

idol and tyrant, the neuralgy, plus a few other "ailments," whose name as spoken gravely by old Doc Clearwater the victim did not take the trouble to learn,—brought her futile career to an end.

Chris wept at the grave placed "erlongside o' Paw," and would steal to it often, laying on the bare mound sprigs of holly, or long pendant clusters of bright mountain ash, in lieu of more delicate flowers; but Ossie had no time for such visits.

She was building and weaving the future, as a tailor-bird weaves its stout nest. The old farm had been put up for rent or sale, though she tried to keep that fact from Chris. All the livestock went down, trip by trip, in the form of pork, wool, mutton, or bacon, and Sol Thigpen's huge wagon "schooner" brought back in return dingy rolls of worn "greenbacks," or thick silver dollars, which Ossie secreted in the whorls of her father's great curved hunting-horn.

It was early in March when events reached a climax. The two Lairds, after eating their supper, were drawn up to the bright kitchen hearth.

"Chris," began Ossie slowly, "ef you-uns has any old duds that you aims to carry down, hit's time ye war thinkin' o' packin'." Before speaking the next words she paused, and leaned forward to stir up a smouldering log. "Sol Thigpen's to drive us down into the city in two days fum now."

Chris swallowed a thick painful lump. It had come, and he felt himself helpless.