

O'Donnahue was in sight and called out :

"Hello, Wild Orchid ! Come again !"

Jinny looked up at him, and smiled. She liked this jolly man, and made up her mind to buy her chicken-feed at his mill henceforth. Then she turned southward and tramped back again along the railway track to the river, where she had left her canoe. Into this she lightly stepped, and was soon paddling down the river.

The day was falling towards evening, and the heat was intense. Not a whisper of wind stirred the reeds on the right and left of the stream ; the very wild-fowl gave over screaming for lack of breath. Jinny said, as she scanned the heavens : "There'll be a thunder-storm soon." Then she fell to meditating upon the predictions of Mother Charpunkey, and her mind went far away to meet the coming stranger, who had been described as "nice" and wearing a "grey coat." She pictured him but in her mind, and saw herself meeting him, now here, now there, and each fresh fancy was more delightful than the last. At length her thoughts fell upon Jake. Instantly a flame shot into her face, a flame of black anger. She clenched her teeth and her breath came hard. "I hate him," she said.

Now Jake was her lover, and she had quarrelled with him about what Mrs. Charpunkey had called the "whiskey business," which was indeed a very bad affair. It was this :

Some lawless fellows had set up an illicit still for the brewing of the stuff—swamp-juice, they called it—and they were carrying on operations in a hastily constructed shed about five miles down the river. This shed was well located for such a purpose, as there were numerous other sheds of similar appearance scattered here and there, on both sides of the marsh, where the men live during the haying season ; for the marsh is sixteen miles in length from end to end, and often the men are far from their homes when stacking and pressing the hay.

Consequently, from the river side it would be impossible to locate such a place, and from behind it was completely

hidden by clumps of cedars. Jake said the only way the authorities could "spot" the place was by their noses, for a strong wind will carry the odour of the brewing for miles.

Their noses had evidently been set in the right direction this time, for within the last week, there had been rumors and whispers of "revenue officers" and "government inspectors," but nothing definite had come of them as yet. It was a risky business, in any case, and offenders caught were likely to be severely punished.

Jinny reviewed the little scene which had taken place between her and Jake three days ago. She had seen him going past the door in the dark carrying suspicious looking jugs and kegs ; so she followed him until he was down near the river at the landing-place for canoes and row-boats.

"Are ye goin' down *there* again ?" she asked, as she caught up to him.

Jake started and trembled, for he had not heard her following him, and guilt makes cowards of the bravest.

"Yas" he answered, recovering somewhat.

"What ye want te go fer ?"

"Fer swamp-juice, of course, ye fool. What ye mean by a-follerin' me ?" answered Jake, feigning anger as the best means of covering up his fear.

Jinny made no reply ; then Jake said again :

"What yer got to say ?"

"Nothin'" said the girl.

"Better git out o' this thin," replied Jake, brutally.

"I've only got this te say t' ye, Jake Teeks," said Jinny, after a pause, while Jake was arranging the kegs in his flat-bottomed punt, preparatory to setting off as soon as it fell dark ; "I've only got this te say, that ef ye go down there to-night, I'll not marry ye."

"Who wants te marry ye ?" questioned Jake in great anger at this unexpected turn, and then dropping into the French *patois*, he poured forth upon the girl beside him, such a volley of curses, invectives and oaths as would have made the hair of any but a Muskrat stand on end forever.

But this storm of passion had no effect