

Alice of Old Vincennes

By Maurice Thompson

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BEFORE HERE
CAPTAIN LEONARD HELM and
LIEUT. PITZBUUGH BEVERLEY were sent
from Vincennes to the military at
GASPARD ROUSSILLON, learned that
LONG HAIR, a desperate Indian, was dis-
eased on seeing the new flag of freedom
which she had placed over the block-
house.

Alice and Beverly find pleasure in each
other's company and in the friendly
house Alice proves more than a match for
Beverly.

"KEEP it," he said, folding
his arms and trying to
look unconcerned, "you
have captured it fairly. I
am at your mercy; be kind to me."
Madame Roussillon and Jean, the
hunchback, hearing the racket of the
foils had come out to see and were
standing aside.

"You ought to be ashamed, Alice,"
said the dame in scolding approval
of what she had done; "girls do not
fence with gentlemen."

"This girl does," said Alice.

"And with extreme disaster to this
gentleman," said Beverly, laughing
in a tone of discomfiture and resig-
nation.

"Ah, Mo'sieu, there's nothing but
disaster where she goes," complained
Madame Roussillon, "she is a de-
stroyer of everything. Only yesterday
she dropped my pink bowl and broke
it, the only one I had."

"And just to think," said Beverly,
"what would have been the condition
of my heart had we been using rapiers
instead of leather-buttoned foils! She
would have spitted it through the very
center."

"Like enough," replied the dame in-
differently. "She wouldn't wince,
either—not she."

Alice ran into the house with the
foils and Beverly followed.

"We must try it over again some
day soon," he said; "I find that you
can show me a few points. Where did
you learn to fence so admirably? Is
Monsieur Roussillon your master?"

"Indeed he isn't," she quickly re-
plied. "He is but a bungling sword-
man. My master—but I am not at
liberty to tell you who has taught
me the little I know."

"Well, whoever he is I should be
glad to have lessons from him."

"But you'll never get them."

"Why?"

"Because."

"A woman's ultimatum."

"As good as a man's!" she bridled
proudly; "and sometimes better—at
the foils for example. Vous-com-
prenez, n'est ce pas?"

He laughed heartily.

"Yes, your point reaches me," he
said, "but sperat et in saeva vicius
gladiatur arena, as the old Latin poet
wisely remarks." The quotation was
meant to tease her.

"Yes, Montaigne translated that or
something in his book," she com-
mented with prompt erudition. "I
understand it."

Beverly looked amazed.

"What do you know about Mon-
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"A woman's ultimatum."

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taigne?" he demanded with a blunt
brevity amounting to something like
gruffness.

"Sh! Mo'sieu, not too loud," she
softly protested, looking around to
see that neither Madame Roussillon
nor Jean had followed them into the
main room. "It is not permitted that
I read that old book; but they do not
hide it from me, because they think
I can't make out its dreadful spell-
ing."

She smiled so that her cheeks drew
the dimples deep into the delicately
tinted pink and brown, where wind
and sun and wholesome exercise had
set the seal of absolute health, and
took from a niche in the logs of the
wall, a stained and dog-eared volume.
He looked, and it was, indeed, the old
saint and sinner, Montaigne.

Involuntarily he ran his eyes over
the first few lines of the book, com-
paring her show of knowledge with the
outward badges of abject rusticity, and
even wildness, with which she was
covered.

"Well," he said, "you are a mys-
tery."

"You think it surprising that I can
read books? Frankly I can't. I read it
because—well just because they want me
to read about nothing but sickly old
saints and woe-begone penitents. I
like something lively. What do I care
for all that uninteresting religious
stuff?"

"Montaigne is decidedly lively in
spots," Beverly remarked. "I
shouldn't think a girl—I shouldn't
think you'd particularly enjoy, his
humors."

"I don't care for the book at all,"
she said, flushing quickly. "only I
seem to learn about the world from it.
Sometimes it seems as if it lifted me
up high above all this wild, lonely and
tiresome country, so that I can see
far off where things are different and
beautiful. It is the same with the
novels; and they don't permit me to
read them either; but all the same I
do."

When Beverly, taking his leave,
passed through the gate at Roussillon
place, he met Rene De Ronville going
in. It was a notable coincidence that
each young man felt something
troublesome rise in his throat as he
looked into the other's eyes.

A week of dreary autumn weather
came on, during which Beverly man-
aged to be with Alice greatly, deal,
mostly sitting on the Roussillon gal-
lery, where the fading vine leaves
made fairy whispering, and where the
tempered breeze blew deliciously cool
from over the distant multi-colored
woods. The men of Vincennes were
gathering their Indian corn early to
dry it on the cob for grating into win-
ter meal. Many women made wine
from the native grapes and from the
sweeter and rich fruit of imported
vines. Madame Roussillon and Alice
stained their hands a deep purple dur-
ing the dressing season, and Beverly
found himself engaged in helping
them handle the juicy crop, while
around the overflowing earthen pots
the wild bees, wasps and hornets
hummed with an incessant, jarring
monotony.

Jean, the hunchback, gathered
imply stores of hickory nuts, walnuts,
hazelnuts and pin-oak acorns. In-
deed, the whole population of the vil-
lage made a great sport of industry
just before the falling of winter; and
presently, when every preparation had
been completed for the dreaded cold
season, M. Roussillon carried out his
long-cherished plan, and gave a great
party at the river house. After the
most successful trading experience of
all his life he felt irrepressibly lib-
eral.

"Let's have one more roaring good
time," he said, "that's what life is
for."

CHAPTER VII
BEVERLEY was so surprised and
confused in his mind by the
ease with which he had been
mastered at sword-play by a mere girl,
that he felt as if just coming out of
a dream. In fact the whole affair
seemed unreal, yet so vivid and im-
pressive in all its main features, that
he could not emerge from it and look
it calmly over from without. His ex-
perience with women had not prepared
him for a ready understanding and ac-
ceptance of a girl like Alice. While
he was fully aware of her beauty,
freshness, vivacity and grace, this
Amazonian strength of hers, this bold-
ness of spirit, this curious mixture
of frontier crudeness and a certain
admiration—so to call it—of patri-
an something, and aspirations
affected him both pleasantly and un-
pleasantly. He did not sympathize
promptly with her semi-barbaric cos-
tume, as compared with the girls of Vir-
ginia and Maryland. He resented her
muscular development and her inde-
pendent disposition. She was far from
coarseness, however, and, indeed, a
trace of subtle refinement, although
not conventional, imbued her whole
character.

But why was he thinking so criti-
cally about her? Had his selfishness
received an incurable shock from the
button of her foil? A healthy young
man of the right sort is apt to be
jealous of his physical prowess—touch
him there and he will turn the world
over to right himself in his own ad-
miration and yours. But to be beaten
on his highest ground of virility by
a dimpled maiden just leaving her
teens could not offer Beverly any
open way to recoupment of damages.

He tried to shake her out of his
mind, as a bit of pretty and trouble-
some rubbish, what time he pursued
his not very exacting military duties.
But the more he shook the tighter she
clung, and the oftener he went to see
her.

Helm was a good officer in many
respects, and his patriotism was of
the best; but he liked jolly company,
a glass of something strong and a
large share of ease. Detroit lay many
miles northeastward across the wilder-
ness, and the English, he thought,
would scarcely come so far to attack
his little post, especially now that
most of the Indians in the interven-
ing country had declared in favor of
the Americans. Recently, too, the
weather had been favoring him by
changing from wet to dry, so that the
upper Wabash and its tributaries were
falling low and would soon be very
difficult to navigate with large bat-
teries.

Very little was done to repair the
stockade and dilapidated remnant of
a blockhouse. There were no suffi-
cient barracks, a mere shed in the
angle serving for quarters, and no

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NEA SERVICE

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



"Merrily We Roll Along"

—By AL POSEN

THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—



THE OLD HOME TOWN—By STANLEY



MARSHAL OTEY WALKER WAS MUCH PUT OUT WHEN THE YOUNG PERKINS BOY RETURNED HIS OVERSHOES -

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OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



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old cannon could not have been used
to any effect in case of attack. As
for the garrison, it was a nominal
quantity, made up mostly of men who
preferred hunting and fishing to the
merest pretense of military duty.
Gaspard Roussillon assumed to know
everything about Indian affairs and
the condition of the English at De-
troit. His optimistic eloquence lulled
Helm to a very pleasant sense of se-
curity. Beverly was not so easy to

satisfy; but his suggestions regarding
military discipline and a vigorous
prosecution of repairs to the block-
house and stockade were treated with
dilatatory gentility by his superior of-
ficer. The soft wonder of a perfect
Indian summer glorified land, river
and sky. Why not dream and bask?
Why not drink exhilarating toddies?
Meantime the entertainment to be
given by Gaspard Roussillon occupied
everybody's imagination to an unusual

extent. Rene De Ronville, remember-
ing but not heeding the doubtful suc-
cess of his former attempt, went long
beforehand to claim Alice as his part-
nais, but she flatly refused him,
once more reminding him of his ob-
ligations to little Adrienne Bourcier.
He would not be convinced.
"You are bound to me," he said,
"you promised before, you know, and
the party was but put off. I hold
you to it; you are my partner, and

I am yours, you can't deny that."
"No you are not my partner,"
she firmly said; then added lightly,
"You mon partenaire, you are dead
and buried as my partner at that
dance."
He glowered in silence for a few
moments, then said:
"It is Lieutenant Beverly, I sup-
pose."
She gave him a quick contemptuous
look, but turned it instantly into one

of her tantalizing smiles.
"Do you imagine that?" she de-
manded.
"Imagine it! I know it," he said
with a hot flush. "Have I no sense?"
"Precious little," she replied with a
merry laugh.
"You think so."
"Go to Father Beret, tell him every-
thing, and then ask him what he
thinks," she said in a calm, even tone,
her face growing serious.

There was an awkward silence.
She had touched Rene's vulnerable
spot; he was nothing if not a devout
Catholic, and his conscience rooted
itself in what good Father Beret had
taught him.
(To Be Continued.)
The ocean's depth at any point can
be ascertained now by echoes obtained
through the instruments used during
the war to locate submarines.