

what, to make a fool o' ye? to have the whole country laughing and saying when they see ye, 'Look at that jack-o-napes o' Butler's, his father sold a hundred acres o' good land to make him what he is.'"

Joe's face flushed and he came and stood before the old man. "Keep your land, father, and your money, I will work my own way."

"And what will ye do?" sneered he.

"I do not know yet," answered the boy, "but I must get an education, I cannot rest as I am. I am so ignorant, there is so much to learn; if I only knew what to do," and he looked down the road and up at the clouds which were rolling themselves into huge mountains.

"Do what you like," said the old man in a hard tone, "but not an inch o' my land will ye get, if that's what you've got in your head."

"I do not look for it, father," Joe said, stoutly, "I'll find a way or make one."

As Farmer Butler turned to go in the house a boy shambled up to the veranda. It was Billy Sickles, Squire Higgins' hired boy.

"Say, Mr. Butler," he called out, "Bell Higgins is lost, and Miss Higgins is most crazy, and the Squire wants your boys to help hunt for her."

"Lost!" exclaimed the farmer, "what, in the swamp? Where are the boys? Sam! Hank!" he called, but they had set out an hour before to spend the evening with their prospective brides. He looked around for Joe, but he was gone.

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Squire Higgins lived in a large brick house about a mile from John Butler's. His family consisted of one son, Joshua, and three daughters, two of whom were married. Isabel, the youngest remained to the joy and grief of the parental heart. She gave promise of beauty, but she was a romp. She climbed trees, and swam like a fish, she galloped her father's horses, and rowed her brother's boat. She was a better shot than any of the young men who entered the list in the yearly shooting match. She could do anything that the orthodox young lady should not do. To be sure there was time for her to mend her ways. Time to take to fancy work and jelly-making, for she was only fourteen years old. The neighbors shook their heads as she tore past on her horse, or jumped the fences, followed by her dog, and prophesied that "Higgins would have trouble with that gel."

This evening, however, the great question was, "Where was she?" She had gone out in the morning with her dog and had not returned. No notice was taken of it for she often spent the day with her grandmother. About six o'clock, as the family were sitting at their early tea, Rover appeared with his mistress' hair-ribbon in his mouth, he laid it on the floor at the Squire's feet and whined, piteously. The consternation was great. Bell was in danger somewhere and had sent the dog home to let them know.

"The swamp!" cried Billy Sickles. "Master, the swamp! I'll bet she's got into it and can't git out."

The swamp had for years been a place of dread to the youth of the township. It was an established fact that a family of bears made their home in the depths.

Nightly excursions were made to the farm yards and many a young porker was carried off to appease the hungry cravings of the bruin family. Expeditions, having for their object the extermination of the bears, had been planned, but not as yet, carried out. Joe Butler knew of Bell Higgins' excursions into the swamp contrary to her father's orders. He knew her fearless, reckless nature would lead her any distance to gain her object. They had been companions from infancy. He had drawn her every winter morning to school on his sled, had guided her on her coastings and skatings on the hills and river. In summer, the berry pickings; boat rides and scramblings after fun were all shared by Joe who was sworn by Bell to strict



"JOE TOOK AIM AND FIRED."

secrecy. He bore silently his father's grumbings about "tramping after that idle, good-for-nothing of Higgins'." He had saved the wild girl several times from death, and now felt bound both by habit and sympathy to rescue her. As he gave a sharp cut with his whip his horse sprang into a gallop and he was soon at the Squire's gate. He found them waiting the arrival of the neighbors to consult on the best way of starting.

"Well, Joe, I guss the gel has come to harm this time, she's been gone the hull day, and we thought she was at grannies."

"I guss she's gone to the swamp for ferns," said Joe "I heard her say she wanted to get a lot."