump and pop in the one nearest him, as the current burnt off the new tips. Lifting his eyes a little, he looked through the meshes of telephone and electric wires, and searches the stars for answer to the question that he was debating in his mind.

"Perhaps I ought to go. It's a long way removed from Knoxville, though, is Blood Camp. A hundred and twenty by rail and forty horseback or foot." Taking a hasty look into his pocketbook he looked up quickly and finished, "and afoot this time without a doubt."

The telephone bell rang, and he went to the telephone with his question unsettled.

"Hello."

"How is that?"

"Yes, sir; this is Paul Waffington."

"I didn't understand, Doctor."

"Well, I am very sorry, Doctor, but I will be away."

"Why—er—Blood Camp, Doctor."

"Good-bye, Doctor." He hung up the receiver, turned about and shoved both hands down deep into his trousers pockets and stared at the floor.

"Now it's settled, I think. Doctor Gray wanted me for dinner to-morrow and I told him that I was going away—to Blood Camp, so now it's settled. Well, my

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promise is out to Gena Filson anyway, so that settles it."

On the following morning the hero of this narrative stepped from his train with an air of rest and satisfaction, with forty miles of rough mountain road lying between him and Blood Camp. The meridian rays of a July sun beat mercilessly down upon him, as the rocks threw him first to one side of the road and then to the other side. But never a faltering moment with Paul Waffington, for the inviting shadows of the Mighty Snake was his goal.

He had learned early and well that great lesson, preparation. Hence he began early in the afternoon to find lodging along the way. At first he drew up before a little brown cottage near the roadside. The little mother of the home was sick, hence our traveler must be denied. He trudged on through the dust and called at the large white house just at the forks of the road. Here, too, was sickness, coupled with the fact that the master of the house was away. Again he takes up his traveling-bag, wipes the wet dust from his brow and journeys on. It seemed to the traveler a long way to the next house. But just before turning into the gorge he saw a great farmhouse by the roadside. Fat, sleek cattle grazed in the clovers; the barns were bursting with the crops of the preceding year; the fields were waving with coming crops, and surely, thought our pilgrim, he would lodge here with ease.

"What did you say your bizness is?" asked the woman on the front porch.

"I'm a Sunday-school worker, madam. I'm on my way to Blood Camp, and am tired and sore. I certainly would be glad to abide the night with you;

I have change with which to pay for my lodging and——”

“I’m mighty sorry, but we’re all sick here, an’ I guess we can’t keep ye.”

“Is not that your husband over there in the field with the horses?” he inquired, kindly.

“Yes, sir. But you needn’t ax him, fur we’re all sick here an’ I guess that we can’t keep ye,” she finished, as she moved towards the door.

“Madam, have you any sons?” he ventured to ask at length.

“Oh, a boy. But he’s not here. He’s in Texas.”

“Well, may the good Lord bless him. And may he ever find a kindly home in which to abide the night when he falls among strangers. Good evening, madam,” and swinging his heavy hand-bag as if it were a mere trifle, with renewed determination he trudged on.

The sun was closing his great, wonderful eye in the west and darkness was fast filling the valleys and gorges. On either side of his way now appeared great clumps of wild ivy and rhododendrons. Down from the deep gorge a gentle breeze brought to his nostrils the sweet breath of wild honeysuckles and mountain roses. He quickened his steps and went forward, believing that he could continue to walk the whole night through, in the breath of the sweet flowers. Here and there he plucked a tuft of mountain moss from the trunk of a fallen tree. Now he snatched a wild cucumber blossom from its stem that brushed his face and carried it on with him.

He turned into the deep gorge in the twilight of evening, recalling what he had once been told of the attacks of the wild animals that frequent the gorge. Then, too, he had been told, that the gorge contained



at times bands of cutthroats and robbers, besides not a few moonshine distilleries. Commercial travelers always made it a point to pass through the gorge in the daytime. And if, perchance, they were delayed in making the gorge in the heat of the noon-day's sun, they lodged the night on the North Carolina side, or vice versa, in order to be safe from harm.

"But nobody would harm me, I believe," Paul Wafington murmured as he passed on into the gorge.

Just then he made out through the twilight a cabin almost hidden by a clump of rhododendrons. He drew up before it and called out:

"Hello!"

"Oh, Lordy have mercy! Oh! You liked to scared me plumb to death, sure," said the voice of a large, fat woman as she came running out from behind the clump of rhododendrons, holding on to her milk-pail with one hand and digging the warm milk out of her eyes with the other. She stood there working the milk out of her eyes and wiping her face, a woman of some two hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupois and proportionately tall.

"I didn't hear you acomin' at all. Milk spilt? Why, Lordy bless you, I don't care nothin' fur the milk. Jist so old Blackie didn't knock the bottom clean out this new milk-pail is all I care fur. An' it's a thousand wonders that she didn't knock it clean out when she heard you holler over there. You see, she ain't used to hearn' anybody holler in this here gorge atter night. Nobody passes this gorge much at night. Then, besides, Blackie is the skeeriest cow in this here gorge, an' has bin ever since she wuz a calf. An' thet's asayin' a right smart, too, for this gorge is nine miles long. What did you say? A stranger and want to stay all night!" She softened down to a kind motherly

tone and continued, "Why, Lordy bless you, child, we're the poorest family 'twixt here an' Blood Camp an' jist one room. But, child, if you think thet you can put up with our fare, the door's open, go in. Here, Cicero, fetch a chair out here in the yard, I believe it's more pleasanter out here. Now hurry, Cicero, an' bild' a gnat-smoke here in the yard fur this gentleman. Hurry now. There, stranger, take thet chair an' rest. The smoke maybe 'll keep the gnats off. Now jist make yourself at home an' rest. My old man and tother boy Caesar have gone to mill, but they'll be back directly. So jist make yourself at home and rest," and off she went into the cabin, to bake the corn-pone on the coals for supper.

## CHAPTER VI

### WHEN EVENING COMES

WHAT a world of joy, happiness and rest—of fear, dread and remorse evening brings!

Some are glad when evening comes, and hail with delight the first long shadows of the dying day. The sturdy toiler of the field puts forth his sickle in the early morning and gleans the long day through with confidence, believing that when the end of the day is come he can lay down his blade, go in at the door of his humble home and under the spell of sweet smiles and the merry laughter of those whom he loves, forget the toils of the day and find sweet rest and peace.

But to another—the prisoner behind the bars—evening brings remorse and dread. His restless body is early astir, and he sits in his iron chains, looks out through the bars, and watches the curtains of night receding as the rising sun brings forth a new day. At the noontide, he gets a glimpse of the busy, surging throngs in the street below. He strains his ears and catches from the throng words of cheer and strength; songs of happiness and courage—and hope is almost born again in his bosom. But, alas! the day soon dies, and the gathering shadows of night fall upon him, bringing only fear and regret, for well he knows for him tomorrow's sun will never rise.

Then to the weary traveler, what a world of suspense, fatigue and rest evening brings! At first, footsore, hungry and alone, he plods on through the dust and meets the shadows of evening with a faltering heart. But

when a friendly roof is found, how quickly the fainting heart is changed to one of strength and multiplied joys! After the day is done, is it not sweet to the worn traveler to abide the night under a kindly roof? To go in at the door and find a welcome? To lie down upon the couch and sleep, assured of the protection and defense of the home, cannot fail to fill the heart with gratitude and remind us of how close akin all the world must be.

As Paul Waffington sat with his chair tilted back against the cabin wall tonight, he watched the chip-fire glow and burn through the darkness with great satisfaction. True gratitude was welling up and running over in his human heart as he sat alone, taking his rest. He was thanking his lucky star that he had found the humble home in which to abide the night. Evening breezes came down from the great gorge above, laden with the breath of sweet flowers. He sniffed their perfumes into his nostrils and all but cried aloud with ecstasy. At the further side of the yard the stream babbled and laughed as it went on its way, hurrying on to the falls below. It was the very stream that ran by Blood Camp. Yes, its fountain-head rivulet began not a hundred yards distant from the cabin in which Gena Filson dwelt tonight. Turbulent little stream! thought Paul Waffington. First an eddy, then a pool; then a splash, splash over the rocks, then a fall. Fall after fall, winding and twisting forever through the rhododendrons and laurels, always overshadowed by the tall hemlocks.

"Poor little Gena Filson," he said at length. "I hope that her life will not be laden with as many dark turns, falls and corners as the stream on which she lives tonight."

"Gee, gee gee-e-e-ee! Haw, haw," were the sounds that came to his ears through the night as he looked up. "Gee-haw! Git up, git up. Haw, haw, haw!! Haw—

woa-a-a-o-oo-a-a-ah!! Here, Cicero, come out here an' help Cæsar tote these two turns of meal in the house while I go and put up the mare an' sled. Hurry now," said the man, driving up into the yard. "Now, hurry, Cicero, fur yo' ma has got supper ready, fur I can smell the bread a bakin'," continued the voice.

"Pa, there's a man come," declared Cicero excitedly, as he went out to help with the corn-meal.

"A man's come?" profoundly repeated the father, dropping the bag and straightening up. "Who is it?"

"Don't know. He's a settin' side the house by the gnat-smoke, there in the dark," said the boy.

"Well, you take the mare and the sled to the barn, Cæsar, an' I'll help Cicero with the meal an' see who it is," the man finished in an undertone. So saying, he lifted a bag of the fresh corn-meal to his shoulder and made for the open door of the cabin.

"Howdy," he simply said, as he came up by the door.

"Good evening, sir. You are the master of the house, I suppose?" said Paul Waffington, as he arose and put out his hand.

"I guess so. What might your name be?"

"Waffington, sir. Paul Waffington, of Knoxville. I'm on my way to Blood Camp, and I am anxious to spend the night with you," he said in inquiring accents.

"My name's Henry Tolson—glad to see you," was all that he said in reply as he entered the cabin.

Paul Waffington was hungry tonight. As he sat by the side of the open door, the smell of the frying ham and the perfume of the baking corn-pone came to his nostrils, and his hunger became painful.

"Here, Cicero, Cæsar—come 'ere," called the mother, as she went through the door and round to the rear of the little cabin. "Now, I want you two boys to listen to what I'm goin' to say: We've got big company here

tonight. An' I want to teach you boys a little more about your table manners. Now, whin you go to the table to eat your supper, you say 'yes, sir,' and 'no, sir,' when the gentleman speaks to you. An' whin you want anything that is on my side of the table, you say, 'please, ma'am,' an' 'thank you.' An', listen, Cæsar, none of your foolin' and knockin'. Now don't fergit! Cæsar, Cicero! Ef you do fergit it, I'll warm you both up with a birch sprout whin this gentleman's gone. Your ma was brot up right an' had a good rais'en before we come into this here country, an' I'm plum ashamed of you two boys sometimes. Now its big company thet we've got tonight an' I want you boys to act nice."

"Is this man bigger company than the sheriff, ma? You know we had 'im once to stay all night," ventured Cicero.

"Well, I don't know. But I 'low he is. He may be the Governor fur all I know. An' if he is the Governor, now you two look sharp—he might take you off to the penitentiary where June Hanley and Jim Fields wint last spring. An', oh, you have to live on bread an' water and be put in a great, big iron coffin of a thing—where you can't git out and jist have to bail water out of the thing all the time, day an' night, to keep from drownin'. Now you look sharp!" She finished as she shook her huge fist at the head of each of the mischievous boys, and went into the house, calling over her shoulder, "Bring the stranger and come to supper, Henry."

Paul Waffington went to his supper in the cabin with a grateful heart and a gnawing appetite. Corn-bread, sweet milk and ham was about the extent of the simple repast. Bût by no means was the supper crudely prepared. The flavor of the sweet corn-pone indicated that a master hand had been at work in the preparation of the evening meal. It was indeed a master hand. One

that had learned the trick from a past-master, away back on the coast of the old North State in the long ago, when the art of cooking was taken up with a will in the kitchen of every home.

Henry Tolson had just finished relating the story of how it had happened that they were in their present surroundings, as the supper progressed. "Yes, stranger," began Mrs. Tolson, taking up the story where her husband had left off, "we've bin in these hills nigh on to twenty year."

"Its not 'stranger,' mother, it's Mr. Waffington from Knoxville," corrected Henry.

"Well, I declare, Henry, I didn't know it. But he might a told me out there in the yard whin the cow kicked me, fur all I know. But I was too scared to know whether he told me his name or not or hardly anything else. But as I was asayin', Mr. Waffington, its bin twenty year aliken' two months since Henry an' me come over the Boone Trail an' stopped here in this wild gorge to rest. We had started to them goldfields away out yander sum'ers in the west. But whin we stopped here that night to rest—lawsa'me-alive, I can remember it jist the same as if it was yesterday—when we stopped that night an' got a campfire built we got so busy a hunt-in' fur bread that we ain't never had no time to go on an' hunt fur gold! Have more milk. Pass the bread to the str—to Mr. Waffington, Henry. Take some more ham. You Cicero—tut, tut! Sh!!——" and she put her hand down under the side of the table and shook it at the mischievous boys.

"Oh!" exclaimed Cicero.

"Oh!" shouted Cæsar.

"What's the matter, Cæsar?" the mother asked, with apparent surprise.

"Cicero kicked me on the shin Make 'im quit."

"Don't bother Cæsar, Cicero. Mr. Waffington will think that you are both mighty bad boys."

There was a long silence likened unto that perfect silence and calm that precedes the great and mighty storms that come up suddenly over the seas. Then Cicero, the youngest, looked up out of the corners of his eyes and ventured to ask:

"Aire you the Governor, Mister?"

"Why, no, my boy, I'm not the Governor. I am only a man—a common man."

"Now, ma," Cæsar chimed in. "Ma said that you wuz the Governor and——"

"Cæsar Tolson, I'm ashamed of you. I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm ashamed of you," the mother finally said in despair.

"An' Ma said that you wuz as big as the sheriff," piped Cicero.

"Ouch! O!—O!—O! oo—oo—my sore toe! My sore toe!" and away from the table and through the door hopped Cicero Tolson on one foot, carrying the other injured member in his hands. In an unguarded moment his mischievous brother had reached his foot under the table and come down heavily with his heel on the already bruised and sore toe of Cicero, hence the catastrophe.

"I'm mighty sorry that my two boys have disturbed you so, while you are atryin' to make out your supper, Mister Waffington," Mrs. Tolson said, after she had sent the other boy from the table. "But try to make out some way, an' git enough if you can to keep you frum starvin' 'til mornin'. I hope you'll forgive 'em. I do hope that you will. Maybe that you'll enjoy your sleepin' better than your eatin' here at our house. You'll have to sleep 'tween Cicero an' Cæsar—but then they're better asleep than they air whin they're awake."

Paul Waffington had not been disturbed by the bad deportment of Cicero and Cæsar Tolson. On the other



hand, he went to his bed in the corner of the cabin that night with a contented mind and a rested body.

For a moment he stood over the bed holding the candle, and looked down upon the faces of the two sleeping boys. He shook his head as he looked into the ruddy faces, and wondered, if in future years they should not go forth from this mountain gorge with robust bodies and great, strong minds, and employ their talents in wielding a mighty influence to promote the brotherhood of man. Thus speculating he blew out the candle, turned down the cover, and slipped into his place between the two, and was soon asleep.

## CHAPTER VII

### BOAZ HONEYCUTT

PAUL WAFFINGTON awoke with the birds on the following morning. He came out from between the two sleeping boys and the snowy white sheets at the break of day, went out and bathed his face in the running stream. He rambled through the clumps of rhododendrons and ivy, picking the flowers, while Henry Tolson fed the mare and Mrs. Tolson made ready the morning's meal.

While the morning was yet early he put out his hand and said good-bye to the little family, believing that he had found friends in Henry Tolson and his dear old wife. It was a fact that was plain to see, that they were poor and unlearned. But throughout the cabin there was cleanliness, and in everything they said and did there was gentleness and truth. There was something about the kind look and gentle spirit of Mrs. Tolson that made Paul Waffington think of his own dear mother away back in the Kentucky valley. The good that was in him asserted itself, and he held out his hand and said from the bottom of his heart:

"Good-bye, Mrs. Tolson. I hope that we may meet again. May the good Lord bless you and yours. Good-bye."

"Why, honey, whenever you air a-travelin' up or down this here gorge, night or day, don't you never pass this cabin-door by. Don't you never do it. You come right over here an' make yourself at home. An'

don't you never holler 'fore this door any more neither. But you march right over here and take a chair, jist the same ef your own mother wuz astandin' right there inside. Here, take this sweetcake along with you. You might git a little hungry along 'bout the spring up the gorge, an' it'd keep you frum starvin' maybe. You'll git to Blood Camp 'fore night. Good-bye."

He swung himself out into the road and walked along at a lively gait. Just as he made the first turn out of sight of the cabin, if he should have been disposed to stop and listen, he might have heard Mrs. Tolson fulfilling her promise of the night before to Cicero and Cæsar.

The road before him now assumed the appearance of one long arbor. It was lined with tall hemlocks and banks of rhododendrons grew between. At the edges of the road giant ferns waved to and fro in the fresh morning air. Then, too, it seemed that the gorge was literally alive with song-birds. Apparently, from every tree birds were pouring forth their morning song. The traveler slackened his pace a bit, removed his hat and carried it in his hand as he went, enjoying all nature to the limit of his capacity. Now he lingered to pluck a bunch of trailing moss that hung over a fallen tree. This July morning he was comparatively rested in body and mind, hence he was keenly alert to everything in nature's world, and it all brought happiness to his soul.

How the heart of the thin and pale-faced city clerk yearned for such a retreat as this, thought Waffington. How those of the torrid cities, who bake their feet against the blistering pavements and burn their faces against the scalding walls, would welcome this haven of rest among the wild flowers and singing birds. The

gentle breezes, the babbling, splashing water falling into the deep pools and the shady recesses, would cool their fevered temples.

For three hours or more, perhaps, the traveler kept his way with uncovered head, enjoying the matchless beauties of nature's world, with never a discordant note. At the noontide he came up before the spring in whose depth many a traveler before had quenched his burning thirst. It stood up in the rock, a basin cut out, moss-covered to its very brim. Crystal water overflowed the rim and trickled down through the moss and fell into the pool below. Paul Waffington knelt down and quenched his thirst in its depth, then seated himself on a log near by to rest and devour the "sweetcake" that Mrs. Tolson had given him in the early morning. He must be getting now within some ten miles of Blood Camp, he thought, munching the cake in silence. He wished that he might meet someone who could tell him the things that he wanted to know of Blood Camp. But he had met but one other traveler during the morning, and that was the mail-rider, who was going himself in the direction of Blood Camp at a fast gallop.

"What's that!" he suddenly exclaimed, straining his ears to hear.

"Ho-de-o-do, ho-de-o-de; ho-de-o-do, ho-diddle-de-de!"

It was the echo of the voice of a boy coming down the gorge from the direction of Blood Camp.

"Ho-de-o-do, ho-de-o-de; ho-de-o-do, ho-diddle-de-de! Now watch at ye! Stan' up here! Ef you stump your toe an' fall down an' throw me off, I'll git down an' git me a club an' knock your dang head off! Git up, Moll!"

Just then an old gray horse came bouncing into view around the turn of the road, with a boy perched

between its bony shoulders and projecting hip bones. The boy was perhaps thirteen years old, wore a rimless straw hat, with bare feet and lips stained with tobacco juice.

"Good morning, my boy," saluted Paul Waffington.

"Whoa, Moll! Howdy," he replied, as he drew up before the spring. "You're takin' a rest, air ye?"

"Yes, sir. Resting and eating this cake for dinner; have a bit of it. It's pretty good. Mrs. Tolson, who lives down at the mouth of the gorge, gave it to me this morning."

The boy suddenly threw the piece that he had taken to the ground with a vim, spat out the portion in his mouth, and yelled out:

"Danged ef I eat any of it then!"

"Why, my boy, what's wrong with the cake?"

"I hate them two dang Tolson boys. They fight me. I've licked 'em eleven times—Cæsar six an' Cicero five—an' doan't you never think that I'll ever eat a cake or anything else that their mammy has made," and he came down with his fist on the bony shoulder of the gray mare as emphasis.

"Do you know that it is wrong to use profane language—to curse."

"What? Dang it cussin'? That ain't cussin'. That ain't a starter to real cussin'. Ef you call that cussin' it wouldn't do fur you to hear Fen Green git started a little."

"Is that tobacco you are chewing?"

"Yep."

"What do you chew tobacco for?"

"None o' your bizness. Whoa, Moll, I say!"

"What's your name?"

"Boz."

"What's that you said?"

"I said, Boz."

"Oh, yes, Boaz."

"Yep. What's your name?"

"Is that all the name you have, Boaz?"

"Course not. Boaz Honeycutt is all my name."

"Where do you live, Boaz?"

"Blood Camp, an' I can lick every boy my size from Blood Camp to the mouth of this here gorge. By giggers, I can lick Cicero Tolson quicker than a bull-frog can snatch a fly off'n a grass-blade!" He turned the quid of tobacco over in his mouth, spat over the gray mare's head and asked:

"But what's your name, I said?"

"Well, my name is Waffington—Paul Waffington."

"Well, I wisht I may drap ded! I thot I had seed you before. Oh yes, you air the feller what organized the Sunday-school up to Blood Camp 'bout two year ago. Well, I wisht I may die! I knowed that I had seed you before. Well, Emeline Hobbs has shore kept the school agoin', an' said she wuz agoin' to keep it agoin' un-til you cum back, ef it took a milun year. But I shore am glad thet you air agoin' back up there. I've bin a tendin' Sunday-skule every Sunday fur nine months 'cept two. Once I wint a chestnut huntin' and tother I wint in swimmin' with a passel of boys. But I decided to quit the skule next Sunday ef you didn't come. I like the skule very well an' I like the lessons middlin' well; but every time I look out the door or spit, Emeline Hobbs jabs me on my shins with that wooden pin o' her'n, an' my legs air sore frum it; an' ef she wuz a boy I'd a tanned 'er up fur it a long time ago. Now, I want you to git her to quit jabbin' me on my shins, git another superintender or I'm quit already now,"

"Well, Boaz, you're a better boy than many boys, I am sure. There are boys to be found who do not go to Sunday-school. I'm glad to know that you have made such a fine record in the matter of attendance. Now tell me, how are all the others at Blood Camp?"

"Well, about as usual. Uncle Laz still keeps the school-house swept for Emeline an' his old woman still irons clothes fur people. The Allison's air still keepin' tavern whin anybody comes along, Fen Green's attendin' a little patch of taters and corn upon his mammy's place since she died. The old fiddler cum since you wuz here. He's a fine 'ne, too. They say he's the finest fiddler in the world, an' I wouldn't be surprised. Fen Green goes to see Genie Filson every Sunday. He 'lows that he will get Jase's word to marry Genie about Christmus. Jase likes Fen mighty well. But I don't see Genie any more. Jase stopped her frum comin' to Sunday-skule. People say that she don't look as well as she used to. Some say that Jase is aworkin' her to deth, but Jase says she is agrievin' herself to deth over her two brothers who wint west an' wuz never heard fum any more, is what's amakin' her look so bad."

He took a bit of tobacco from his pocket and added it to what he already had in his mouth, and then continued:

"But Fen Green ain't no account fur Genie as a man. Fen Green ain't worth shucks! He couldn't set a goose on a hillside 'thout putting the rocks on the upper side. I could stick a gourd on the end of a fence rail and learn it more sense than Fen Green's got. Whoa, Moll! But by giggers, I got to go."

"Well, I thank you for your information. And now I hope that you will be at Sunday-school next Sun-

day. You are a promising boy, Boaz. You might make a great man, perhaps a great preacher."

"No, siree. I couldn't learn to kote (quote) Scripture fast enough."

"I presume that you have learned a lot of Scripture in the Sunday-school?"

"Well, I reckon I have learned to kote a little, maybe."

"Here's a five-cent piece, Boaz. I want to hear you quote a verse or two of the Scriptures. If you can do it, I am going to give you the five-cent piece, and when you reach the town you may buy with it whatever you may wish. Now let's have the verse."

The boy looked at the coveted coin in the hand of the man. He had never been in possession of so large a piece of money before. His heart thumped heavily as he shut one eye and sighted with the other one through the ears of the gray mare at a rock in the road just in front, in a feeble attempt to steady his nerves.

"Well, I'll try a verse. 'He—he—he threwed him over the wall—the Lord throwed a man over the wall, an' he throwed 'im over again—then he throwed 'm over the wall seventy times seven; then the dogs cum an' licked all his sores—an'—an'—an' there remained of the fragments thereof—twelve basketful.'"

"Paul Waffington fell over on the moss-covered log and held his sides.

"You're a fine one, Boaz, you're a fine one. Success will come to you in time, my boy. Just keep it up. Here, take the money and buy candy or whatever you like when you reach the town."

"I got to hit the road now. Killed too much time,



I guess; an' then I may have to fight them Tolsons down the gorge about another hour 'fore I git to go on. Started to Mountain City to git fall turnip seed and have this plow-pint sharpened." He drew up his reins, took from his pocket three ripe apples, selected the finest one and began munching it.

"Why don't you eat the smallest one first and save the best until the last, Boaz?" inquired Waffington.

"No, sir. You're wrong there," said the boy. "Eat the best first an' you'll be eatin' the best all the time. Git up, Moll! Git up!" and away he went, disappearing through the trees.

Paul Waffington sat alone, stunned. He was puzzled.

"Eat the best first," he repeated, "and you will be eating the best all the time." His brain cleared, he smiled, and said, "He's right. That's a lesson from a country boy, and it's a good one," and he got up to go.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RESPONSE TO DUTY'S CALL

ANOTHER day had grown old and was peacefully dying in the west as our hero drew near unto the goal of his heart. In the early morning he had come forth rested, with an elastic step, bright and happy. But the torrid heat of the noon-day had steadily followed him, and evening had brought him hither with weary limbs. He emerges from the gorge and slowly mounts the little knoll that overlooks the village.

"At last!" he exclaimed with delight. The fatigue of the trying day overcoming him, he sinks down upon a stone to rest and study the village that now lay before him.

Bathed in the yellow sunlight of the dying day, there lay before him the goal that he had been so laboriously trying to reach for more than thirty-six hours. To his eye there were not many changes visible in Blood Camp. To his left he could plainly see the two little rooms in which dwelt alone Miss Emeline Hobbs, the Sunday-school superintendent. Since the death of her father and mother five years before she had lived there alone, yet but a stone's throw from the cabin of Uncle Lazarus and Aunt Mina. The door of her house stood open, and Paul Waffington could make out the figure of a woman in the excuse of a garden at the side. For a moment he kept his eyes on the figure among the vines and vegetables, then the figure gave a limp, and he knew that it was no other than Emeline Hobbs herself. A little further to the left

was the school-house, and just about it the chestnut grove and the grave-yard. To his right stood the blacksmithshop, the store, and Slade Pemberton's home and the tavern. Then lifting his eyes he beheld the mighty Snake smiling down upon him in silence. Again his eyes swept the mountain, and half way down its side they rested on the cabin of old Jase Dillenburger. From the cabin's rude chimney lazy rings of smoke pushed each other upward. He thought, no doubt, that the hands of Gena Filson had built the fire that made the smoke, and perhaps at this very moment she was busily engaged in making ready the supper for old Jase Dillenburger and his stout wife.

The sudden stop of the clinking ring of the anvil in the blacksmith shop reminded him that the day was nearly done. Then roaring cheers came up from the store, and men and boys began pushing out the door in bunches. Fen Green was recognized among the others, and there was among the number a new one, the old fiddler, hence the ringing cheers. Slade Pemberton is the last to emerge from the store. He closed and locked the door and walked away towards his home. But groups of lazy and idle men still linger about the platform of the store to hear "Jist one more tune before we go," as Fen Green had said. Then another final cheer goes up, and every man turns about and goes towards his own place. Day's glittering train glides down the mighty mountain, passes by and enters the gorges of twilight, and sends its messenger—a peaceful silence—over the hamlet.

"How sweet is life!" exclaimed Paul Waffington, as he arose, trudged down the knoll into the village and turned in at the tavern gate.

The Allisons who kept the tavern greeted him cordially. Supper was ready and he went into the dining-

room with a gnawing appetite. Supper over, he concluded that he would pay a little visit to Miss Emeline Hobbs and Uncle Lazarus and Aunt Mina, in order that he might have some definite word as to the welfare of the Sunday-school.

"Oh, go 'way! Oh, oh, go 'way!! No, no, doan' go 'way. Oh!!! De Lawd help my po' black so'll! Is yo' a gos'? Or is it Puolly yo' you'self, Massa Waffington?" Aunt Mina stood in the middle of her one-room cabin, with both hands up and her big eyes dilating until all the whites were visible. Then recovering herself somewhat, she put back her glasses on her forehead, dropped her big fat hands to her hips, and gazed at the man in the door again. "I showly do believe dat it is Puolly yo' yo'self. De good Lawd be praised. Come right in he'ar an' let yo' ole black mammy see yo' face. It is Puolly yo' yo'self. I—I—I sed yo'd come. I sed yo'd come back. Laz said yo'd come. De good Lawd be praised, it's yo' yo'self." She turned to the rear door of the cabin and put out her head in the gathering darkness and called out:

"Laz, Laz! run he'ar dis minit—right now!" and then turning back into the room she continued, "Miss Emeline hed jis' 'bout give yo' out. Some said you'd come back an' some said yo' wouldn't. Laz has kept de house clean an' de fires goin' in winter, an' Miss Emeline has kept de school agoin'. Laws, I'se afear'd dat she'll break dat wooden peg whin she hears dat yo'se come." She untied the red handkerchief and removed it from her head, readjusted her glasses on her nose, and stood off a little distance looking down at Paul Waffington, her old black face glowing with happiness.

"So glad 'use come, Massa," was the greeting of the old colored man. "We all needs you'. De little gurl up dar on de mountain side needs you' mos', tho'."

The two men walked out through the door into the garden together, Waffington and the black man. On up through the winding path the black man led the white, through the wicker gate and into the chestnut grove and the grave-yard.

"I wanted to come up hear with yo' an' sho' yo' somethin', Massa Waffington," said the old black man. They finally came up to a giant chestnut tree. At the trunk, the old black man pointed to a hard, slick barren spot at the base of the tree, that was just visible in the growing darkness.

"What made the hard worn spot, Uncle Lazarus?" inquired Paul Waffington.

"Dese ole knees, Massa Waffington, dese ole knees," he said, standing with his head bowed down to the ground. Then he lifted his eyes and looked into the face of the white man as he continued: "Eber evenin' after my chores is done, for mo'n a year, Massa Waffington, I'se come up hear an' dropped dese ole knees down hear an' prayed fo' yo', Massa. I'se prayed dat yo' would come back. I'se prayed dat yo' would be spaired an' come back to Blood Camp an' help us. Miss Emeline needs yo', and I need yo', an' we all need yo' so bad. Den, Massa, dat leetle gurl up yandar on de mountain side needs yo' help worse dan all de res'."

Together they walked back towards the gate. Paul Waffington had spoken in reply not a word. He was turning in his mind problems for solution.

"I thank you for your prayers, Uncle Lazarus. I

appreciate them, I thank you for them, and you are a good man."

"An' now 'fore we part, i'se anoder thing dat I want to ax yo', Massa, while we is out he'ar together, ef yo' will bear with this 'ole black man," he ventured, as they neared the gate.

"Why, certainly, Uncle, certainly. Why, I would be willing to have you ask me questions all the night through, if only I could answer them."

"I'se done knowed dat dis 'ole black man aint gwine ter be he'ar many mo' summers at mo's. I'm gettin' mighty feeble, Massa. My jints is growin' stif', an' i'se all weightd down wid years. Here lately i'se bin wantin' to kno' mo' 'bout dat odder worl' away off up yander som'ers. Atter I gits da school-house swept out Sunday mornin's, I'se bin stayin' an' a hearin' Miss Emeline a tellin' 'bout it to da chil'ens. I'se bin longin' to ax yo' 'bout it, den I'll be satisfied. Is dar any good place fo' an ole black man like me away off in dat country?" The feeble old man lifted his thin eyes and looked into Paul Waffington's face for an answer with all the yearning of his soul.

"Yes, there is, Uncle Lazarus," came the answer, in low, gentle tones.

"De good Lawd be praised. I'se ready to die," he shouted, turning his black face to the starry heavens in humble thanksgiving.

It was dark now, and the stars came out and looked as bright as gold. Paul Waffington looked up at the peaks of the mighty Snake and at the myriad of stars beyond, and was grateful for all. Near by the gate he stopped and reverently removed his hat as he looked upon a grave whose turf was now growing old. For a full minute he stood, when the silence was broken by the black man.

"Under dat moun', Massa Waffington, res' de body of de bes' woman, de bes' mudder, dat eber lived in dis worl'. Many is de time dat dis ole nigger man has waded thro' de snow deeper den my knees an' gone an' fixed firewood fo' her an' dat little angel Genie to keep warm by, when Joe wa' wild an' bad. Hundreds ob dark winter nights I'se rocked an' sung to dat little baby Genie, sung to her 'bout bettar times whin she'd be a woman." Then he went on half aloud: "But dem bettar times fo' dat little body aint nebbar come yit. Aye, Massa, bes' heart dat eber beat lays der asleep under dem daisies."

They walked out through the wicker gate together. Each was engaged with his thoughts.

"If I can do anything to make life easier for Gena Filson, I am going to do it, Uncle Lazarus. I know that Jason Dillenburg is mistreating his adopted daughter. I know, too, that to cross Jase Dillenburg's path means death perhaps. But both Gena and Jase invited me to come to see them when I returned to Blood Camp, therefore, I have decided to go up tonight and pay my respects to Jason Dillenburg and his adopted daughter. Jase has naught against me, and I believe that he will truly be glad to see me. Good night, Uncle Lazarus," he called, as he turned from the gate.

"Jus' one mo' question from dis ole black man fo' yo' go, Massa, jus' one mo'."

"Why, Uncle, two of them if you wish," came the good-natured reply.

"My mind has been pesterin' me a heap o' late 'bout a question. I—I want to ax yo'. Where is de modder ob dat little Genie tonight? Is she at res'?"

For a moment Paul Waffington stood in the night with his eyes penetrating the darkness that filled the

valley below. Then, beckoning with his hand for the black man to draw near, he showed him the mighty Snake with its domes and peaks that stood up in the starry night. Then he pointed out the tall pines that waved on the mountain top, then the stars that twinkled and shimmered beyond.

"Yes, Uncle Lazarus," he finished, "far, far beyond where the stars come forth at evening time in their cars of gold, there lies a land of perennial bliss. A country where thinly clad mountain mothers never suffer from hunger and cold; where little children of the poor and lowly never cry for bread; where hard toiling men of the world, if they be faithful, shall find rest under the shade of the tree. And methinks, tonight, in the border of that congenial clime, the mother of Gena Filson dwells budding and blooming—a flower more beautiful than the rose."

He let loose the black man's arm, closed the wicker gate, and went his way through the starry night.



## CHAPTER IX

### LIFTING THE YOKE

PAUL WAFFINGTON inhaled deep draughts of the crisp night air as he ascended the mountain side, and was refreshed. He had been glad to greet the folk of the little village after two long years of absence. Especially glad to learn of the sticking qualities of Miss Emeline Hobbs and the prosperity of the little Sunday-school. With all this he had been in some degree satisfied. But there was one thing still for which he had a longing desire to know, and that one thing was, how went life with Gena Filson. Well, he soon would know, and with renewed energy he mended his pace up the mountain side. Half way up, he stopped and looked down at the little village in the dark valley. Some two or three faint flickering lights was all that could be made out. The laboring men of the mountains retire early and arise early. Not all the fathers of the Blood Camp neighborhood idled away their time. Many of them were logmen—men who felled trees the long day through, winter and summer alike, others yoked together the oxen and “snaked in” the logs from the mountain coves so they could be loaded on the wagons and hauled away to the markets. But, by this hour, the oxen had been given his fodder, each workman had sat at his humble board and partaken of his portion, and now man and beast had gone to his bed that he might find rest. Under the shining heaven’s blue Paul Waffington stood upon the mountain’s side and reflected upon it all. A single light was now burn-

ing in Blood Camp. He watched its faint glow—it flickered now and went out—Blood Camp is at rest.

“What if old Jase should resent this visit?” he thought, as he resumed his journey. Well, old Jase had invited him in the first place to visit his home. It was not a late hour—7:30 o’clock. Rather a seasonable hour for a summer night’s call, he thought. And, further, it was perfectly proper for him to accept the invitation and pay his respects to Jase Dillenburg and his adopted daughter.

But what could he do for Gena Filson? If Jase were willing he might assist her to a scholarship in some college of music. She had gone to the public schools until her thirteenth year, but that was little indeed. Then her own mother had been a Pennsylvania school-teacher and had taught her little daughter much at home. She had once even said that she was fond of music. Now, if old Jase were willing, he might do something to help her to get a musical education. But, aye, would the old mountaineer let her go, if the college were found, board provided and tuition—and all paid? Would he be willing to let her go at any price? Would he ever let her go beyond the neighborhood of Blood Camp, for any reason? Well, at all events, thought Paul Waffington, he would do the best that he could for her. “Eat the best first” was the maxim of Boaz Honeycutt, and Paul Waffington decided that he would “do the best first” for Gena Filson. In fact, he meant to adopt the maxim of Boax Honeycutt in many things hereafter. He had resolved to have the best first in all his work henceforth.

“As you go out into life, remember, Paul, my boy, that the parting words of old Professor Goff in the college class-room came to him clear and plain:

“As you go out into life, remember, Paul, my boy, that every man is a sculptor. Remember, that the stones which

you are carving are the people with whom you come in contact. Each deed and act are strokes upon the chisel which you will hold. Some strokes upon the chisel will deface the stone for time. Other strokes will polish, and carve beauty and character. Hold your chisel at such an angle and apply such strokes, my boy, as will bring polish to the stones and happiness to the world."

These grand words were ringing in his ears tonight, as he put out his hand and turned the latch in the gate in front of Jase Dillenburger's cabin. At the first click of the latch, the great watch-dog flew down through the yard with a vicious look. But Paul Waffington had had experience with dogs before. Bringing his tact quickly into play, he saluted the great mastiff with a low, gentle whistle, and they were friends at once, without a single bark from the dog. He wished to give old Jase and Gena a complete surprise tonight. Then, too, he was fearful, if the dog should give warning, that old Jase might mistake him for an officer of the law and shoot him on the spot. How he would surprise them, he thought at last! Would not Gena be glad to see him after more than a year of absence? Then what would he find her doing? Perhaps reading to her foster father from some cast-off weekly paper that Slade Pemberton had given Jase. Maybe she was singing some hymn that she had recently learned in the Sunday-school.

He walked lightly up to the door and put his hand out to knock——

"What's that?" he said under his breath.

"You aint no account. Your old sorry daddy before you warn't no account. He warn't nothin' but a cold black murderer. That's what he wuz, an' he died in the pen, ter boot! But you're mine by law, an' you've got to do as I say. You aint apayin' fur the salt 'at goes in

yer bread. Sick? Sick nothin'. Git outen that bed. I'll let you know when ter go ter bed."

Paul Waffington stood at the cabin door and heard it all. He swallowed down a great lump that came up in his throat, and his heart thumped against his breast loud and fast. He clinched his fists and shoved them deep down into his coat pockets, and listened again. His ears caught the begging cry and pleading of the girl as she lay upon her hard bunk.

"I'm so sick, daddy Jase. I'm so sick, daddy Jase. I can't get up. I can't get up, daddy Jase. Oh, my dear mamma, if you would only come back and take me away!" was the final cry that came so feebly from the feverish lips.

The old mountaineer's voice grew louder and more furious, and then Paul Waffington heard distinctly the stroke—!!! The door flew open as if a bolt of lightning had struck it as Paul Waffington went through.

"Hold on there, Jase Dillenburger, hold on there! Don't you strike her again, don't, don't, don't you strike her again, I say. Yes, I know that you can kill me. You can shoot me on the spot. But, Jase Dillenburger, don't you forget to calculate that if I come up missing I have two brothers back in the Kentucky valley that will hunt you down like the stealthy fox that you are. They will scour this continent for your shaggy head—aye, they will drag the sea for your bones. Don't you strike—don't, don't. If I were not a gentleman and a Christian I would say to you, begone to your place, you imp of Satan, and I would punctuate it with this," and he shot out his athletic fist like an iron shaft within an inch of old Jase Dillenburger's nose and held it there, glaring into the beady-black eyes of his savage enemy without a tremor. For a moment they both stood glaring at each other. Then, quick as a flash, Paul Waffington flew to the bunk,

snatched the sick girl in his arms and cleared the door, crouching as he went, expecting to be shot with old Jase's deadly gun.

He evidently had judged his man aright. As he cleared the door old Jase reached for his gun, with which to bring down his man. But as the hammer of his gun came back, strong arms wound around him, steel bands snapped together over his wrists, and before he could collect his mind three men had their hands upon him, and the spokesman of the three was no other than the old fiddler himself.

"In the name of the President and the United States, I arrest you, Jason Dillenburger," said the fiddler, at the same time exhibiting the badge of a United States revenue officer.

Ten minutes after the handcuffs had snapped together around the wrists of Jase Dillenburger Paul Waffington had placed Gena Filson between clean, white sheets on a bed in the home of Emeline Hobbs. The people of Blood Camp were stirred and seemed conscious of some great change taking place in some inexplicable way, hence it was but a few minutes until the little house of Emeline Hobbs was running over with frightened people.

As the night wore on, some of the people returned to the others were told the story of the flight, and were requested not to insist on going into the sick-room, for the sake of the sick one. Men stood about in groups and shook their heads while women spoke out boldly and pitied Paul Waffington, for they were constrained to believe that Jase Dillenburger would be on the trail of him within an hour, and when found would shoot him down.

As the night wore on, some of the people returned to their homes, others hung about the sick-room at a safe distance to see if Jase Dillenburger would appear. By

and by, word was passed out from the sick-room that Gena Filson was burning up with a dreadful fever and that she was then delirious. It was certain now that some grave sickness was upon her. Paul Waffington sought out Fen Green, and asked him if he would venture to make the twelve miles through the dark night and the gorge for the doctor.

"Fenton, I want you to bring the doctor when you return without fail. Gena is burning up with fever, and is delirious. Make all the speed that you possibly can, Fenton," was the request of Waffington.

"I'll bring 'im. Don't you never doubt but what I'll bring 'im. I'll bring 'im, dead or alive, shore's my name is Fen Green," and into the dark and dangerous gorge he turned his horse at a fast gallop.

Every living soul in Blood Camp was up before the sun on the following morning. They wished to get a start with the sun and see what new things the day would bring forth.

Not long after the store had opened for the day, a wagon drew up in which were seated the old fiddler, Jase Dillenburger and two guards. All the fathers of Blood Camp had gathered at the store to see the going away of their neighbor Jason Dillenburger in the company of an officer of the law.

"Boys, the next time a man comes into your neighborhood fiddling free, be careful," said Bull Jones, the fiddler. "I've not fiddled here for more than a solid year for nothing, boys. I didn't go out here on the hills during the long summer days and plough and hoe corn with no expectation of receiving a reward in the end. I've milked every cow in the neighborhood, hoed most of the gardens, planted sugar-cane and played the fiddle in the store there by the week. Remember, boys, that somebody

always has the fiddler to pay. Good-bye, boys, and good luck," and the officer gave the signal to start.

Old Jase had sat still and sullen throughout it all. He had been arrested by an officer of the law for moonshining, counterfeiting and several other violations. He knew that he would now go to prison for a long term of years, however light the sentence might be. He knew, too, that he was old and that he would never live to serve out his time and return to Blood Camp. Therefore, as the wagon moved away, he turned his great shaggy head and looked at Fen Green standing on the store platform and called out:

"Fen, don't fergit, thet I want ye to have Genie, Christmas, ef she don't die."

The shock of the arrest and the presence of an officer in her home was too much for the little stout wife of old Jase. Consequently, she gathered up a few of her choicest belongings in a red tablecloth, threw the bundle over her shoulder, and made her way back across the mighty Snake back to her "people" on the Catawba.

"Never liked to live thar, a day of the thirty year no-how," she said.

Many long, weary weeks went by at Blood Camp. Paul Waffington, Fen Green and Emeline Hobbs watched over the sufferer day and night with never a murmur. Each day, each night, the faithful Waffington had followed the old doctor to the gate and asked him the same question:

"How is the patient, 'doctor?"

Each time in reply the old doctor had shook his head. Business was hard pressing him to return to his Knoxville home, but he remained at the bedside of the sufferer. Then, too, he had failed to make his annual visit back to Kentucky to see the home folks. He had duly written to his mother that she might know the reason of his

delay. But tonight he has received a letter from her that burns him:

"HAZEL GREEN, KY., July 4th, 19—.

"DEAREST PAUL:

"We are all deeply disappointed to learn that you will not come home this summer. Your two brothers, your little sister and your father, too, have all made mention of it and expressed disappointment. I fear that you are unwell—and are doing too much.

"We have looked forward with delight to the time when you would come and make us all so happy.

"Your little schoolmate, Imogene, inquires about you most every week—and, Paul, she has grown so beautiful during the past year.

"Your dear father is not well, and your sister says to tell you to come home soon. I miss you so much, my boy.

"Let no one, nothing, come between us, dear son, and may Heaven bless my boy.

"Your devoted MOTHER."

He read the letter again. Getting up he studied the ground between his feet for an answer. Then looking up, he kissed the little note, put it into his pocket and walked away towards the sick room.

"Yes, I will go. But—not—now," he said, as he went.



## CHAPTER X

### THROUGH THE EVER CHANGING SCENES

THE days following the rescue of Gena Filson and the period of her convalescence were trying ones for the humble folks of Blood Camp. Without exception, every man from the bottom of his heart was glad that the fingers of the law had finally reached out and taken hold upon old Jase Dillenburger. Yet, for fear, not a man had given expression to the fact to his next neighbor.

When the news came from the sick-room, telling of the change for the better, the convalescence period, then the long suspense which had held the little hamlet in awful dread so long was broken. Darkness dispersed, and the people of Blood Camp adjusted themselves to the new conditions, and turned again to honest toil with contented minds and grateful hearts.

Since Paul Waffington had again taken his leave, the courts had decreed and ordered that the cabin and three acres of land that belonged to old Jase Dillenburger should pass to Gena Filson, and forthwith appointed Slade Pemberton her guardian and administrator.

Slade Pemberton was a hard man of the hills. He had about "held his own" or "kept even," as he would say, selling goods in Blood Camp, and perhaps, he had been niggardly with it. He invariably tied the twenty-five-cent bag of brown sugar at the top with about an inch of cotton string, instead of wrapping the bag with the string, as is the custom, thereby saving a few inches of wrapping-string. But with Slade Pemberton twenty

inches of cotton string saved was twenty inches made. More than one mother in Blood Camp could testify that his pound was short and his yard niggardly.

Still Slade Pemberton was the store-keeper, and the people looked up to him in a way, and respected him. Since good luck had favored him somewhat lately, and he had been able to settle his back accounts with his dealers in the cities and thereby reopen his store for business, he had tried ever so hard to deal justly with all. But Slade Pemberton found it hard, even a strain upon him, to put more than thirty-five and one-half inches in his yard. But recently he had attended a few sessions of the Sunday-school "Jist to hear the tunes—not to take part," as he said. But the tunes seemed to have done him good. The Sunday-school, the new adjustment of life in Blood Camp, and one other great fact—the fact that he was now the guardian of Gena Filson—all seemed to take hold upon him until the little spark of good that was in him flamed up and found expression in deeds of kindness.

Without further delay, he had the cabin on the mountainside cleansed of its filth and the greasy and germ-laden furnishings burned. When all had been made clean, the serviceable furnishings were arranged in their places, a few new things bought and installed, and all was made ready for the return of Gena Filson. Slade Pemberton had even outdone himself in the matter of kindness for Gena Filson. He arranged with Emeline Hobbs that she should close up her own little house and go with Gena on the mountain and be her housekeeper.

When the day arrived for Gena Filson to return to the cabin and make it her future home, misgivings were in her heart. But Slade Pemberton closed and locked his store and accompanied Gena and her housekeeper to the new home. At the first sight of the old home, Gena shrank

back with dread. She thought of the awful past, of her hard master Jase, whom she had seen standing in the door a thousand times.

"Ay, it's all different now, Genie, it's all different now," said Slade Pemberton, as he led the way.

She came up and took a look through the little door. She saw to her great surprise many changes in that dismal little room. It looked so different, so clean and really sweet, she thought. Then it was to be her home, it was her home. And then she was to have a housekeeper, and the best housekeeper! And it all—all the three acres of corn, potatoes and house—all her own.

"All for me—all mine!" she cried, with delight.

It was the first evening of September now. She had been to the wood-yard, where she had filled her basket with dry chips. Returning, she had built a fire for the night was growing chilly. When the sun was high the days were still warm and pleasant, but the nights were growing cold and tonight there was dampness in the room. Supper was over, and Emeline Hobbs was busy putting away the dishes while she finished the fire. The blaze leaped up and lent a cheerful look to the room as she sat throwing on handfuls of chips.

Gena Filson was herself again now, and was growing stronger each succeeding day. The rose was coming again to her cheeks and she was truly grateful for her existence. She smiled with satisfaction as she listened to the stub, stub of Emeline Hobbs' wooden peg, as that happy soul busied herself about the kitchen work humming the while "Am I a Soldier." Then, taking a pailful of beans from a corner of the room, she began stringing them for the morrow's cooking, as the figure of a boy appeared in the open door.

"Howdy, Genie?"

"Why, how do you do, Boaz. Do come right in.

Why, Boaz, this is the first time you have come to see me since—since I came back home. I'm so glad that you have come. Have this chair, Boaz."

"Jist leave stan'. Iz Emeline here? I'd a come sooner, but I know'd Emeline wuz here. I don't like her much, you know. You know thet she wuz allus a peckin' on me in Sunday-skule for sumthin' or 'nother. But she ain't done it as much lately as she used to. Maybe she's got a little more feelin' fur a feller or sumthin'. I jist thot I'd come up and fetch you these daisies, ef you wanted 'em. They're about all gone. Found these over by the big stub over yander on Slade's hill. I started up here more'n two hours ago, but as I cum up, I saw an adder, and laid them daisies down to kill 'em, an' I like to never found them daisies agin when I got through with that adder. I wisht I may die, ef I didn't hunt an hour fur 'em 'fore I found 'em. But I found 'em."

"How can I ever thank you for the kindness you show me? I do love daisies. You are a good boy, Boaz, and a dear friend to me."

"Yes, you bet I'm your friend all right, Genie, an' don't you fergit it," piped Boaz. "Course I'm jist a boy an' can't help you like Mr. Waffington did when he was here." He looked into the fire for a long time, turned over his quid of tobacco, spat in the ashes and gave a jerk at his head as he continued: "He's gone agin now, though. But ef I wuz a man, though, I'd show them rowdies, Fen Green an' them, how to impose on you, Genie. Has Fen Green bin up here lately, Genie?"

"No, I think not, Boaz," she replied, and went on breaking and stringing the beans.

"Well, he's acomin'! I hear him atellin' the boys down to the shop yisterday, thet he was agoin' to put on his new celloi' collar and his new striped shirt and

fix up an' come upon the mountain tomorrow an' see his future wife—Miss Genie Filson. The dang——”

“Oh, Boaz! You mustn't! I didn't think that you would——”

“Well, I didn't. I didn't cuss, Genie. Not hardly, I didn't. Don't count it this time. But you ain't afixin' to marry Fen Green, air you, Genie?”

“Why, no, Boaz, I'm not fixing to marry anybody,” she simply said.

“O—o—o—oh!” he said. His clenched fists relaxed and he stood looking into the fire. Stooping to the floor, he picked up the few beans that had been carelessly dropped to the floor, threw them into the pail and said, “It's gettin' dark—I got to go. I'll see you at Sunday-skule nex' Sunday. Good-bye, Genie,” and he disappeared through the door and went down the mountain side like a flash. She ran to the door and looked after him. Then presently there came to her ears from away off down the mountain side the familiar tune:

“Ho-de-o-do, ho-de o de; ho de o do, ho diddle de de.” Her cheeks flushed crimson as she smiled, went in and shut the door.

Gena Filson sits by her own fire in a speculative mood tonight. Was she not happy, she thought. She was now her own mistress in a sense, free to do in most things—as she chose. The house and corn patches were hers; her savage old master, Jase, was now behind prison walls making reparation in some degree for the stripes that he had laid upon her. But since her recent illness; since the lifting of the yoke from her neck; since the new era in Blood Camp life, there appeared a pain in her young heart not without a cause. Fen Green wanted to marry Gena Filson, and she was aware of the fact. Oh, no; she could never marry Fen Green. She knew not the reason why, but then, that could never be. Then

there was another friend, one who had so befriended her. But she had never thought of marrying him—of marrying anybody. Why, she thought, Paul Waffington had never even hinted that he cared for her in the slightest—and much less thought of marrying her. But whose name was it that was on her lips most during those long hours of delirium? To whom did she then appeal constantly for help? Who was it that she pulled down over the bed and begged a hundred times over that he would not let old Jase beat her again? Had no one ventured to tell her that it was Paul Waffington? But now, as she sits looking into the fire, she thinks that she can faintly recall the gentle touch of soft hands and a sweet reassuring voice bending over her, constantly telling her that no harm should come nigh her. And as she reflects upon it all tonight, she allows her heart to half wish that Paul Waffington loved her. But perish the thought, she reasoned. Had he not returned to his native country to be with those who honor and love him? Perhaps tonight he sits at the festal board smiling upon her whom he loves and who he boasts as his equal. One who has many graces, refinement, culture and sterling character. But no matter, thought Gena Filson, he had befriended her, and she resolved now to ever be grateful at least for his friendship.

The fire on the hearth went out; she arose and went to her bed with the first gentle call of love throbbing in her bosom.

On the following day Fen Green found her about the flowers in the yard. She was preparing to take up many of the flowers and remove them into the house for the long winter. In all the style and glory of which Boaz Honeycutt had told her Fen Green came.

"It's mighty pretty day, an' ye air alookin' well, Genie. I'm glad ye air so well. I hope thet ye air well enough

to lis'en with some sense to what I'm agwin' to say. Now, will yer be fair?"

"Why, yes, Fen, I will always try to see things rightly," she said, as she took up a large chrysanthemum near the gate.

"Slade Pemberton is atalkin' of you agwin' off to skule. Now you don't need no more skulin'. You've bin to skule an' then your maw learnt you a lot at home. You don't need no more learnin'. Too much learnin' makes wimen highfalutin. An' you know that it wuz the will of Jase thet me an' you marry at Chrismus. Now what you goin' to do? You ain't agoin' to forgit adyin' man's request, air ye? He's bin took to prison, an' he's too old to sarve out his time an' come back—so he's jist as good as ded. I won't never beat ye like Jase did, neither. I'll allus keep ye plenty to eat an' ware. An' you know I have a little farm up thar on the hill, with plenty of corn, cabbage, taters and sich like. Now won't thet be better than goin' off to skule an' settin' yerself for somebody thet ye can't git?"

"Fen, I'm not thinking of marrying anybody. You have befriended me, and I want your friendship. I need it, especially when friends are so few." She put down the spade and looked away off down the mountain side. Then slowly said: "No, Fen, we cannot marry. Here in this valley below us are girls better suited to you than I. Choose you a wife from among them, and prove yourself worthy of her. As a friend you can help me and as your friend I will try to help you."

"I have loved you an' waited fur ye—an' I ain't agoin' to give ye up. I'll be yer friend, an' I'll be yer lover too—an' I hope thet ye'll come to your senses some day," he called back over his shoulder as he went down the mountain side.

The time came when Slade Pemberton was to close his store and make another trip up on the mountain to the cabin of Gena Filson. He went this time with a grave face but a good mission in his heart.

"I'm not much of a man, Genie, but I'm disposed to do the best for ye that I know. I wrote Mr. Waffington fer a little advice. I told him all about everything—thet I had been appointed your guardian an' that the house an' all was your'n, and that you could sell off enough of corn, beans and a few other things to send you to skule off somewhere fur a whole year or nearly so. Now I've got a letter here from him. He says that he will help you to get a scholarship. Now, I come up to see you an' find out from you ef it's your own mind fer you to go off to skule. Now ef it is, then Slade Pemberton is goin' to see to it thet you git to go. Ef you want to go off an' study music an' a few other things, I say that you can go. I'll buy in your corn an' other things mostly myself. Emeline can go back to her own home while you are gone. I'll git Uncle Laz to take care of the house while you are gone. Now, Genie, you jist decide about this to suit yerself. I'm jist Slade Pemberton, but I'm going to do right by ye, Genie, ef I know what right is."

"Oh, I can hardly believe that you are saying it!" she cried, joyfully. "Oh, if I could only go to school!"

Slade Pemberton left Gena Filson with her heart all aflame that afternoon. She sat on the tuft of grass in her own yard looking down on the hundreds of peaks before her, and wondered how it would all seem to be beyond the hills, within the limits of some great city; to push one's way along through the mighty throngs in the congested business districts. Then college! She had seen the pictures of colleges in the magazines and the catalogues—but to go to college! that would be altogether another thing. To get a real chance in life; to mingle



with the learned and refined people of the world, she thought, could not fail to set her feet upon higher planes of service and endeavor in the battle of human life.

At last the desire of Gena Filson's heart was realized—she went to college. To her scanty little wardrobe were added three cheap dresses that she and Emeline Hobbs had hurriedly made by candle-light. All were at length crowded into a little trunk that had long since seen more service than its share, and Gena Filson climbed upon the wagon seat by the side of Slade Pemberton one bright morning, and was ready to leave for college.

Once more the hearts of all Blood Camp were made sad. All had gathered at the store to see her off. Mothers forgot, in their real sorrow, to still their crying children as they stood on the store platform, holding them in their arms—looking on with downcast hearts.

All had been made glad when the news flashed back that Jase Dillenburg had been sent to prison. All had again had much cause for thanksgiving, when they found that the one beloved in the village above all others—Gena Filson—was to make her home in the cabin in their midst. But now that she was going away to be gone a very long period of time, and perhaps never to return, was too much for them. It made them all sore at heart. And if she did return, would she be the same? She would be above them, Fen Green had said.

“Be a good girl, honey, an’ doan’ yo’ nebber go back on de folks at home. No matter whar’ yo’ go nor what yo’ see, doan’ nebber fergit ’em. De is mighty rough folks, but ebber one has good hearts an’ lobes yo’. An’ honey, doan’ yo’ fergit yo’ ole black mammy. I’ll be stan’in’ right ober der in de do’ah alookin’ fo’ yo’ whin yo’ come. Good-bye, honey.”

The wagon went up over the little hill and out of sight. Fen Green jabbed the spur into his horse's side and shot away in the opposite direction, yelling as he went:

"Let 'er go—nobody cares."

For a time the others stood together looking at the spot just where the wagon disappeared, as if they were bound together under the spell. But after a time the mothers rewrapped the babies in their shawls and resignedly returned to their homes.

Boaz Honeycutt remained upon the store platform alone. He had not seen the wagon pass out of sight over the hill. He had strained his eyes watching the wagon as it neared the hill-top, and finally, when he heard the words come ringing back to him:

"Good-bye, Boaz; don't forget me"—tears filled his eyes and put the wagon out of his vision. For a long time the little barefoot boy sat without a stir. Then, getting up, he ran his hands down deep into the bottomless pockets of his coat and slowly walked away.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE THRILL OF COLLEGE LIFE

It was the first day of the commencement exercises in a grand old Southern college. A college that was founded more than a hundred years ago, by the indefatigable and persistent Doak. While on his westward march in that remote ago he stopped, laid down his books, took up the sword, and stood before his countrymen at Sycamore Shoals and challenged those who were willing to make the hazardous risk, and charge up King's Mountain, to step out in line! Inspired by the great educator's patriotic call, brave and noble hearted men filled the line in the twinkle of an eye. Thus it was that the immortal Doak did his part to win that glorious victory. But not even the glory of that great victory could divert him from his path of plain duty before him. Hence he again gathered up his books and continued his journey, through the mountain gaps and down into the gorges he went, finally settling in the Valley of the Tennessee—immediately founding a college and giving the remainder of his life for the cause of education.

In a little room, with its snowy white walls and furnishings, on this self-same college campus, we find today the heroine of this humble narrative making final preparations for her humble part in the ninety-first commencement exercises.

At first, the trial of college life had been a very hard one for Gena Filson. To make the attempt of adapting herself to college life was in a comparative way like changing worlds with her. There were rules and regu-

lations until her head was in a whirl. There was a daily programme—a time to rise; a time to recite; a time for supper; a time to retire—a time for everything it seemed! System! System was something new with her. Then she had been repelled by the rebuffs of older and more advanced college students. The young ladies of better wardrobes had at first passed her with haughty spirits. In fact, nearly everyone had been guilty in speaking in a jesting manner of the scanty wardrobe that was hers.

But as the days went by Gena Filson proved herself equal to the arduous tasks that were before her. Inch by inch, she won her way among them. First she won a friend—then a second—the while holding on to the first with ever so much care. In short, the application of Gena Filson's mind to her work; the physical culture that she daily received; system and the constant association of cultured and refined teachers, was doing for her the same as it had done for many another young lady of sterling qualities; was bringing her to womanhood with the true graces and polish of a gentlewoman.

By sheer pluck she had been able to hold out during the first few months. Then she began to have an insight of things—she saw the real meaning of it all. As the year had progressed, there were musicales, society meetings and class receptions. She rose up, did her best, and met every occasion and enjoyed it all to the fullest extent of her capacity.

But today the college year was over, and the commencement exercises was before her. Her first commencement! Tonight her heart was happy and full, for all were now her friends, and they honored her. She gave a last touch to the pins in her braided hair before she left the room. The tresses of gold that all Blood Camp knew and loved so well were no longer hanging down her back. But they were done and arranged in

the latest style, "beautifully," as her best chum had exclaimed with emphasis only a half hour before when she was finishing it. She took another look in the mirror before going out. The soft blue dress that she wore, made from some soft materials, matched the big blue eyes, and her neck and throat were charming. She had made that pretty dress herself during extra hours, and she was truly proud of it. Drawing on a glove she walked towards the door. The gloves! Oh, yes! Why, she had received them at Christmas—as a present—from some friend somewheres; yes, a friend indeed—Paul Waffington. For a moment she stood at the door, thinking. She wondered would he know her now. Would he think her changed—would he be pleased with her personal appearance. The first and only letter that she had ever received from him had been sent along with those gloves. But then she had been so overjoyed at the sight of the beautiful gloves that the note had been hastily read and put away. It was over there now in the excuse of a trunk that was hers. She slowly turned about—went over and raised the lid and found it. Opening the note she read:

"HAZEL GREEN, KY., December 23, 19—.

"MISS GENA FILSON,  
"Tusculum College, Tenn.

"My Dear Friend:—I am sending you by today's mail a little Christmas remembrance. Please accept it as a little token of respect and esteem. I learn that you are doing well in Tusculum. My earnest desire is that you will continue to be happy in your work.

"I have been somewhat delayed in returning to my headquarters in Knoxville but expect to return soon.

"I shall be glad to pay you a visit at the college whenever an opportunity is afforded.

"With many good wishes for you, I beg to subscribe myself,

"Your friend,

"PAUL WAFFINGTON."

She read it twice over, replaced it in the little trunk and let down the lid. Five months had now elapsed since the note was written, yet he had not come. The college year was ended and commencement was now in progress, still never a word. But Gena Filson had no time to worry over such matters. She was happy in her new world, her new work; then, too, she had plenty of friends to claim her time now—friends among the young men the same as among the young ladies. Therefore, drawing on the other glove, she went quickly out and shut the door.

Gena Filson had never been told the full extent of the persistent efforts that Paul Waffington had made with the college president in her behalf. She knew nothing of the frequent letters that had passed between the college president and Paul Waffington solely in her interest. Then the flippant and less studious ones of the college had told her, that "a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush," hence it was beginning to lead her into the disposition of dismissing uncertainties from her mind.

"Dismiss uncertainties—for the commencement at least—and enjoy the present time while you may," one had said to her.

In the gathering shadows of evening a carriage rolled up and stopped before the college gate. Paul Waffington alighted in the face of one who seemed to be the center of attraction with a group of young

men. It was a young man—this center of attraction—a “Mr. Texas,” as he heard one of the party address him. His great square jaws and protruding black eyes loomed up under a large derby hat. His suit was of the flaring variety, with an extremely tight fitting waist. But, above all, his hose with their white polka dots each the size of a twenty-five cent piece could not fail to attract attention, and he carried a cane. Paul Waffington gave him a fair look as he went by and passed on into the president’s office.

When finally emerging from the president’s office, he met a merry and happy throng that was making its way to the college chapel. He had meant to send up his card and have at least a few minutes with Gena Filson before the exercises. But a delayed train had made great inroads upon his limited time, hence his failure to do so. Notwithstanding the failure of his intentions in that direction, still with an air of some satisfaction he climbed the steps that led to the college chapel and was ushered to a seat near the center of the hall.

Everybody was happy tonight! Laughter and fun; the swish of soft skirts; the smell of roses—all told a tale of happiness.

Then the programme commenced. It was the recital of the musical department. What! yes, the same! Paul Waffington ran his eye down the programme that he held—it stopped at the third number. He dropped the programme to his knees and settled back uneasily in his seat. It seemed that he could hardly abide the time, when she, in whom he had always—from the very first—had been so deeply interested, should appear upon the stage and render her part of the programme. But finally the old president came slowly forward, adjusted his nose-glasses with ever

so much care and precision, and read from the programme.

"The next number on the programme is——— instrumental, by Miss Gena Filson."

But who was this coming forward? Gena Filson was the name on the programme. Some mistake sure, thought Waffington. Too bad that she should be cheated out of her number. Some mistake——

"Oh!" he suddenly cried out half aloud, as he saw the young lady come forward and take her place on the piano bench.

He sat dazed. Did his eyes fail him? He rubbed them once, then looked again. She finished the number, turned and looked the audience square in the face and left the stage. The hair! The eyes! Yes, it was Gena Filson of Blood Camp. But oh, so different, so changed, so beautiful!

He heard little of the remaining numbers of the programme, for he was busy with his thoughts. But by and by the music stopped, and the people were crowding the rostrum to offer congratulations. Paul Waffington made off with the others in the direction of the rostrum, to offer his congratulations and to express his pleasure and belief in the ability of Gena Filson to succeed. But as he drew near he saw no other than the square-jawed, ill-dressed "Mr. Texas" standing at Gena Filson's side, himself acknowledging the congratulations of her friends as if she were property individual. He stood there, showing his big teeth, his arms almost breaking under the load of bundles, boxes of candy and flowers that he himself had brought to lavish upon her. He had taken her by the arm, and was now leading her away, with his great head poked right into her very face. Gena Filson dropped the train of her dress as she turned to see who it was



that had spoken to her. She blushed a deep red, and her lovely blue eyes sparkled as bright as the evening star as she put out her hand and simply but gently said:

"Mr. Waffington, is it you!"

"Accept my congratulations. I knew that it was in you to succeed. I arrived too late to see you before the musicale, and must go now, at once. Good-bye. I knew that you would succeed. Good-bye." And before she had time to present her friend, "Mr. Texas," Paul Waffington was moving away.

"Ugh!" growled Mr. Texas holding on to his bundles. "Ah, do you know him, ah?"

"Yes, sir. He is a friend," the answer came softly.

"Ugh!" he again exploded, as he pulled his bundles after him as he went through the door.

That night Gena Filson sat in her room alone and very quiet, after all the lights had winked out on the college campus. The bundles and boxes of candy and flowers were piled about untouched. She cared not a straw for candy and flowers now. Thoughts were surging about in her troubled mind, reaching out beyond such trivial things as candy and flowers. Moving over to her window, she could see the great oaks on the campus towering up in the moonlight. Only a few moments ago she had sat under one of those oaks and listened to the ejaculations and babblings of "Mr. Texas." Yet she had heard but little of what he had said to her there. The while she had found herself continually trying to recall the meeting with Paul Waffington in the earlier part of the night in the college chapel. Even to this present moment she found herself unable to throw it off her mind. But Mr. Texas was gone now, so was Paul Waffington. Then suddenly she heard the lonely whistle of a locomotive

coming through the still night air to her ears, and she knew that it was no other than the one that was carrying Paul Waffington back to his city home at lightning speed.

The happy faces that she had learned to know and love so well during the school year would separate on the morrow, each going back to home and friends. She, too, must go. Back to the hills and Blood Camp and to the little cabin upon the side of the mighty Snake Gena Filson would go. For a long time she stood at the open window and looked out into the night.

"Yes, I did very wrong not to thank him. I should have sent a note expressing my appreciation of the pretty gloves. Why didn't I? Why didn't I?" she cried as she stood in the night, wringing her hands. Then hastily she laid a sheet of paper on the window sill and scribbled something upon it in the moonlight, folded it and laid it away in the little trunk.

The night was wearing away. Midnight had passed when she finally lit the tallow candle that she was accustomed to use in emergencies after the lights had gone out. Then began the packing and the other preparations for the going away on the morrow.

There were college colors and pennants to be taken down from the walls and carefully packed. There were trinkets and knots of ribbons, and pictures of dear chums that were taken from their places and packed away with care. Little paper fans, that were covered with scribblings of some one that told a story of a happy day. They were, indeed, souvenirs that told of that happy college life (a time in life with many without responsibility), souvenirs that tell the story of many a happy jaunt. By and by, the last thing was put into its place. The lid on the little

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old trunk refused to go down at first, but in the end yielding to pressure the key turned in the lock.

Gena Filson lay awake for a long time upon her pillow that night. But when the belated messenger of sleep did come to her, he found her tired and weary young mind pondering over the serious problem: If after all, in the end, should happiness or remorse be hers?

## CHAPTER XII

### BACK TO THE OLD HOME AND THE HILLS

BACK to the noisy city and to hard work went Paul Waffington. He turned over to the paper on his desk and read the paragraph again. It was the column of local items from Tusculum College, of the week preceding the commencement of that institution that was absorbing his attention in the paper just now.

"Mr. L. Texas won the tennis pennant," he read, "who in turn in a beautiful little ceremony presented it to his partner, Miss Gena Filson." Still a little further down the column another paragraph attracted his attention. The paragraph ended by saying: "It was a beautiful affair. Those who stood together were————— and Miss Gena Filson and Mr. L. Texas." He folded the paper and turned again to his work, with the firm belief in his heart that the man who tried for the hand of Gena Filson had an aggressive and formidable rival.

The days following the end of the college year were inspiring ones for the humble folks of the village among the hills—Blood Camp. Slade Pemberton had duly harnessed his mules into the wagon, driven down to the little station and met the new collegian and her trunk.

But would she be changed much? was the question that was upon the lips of all Blood Camp. There were free expressions all around, that she would return from college "stuck up." And what was still another

ghost, that overshadowed every heart in the village, was the avowal of Fen Green and his friends that she would certainly return "proud." But at length the homecoming was over, and the new college girl returned to the cabin upon the mountain side with Emeline Hobbs again acting as her housekeeper.

The first few days after her return the little cabin was overflowing with callers. Aged women; mothers with bawling babies upon their hips, old men and all, came to see and pay their respects to Gena Filson.

"Jist come up to see ye and take a good look at ye an' say howdy," was the unanimous greeting of all.

"Yes, she's changed. Grow'd a lot. Prettier, too! an' not a bit stuck up," was the final verdict of all.

But there was one certain individual who had been a little slow in going to the cabin to visit its mistress since she had returned, and that one was Boaz Honeycutt. Since her return, Boaz Honeycutt had been quick to perceive the difference in the dress of Gena Filson and his own ragged clothes. The clothes of Gena Filson were better now, and alas! his own—rags they had always been—were growing worse with the passing years.

However, he had a few times ventured up to the cabin and had been each time cordially received. But each succeeding time that he went he was the more convinced that there was something—something that he could not explain—fixing a gulf between their friendship. It bruised and crushed his boy heart, lacerated it and left it bleeding and sore. The power of it bore down upon him with force, and left his face the picture of despair. The only other friend that he cherished next to Gena Filson was Paul Wafington. And now, at the thought of his name, his broken little heart went out over the high mountain's

fastnesses towards the far-away city and yearned for his comfort.

Lately he had taken his position upon the graveyard hill to watch.

From his position on the grass plot he could command both a view of the store and of the road that led into the gorge, or "out into the big world som'ers," as Emeline Hobbs had one day told him. Sometimes he would get up from his place on the grass plot, and as a diversion pass in at the little wicker gate and busied himself plucking the weeds from the mounds of two certain graves there. Then perchance, if shouts came up from the store a hundred yards away, that told of an extra good story that was being told there by one of "the boys," he went down and heard it through only to return at length and resume his watch.

He had gathered up in his mind fragments of conversation that he had had with Gena Filson and Paul Waffington, about college; the city with its alluring charms, its street cars, steam trains and all. He sniffed it into his nostrils again, and it burnt his soul to know more about the big world beyond the hills.

It was growing late in the afternoon of Saturday, July 2, 1904. Boaz Honeycutt lay in his accustomed place on the knoll, stretched at full length in the grass with his hands in his palms, spelling out the words on a paper before him. Yes, Boaz Honeycutt had a father, a man who was used to hard toil, a lumberman, a man who felled the trees and by the hardest toil dragged them to a distant market. But there were seven other mouths to feed in the little shack that Boaz Honeycutt called home, and hence gross neglect had been the lot of the oldest child Boaz. The boy's

school days had been of sufficient length to allow him to hardly read and no longer.

"Congress, President Roosevelt, tariff," he laboriously spelled out. "Shucks! I never seed nothin' like none of them things! Papers ain't fit fur nothin' 'cept to wrap calico in nohow," he concluded, brushing aside the paper and laying his head down in the fresh green grass.

The rider emerged from the gorge, rode up the little hill slowly and with little noise.

"Hello! Boaz, is that you?" called out Paul Waffington.

"Well, I wisht I may drap ded!" shouted the boy, jumping up into the air with delight. He hurriedly made a cross in the grass with his right foot, spat into the center of it five times, jumped up into the air again and bounded towards Waffington.

"By giggers, I'm glad to see ye. Git down an' lemme take your hoss an' put 'im up an' feed 'im. When all uv 'em find out your here they'll shore be glad, I bet. The Sunday-skule's agoin'. Emeline's well, Slade's sellin' more goods than he ever did—no, I'll put 'im up myself—ten ears of corn and hay? Well, I'll do it right, by giggers I will."

On Sunday morning the little cracked bell on the school-house rang out in wheezen tones, warning the people that the Sunday-school would begin an hour earlier than was the custom. The founder of the Sunday-school was to be present, and Emeline Hobbs wanted to get a fair chance to show off the gracious qualities of the school that by persistent effort she had built up. She was indeed proud of her Sunday-school—boldly so—since Gena Filson had returned from college and had been elected vice-president or

assistant superintendent and teacher of the intermediate class.

At the appointed time, Emeline Hobbs took her place at the front of the room, balanced herself on the wooden peg, and looked at the little audience with a grave countenance. Now and then she gave a quick jerk at the white, stiff collar that was fast cutting off circulation from her neck. Then she hopped over and arranged the "little class" on the left side of the room. Then the "big class" in the middle of the room. After settling the "intermedium class" on the right, she made another final round to see that all was ready to begin.

"Sh—s! Sh—s! You Emmy! Set down, Boaz! Git ready, Carrie!" she made the entire command in a single breath.

"Turn to 'Over There' in your song-books. Git ready!" Then with a movement of both arms she led off. She hopped over in front of the "big class" and stood beating the air with her arms and thumping the floor with her wooden peg, endeavoring to hurry up those who were miserably dragging behind. Then she swung over and spurred up the "little class" who were piping away in some five or six different keys. Then back to the center of the room she went, and they all sang. The chorus swelled up and fairly lifted the roof, and the blend of harmony was about the same as the blending of kerosene and water.

Far back in the rear two or three good mothers, with crying babies swinging to and fro on their knees, were piping away in falsetto voices, coming out at least a line behind all the others. But it was singing. It was music—real worship, from the very bottom of hearts of Blood Camp—and methinks He who controls the destinies of all must have heard.



That day's session of the Sunday-school ended in a blaze of glory with Emeline Hobbs, and she went back to the cabin on the side of the mighty Snake with her heart loving everybody—even Boaz Honeycutt was not forgotten.

But the glorious Fourth was drawing near, and preparations were under way for the picnic at Blowing Rock. Blood Camp did not understand in its fullest meaning the day we celebrate. They had heard little indeed of the great cities with their miles of bunting and the flag that we so dearly love floating from every window and door on July the Fourth. Of the fireworks; the great military pageants and the patriotic speeches from ocean to ocean, they knew little. But Paul Waffington had fittingly made mention of it in the Sunday-school, and the outcome of his remarks was the proposed picnic to Blowing Rock on the glorious Fourth.

The morning of the Fourth of July, 1904, was indeed glorious! The early sun had found the lunch ready and tucked away in baskets and pushed back under the seats in Slade Pemberton's wagon. There were seats in the wagon for a party of eight. Fen Green sat in the driver's place with Boaz Honeycutt and the three Allisons occupying the next two seats. Paul Waffington assisted Gena Filson into the rear seat and was himself seated with her, thereby leaving but one unoccupied seat in the wagon, and that by the side of Fen Green, the driver.

"Attention everybody!" cried Waffington, standing up in the wagon. "Miss Hobbs is the chaperon of this party, and rightly belongs to her the first seat by the driver." Whereupon Emeline Hobbs allowed herself to be assisted to the side of Fen Green.

The big, gray mules fairly flew over the rocks, and the happy party laughed, babbled and sang snatches of song as they went. The way led under the tall trees, where the shade was deep. Then, coming out on the spur of the mountain, the road wound in and out of shallow ravines in beautiful turns. Some put out their hands and plucked rhododendron sprays as they bowled along. Stopping before a large clump of rhododendrons that were in full bloom,\* they wove garlands of the flowers, decorated the bridles and harness and resumed their journey. Paul Waffington plucked a single daisy and roguishly fastened it in the hat of Gena Filson, and for his trouble she blushed sweetly and smiled upon him. On and on they went through the crisp morning air, finally turning into the neighboring village of Boone.

Yes, it was really Boone! a town named in honor of Daniel Boone. Here within its borders was the very spot where the great pioneer and man of iron nerve had pitched his camp, brought down the needed game with his rifle from the wilderness about him, deftly prepared his evening meal, and went to his sleep in the midst of the red man's country, with little apparent fear.

"Three cheers for Daniel Boone!" cried Waffington, and they were given with a will as they cleared the village.

A long and beautiful stretch of mountain road was now before them. Acres and acres of full-blooming rhododendrons lent beauty and color to the scene. On the left water, crystal clear, tumbled down over

\*At this altitude (3000 to 4000 feet) the rhododendrons bloom in late June and early July, instead of May and June, as in lower altitudes.

the rocks and fell into pebbled bottomed pools below. The cool morning breezes coming down from the mountain tops laden with the invigorating smell of the balsam brought shouts of joy from all.

"Oh my everlastin' sweettbacker!" yelled Boaz Honeycutt, going over the side of the wagon and disappearing in the direction from which they had just come.

"What's the matter!" all cried excitedly and in the same breath. Paul Waffington was climbing out of the wagon to make investigation when Boaz was seen coming back at a fast trot.

"Why, Boaz, what is the matter?" together all cried again.

"Oh nothin'," replied the boy climbing into his seat. "But you doan't git Boaz Honeycutt to pass no forks of the road 'thout crossin' an' spitten'. No sire—ee! It's bad luck. Onst I had a stone-bruise an' a sore toe fur two year, summer an' winter, 'account not crossin' an' spitten' when passin' the forks of a road. No sire—ee, you needn't expect to see Boaz Honeycutt fail to cross an' spit whin he comes to the forks of the road no more'n you 'spect to see a jay-bird awalkin' on crutches."

The next turn of the road brought the party out into the open again. The hot July sun came down, and Emeline Hobbs moved uneasily in her seat.

"Gee, but I'm dry!" she finally bawled out.

"What did you say, Miss Hobbs?" inquired Paul Waffington.

"I'm dry," she again bawled out at him over her shoulder. "I salted the gravy too much this mornin'. Gee, but I'm dry—want water," she finished.

"Oh! You're thirsty. Well, here is a house, and

a spring too. We shall all have some water here," was Waffington's reply.

Fen Green, the driver, brought the wagon to a stand. Paul Waffington got out of the wagon, jumped the fence and ran down the little path in the direction of the spring.

"Good morning, madam," he said as he lifted his hat and bowed to the lady standing with her pailful of water near the spring.

"Does this spring belong to you, madam?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, if you please, madam, we would like to get some water for the ladies of our party."

"All right," came the reply. "There's a gourd hangin' up there on that stick, you can take 'em some water in it, I guess."

"Fine spring you have here, fine farm, too, and plenty of everything growing on it too. Your husband must be a great worker, madam," he ventured to say.

"He's dead," she simply said. "He died las' month, an' left me and the children here to do everything."

"Too bad, too bad!" he said as he looked at her in a kind and benevolent way.

"Yes, I wouldn't have minded it much," she called out after him as he went up to the road, "if it 'ed a happened attar the crops wuz gathered."

The little company in the wagon had heard what the woman had said, and giggled. Paul Waffington saved his own face with the blowing of his nose in his handkerchief. But Boaz Honeycutt swelled up to the danger line, exploded, and said:

"Well, I wisht I may die!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PASSING OF THE CLOUDS

ON the very top of the Blue Ridge, over against Mt. Mitchell itself, the highest peak of the Appalachian system, nestles the little village of Blowing Rock. The distinction of being a great summer resort and at the same time boasting the highest altitude of any town in the Appalachian system belongs to Blowing Rock. A town of some five hundred inhabitants, with six or seven summer hotels and long strings of summer cottages, its population is easily doubled twice over during the hot summer season, by the rich of the north and east, and the well-to-do from the south. The northerner and southerner meet here for a month's rest, not forgetting (albeit they come for rest) to find time enough in which to exchange a few shares of cotton-mill stock of the South for a few shares of shoe-factory stock of the East.

The artist, too, is found in Blowing Rock. He comes and finds both rest and profit. He walks out upon the great rock—the Blowing Rock itself—which projects horizontally out into space at the very apex of the Blue Ridge, and looks out into the very countenance of the great Appalachian system of mountains. He sees just in front of him Mt. Mitchell itself, in all of its midsummer glory. To the right he beholds Grandfather Mountain, the old man reclining in silent sleep beneath sapphire skies—his aged head pillowed upon the everlasting piles of stone, and his couch draped in summer's mantle of emerald green. Then thousands

of feet down he beholds the plains of the valleys below stretching away, beyond the vision of his eyes, on into the endless cotton-fields of the South.

He has beheld visions before. But this is sublime! From lofty crags and peaks he has many a time looked upon all nature, but here he is overcome by matchless beauty. He snatches up his brush, and under the inspiration the daubs of hard, cold paint begin to warm on the canvas, and resolve themselves into green valleys and peaks and shadows, a picture of the truth.

Into this same Blowing Rock—not the Blowing Rock on the page of a book—but the Blowing Rock of reality, the little picnic party from Blood Camp came bowling along, past the rows of summer cottages and drew up at the great rock itself.

"Oh, how beautiful!" cried Gena Filson. "Oh, how grand! And the great mountains, how dearly I love them!"

The wagon was stopped under the trees, and the mules were made comfortable. Then came reconnoitering, exploration and the gathering of flowers and ferns. Going to the wagon Paul Waffington returned with a package in his hand, that he had brought with him from the city. All were inquisitive to know its contents.

"Giant firecrackers," he said. "Glorious Fourth! Let us throw a few over the rock and celebrate." Suiting the action to the word, he tore open the package, touched a flame to the fuse of one of the giant crackers and threw it over the rock with all his might. It went down, down, down through space—then boom! came the terrific report, and all screamed with delight.

"Oh, do it again!" begged Gena Filson, clapping

her hands. Suddenly she arose, ran to the wagon, drew from her basket a silk flag and came running back, waving it and exclaiming:

"The glorious Fourth and the Stars and Stripes! Hurrah, hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" came the thundering rejoinder from all.

During the exciting moments that followed, the giant crackers became scattered on the ground. Inadvertently the chaperon, Miss Emeline Hobbs, sat down among them. A match was struck and went to Fen Green's pipe, then to the ground. In a wink it touched the protruding end of the fuse of a giant cracker on which sat Miss Emeline Hobbs. Before any one could give warning—boom! went the report of the great explosion, and up into the air went Emeline Hobbs, then down again on to the ground with a thump. But, thanks to her lucky star, she was unharmed, save a faint through fright.

Cold water and persistent rubbing soon brought her again to normal conditions. With her head still pillowed on Paul Waffington's coat, that he had shed in a twinkling and made into a pillow for the occasion she refused to get up until she had propounded the following question:

"Oh, where am I? Am I in the valley or still on the rock?"

"You'd better be a leetle more careful what you're asetting' down on nixt time, Emeline," said Boaz. "Ef you'd abin jist a leetle closer to the edge of the rock whin thet thing busted, you'd a hit a farm 'bout a mile below here, I reckon."

That was too much for her—and from Boaz Honeycutt. It fired her up. She jumped up and shook her fist at the boy. But when Waffington put out his hand in surprise she resumed her normal state and

stood in her place with the rest and watched the giant crackers go down over the rock and explode.

Dinner time! By a rustic seat and under a bower of rhododendrons the dexterous hands of Gena Filson led the other ladies of the party in spreading the dinner. It was indeed a feast, a feast on the mountain-top. There were pickles and slaw; chicken salad and cold ham; stuffed eggs and many, many sweets. Fen Green and Boaz Honeycutt tried a little of all and pronounced it all good. When dinner was over, the baskets went back to their places under the seats in the wagon. The mules had just been given their corn and hay when the wheels of an approaching carriage was heard. The carriage rolled up and stopped a few yards distant from the party.

"Ah, how do you do, ah, Miss Filson. Ah, may I speak with you a moment, ah?" It was no other than "Mr. L. Texas" himself, and Paul Waffington ground his teeth.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Texas," said Gena Filson, going over to the carriage and offering her hand.

Waffington was dazed. His heart nearly failed him. What did it all mean? What did he mean by thrusting himself into the happiness of this little picnic party? Did she know that he was coming? Why, as a matter of course, she must have known. Why, then, had she not told him?

She came back. Walking slowly she finally stopped within a few feet of the party and said:

"I beg that you, Mr. Waffington, and the others will excuse me for a few minutes."

"Why, certainly, certainly, Miss Filson," he replied, almost against his will.



She returned to the carriage and was assisted in by Mr. Texas and disappeared.

Forty-five minutes had elapsed when the carriage again appeared, and Gena Filson alighted and bade Mr. Texas good-bye.

"Well, by giggers! Who is thet jug-headed dude, Genie?" demanded Boaz, as she came up.

"Boaz!" intervened Waffington. "You should always speak politely of gentlemen—of strangers."

Then the party separated for a time. Boaz and Fen Green went off in the direction of one of the big hotels, while the three Allison and Emeline Hobbs chose another direction. Paul Waffington was left in the company of Gena Filson. He sat away out on the projecting rock with his feet hanging over the edge, looking out on the matchless scene before him.

"Oh, is it not grand!" ventured Gena Filson.

"Indeed it is a grand sight to behold," calmly replied Waffington.

He broke off a bit of stick and threw it over the rock. At first it poised in the strong breeze that came up from the valley below, but finally tilted on end and began slipping away thousands of feet downward, towards the valley. He mechanically threw out another stick in the air and raised his head to speak.

"Doesn't the wind bear it up beautifully?" she intercepted him.

"Yes, rather," came the quiet reply. "But I must confess that it reminds me of insincere friendship. There are those in this big world who are treacherous, like the wind with the stick. They bear us up beautifully at first, then upon their strength we begin to build; but in the end, they betray the trust and dash us to pieces on the rocks below."

"But are my friends like that, Mr. Waffington?" she painfully asked.

"Well, I'm not a judge. I don't know who are your best friends."

"Well, may I ask, is your friendship like the stick and the wind, Mr. Waffington?"

"No, Gena," he said quietly. Then after a long silence he threw the remaining stick that he held in his hand far back on the grass and finished, "Once a friend, always a friend with me—at least nothing less." Then his heart cried out and begged him to tell her all, but his voice failed to do his bidding.

"Well, I wisht I may die, ef I didn't think I'd slip upon on you all an' ketch you atalkin' courtin' talk, but I didn't, I reckon," piped Boaz Honeycutt, as he bounded out from behind a clump of rhododendrons.

They both blushed, and she smiled as her eyes met Waffington's and said:

"Why, Boaz!"

"All aboard!" bawled out Emeline Hobbs; "all aboard for Boone an' Blood Camp—all aboard!"

The wagon was made ready for the homeward trip. Once more Waffington led the little company out upon the Blowing Rock, and Gena Filson waved the silk flag as Waffington commanded:

"Three cheers for the glorious Fourth."

The cheers went ringing out into space with a roar that all but awoke the aged grandfather from his long sleep on his green-mantled couch in the distance.

The sun was still an hour high when the party in high spirits returned to Blood Camp. At the store they rose up in the wagon, gave three last cheers for the glorious Fourth, and disbanded.

"Fust Foth of July I ever seed, an' I wisht I may

die, ef we aint agoin' to have one next year again," declared Boaz Honeycutt as he went off in the direction of his home, to tell his sisters and brothers of the pleasures of the day.

Paul Waffington led Gena Filson up the mountain side to her cabin home and was saying good-bye. He was going back to his city home on the morrow. He had experienced, after all he thought, the best day of his life. But at the thoughts of going away his heart grew heavy.

"But won't you sit down, Mr. Waffington? It is early yet," Gena Filson gently said. "We can sit here in the fresh evening air, here on these boards," she finished.

"Thank you, I will sit down," and seated himself by her side.

He looked upon the lovely face of Gena Filson in the bright evening sun, and reasoned with his heart again. Tut! tut! she belonged to another. But how did he know so much? He had failed to learn the truth while at Blowing Rock. Why had he not the speech to say the things that were in his heart now? Why, Paul Waffington could recall the time when, in college debate, he had stood upon the floor and fearlessly battled against the best. Scores of times he had stood before public audiences and juggled with words and themes without embarrassment. Yes, he had stood in the very face of death, so far as he knew—not rod distant from where he now sat—and shot out his fist into the face of old Jase Dillenburg, expecting nothing but death in the end—and had done it all without a tremor. But how was it now, that a woman, a daughter of the simple hills could without a single command hold him dumb?

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He turned his head and looked away off down the mountain side as he turned it all over in his mind again. Suppose that Gena Filson was the daughter of Lucky Joe. She was now his equal. She had already proven that she had a wonderful brain capacity; that she could succeed, he had said so to her himself at the college. Suppose that her father had been a bandit—a moonshiner. Many another have yielded to the same temptation. But still there remained with her the memories and the sweet benediction of a kind and gentle mother. A mother who, when her heart was young, came into the hills with good blood in her veins, of sterling character, polished and refined.

But after all, he thought that he could have been, perhaps, long since mated to his mother's choice, Imogene. She was of his station in life, he had been told. Culture, education, refinement, jewels and money were hers. But beyond the reach of the jewels and moneys Paul Waffington's heart reached out and yearned for the true love of his heart, and he finds it in Gena Filson by his side.

He looked upon the face of the woman at his side again, and it was fair. She was born and bred in that congenial southern clime, among the beautiful green hills, where crystal streams purl and ripple on forever; where sweet song-birds dwell; where acres of wild flowers come forth in summer time, only for bees to plunder and birds to swing and sway in tun 'ul song. "I must know all," he cried to himself, and his voice yielded to his heart's desire.

"It's been seven years since I first saw you there in the snow, Gena. You were thirteen then. And—then—old Jase managed to get you, and shifted the

hard burdens from his own shoulders to yours. And then I came and saw you burning up there on the bunk with fever. Then I took you away, and, well, I thought I was doing right!" He paused and looked away to the west, and saw the sun sinking down into fathomless seas of purple and gray. Then he busied himself pushing the stem of a daisy into the worm-holes in the board on which they sat, as he went on, "And then Jase went to prison."

"Yes, and it saved us both, Paul." Her hands flew to her lips and held them, as if they had allowed something that was terrible to pass them. "Oh, forgive me, forgive me," she cried. "I didn't——"

"That's it, that's it, Gena. For seven years I have yearned for you to simply say Paul. I go away to-morrow, Gena, and I just as well have it out and be done with it. The first time that I ever saw you, it was there in the snow and the storm; I loved you, and I love you still. Tonight I want to know all. Tell me, Gena, will you be my wife?"

He lifted his eyes to hers as he finished. In the short interval of time his heart seemed to be dropping, dropping, dropping down through fathomless depths of space. The sun was gone now. But the big blue eyes at his side looked out over the mountains and watched the purple clouds with their rims of gold. Then they turned their vision upon him, and welled up with tears as she whispered:

"Yes."

Under the starry dome of night he gently drew her within his arms, and there, together, they finished the bridge of love that spanned the present and reached into the future, that thitherland.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LOVE SEEKS ITS OWN

But few, indeed, ever learned the truth of what it cost Gena Filson to withstand the persistent and irritating attentions of her would-be friend and admirer, Mr. L. Texas, during her second college year. He had approached her heart, traversing every conceivable avenue; yes, he had tried her very spirit as well and her heart.

He was rich, the girls had told her. He had diamonds. What feminine hand had not longed and wished for a diamond? But through all the consuming fire the heart of Gena Filson never failed her, and at the end of the second college year she went back to her native hills carrying her certificate from the department of music with dignity, to make good the day of her promise.

It was a certain bright afternoon in October that Slade Pemberton gave away the little bride in the cabin to Paul Waffington. Slade Pemberton had been her guardian during these latter years, and he had done his part by her, much better than had been expected of him. And as he stood up in the cabin and gave the sweet little bride away, he could not but believe that she was passing into the hands of the noblest man that ever lived.

Then came the going away. Aye, the tears that were shed on that October afternoon! Not tears alone from the eyes, but tears from human hearts

as well, were those that Blood Camp shed, as the bride slipped away with the man she loved.

Into the great and mighty city with its whir and clank of machinery, and its passing throngs, Paul Waffington took his bride. Up marble steps and into reception rooms of friends he led her, presenting his beautiful young wife without the shadow of a fear of reproach from anyone.

\* \* \* \* \*

A half dozen years of happy married life passed quickly by with Paul Waffington and his beautiful young wife. Throughout the changing years, the young wife stood firmly by the side of the man she loved and helped him to earn the money that was to build their home nest, and now the funds were all in hand, and their happiness was full.

"Oh, it will be so sweet to dwell in our own dear home, Paul, and with you! You have toiled so long and so hard," she finishing stroking his hair.

"Yes, Gena, dear, it shall be the sweetest nest in all the world," came the reassuring reply.

"Now, I think we can afford to see the Exposition, Paul, dear. And this is the initial Exposition, too," she excitedly exclaims.

Under the arch of the great Appalachian exposition he led her. It was now in all of its glory—running at its best—was this great exposition in his home city. Under the glare of millions of electric lights and in the din and thunderous roars of rival performing shows they were happy. There were assembled the stupendous and gorgeous pyrotechnical displays of the world, the exhibits from the most wonderful mountain country in America. There were the airships and the races by day. There was the moonshine

still! Gena had seen a moonshine still before, but she saw it all again and was happy.

Long before the wheels of the great exposition had run down and stopped, Paul Waffington and his bride were established in their own little home in a quiet corner of the city, there to dwell in mutual love.

But each succeeding summer the thoughtful Waffington carried his bride back to the village of the hills, and they spent their vacations in the cabin on the side of the mighty Snake. A piano and new furnishings found their way into the little cabin. A porch was added to the front and a dexterous hand had planted jessamine and wisteria vines at the corners. When each succeeding vacation period was over, Uncle Lazarus was appointed caretaker of the house during the long winters, and the following summer made ready for the coming of the master and mistress.

And now, kind reader, let us together turn over the leaf and take a look at the last picture in this humble narrative.

Six years have now rolled their cycles into the past since Gena Filson became a bride and went away to her city home. And with the passing of the years, many a change have been wrought in the village of the hills—Blood Camp. Fen Green long since offered his heart and farm to Emeline Hobbs, and that individual promptly accepted. Notwithstanding, the new duties of wife that devolved upon her, she still continues to hold on to the helm of the Sunday-school with a firmer grasp than before. Over near Slade Pemberton's store stands a little church now. It stands with its steeple pointing into the blue above, a monument to Paul Waffington and the faithful Emeline Hobbs. On Sunday mornings its bell rings



out from the steeple, proclaiming that the days of moonshining are over in Blood Camp, and calling the people down from the hills to worship God.

The mark of Father Time is beginning to tell upon some of the fathers of Blood Camp now. And the children of but a few years ago are now young men and young women. The strokes of the blacksmith's sledge upon his anvil in the shop are growing fainter now and farther between. And like the aged sledge its master has swung for years, the blacksmith, too, is growing old.

Summer is now over again. The first day of September is come, and Paul Waffington and his little family are making ready to return to their city home.

In the heat of the summer they had journeyed hither, from the grime and smoke of the torrid city, and in many a jaunt among the hills they have been refreshed in body and soul. Now they would return thither, with a more elastic step and a double portion of sweetness that will not fail to permeate the succeeding years.

The carriage moves slowly away from the store.

"Good-bye Emeline, Fen, Daddy Slade, Aunt Mina and all," called Gena. "Good-bye, Boaz, and remember, that you are to come to live with us in the city at Christmas. Good-bye."

The human hearts of all Blood Camp again welled up with sadness and they found it hard to say "good-bye" in cheerful tones.

When the chestnut grove on the hill was reached, the carriage stopped. Uncle Lazarus stood at the wicket gate. Paul Waffington led the way through the gate and stopped before two well-kept mounds that lay side by side. He removed his hat and looked upon the mounds with reverence. Then taking a

wreath from the hand of little C—— aged four, he placed it upon the mound to his right. A second wreath he took from the tender hands of little H——, aged two, and silently laid it upon the mound to his left.

“Whose graves are these, papa?” inquired little C——, aged four.

“They are the graves of your grandfather and your grandmother, my son,” he replied breaking the long silence.

He took the youngest child in his arms as he led the way over to a neglected corner of the graveyard. Before a grave of large dimensions that showed much neglect they paused. The little family stood together and looked upon the mound a long time. Then the wife and mother went forward, plucked away some weeds and laid upon the mound the wreath she carried. Paul Waffington stooped and parted the weeds and glanced at the marble slab that bore the simple name:

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As the little company went out the black man put out his bony hand and said good-bye. He closed the wicket gate and the carriage moved away. The others at the store had looked upon the scene with aching hearts. For the seventh time Boaz Honeycutt sat in his rags on the store platform and saw the idol of his heart disappear over the hill. The muscles in his face twitched as he sat in his rags and strained his eyes at the last sight of the carriage. Then suddenly a lady's hand was thrust out of the carriage waving a handkerchief. Again the boy's face twitched with deep emotion, for he knew that the hand was the hand of Gena of the Appalachians.

(The End)





















