

TIPPECANOE

By SAMUEL MCCOY

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This is a story of pioneer days in Indiana, when courageous frontiersmen fought the redskins and the wilderness and won vast territory

CHAPTER XV—Continued.

With a bound he reached the bank of the stream, leaped down beneath its friendly shelter and ran on noiseless moccasins along the shelving edge, back toward the quarter from which the shot had come; if he were pursued, it would be better to let the chase pass him than to try to outdistance the Indian runners. At last he stopped and inch by inch crawled up to the top of the bank until he could lift his head with infinite caution and peer through the tufts of weeds. No sound broke the stillness. For an eternity of time he lay, clutching his rifle in readiness; but the only sound was the querulous calling of the little woodpecker, high overhead. He waited . . . waited . . . waited . . .

From Girty's lips broke the roar of an infuriated animal; he staggered back with the impact of the shot, but he did not fall nor yet did he lift his weapon to his shoulder; and David saw that his shot had struck only the lock of Girty's rifle, rendering it useless but leaving the man unharmed. With a bellow of rage, Girty bounded toward him, swinging the broken weapon like a club. There was no time to reload. David leaped to the top of the bank and braced himself for the onset. As the clubbed rifle of the outlaw rose above his head, David swung his own upward to meet it. They crashed together and splintered with a shock; and in the same second, flinging the broken stock away, the mighty arms of Simon Girty flung themselves around David.

With the strength of desperation, David strove to oppose the terrible sinews. Back and forth over the frozen grass the two men fought like beasts, heaving, struggling, stumbling over roots, locked in an embrace as deadly as that of the cougar. But it could not last long; David felt his strength ebbing under the terrific strain and his breath grew short and gasping; when suddenly the earth gave way beneath their feet and with a last despairing effort David twisted himself above as they toppled over the low bluff, and the fight was over. Girty, falling underneath, had struck his head upon a stone; and his arms relaxed their hold.

David stood up, panting. Girty lay very still. But David knew that he must make sure that the man was dead before he could be safe himself. He felt in his grudge for his



They Crashed Together and Splintered With a Shock.

but it had fallen out during the struggle. Clambering up the bank he saw it lying on the ground. His fingers closed upon the trigger and he heard a sob. He waited . . . waited . . . waited . . .

From him in the darkness, in his soul, he felt a sense of relief. He had never spoken one word to her about David from that day on. Little by little, as she went over each point in her heart, a sense that she had been tricked out of her love grew on her, a sense that somehow she had cheated herself. In the sleepless hours of the night that followed, she felt her eyes smarting with tears. What could she do? What could she do? The whole world seemed against her!

"Save yourself," she murmured faintly, "there are Indians coming!"

He knelt and cut the thongs that bound her ankles and then those of her wrists. As she tried to stand, she swayed weakly and fainted. There was no time to lose; he lifted her limp form upon his shoulders and ran staggeringly in the direction of the troops. He could never overtake them—the marching column and the slow-moving wagons must be a mile away by now. He stumbled on with desperate exertion. He reached the winding creek again, laid down his unconscious burden and dashed the icy water in Toinette's face. Her great blue eyes, shadowed by dark circles of exhaustion, opened slowly, looked at him blankly. "Father, help me!" she cried. He shook her by the shoulders. "Stand up! Try!" The light of consciousness came back into her eyes; she rose tremblingly and tried to walk. They found a place where the water gurgled over a stony bar, ankle-deep; crossed it and struggled up the bank on the farther side. As they reached the top there came to their ears the dreadful exultant yells of the Indians, three hundred yards behind. David put his arms around the girl's shoulders and they ran on with palsied limbs. They seemed to be struggling on in that nightmare where the feet are leaden and the pursuers fleet. Nearer and nearer came the fierce yelping.

At last David and Toinette stood still and looked at each other. David drew his knife. She nodded, silently praying him to deliver her with that swift death from the tortures of the savages. "Oh, God, not yet!" he cried; and drew her on in blind haste. Twice he shouted, with all the strength of his gasping lungs. Was it an echo, or an answering shout that came back? And then there came a burst of the sweetest music in the world: the cheers of a score of Harrison's men, crashing through the woods a hundred yards away.

The chase was suddenly reversed. At the first shout of the backwoodsmen, the baffled Indians turned and fled. The rescuing party pursued them but a little way, firing vainly at the feeble forms dodging among the tree trunks. Young George Croghan, Harrison's aid, was in command of the little squad. They had heard Girty's shot, fired at David, and a little later, David's shot; and had come back from the troops with all speed. Toinette had sunk to the ground, laughing and sobbing; they gathered around her with wild hurrahs, a torrent of eager questions.

They bore her on their shoulders back to the marching men. How the cheering ran along the line as the men caught sight of her! General Harrison and his staff galloped up one by one and shouted like boys. Old "Wash" Johnston leaned over and kissed her face, stained with happy tears. "I'm old enough, my dear," he said. And the men cheered again.

A dozen times she was obliged to tell the story of her captivity; a dozen times the men lifted David on their shoulders and cheered him to the echo. But through all the rejoicing and the thanksgiving, David's heart remained heavy; for the breach still seemed impossible to bridge. She, too, suffered; tormented by a debt of gratitude due one whose treason to his country must forever bar him from her love.

Treason? Why was it, then, that David seemed such a hero to all his comrades among the militiamen? Why had all of them received him into their hearts like a brother? Toinette struggled all through the day with the secret which she thought so horrible. Little by little, she came to the conclusion that David had managed in some way to win a pardon from Governor Harrison, before the trip to the Prophet's camp had been begun.

She went back over the circumstances of that tragic meeting in Corydon, when she and Ike had confronted David and found the proofs of treachery upon him. What had happened after she had left that scene? Perhaps Ike had prevailed on David to renounce his allegiance to England. Perhaps, then, he had interceded with Governor Harrison in his friend's behalf. She pictured the stern young governor as saying that David's life must depend on his faithful service to the territory in the future. Ike had never spoken one word to her about David from that day on. Little by little, as she went over each point in her heart, a sense that she had been tricked out of her love grew on her, a sense that somehow she had cheated herself. In the sleepless hours of the night that followed, she felt her eyes smarting with tears. What could she do? What could she do? The whole world seemed against her!

She could not bring herself to voice her inward trouble to anyone, least of all to David. She watched him striding along, among his comrades, jesting with them as only men who have passed through death together can jest, and her torment almost maddened her. What a sorry tangle she had got herself into! What a little fool she had been! But David, too, she thought, had been as unreasoning as herself. She caught glimpses of him thoughtfully, as if he were seen by some invisible eye. His jaws were set in a grimace of pain. He was

in his fixed resolve not to forget what had gone before. Why couldn't he be sensible and talk to her as if nothing had happened? As for herself, she would die before she begged his forgiveness. And so matters stood when they reached Fort Harrison, on the homeward journey.

At Fort Harrison they found Ike Blackford, sound and strong again. Toinette had dreaded meeting him. He came toward her, his face bright with joy, but clouded when he realized that David and she had not yet settled their silly quarrel. Ike was miserable; but he kept silence. He knew better than to thrust his paw into that fire.

The wounded were transferred to the boats at Fort Harrison and the journey to Vincennes was soon accomplished. There they found the lady mule Priscilla, and when the march to Corydon was resumed Toinette was ferried on the Jenny's patient back, while Ike strode beside her.

And Ike, laughing, striving to make her forget; but strove in vain!

On the twenty-fifth of November they reached Corydon. Runners had gone on before with the news of victory; and the whole village came out to meet them as they neared the town; women ran among the men even as they marched and flung their arms around the necks of brothers, fathers, husbands, though some sought in vain for those who would never return, or threw themselves with weeping beside the bodies of those who lay upon the litter. But a hundred hearts were happy and thanked God; and happiest of all was a little old man, Patrice O'Bannon, who strained his daughter to his breast and kissed her again and again with tears mingling with his kisses; for she had been brought back to him as from the grave.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Poison Lingers.

David stayed behind in Vincennes, going back to his work at the trading house of Francois Vigo. But he stayed there only a week or two before his loneliness made existence without a sight of Toinette an existence not to be endured. He hated the sight of the ill-smelling store, with its heaps of green skins, its crackling bundles of furs, hated the sight of the cheerful Hoosiers and French who thronged the streets of the old capital, and loathed the wretched Piankeshaw Indians who slept in the doorway. Suddenly, one morning, he told old Vigo that he must leave; and the next day found him once more in Corydon, where Ike welcomed him with beaming face.

Still the breach was open! It is so hard for young men and maidens to lay down their pride!

To Toinette the days were almost unbearable. David acted like a bear with a sore head, she thought. It was just what she might have expected, she told herself. It is perfectly silly to be so big and flinty, she was sure. David had never spoken ten words to her at any one time, since the day he had knocked everything into a cocked hat by telling her he loved her. People who loved each other didn't act as they did, she knew; why, whenever they had been together she felt as though something tremendous, something bigger than she was, was in the very air around and on the point of exploding. She didn't approve of explosions, still less of things, nameless forces, that were bigger than she was. When she had talked to David in the old days it was like talking to the heart of one of those terrible creatures of steel, about which Mr. Livingston had written her father—that great, throbbing caldron which they fed with logs and which palpitated with fury and drove a boat from Pittsburgh to New Orleans in a month. It was bigger than she was and unmanageable and it was not at all her idea of love. Whenever she thought about it, that is to say about the atmosphere which was immediately and mysteriously evolved out of common day whenever David and she encountered, her eyes filled with tears of vexation. As for being sorry, that was another matter. If David wished to be flint, she was perfectly capable of being steel. Yet she thought about him every day.

Her father, for the first time in her experience, failed to be of any help to her. At home, in New Orleans, she had gone to him with the story of each boy who had danced attendance upon her and he had seen them as she did and together they had laughed each cavalier into oblivion; but she found it impossible to discuss this new problem with him. It was no use telling her father that she was afraid of something she couldn't name. If it was true that she had trembled from head to foot when she felt that the sparks which flashed back and forth from her steel and David's flint were dangerously near a powder mine somewhere inside her, that was her affair and she would have to drown it with her own contempt as best she might.

Accordingly, the little old gentleman, who was sincerely troubled by the evident breach between his daughter and David, got small satisfaction from Toinette when he stuck a cautious finger into the difficulty. There was nothing wrong and she was perfectly happy and if David chose to be a bear with a sore head that was his

concern and not theirs; and Mr. O'Bannon wisely forbore further attempts to effect a reconciliation. Ike Blackford, who remained a staunch friend to each, was likewise constrained to remain in troubled silence, he had opened a well-meaning mouth to each in turn and had got no cakes to fill it at either fair.

And at last her "happiness" was so perfect that she resolved to endure it no longer.

She waited until she found him alone in the shop, the little room which had once meant to him the beginning of life's joyousness and life's hopes; and which was now a prison house whence ghosts of yesterdays mocked him with their memories.

He was about to close its doors for the day.

Toinette summoned all her strength. The tower of pride was tottering; it can be sent down in ruins so easily when a girl throws down the weapon of her sex!

"I can't stand it any longer, David," she said breathlessly, "to see you suffer. I know you are suffering, because I—because I—because it hurts me so!"

What a glorious crash the tower made!

David took a quick step toward her. His pulses throbbed ungovernably.

"Toinette, what do you mean?" His face was glorious. "Have you—do you believe in me now?"

"You have blotted out all the past, David," she said simply.

The joy suddenly left his face.

"But the past," he said, in dread of what her answer might be, "the past—have you forgotten why you drove me from you? Have you forgotten what treason you charged me with?"

She waved the words aside. "That is all past now, David. It is the future that is everything. And I know now what you mean to me."

He clenched his hands at his side. He would be patient. Was it possible that she still believed the empty slander against his loyalty?

"No, Toinette," he said, as gently as he could, "I have not forgotten your charge against me. I can never forget it until you say that you were wrong."

The tower of pride reared itself up again from its dust. Why must he ask her to humble herself still further, when she had already said so much? She was silent. He waited for her answer, but none came; and at last, he bowed gravely.

"Then it is useless to talk of—forgetting. Please let us end this foolish play."

He moved as though to go on with his work.

"Wait, David!" she said tremulously. Her eyes were blinded with tears. Her fingers had been plucking nervously at a purple ribbon which hung from her bodice.

"Wait, I want to give you—a remembrance." She lifted the great shears from the counter and clipped the silken cord from its fastenings. A tear ran down and stained it with a darker color. Her fingers twisted the sorry token, quickly twisted it into a wistful emblem such as happy lovers laughingly give each other—a lover's knot. She raised her face and her blue eyes smiled wanly through the mist that clouded them.

"Here, David, take this—just to be foolish, just to be foolish for once."

He took it. His hand was trembling. But his face was steel, unforgetting. All his yearning for her burned in his breast, a white caldron of passion; but around it closed the unyielding walls of his cold passion for his honor. He could never forget that she had doubted him once. Until that stain had been washed away, he could not forgive. He remembered the young Sir Philip Sidney of whom her father, old Patrice, had so often told him—of his proud guardianship of the white shield of manly honor; he himself had been only a wearer, but here, in this new country, he was a man; and his honor must be first!

"Toinette," he said in a low voice, "who told you that I had acted as a spy?"

The blood rushed to her cheeks. This, too, she would give him.

"Doctor Elliott," she whispered, with bent head.

"Who is he?" cried David in a fury. "That young doctor who comes here from Louisville? In God's name, what has he against me? I've never seen the man! But do you believe him still?"

"You have never—never denied—never—" she stopped miserably. She could not raise her eyes to face him. "Then nothing else matters, Toinette."

"Oh, David, that doesn't matter either!" she cried. "Nothing matters! I want you in spite of that!"

But he shook his head.

She became very pale again.

"I have offered all I have," she said proudly, "I have nothing more to give."

"I can take nothing from you while you believe me guilty. My name is all I have to give you."

Her answer scarcely reached his ear.

"Oh, David, let our love be enough."

The light had faded from the sky. David looked down at her bent head and trembled.

"Where is this man Elliott now?" he demanded suddenly.

"I do not know," faltered Toinette, "but, oh, David—"

"Good-by!" he said.

She did not answer, but held out her hand. He paid no heed. With a sob she turned and ran falteringly toward her father's house.

David set about the work he had to do.

He went directly to Blackford's room at the tavern. Ike was not there. In a corner, beneath the wooden table where a dozen law books lay scattered, was a narrow box. Ike had often exhibited its contents to him. He lifted it upon the table and threw open the lid. Within lay two of those deadly weapons which none but gentlemen cherished—two dueling pistols, brown-barreled, glistening, long and lean as lightning. He drew forth one of them, tried its hammer; it moved swiftly, noiselessly. He loaded it, fitted the flint into the lock, placed it in the bosom of his coat, and went out, silently, his face white as linen.

Night had fallen. Far to the east a sheet of flame flickered palely. Long after, a faint roll of thunder followed. A drop of icy rain struck his face.

When his siren horn sounded I took down my sweater and hat, threw them on the bed and flew downstairs.

We had planned, perhaps vaguely, to go up to Slayback's woods before the trees were stark and bare. Sylvia, however, was downstairs before me, and an hour later she left the house for a ride with him.

"My dear," from mother again, "please don't flatten your nose against the window pane in that undignified way. Sylvia is very pretty and amusing. They'll have a perfectly lovely time together!"

Mother was fairly raging. That I, Betty, with twenty-five years on my shoulders, had no more maidenly modesty than to cling desperately for one look from Robert Hewes, or any man!

I'm perfectly willing to accept the position of oldest, to take all the drudgery, the bitterness and thanklessness from the heedless younger members, but I want some of the sweetness, too.

Lucille, fresh and well groomed and just twenty, rushed into the room with an explosive shriek. "Did you see Sylvia? Who was the man?" I felt like a screen heroine and that the only proper thing for me to do was to prostrate myself in utter abandon and shriek back, "Mine!"

"Betty met him at the Friday night dance," said mother and went into details. "He's evidently much taken with Sylvia."

"Oh!" cried Lucille sympathetically as she and mother exchanged glances.

Later in the kitchen I worked steadily preparing supper for Robert and Sylvia. In the kitchen, at least, I could be alone. Mother hated the place, and so did the girls. Never in my life have I spent such a miserable hour as I did when I baked the hot biscuits, broiled ham and made the coffee for their supper. I watched through the window for a sight of the long, gray car. For a moment I could not see clearly through the window for a mist had dimmed my eyes. It was all so hopelessly muddled and tiresome, this charming, do-nothing family of ours. The next moment I broke panic-stricken for the door.

Robert Hewes had swung his car out of the valley road, and, taking the turn at 50 miles an hour, the car smashed into a monster tree, skidded across to the sandbanked roadside. As I looked Sylvia and Robert shot into the air.

In a moment we were bending over them both. Sylvia sat up stunned but unhurt and blinking bewildered. Robert lay crushed and broken in the roadway.

With assistance Sylvia got to her feet and staggered to the house. I sat in the roadway and held Robert's head in my lap. He had fainted. When his eyes opened he looked into mine with utter amazement. He smiled wanly, as he assured me he wasn't hurt, and his lean, brown hand caught compellingly at mine, as if he would never let me go.

Mother and girls stood in the hall awed and weeping as we carried him in.

Next day when it was all over, Robert bandaged and his broken ribs set, I sat beside him. I tried to forget that through the delirium of the night, he had continuously called my name. There was great excitement in the family circle, no one had slept. They had crouched about listening as my name fell from his lips. But as Sylvia said, of course he was delirious. In his delirium he thought I was sitting next him when the crash came. When the pain stirred him from his semistupor, he murmured broken words and phrases and before he opened his eyes in consciousness, the entire family was in possession of his heart secret. During the long night he struggled to keep me near him. Ceaselessly he cried out against letting Sylvia run the car. She confessed shamefacedly that she had teased him into permitting her to take the wheel, just before they turned.

When Robert awakened he made an effort to lift himself.

"No one else was hurt, really?" he questioned. "Thank God for that," he said as he sank back on the pillows.

Then I heard his voice, a mere whisper, as his eyes sought mine. "Will you ever forgive me?" he said, "for running away from you yesterday?"

"Don't talk," I begged. "You did not seem anxious to go," he explained. "I must have seemed a brute." His hand closed over mine. Waveringly I forced my eyes to meet his. And then we knew.

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He passed swiftly from house to house, inquiring from each if there the young doctor from Louisville, young Doctor Elliott, was within; and, though several had seen him that day, none knew where he might be found. It was late when someone he questioned recalled that he thought he had seen Elliott that night at Conrod's tavern outside the village.

He set out on the road that led to the east. The storm had reached its height.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Storm Breaks.

Young Doctor Elliott, lying prone on his blanket on the hewn logs of the floor of Conrod's tavern, stirred uneasily in his sleep. Outside, the artillery of the last thunderstorm of the autumn rumbled and crashed above the steady rush of the rain. A hand fell upon the latch and the door burst open before the fury of the wind. Elliott woke to find the rain driving into his face. He was about to rise to close the door when the whole room was struck out of darkness by the dazzling blue of sheet lightning. It was gone as instantly as it came and the crash of thunder which accompanied it drowned his cry.

In that single moment of the blinding flash he had seen, outlined against the shimmering sky, franted in the rectangle of the door, the dreadful figure of a crouching Indian, knife in hand.

His limbs froze in horror. The room was now as black as midnight, but his eyes ached with the impress of the lightning glare and the image that had been struck into them. Still in the pitch darkness he could see that sickening face—dark, evil, its bloodshot eyes peering malevolently into the room.

He heard the rain-soaked moccasins of the savage take two steps inward. Before he could cry out again, a second flash of lightning illumined the room, and showed a second man, tall, pale with anger, his foot on the threshold.

With the hoarse snarl of a wild beast, the Indian leaped at the figure in the doorway. They grappled. In the darkness Elliott heard their quick terrible breathing as they swayed in a struggle for life. A stool tripped them and they fell, rolling against him. Again the lightning flared and he saw the knife, dashed from the Indian's hand, lying beside him. The white man was beneath, his face hidden by the straining shoulders of the savage. Blindly Elliott seized the weapon and struck with hysterical force.

The man beneath shook off the relaxed arms of the hideous intruder and rose unsteadily to his feet. Then he laughed aloud in the darkness.

"I can't see who you are, friend," he said, "but you've certainly saved me from a close call."

Elliott made no answer. He was sobbing weakly, his hand still clutching the blood-stained knife. From the upper room came the sound of voices and the tavernkeeper came hurriedly down the narrow ladder leading from the loft, followed by the awakened guests. Someone struck a flint; candles were lighted.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CURING SYLVIA

By ELIZABETH SHIELDS.

"Well," I murmured, "I'm always glad the men at the club like me well enough to come to our house. Sylvia enjoys them so much." Sylvia was just then climbing into a low racing car with Robert Hewes, who had called to see me, gripping the wheel.

"My dear," exclaimed my mother, "do stop criticizing your sister. You must realize they are so much younger than you. Naturally Sylvia and Lucille are companionable on motor trips and at dances."

"I don't mind in the least," I returned serenely. But I did not feel serene. Robert had come to the house for me, and he acted, as did all my men friends who came, by taking one of the younger girls out. Oh, I didn't care usually, but Robert Hewes—well, he was different. And I did care.

When his siren horn sounded I took down my sweater and hat, threw them on the bed and flew downstairs. We had planned, perhaps vaguely, to go up to Slayback's woods before the trees were stark and bare. Sylvia, however, was downstairs before me, and an hour later she left the house for a ride with him.

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