

THE MAIL

A PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE.

DORIS BURNHAM.

A STORY OF PIONEER DAYS.

CHAPTER XIII.

DORIS AND HER PRISON HOUSE.

Doris gazed around the rude cabin, when Hank had struck a light. It reminded her of the camp occupied by Fairfax and the trapper, though there were none of the little conveniences of a woodland life...

Munro seated himself by the side of the door, while his companion kicked together the dry embers, and replenished the fire from a store of dry branches and half-decayed logs piled in one corner.

"How! How it does storm!" said the latter worthily, as a fierce gust of wind brought the torrents of rain against the side of the cabin in a sweeping rush.

"Yes," answered Munro, "and we will be lucky if we get home to-night."

Doris started at these words. She hardly knew what to expect at Munro's hands, but after reaching his cabin she had presumed that she was to be confined there, and she knew that her imprisonment would be short, as her father—and Fairfax, she felt sure—would visit every spot on the peninsula in their search for her.

Turning her head towards Munro, she noted with intense scorn and anger, the triumphant look with which he gazed upon her. Her undaunted gaze met his unflinchingly.

"I suppose, Mr. Munro," said she, finally, "you will inform me of your intention in bringing me here. I do not wish to be anything you can say will surprise me now, for I am ready to imagine you capable of any villainy after what I have witnessed of your conduct already."

"Exactly so," sneered Munro. "We are merely waiting here until the storm abates, so that we may continue our journey."

"What is to be the end of that journey?" inquired she, calmly. Although her heart was beating wildly in terror, she would not have allowed him to deem her afraid for untold gold.

"To a safe and secure retreat, where I may be certain that there is no danger, either of your escape or of any inquisitive search being able to find you."

"I am to be held your prisoner then, Mr. Munro?"

"Exactly—until such time—and I hope it will not be long—as you are willing to become my wife."

"And—then?"

"Then you shall be restored to your father. Instead of one child, he will receive two—and you and your husband."

"Doris gazed at him a minute or longer in perfect silence. He was puzzled by her gaze, and by the equanimity with which she listened as he unfolded his plan. Finally she spoke, and inquired:

"Well, supposing I should consent—what excuse do you intend to invent whereby to explain my absence?"

Munro could not understand the quiet, equable manner in which she spoke. Her face was as calm as if she were discussing some entirely commonplace matter, and her eyes fixed upon his face with a clear and steady gaze.

"That is a matter that can be very easily arranged. You will find that your father can easily have your absence explained, and will not be critical in the matter."

"But explain to me the manner in which it came to be done," answered Doris, in an inquiring tone.

Munro began to be deceived by her quiet manner. "It is easy and simple enough," replied he, reassuringly.

"There are occasional parties of trappers, Indian traders and of Indians also, passing along the lake in their canoes, and at this point they can cross, in their small canoes, from the northern shore of the lake to this side, passing from island to island. You can say that one of these captured you and held you a prisoner at some point among the island, and that I discovered and rescued you. Of course I shall take you to your father, when you go—or rather when you consent to marry me—and it will be perfectly easy for you to fall in love with your gallant rescuer, and to speedily marry him," and he smiled at the thought.

"Don't you see, Doris, that it will be remarkably easy to do this?"

Doris never moved a muscle as he unfolded his plans to her, though the hot blood danced through her veins as she listened. With a mighty effort she still controlled herself—for she wished to draw from him every detail of his scheme—and asked, "Where is this spot to which I am to be conveyed?"

"It is not far away," answered Munro, "but it is so well concealed that no one can possibly discover it. Never fear; you shall be well cared for—and you will be as safe as if you were with your father. And I sincerely hope," he continued, smiling, "that your stay there will be extremely short—thus you will consent to make me the happiest of men."

There was but one more point upon which Doris required information. Her cheeks burned as she asked it of Munro:

"And suppose I should promise to become your wife, what guarantee have you that I should carry out that promise when I am restored to my poor father?"

"Mr. Munro!" she began vehemently, "sooner than accept the love you offer, or pollute my lips with the foul lie you utter, I will cast an air of captivity! Do you imagine I could ever consent to wed a man so low, so degraded, so lost to all sense of manhood, as you are? A man who would attempt to force a woman to marry him would be capable of any villainy, however great! Marry you! Never, never! Sooner die—a thousand times sooner! You may starve me, maltreat me, keep me imprisoned for years, and my answer will always be the same! I loathe you, and the day of retribution will come to you yet! My father will not rest until he finds where I have been hidden. I know he will never give up the search until he has found me—and then, toward, you will receive the punishment you so richly deserve!"

She quivered with passion as she stood before him, with all her womanly sense of dignity outraged, and he shrank back from the angry light that flashed from her eyes, and the words of fierce denunciation that came from her lips. He had expected tears, entreaty, expostulation, but nothing like this. But in a moment he recovered himself, and considered that it would not do to get angry. The storm of anger far surpassed his expectations, but it would pass. A few days' sober reflection, in solitude, would break this spirit; her fears would return; and she would yield. Her love for her father—that was the card to play! She with no trace of anger in his tones, he answered:

"Your father will not dream of searching for you, Doris. He will think you lost on the lake in the storm—drowned while attempting to return home. Your boat—did you not see it cast off, the oars in the rowlocks, nothing removed of yours? This storm will drive it on the shore somewhere near your father's camp. He will naturally suppose you lost. His grief will be great—but think of the joy your return, safe and sound, will give his loving heart!"

"The blood left Doris's cheeks, which became the hue of ashes. She gazed at Munro's face, her eyes dilated, and she realized the probability of all that he said. Then dropping on the rude seat, she lifted her hands, bound as they were to her face, with the exclamation, "Oh, father, father!" and then bright tears trickled through her fingers.

"So you see, Doris," he went on pitilessly, "he will search the western and watch the shore for your body, but he will not dream that you are in the land of the living. But two persons, Hank and myself, know of your real fate. Your father will seek your corpse until all hope fades away, and he is convinced that the lake will not give up its dead. Then he will return to his Eastern home alone, and you will be in my power, as completely as if a Circassian slave in Turkish harem in the power of her master!"

Doris sat with her head bowed, while sobs shook her slight frame. She attempted no reply. Munro gazed on her in triumph, and then glanced at Hank, who was comfortably ensconced in a corner of the chimney, smoking a pipe, and a grin was exchanged in silence between those two worthies.

Munro resumed his seat by the door, and silence reigned in the cabin. The violence of the storm had passed, and the wind was sinking, although the rain still fell.

An hour passed—without a word being spoken by either of the three. Doris gradually recovered her composure and, turning slightly so that her back was to the light she sat silently, her bound hands resting in her lap, her eyes fixed on vacancy. Then Munro arose, unfurnished the door, and looked out. The sky was full of broken clouds, but the rain was over.

"It is time, Hank," said he. "Get the boat ready, and see that some blankets are on the seats."

Hank arose, and taking a pair of oars and the blankets, left the cabin. Doris heard the words, but gave no sign. Munro resumed his watch by the door until Hank returned in a few minutes.

"All ready!" said the latter. Then Munro, stepping to the side of the girl, said: "Come, Doris; we must leave this place at once."

"Have you not done enough base work for one night?" replied she.

"Doris, you have to go with me, whether you wish or not. I have treated you as well as could be consistently with my purpose. I give you your word you are safe from any personal harm at my hands, as if you were in your father's tent to-night. But you must come with me! If you do not, then I shall carry you!"

After a moment Doris rose wearily. She knew that no resistance on her part would deter him from carrying out his purpose, and had not the least doubt but that he would put his threats into execution.

"Since you compel me to go with you," she answered, "I certainly prefer walking myself to being carried by you." She arose, and stood ready to accompany him.

Munro placed a blanket over her shoulders, and wrapped it around her so that she could grasp it in her hands and hold it in place. Then he opened the door, and they all stepped out, Hank leading the way.

It was but a few steps to the edge of the swamp, where the boat lay. Munro aided the girl to step aboard, and gave her a seat. Then the boat was pushed off and they began to tread the mazes of the swamp.

It was very dark, of course, and their progress was slow. Doris looked keenly ahead, but could see nothing. She had no idea whether she was being borne, and when the boat stopped at the shores of the little island, lost in the recesses of the dark swamp, her amazement increased, for she could see no sign that human footsteps had ever before reached that spot.

Munro aided her to land, and she was compelled to accept his aid, although she loathed even his touch. He kept close by her side, to aid her progress through the dense and tangled forest that covered the little island. Doris's fears had been deepening, and it was with a feeling akin to delight that she saw the cabin hidden in the center of the island.

The door was unlocked, and they entered the first room. Hank started a fire, while Munro, after carefully fastening the door, made a light. Doris gazed around her in astonishment. She saw the lamp in the rear room, placed it on the table. Then he conducted Doris thither.

"Removing the blanket, he took out his hunting knife and severed the thongs of deer hide with which her wrists were bound.

Doris dropped upon a seat by the table and began to rub her chafed wrists and aching arms.

"This is the home I spoke of, Doris," said Munro to her. "You are here, not only strong and safe, but comfortable. That bunk has plenty of robes and blankets. The walls are thick and secure, and you can rest in perfect ease. As I said before, you are as safe here as in your father's tent, and your privacy shall not be intruded upon unnecessarily."

ly. There is a wooden bolt on this side of the door, which you can fasten if you wish. I will be locked on the other side of course. I hope, however, that you will not compel me to keep you as an unwilling prisoner long."

Doris looked at him for a moment, and then said sadly, "It will be my life-long prison, I fear."

"Oh, no, Doris," he replied, smilingly. "You may not be so cruel! Shall I have some supper sent you?"

"I require nothing," was her reply. "Then I will not intrude again to-night. Good-night!" Closing the door after him as he left the room, Doris heard him lock it on the other side, and she shot the wooden bolt on the left side of the door, and gazed around the room that was to be her prison. The reader is familiar with it. The windows were narrow slits between the logs, some three feet long and three inches wide, one on each side of the room. Each looked out into the dense forest.

The poor girl was very weary, and the terrible excitement of the past few days had overtaken her, and she was glad of a chance to lie down and rest. Removing her hat, she threw herself upon the pile of skins in the bunk, and though she was deeply anxious concerning her own fate, and doubly so on account of the agony she knew her father was suffering, it was not long until she dropped off into a deep, heavy slumber, induced by mental and physical exhaustion.

CHAPTER XIV. SETH'S SAGACITY.

The next day was calm, bright, and beautiful. A weary group of four were gathered at noon in the tent of Mr. Burnham, who sat in a chair, haggard and worn, the image of despair. All through the night he had not closed his eyes, grieving over the loss of his beloved daughter. With the first dawn of day, he, with Fairfax, Seth and Jotham, had set out, in both boats, and had searched the lake from the island to which she had gone on her fishing excursion, to the peninsula, and along its shore for miles, in a vain search for the body of the missing girl, or some trace of her. Their efforts were rewarded by no sign or token of the presence of Doris.

Persuading the agonized father's perceptions of some nourishment, of which his exhausted system stood greatly in need, Fairfax, obeying a quiet signal which Seth had made to him to follow him out side the tent, made an excuse to the Mr. Burnham, and joined the trapper. Seth walked slowly along in silence until they were beyond the possibility of being overheard, and then, turning sideward around and facing Fairfax, he said:

"Seth, this is a mighty queer go, this is."

Fairfax, whose pale face and distressed expression showed how keenly he suffered, only nodded his head in silence, and waited for the trapper to speak.

Seth looked scrutinizingly at him and then inquired: "Seth, where do you suppose the girl is?"

"Lying at the bottom of that stretch of treacherous green water over there," answered Fairfax, sadly, indicating the bright expanse of lake, whose milky surface was hardly ruffled by the light breeze.

"You do, do you?" answered Seth, after a moment's pause.

"Certainly," was the reply. "If she had escaped the storm she would have returned home long ere this."

"Think she was drowned, do you?" pursued Seth, impetuously.

"What else could have happened to her," answered Fairfax, "her return home?"

"Think the boat capsized with her, I suppose?" pursued Seth.

"What else could have happened her," repeated Fairfax. "For heaven's sake, Seth, explain yourself. Have you any hope that Doris is not drowned?"

"Well, Cap, I don't say that the gal isn't drowned, but she's some mighty queer thing about the hull business that I don't quite see through, that's all."

"Tell me, quick, what you mean, Seth! Your words drive me crazy!"

"Wall, Cap, let me just ask what reason you have for thinkin' that the boat capsized and split Miss Doris out into the lake?"

"For reasons? Why, Doris went out in the boat; a storm arose before she returned; we find that she is not on the island near which she went to fish; the boat comes ashore, upside down and empty."

"Just so, just so," repeated the trapper. "The boat came ashore, upside down and empty. That's what I want you to tell me, what's the reason of it?"

"Tell me what you mean, Seth."

"Well, what was in the boat besides Miss Doris?"

It hasn't come ashore. And she always had ribbon trimmin's about her, flyin' ends, that was liable to wash off in the heavy swash of the water. Then she was always tuckin' her handkerchief into her belt, and it would wash out. Then she wore long wash-leather gloves, that she used to row in, but when she stopped rowin', Jotham says she would tuck 'em on again. Now her cap, nor a bit of ribbon, nor a handkerchief, nor a glove—not one little bit of anything that she wore—has come ashore. Now, don't that look as if she wasn't in the boat when it capsized?"

Fairfax's mind had rapidly canvassed the points in his mind as Seth was speaking. He shook his head sadly.

"That is a weak bit of negative evidence, Seth, when we are confronted by the positive fact of Doris's disappearance, and that, too, under circumstances that show you too clearly that she perished in the lake."

"Think so, do you? Well, come along with me, and I'll show you a piece of evidence that will be harder to get over than this."

Seth started off, and Fairfax followed at once, eager to see what his companion had discovered. He had great faith in the sagacity of Seth, especially in matters connected with woodcraft.

On they went, Seth pressing on an impetuous silence, until they reached the spot where the overturned boat had been found.

"Now, Cap," said Seth, "you see where Miss Doris was fishing? She said she was goin' over there, beyond the point of your island?"

"Yes," assented Fairfax, wondering what was coming next.

"Now, tell me what direction that point is from where that boat came ashore?"

"It is directly north," was Fairfax's reply.

"Just so. Now, what direction did the storm blow from last night?"

"A look of surprise stole over Fairfax's face, and he was silent for a moment, as he gazed over him. Seth gazed into his face earnestly.

"I came from the northwest, did it not?" said he finally.

"Come up the hill a little piece," was the reply of the trapper.

Eagerly Fairfax climbed the acclivity by his guide's side. A partially decayed tree had been overturned by the storm on the preceding night, and Seth halted by it.

"Now, Cap," he explained, "this tree was turned over by the wind last night, roots and all; so you see she didn't twist round in fallin', for none of the roots ain't broke off on the lee side of the tree. Consequently the way the tree lays is the way the wind blew. Now which way did the wind blow that turned it down?"

"From the northwest—if anything, a little west of that," was Fairfax's decision.

"Correct you are. Now come to what was the top of the tree—right here! Now squat along the tree-trunk, just as if it was a rifle-barrel. Where does she strike? Hey?"

An exclamation of surprise broke from Fairfax. "Why it strikes the shore! It is a couple of miles west of the point at which Doris was fishing!"

"Well, what do you make of that?" demanded Seth.

"I do not know—stop! Might not Doris have taken a whim to try fishing over there?"

"Yes, she might—but do we know that she did? And as there hasn't anything come ashore of Miss Doris—not even her hat—don't it look a little as if there was something more than we understand about this?"

"True, Seth, there is a possibility; but—"

"We don't want any 'buts.' What you me wants to do is to git a boat and go over there and do a little explorin'. Mebbe we won't find nothin'; and then agin we may."

"It is worth tryin'. Come, we will go at once."

the willow and the two men searched the woods in the neighborhood thoroughly.

But nothing was discovered to throw further light on the disappearance of Doris, though they swept a considerable range of the surrounding forest. They kept on, however, until the descending sun warned them that the day was closing.

"Let's go back, Cap, git a good night's rest, and take a fresh start in the mornin'!" said Seth, finally.

"And tell the news to Mr. Burnham!" added Fairfax.

"Yes, indeed! The old man'll be powerful glad to hear this—though I didn't know but the girl would be better off at the bottom of the lake than in anybody's hands that's likely to be prowlin' along here in the woods," he added, in a lower tone.

Mr. Burnham was standing on the shore, eagerly watching his return. Fairfax rapidly explained the sagacious observations of Seth that had led them to explore the coast to the west, and placed the little cross in his hand.

The tears filled his eyes as he recognized his gift to Doris when she was but a little girl. "Thank heaven, Doris is not drowned!" he exclaimed fervently.

"But where is my poor little daughter?" This was a question none could solve, though they speculated long upon it. Jotham provided a plentiful supper, to which all did full justice. They retired to rest early, for they were all worn down with fatigue.

The trapper went to share Jotham's bed, while Fairfax was given Doris's little chamber for a sleeping-room. He sat and gazed around the neat little apartment with reverence.

Her trunk stood at one side. By the bed was a neat little dressing bureau, improvised from a rough packing-box, draped with pretty muslin. Above was suspended a glass, while various dainty toilet articles were scattered around, just as they had been left by the fair owner. The book she had last been reading lay face downward upon the bed. Fairfax picked it up. It was a volume of Shakespeare, and the page was open at the balcony scene in "Romeo and Juliet."

Somehow, tired as he was, the bright face of Doris was before him. He dreamed all night, but it was a troubled dream, and once he started from his slumbers into wakefulness, seeming to hear her voice calling in agonized tones on him for succor.

Gout has various names, according to the parts affected, as podagra, when in the feet; chiroagra, when in the hands, etc.; but whether the attack is first felt in the feet or the hands, rub with Salva-Oil at once. It annihilates pain. Price 25c.

Professional Card

I. N. PIERCE, Attorney at Law, Office—303½ Main Street.

C. O. LINCOLN, DENTIST Office, 194 1/2 S. Sixth, opposite P. O. Extracting and artificial teeth specialties. Work warranted.

DR. W. C. EICHELBERGER, Oculist and Artist, Room 13, Savings Bank Building. Terre Haute, Ind. Office hours: 9-12 a. m. 2-5 p. m. Sundays-9 to 11 a. m.

J. RICHARDSON, R. V. VAN VALZAH RICHARDSON & VAN VALZAH DENTISTS. OFFICE—Southwest corner Fifth and Main streets, over National State Bank (entrance on Fifth street. Communication by Telephone.

E. E. GLOVER, M. D., Practitioner of Diseases of THE RECTUM. No. 115 south 6th st., Savings Bank Building. Office hours 9 to 12 a. m.; 2 to 5 and 7 to 8 p. m., Sundays-9 to 11 a. m.

GLENHAM HOTEL, FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK. Bet. 21st and 22d sts., near Madison Square. EUROPEAN PLAN. N. B. BARRY, Proprietor. Also, HOWLAND HOTEL, LONG BRANCH, N. J.

DR. CALLENDAR'S CELEBRATED LIVER BITTERS. Why call Callendar's Liver Bitters the Left Liver Bitters? Because the liver is the largest and most important organ of the human system, and its health is essential to the health of the whole body. It is the source of life, and its failure leads to death. Callendar's Liver Bitters is a powerful and reliable remedy for all liver complaints, including jaundice, biliousness, indigestion, and constipation. It is a blood-purifier and a general tonic, and it is the only liver bitters that is guaranteed to cure. Price 50 cents per bottle. Sold by all druggists.

A SKEPTIC SAID. "I was a skeptic until I tried Callendar's Liver Bitters. I was suffering from a severe case of liver complaint, and I had tried every other remedy without success. I was skeptical, but I decided to try Callendar's Liver Bitters. To my surprise, I found that it was the only remedy that did me any good. I am now a convert, and I can heartily recommend it to all who are suffering from liver complaint. Price 50 cents per bottle. Sold by all druggists."

THE GREAT NERVE CONQUEROR. This medicine is a powerful and reliable remedy for all nervous disorders, including neuralgia, sciatica, and rheumatism. It is a blood-purifier and a general tonic, and it is the only nerve conqueror that is guaranteed to cure. Price 50 cents per bottle. Sold by all druggists.

NEVER FAILS. Diseases of the blood own it a conqueror. Endorsed in writing by over fifty thousand leading citizens, clergymen and physicians in U. S. and Europe. For sale by all leading druggists. Price 50 cents per bottle.

DR. S. HALEY, Binghampton, N. Y.