

As consciousness was returned she wondered dully how she came to be tossing and pitching in a stifling blackness. With an effort she raised her lids—and remembered! For one instant the sickness of horror overwhelmed her; and then she conquered the emotion until her brain became controllable and clear.

The sun hung close to the sharp ridge towards which they were travelling, and all the western half of the heavens was a delicate salmon pink. At least an hour must have elapsed since she left the river, and she had not been rescued. It was evident that she must depend on her own ingenuity and courage to escape, and she doggedly refused to consider what her fate might be if she failed. She had never before been forced to stare danger in the eyes. Night would presently shut down from above, while the mysterious menacing wildness closed her in on all sides, and she would be alone with her clamoring fears. She strained her ears for sounds of pursuit, and the strident clatter of a woodcock mocked her hopes.

With her calmness grew a bitter loathing of the brute beneath her. The odor from his perspiring skin began to nauseate her, while the pressure of his arm was like the coil of a snake. She could scarcely control the mad impulse to tear at his brown flesh with her nails, to fight and scream in her fury. But beneath the surface chaos she knew her own impotence and the necessity of husbanding her strength for the opportunity that must come. She mastered her voice of all emotion until it seemed as if a stranger had spoken instead of herself.

"Put me down," she said dispassionately.

Her captor promptly stopped and slid her to the ground. She was surprised and unutterably relieved, though her pale features masked the effect. Her full red lips were tightly closed; her little fists were clinched combatively, and her oval face, crowned by a luxuriance of sun-lit, yellow hair, was tilted upward, so that her blue eyes gazed straight into those of her enemy. Now that she was free of contact it was less difficult to overcome her weakness.

The man leered vacantly and tapped her cheek with a stained finger. As she involuntarily shrunk back a step a sudden understanding flashed to her brain. He was a maniac! Insanity peered beneath

those heavy brows and lingered in the weak lines about his mouth. Only meaningless good-nature met her scrutiny, and yet she remembered his expression as he advanced upon the canoe, and the inhuman growl with which he swung on her lover. If harmless now, she knew what he could be when aroused, and her immediate safety lay in pandering to his moods.

"Don't be scart o' me, Miss," he said in a voice strangely soft and gentle coming from such a giant. "George wouldn't tech a fly, George wouldn't," he explained confidentially.

"Of course not," agreed the girl. "Where are we going, George?" She spoke lightly, almost flippantly.

"To my big house, top o' yonder," and he waved his arm towards the sun that stared a moment from a bloodshot eye ere it sank below the grey, barren ridge.

Without question or demur she turned and walked on, while the man shuffled behind. Though exhausted from the nervous strain, she was as unconscious of bodily suffering as of mental. Her eyes, feverishly bright, roved continually to right and left as those of a tired swimmer searching for a plank; her blue skirt brushed and caught on the low thickets; her light shoes were gashed on rocks, her stockings rent by prongs; but her attention had no room for such petty discomforts. In another hour the stealthy night would creep up and close the second inexorable door of her prison, as the wilderness had the first, and confine her alone with her gaoler!

She remembered how men sometimes marked their trail by breaking twigs and upturning stones. Here the woods had shrunk back like a hound baring its fangs, and the first trick was impracticable; but she kicked surreptitiously at every small stone that passed in reach, and dropped her little lace handkerchief on a bush. She unpinned her broad felt hat and carried it in her hand, waiting for an opportunity to discard it. Though his brain was warped she realized the astute cunning that prompted him to watch her every movement, and her most imminent fear was the possibility of awakening his violence. However, as they began to descend the opposite side of the mountain and the woods closed about them, she succeeded in jerking