

with its great terra cotta petals, specked with umber-brown. Here and there, also, upon the mellow level, stood a clump of poplars or white oaks—prim like virgins without suitors, with their robes drawn close about them; but when over the unmeasured plain the wind blew, they bowed their heads gracefully, as a company of eastern girls when the king commands.

As the two horsemen rode silently around one of these clumps, there suddenly came through the hush the sound of a girl's voice singing. The song was exquisitely worded and touching, and the singer's voice was sweet and limpid as the notes of a bobolink. They marvelled much who the singer might be, and proposed that both should leave the path and join the unknown fair one. Dismounting, they fastened their horses in the shelter of the poplars, and proceeded on foot toward the point whence the singing came. A few minutes walk brought the two beyond a small poplar grove, and there, upon a fallen tree-bole, in the delicious cool of the afternoon, they saw the songstress sitting. She was a maiden of about eighteen years, and her soft, silky, dark hair was over her shoulders. In girlish fancy she had woven for herself a crown of flowers out of marigolds and daisies, and put it upon her head.

She did not hear the footsteps of the men upon the soft prairie, and they did not at once reveal themselves, but stood a little way back listening to her. She had ceased her song, and was gazing beyond intently. On the naked limb of a desolate, thunder-riven tree that stood apart from its lush, green-boughed neighbours, sat a thrush in a most melancholy attitude. Every few seconds he would utter a note of song, sometimes low and sorrowful, then in a louder key, and more plaintive, as if he were calling for some responsive voice from far away over the prairie.

"Dear bird, you have lost your mate, and are crying for her," the girl said, stretching out her little brown