

When the day's work was done, he would sit down to table and eat his supper with the rest, but when the meal was at an end he would quietly withdraw to a corner of the yard and smoke his pipe in solitude until he felt inclined for slumber. No amount of persuasion could induce him to lie in a bed; a bed being an article which he regarded as a useless and enervating luxury. He declared that he had never slept in one since he was a boy, and that he did not intend to resume the practice at that late time of day. When his pipe was finished, he would betake himself to the kitchen, stretch his limbs out upon the floor with his arm for a pillow, and in less than two minutes his prodigious snores would proclaim that he was sleeping the sleep of the just. He seemed to require but little sleep, and was always astir long before any one else in the house. It was nothing unusual for him to get through as much work before his breakfast as would have taken an ordinary man half a day to accomplish.

When the last sheaf had been gathered in, he went away with the other hands who had been specially employed for the harvest. In a few days, however, he again made his appearance as he had been accustomed to do. My lessons were resumed, and he took good care that I should make up by increased assiduity for the time I had lost by his temporary absence. My progress was such that before many more weeks had elapsed I could read as well as he could, and he was at length reluctantly compelled to resign his tutorial functions into my mother's hands. Throughout the ensuing autumn and winter his visits were somewhat irregular, as he was frequently absent from the neighbourhood on hunting excursions. Sometimes we would see nothing of him for several weeks, and then he would suddenly drop in upon us with a fine haunch of venison on his shoulders—or perhaps a bag of wild rabbits or hares—as a present to my mother.

Nothing of sufficient importance to be recorded occurred during that winter, which had little to distinguish it from the preceding one except that there was much less snow, and that the weather was not nearly so cold. It was quite cold enough, however, and there were several days when the mercury went down ever so far below zero. We were all very happy at the Crofts, and no one was happier than I. Again were the logs piled high in the great fireplace, and the landscapes among the hickory coals were as resplendently gorgeous as ever. Happy, happy days of childhood! What joys does adolescence bring with it to compensate us for those it takes away?

Spring came in early. The bleak winds of March soon blew themselves out, and the first of April found the ground bare. In that month of April an event happened which changed the whole course of my future life. But for that event I would not have had much of a story to tell, and it would not have devolved upon me at this distance of time to take up my pen to recount the weird mystery of Sebastian Gee.

Thus ends the last completed page of this singularly realistic but withal romantic story. The remaining MS. consists merely of headings for chapters, which prove, however, that the author had a clear conception in his mind as to the subsequent course of the narrative. The headings are as follows:—

CHAPTER XII.	THE MAN OF BELIAL.
CHAPTER XIII.	THE HOUSE THAT JAKE BUILT.
CHAPTER XIV.	THE NOBLE SAVAGE.
CHAPTER XV.	ALL IN THE WILD MARCH MORNING.
CHAPTER XVI.	THE CROWNER HATH SET ON HIM.

CHAPTER XVII.

SHE IS A WOMAN; THEREFORE MAY BE WOODED.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHE IS A WOMAN; THEREFORE MAY BE WON.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE OF BURTON'S LANDING.

CHAPTER XX.

LIFE AT THE EYRIE.

CHAPTER XXI.

SURFACE INDICATIONS.

CHAPTER XXII.

LIFE IN THE CLEARINGS.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BOUNDING BILLOWS.

END OF PART FIRST.

PART SECOND.

COMPILED from the narrative of Wheaton Scovill, an Incurable, by Septimus Dweley, one of the Surgeons in Ordinary to the Royal Free Hospital, Elmhampton, England.

[Introductory note by Dr. Dweley.]

This is the "trifling exception" referred to in Part I., Chapter I.

PART THIRD.—MARK WILFORD'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

A LETTER.

CHAPTER II.

STEERAGE.

CHAPTER III.

THE CRYPTOGRAM.

CHAPTER IV.

DECIPHERED.

CHAPTER V.

EXPLORATIONS AT THE RAGLE'S NEST.

CHAPTER VI.

DISCOVERY.

CHAPTER VII.

SO FOUL A SKY CLEARS NOT WITHOUT A STORM.

CHAPTER VIII.

THIS LOOKS NOT LIKE A NUPTIAL.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORM BURSTS.

CHAPTER X.

THE CLOSING SCENE.