

vigorous, enterprising men, but for the most part they were waifs and strays whom civilization had disappointed. A few who came into the woods together were Swedenborgians. These mysterious woodlands suited them. Regarded by their neighbors as strange beings, they lived on, patiently waiting for the better earthly good which did not come. The majority had no religion, or what they had had faded away in the absence of churches, and their schoolless children grew up strong as young pines in that untainted air. In these deep woods, untroubled by courts of justice, a more dangerous and smaller class found a sanctuary into which no avenging law pursued their steps. With lessened temptations and sufficient work, fish in the streams, and game in the woods, life was adventurous enough to suit their tastes, and not too difficult. Hence, serious crime was rare, and these rough exiles from the cities were less troublesome than in more conventional communities. For grave offences the law of the woods was swift enough, and sometimes even too thoughtlessly swift, in its vengeance. On the whole, the tone of this widely-scattered and sparse population was right-minded and just. A certain manliness was the common gift. Caste was unknown. Physical strength and skill with axe or rifle were valued as they must needs be in such a life. Newspapers were rarely seen, and politics troubled no man.

Three years before the date of my story, Elizabeth Preston had found her way with her husband into the wilderness. A great stress was upon