

"Thanks, my pretty one," he said, with a smile that for the moment quite dispelled the expression of haughtiness which marred an otherwise comely countenance. "Come, give me a kiss, sweeting, and tell me thy name."

The child looked at him gravely. "My name is Audrey," she answered, "and if you eat all of our bread we'll have none for supper."

The Governor laughed, and kissed the small dark face. "I'll give thee a gold moidore, instead, my maid. Odsol thou'rt as dark and wild, almost, as was my little Queen of the Saponies that died last year. Hast never been away from the mountains, child?"

Audrey shook her head, and thought the question but a foolish one. The mountains were everywhere. Had she not been to the top of the hills, and seen for herself that they went from one edge of the world to the other? She was glad to slip from the Governor's encircling arm, and from the gay ring beneath the sugar-tree; to take refuge with herself down by the water side, and watch the fairy tale from afar off.

The rangers, with the pioneer and his son for their guests, dined beside the kitchen fire, which they had kindled at a respectful distance from the group upon the knoll. Active, bronzed and daring men, wild riders, bold fighters, lovers of the freedom of the woods, they sprawled upon the dark earth beneath the walnut-trees, laughed and joked, and told old tales of hunting or of Indian warfare. The four Meherrins ate apart and in stately silence, but the grinning negroes must needs endure their hunger until their masters should be served. One black detachment spread before the gentlemen of the expedition a