Lights And Shadows Of The South - Myths And Legends Of Our Own Land, Volume 5.

Charles M. Skinner

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MYTHS AND LEGENDS
OF
OUR OWN LAND

By
Charles M. Skinner

Vol. 5.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF THE SOUTH

CONTENTS:

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF THE SOUTH

THE SWIM AT INDIAN HEAD

At Indian Head, Maryland, are the government proving-grounds, where the racket of great guns and splintering of targets are a deterrent to the miscellaneous visitations of picnics. Trouble has been frequently associated with this neighborhood, as it is now suggested in the noisy symbolry of war. In prehistoric days it was the site of an aboriginal town, whose denizens were like other Indians in their love for fight and their willingness to shed blood. Great was the joy of all these citizens when a scouting party came in, one day, bringing with them the daughter of one of their toughest old hunters and a young buck, from another faction, who had come a-courting; her in the neighboring shades.

Capture meant death, usually, and he knew it, but he held himself proudly and refused to ask for mercy. It was resolved that he should die. The father's scorn for his daughter, that she should thus consort with an enemy, was so great that he was on the point of offering her as a joint sacrifice with her lover, when she fell on her knees before him and began a fervent appeal, not for herself, but for the prisoner. She would do anything to prove her strength, her duty, her obedience, if they would set him free. He had done injury to none. What justice lay in putting him to the torture?

Half in earnest, half in humor, the chief answered, "Suppose we were to set him on the farther shore of the Potomac, do you love him well enough to swim to him?"

"I do."

"The river is wide and deep."

"I would drown in it rather than that harm should come to him."

The old chief ordered the captive, still bound, to be taken to a point on the Virginia shore, full two miles away, in one of their canoes, and when the boat was on the water he gave the word to the girl, who instantly plunged in and followed it. The chief and the father embarked in another birch--ostensibly to see that the task was honestly fulfilled; really, perhaps, to see that the damsel did not drown. It was a long course, but the maid was not as many of our city misses are, and she reached the bank, tired, but happy, for she had saved her lover and gained him for a husband.

THE MOANING SISTERS

Above Georgetown, on the Potomac River, are three rocks, known as the Three Sisters, not merely because of their resemblance to each other--for they are parts of a submerged reef--but because of a tradition that, more than a hundred years ago, a boat in which three sisters had gone out for a row was swung against one of these rocks. The day was gusty and the boat was upset. All three of the girls were drowned. Either the sisters remain about this perilous spot or the rocks have prescience; at least, those who live near them on the shore hold one view or the other, for they declare that before every death on the river the sisters moan, the sound being heard above the lapping of the waves. It is different from any other sound in nature. Besides, it is an unquestioned fact that more accidents happen here than at any other point on the river.

Many are the upsets that have occurred and many are the swimmers who have gone down, the dark forms of the sisters being the last shapes that their water-blurred eyes have seen. It is only before a human life is to be yielded that this low wailing comes from the rocks, and when, on a night in May, 1889, the sound floated shoreward, just as the clock in Georgetown struck twelve, good people who were awake sighed and uttered a prayer for the one whose doom was so near at hand. Twelve hours later, at noon, a shell came speeding down the Potomac, with a young athlete jauntily pulling at the oars. As he neared the Three Sisters his boat appeared to be caught in an eddy; it swerved suddenly, as if struck; then it upset and the rower sank to his death.

A RIDE FOR A BRIDE

When the story of bloodshed at Bunker Hill reached Bohemia Hall, in Cecil County, Maryland, Albert De Courcy left his brother Ernest to support the dignity of the house and make patriotic speeches, while he went to the front, conscious that Helen Carmichael, his affianced wife, was watching, in pride and sadness, the departure of his company. Letters came and went, as they always do, until rumor came of a sore defeat to the colonials at Long Island; then the letters ceased.

It was a year later when a ragged soldier, who had stopped at the hall for supper, told of Albert's heroism in covering the retreat of Washington. The gallant young officer had been shot, he said, as he

attempted to swim the morasses of Gowanus. But this soldier was in error. Albert had been vexatiously bogged on the edge of the creek. While floundering in the mud a half dozen sturdy red-coats had lugged him out and he was packed off to the prison-ships anchored in the Wallabout. In these dread hulks, amid darkness and miasma, living on scant, unwholesome food, compelled to see his comrades die by dozens every day and their bodies flung ashore where the tide lapped away the sand thrown over them, De Courcy wished that death instead of capture had been his lot, for next to his love he prized his liberty.

One day he was told off, with a handful of others, for transfer to a stockade on the Delaware, and how his heart beat when he learned that the new prison was within twenty miles of home! His flow of spirits returned, and his new jailers liked him for his frankness and laughed at his honest expletives against the king. He had the liberty of the enclosure, and was not long in finding where the wall was low, the ditch narrow, and the abatis decayed--knowledge that came useful to him sooner than he expected, for one day a captured horse was led in that made straight for him with a whinny and rubbed his nose against his breast.

"Why!" he cried,--it's Cecil! My horse, gentlemen--or, was. Not a better hunter in Maryland!"

"Yes," answered one of the officers. We've just taken him from your brother. He's been stirring trouble with his speeches and has got to be quieted. But we'll have him to-day, for he's to be married, and a scouting party is on the road to nab him at the altar."

"Married! My brother! What! Ernest, the lawyer, the orator? Ho, ho! Ah, but it's rather hard to break off a match in that style!"

"Hard for him, maybe; but they say the lady feels no great love for him. He made it seem like a duty to her, after her lover died."

"How's that? Her own--what's her name?"

"Helen--Helen Carmichael, or something like that."

Field and sky swam before De Courcy's eyes for a moment; then he resumed, in a calm voice, and with a pale, set face, "Well, you're making an unhappy wedding-day for him. If he had Cecil here he would outride you all. Ah, when I was in practice I could ride this horse and snatch a pebble from the ground without losing pace!"

"Could you do it now?"

"I'm afraid long lodging in your prison-ships has stiffened my joints, but I'd venture at a handkerchief."

"Then try," said the commandant.

De Courcy mounted into the saddle heavily, crossed the grounds at a canter, and dropped a handkerchief on the grass. Then, taking a few turns for practice, he started at a gallop and swept around like the wind. His seat was so firm, his air so noble, his mastery of the steed so complete, that a cheer of admiration went up. He seemed to fall headlong from the saddle, but was up again in a moment, waving the handkerchief gayly in farewell--for he kept straight on toward the weak place in the wall. A couple of musket-balls hummed by his ears: it was neck or nothing now! A

tremendous leap! Then a ringing cry told the astonished soldiers that he had reached the road in safety. Through wood and thicket and field he dashed as if the fiend were after him, and never once did he cease to urge his steed till he reached the turnpike, and saw ahead the scouting party on its way to arrest his brother.

Turning into a path that led to the rear of the little church they were so dangerously near, he plied hands and heels afresh, and in a few moments a wedding party was startled by the apparition of a black horse, all in a foam, ridden by a gaunt man, in torn garments, that burst in at the open chancel-door. The bridegroom cowered, for he knew his brother. The bride gazed in amazement. "'Tis the dead come to life!" cried one. De Courcy had little time for words. He rode forward to the altar, swung Helen up behind him, and exclaimed, "Save yourselves! The British are coming! To horse, every one, and make for the manor!" There were shrieks and fainting--and perhaps a little cursing, even if it was in church,--and when the squadron rode up most of the company were in full flight. Ernest was taken, and next morning held his brother's place on the prison-list, while, as arrangements had been made for a wedding, there was one, and a happy one, but Albert was the bridegroom.

SPOOKS OF THE HIAWASSEE

The hills about the head of the Hiawassee are filled with "harnts," among them many animal ghosts, that ravage about the country from sheer viciousness. The people of the region, illiterate and superstitious, have unquestioning faith in them. They tell you about the headless bull and black dog of the valley of the Chatata, the white stag of the Sequahatchie, and the bleeding horse of the Great Smoky Mountains--the last three being portents of illness, death, or misfortune to those who see them.

Other ghosts are those of men. Near the upper Hiawassee is a cave where a pile of human skulls was found by a man who had put up his cabin near the entrance. For some reason, which he says he never understood, this farmer gathered up the old, bleached bones and dumped them into his shed. Quite possibly he did not dare to confess that he wanted them for fertilizers or to burn them for his poultry.

Night fell dark and still, with a waning moon rising over the mountains--as calm a night as ever one slept through. Along toward the middle of it a sound like the coming of a cyclone brought the farmer out of his bed. He ran to the window to see if the house were to be uprooted, but the forest was still, with a strange, oppressive stillness--not a twig moving, not a cloud veiling the stars, not an insect chirping. Filled with a vague fear, he tried to waken his wife, but she was like one in a state of catalepsy.

Again the sound was heard, and now he saw, without, a shadowy band circling about his house like leaves whirled on the wind. It seemed to be made of human shapes, with tossing arms--this circling band--and the sound was that of many voices, each faint and hollow, by itself, but loud in aggregate. He who was watching realized then that the wraiths of the dead whose skulls he had purloined from their place of sepulture were out in lament and protest. He went on his knees at once and prayed with vigor until morning. As soon as it was light enough to see his way he replaced

the skulls, and was not troubled by the "haunts" again. All the gold in America, said he, would not tempt him to remove any more bones from the cave-tombs of the unknown dead.

LAKE OF THE DISMAL SWAMP

Drummond's Pond, or the Lake of the Dismal Swamp, is a dark and lonely tarn that lies in the centre of this noted Virginia morass. It is, in a century-old tradition, the Styx of two unhappy ghosts that await the end of time to pass its confines and enjoy the sunshine of serener worlds. A young woman of a family that had settled near this marsh died of a fever caused by its malarial exhalations, and was buried near the swamp. The young man to whom she was betrothed felt her loss so keenly that for days he neither ate nor slept, and at last broke down in mind and body. He recovered a measure of physical health, after a time, but his reason was hopelessly lost.

It was his hallucination that the girl was not dead, but had been exiled to the lonely reaches of this watery wilderness. He was heard to mutter, "I'll find her, and when Death comes I'll hide her in the hollow of a cypress until he passes on." Evading restraint, he plunged into the fen, and for some days he wandered there, eating berries, sleeping on tussocks of grass, with water-snakes crawling over him and poisonous plants shedding their baneful dew on his flesh. He came to the lake at last. A will-o'the-wisp played along the surface. "'Tis she!" he cried. "I see her, standing in the light." Hastily fashioning a raft of cypress boughs he floated it and pushed toward the centre of the pond, but the eagerness of his efforts and the rising of a wind dismembered the frail platform, and he fell into the black water to rise no more. But often, in the night, is seen the wraith of a canoe, with a fire-fly lamp burning on its prow, restlessly urged to and fro by two figures that seem to be vainly searching for an exit from the place, and that are believed to be those of the maiden and her lover.

THE BARGE OF DEFEAT

Rappannock River, in Virginia, used to be vexed with shadowy craft that some of the populace affirmed to be no boats, but spirits in disguise. One of these apparitions was held in fear by the Democracy of Essex County, as it was believed to be a forerunner of Republican victory. The first recorded appearance of the vessel was shortly after the Civil War, on the night of a Democratic mass-meeting at Tappahannock. There were music, refreshments, and jollity, and it was in the middle of a rousing speech that a man in the crowd cried, "Look, fellows! What is that queer concern going down the river?"

The people moved to the shore, and by the light of their torches a hulk was seen drifting with the stream--a hulk of fantastic form unlike anything that sails there in the daytime. As it came opposite the throng, the torchlight showed gigantic negroes who danced on deck, showing horrible faces to the multitude. Not a sound came from the barge, the halloos of the spectators bringing no response, and some boatmen ventured into the stream, only to pull back in a hurry, for the craft had become

so strangely enveloped in shadow that it seemed to melt into air.

Next day the Democracy was defeated at the polls, chiefly by the negro vote. In 1880 it reappeared, and, as before, the Republicans gained the day. Just before the election of 1886, Mr. Croxton, Democratic nominee for Congress, was haranguing the people, when the cry of "The Black Barge!" arose. Argument and derision were alike ineffectual with the populace. The meeting broke up in silence and gloom, and Mr. Croxton was defeated by a majority of two thousand.

NATURAL BRIDGE

Though several natural bridges are known in this country, there is but one that is famous the world over, and that is the one which spans Clear Creek, Virginia--the remnant of a cave-roof, all the rest of the cavern having collapsed. It is two hundred and fifteen feet above the water, and is a solid mass of rock forty feet thick, one hundred feet wide, and ninety feet in span. Thomas Jefferson owned it; George Washington scaled its side and carved his name on the rock a foot higher than any one else. Here, too, came the youth who wanted to cut his name above Washington's, and who found, to his horror, when half-way up, that he must keep on, for he had left no resting-places for his feet at safe and reachable distances--who, therefore, climbed on and on, cutting handhold and foothold in the limestone until he reached the top, in a fainting state, his knife-blade worn to a stump. Here, too, in another tunnel of the cavern, flows Lost River, that all must return to, at some time, if they drink of it. Here, beneath the arch, is the dark stain, so like a flying eagle that the French officer who saw it during the Revolution augured from it a success for the united arms of the nations that used the eagle as their symbol.

The Mohegans knew this wonder of natural masonry, for to this point they were pursued by a hostile tribe, and on reaching the gulf found themselves on the edge of a precipice that was too steep at that point to descend. Behind them was the foe; before them, the chasm. At the suggestion of one of their medicine-men they joined in a prayer to the Great Spirit for deliverance, and when again they looked about them, there stood the bridge. Their women were hurried over; then, like so many Horatii, they formed across this dizzy highway and gave battle. Encouraged by the knowledge that they had a safe retreat in case of being overmastered, they fought with such heart that the enemy was defeated, and the grateful Mohegans named the place the Bridge of God.

THE SILENCE BROKEN

It was in 1734 that Joist Hite moved from Pennsylvania to Virginia, with his wife and boys, and helped to make a settlement on the Shenandoah twelve miles south of Woodstock. When picking berries at a distance from the village, one morning, the boys were surprised by Indians, who hurried with them into the wilderness before their friends could be apprised. Aaron, the elder, was strong, and big of frame, with coarse, black hair, and face tanned brown; but his brother was small and fair, with blue eyes and yellow locks, and it was doubtless because he was a type of the hated

white race that the Indians spent their blows and kicks on him and spared the sturdy one. Aaron was wild with rage at the injuries put upon his gentle brother, but he was bound and helpless, and all that he could do was to encourage him to bear a stout heart and not to fall behind.

But Peter was too delicate to keep up, and there came a day when he could go no farther. The red men consulted for a few moments, then all of them stood apart but one, who fitted an arrow to his bow. The child's eyes grew big with fear, and Aaron tore at his bonds, but uselessly, and shouted that he would take the victim's place, but no one understood his speech, and in another moment Peter lay dead on the earth, with an arrow in his heart. Aaron gave one cry of hate and despair, and he, too, sank unconscious. On coming to himself he found that he was in a hut of boughs, attended by an old Indian, who told him in rude English that he was recovering from an illness of several weeks' duration, and that it was the purpose of his tribe to adopt him. When the lad tried to protest he found to his amazement that he could not utter a sound, and he learned from the Indian that the fever had taken away his tongue. In the dulness and weakness of his state he submitted to be clothed in Indian dress, smeared with a juice that browned his skin, and greeted by his brother's slayers as one of themselves. When he looked into a pool he found that he had, to all intents, become an Indian. In time he became partly reconciled to this change, for he did not know and could not ask where the white settlements lay; his appearance and his inability to speak would prevent his recognition by his friends, the red men were not unkind to him, and every boy likes a free and out-door life. They taught him to shoot with bow and arrow, but they kept him back if a white settlement was to be plundered.

Three years had elapsed, and Aaron, grown tall and strong, was a good hunter who stood in favor with the tribe. They had roamed back to the neighborhood of Woodstock, when, at a council, Aaron overheard a plot to fall on the village where his parents lived. He begged, by signs, to be allowed to go with them, and, believing that he could now be trusted, they offered no objection. Stoic as he had grown to be, he could not repress a tear as he saw his old home and thought of the peril that it stood in. If only he could give an alarm! The Indians retired into the forest to cook their food where the smoke could not be seen, while Aaron lingered at the edge of the wood and prayed for opportunity. He was not disappointed. Two girls came up through the perfumed dusk, driving cows from the pasture, and as they drew near, Aaron, pretending not to see them, crawled out of the bush with his weapons, and made a show of stealthily examining the town. The girls came almost upon him and screamed, while he dashed into the wood in affected surprise and regained the camp. The Indians had heard and seen nothing. The girls would surely give the alarm in town.

One by one the lights of the village went out, and when it seemed locked in sleep the red marauders crept toward the nearest house--that of Joist Hite. They arose together and rushed upon it, but at that moment a gun was fired, an Indian fell, and in a few seconds more the settlers, whom the girls had not failed to put on their guard, were hurrying from their hiding-places, firing into the astonished crowd of savages, who dashed for the woods again, leaving a dozen of their number on the ground. Aaron remained quietly standing near his father's house, and he was captured, as he hoped to be. When he saw how his parents had aged with time and grief he could not repress a tear, but to his grief was added terror when his father, after looking him steadily in the eye without recognition, began to load a pistol. "They killed my boys," said he, "and I am going

to kill him. Bind him to that tree."

In vain the mother pleaded for mercy; in vain the dumb boy's eyes appealed to his father's. He was not afraid to die, and would do so gladly to have saved the settlement; but to die by his father's band! He could not endure it. He was bound to a tree, with the light of a fire shining into his face.

The old man, with hard determination, raised the weapon and aimed it slowly at the boy's heart. A surge of feeling shook the frame of the captive--he threw his whole life into the effort--then the silence of three years was broken, and he cried, "Father!" A moment later his parents were sobbing joyfully, and he could speak to them once more.

SIREN OF THE FRENCH BROAD

Among the rocks east of Asheville, North Carolina, lives the Lorelei of the French Broad River. This stream--the Tselica of the Indians--contains in its upper reaches many pools where the rapid water whirls and deepens, and where the traveller likes to pause in the heats of afternoon and drink and bathe. Here, from the time when the Cherokees occupied the country, has lived the siren, and if one who is weary and downcast sits beside the stream or utters a wish to rest in it, he becomes conscious of a soft and exquisite music blending with the plash of the wave.

Looking down in surprise he sees--at first faintly, then with distinctness--the form of a beautiful woman, with hair streaming like moss and dark eyes looking into his, luring him with a power he cannot resist. His breath grows short, his gaze is fixed, mechanically he rises, steps to the brink, and lurches forward into the river. The arms that catch him are slimy and cold as serpents; the face that stares into his is a grinning skull. A loud, chattering laugh rings through the wilderness, and all is still again.

THE HUNTER OF CALAWASSEE

Through brisk November days young Kedar and his trusty slave, Lauto, hunted along the Calawassee, with hope to get a shot at a buck--a buck that wore a single horn and that eluded them with easy, baffling gait whenever they met it in the fens. Kedar was piqued at this. He drained a deep draught and buttoned his coat with an air of resolution. "Now, by my soul," quoth he, "I'll have that buck to-day or die myself!" Then he laughed at the old slave, who begged him to unsay the oath, for there was something unusual about that animal--as it ran it left no tracks, and it passed through the densest wood without halting at trees or undergrowth. "Bah!" retorted the huntsman. "Have up the dogs. If that buck is the fiend himself, I'll have him before the day is out!" The twain were quickly in their saddles, and they had not been long in the wood before the one-horned buck was seen ahead, trotting with easy pace, yet with marvellous swiftness.

Kedar, who was in advance, whipped up his horse and followed the deer into a cypress grove near the Chechesee. As the game halted at a pool he

fired. The report sounded dead in the dense wood, and the deer turned calmly, watched his pursuer until he was close at hand, then trotted away again. All day long he held the chase. The dogs were nowhere within sound, and he galloped through the forest, shouting and swearing like a very devil, beating and spurring the horse until the poor creature's head and flanks were reddened with blood. It was just at sunset that Kedar found himself again on the bank of the Calawassee, near the point he had left in the morning, and heard once more the baying of his hounds. At last his prey seemed exhausted, and, swimming the river, it ran into a thicket on the opposite side and stood still. "Now I have him!" cried the hunter. "Hillio, Lauto! He's mine!" The old negro heard the call and hastened forward. He heard his master's horse floundering in the swamp that edged the river--then came a plash, a curse, and as the slave arrived at the margin a few bubbles floated on the sluggish current. The deer stood in the thicket, staring with eyes that blazed through the falling darkness, and, with a wail of fear and sorrow, old Lauto fled the spot.

REVENGE OF THE ACCABEE

The settlement made by Lord Cardross, near Beaufort, South Carolina, was beset by Spaniards and Indians, who laid it in ashes and slew every person in it but one. She, a child of thirteen, had supposed the young chief of the Accabees to be her father, as he passed in the smoke, and had thrown herself into his arms. The savage raised his axe to strike, but, catching her blue eye raised to his, more in grief and wonder than alarm, the menacing hand fell to his side, and, tossing the girl lightly to a seat on his shoulder, he strode off into the forest. Mile after mile he bore her, and if she slept he held her to his breast as a father holds a babe. When she awoke it was in his lodge on the Ashley, and he was smiling in her face. The chief became her protector; but those who marked, with the flight of time, how his fierceness had softened, knew that she was more to him than a daughter. Years passed, the girl had grown to womanhood, and her captor declared himself her lover. She seemed not ill pleased at this, for she consented to be his wife. After the betrothal the chief joined a hunting party and was absent for a time. On his return the girl was gone. A trader who had been bartering merchandise for furs had seen her, had been inspired by passion, and, favored by suave manners and a white skin, he had won in a day a stronger affection than the Indian could claim after years of loving watchfulness.

When this discovery was made the chief, without a word, set off on the trail, and by broken twig, by bended grass and footprints at the brook-edge, he followed their course until he found them resting beneath a tree. The girl sprang from her new lover's arms with a cry of fear as the savage, with knife and tomahawk girt upon him, stepped into view, and she would have clasped his knees, but he motioned her away; then, ordering them to continue their march, he went behind them until they had reached a fertile spot on the Ashley, near the present site of Charleston, where he halted. "Though guilty, you shall not die," said he to the woman; then, to his rival, "You shall marry her, and a white priest shall join your hands. Here is your future home. I give you many acres of my land, but look that you care for her. As I have been merciful to you, do good to her. If you treat her ill, I shall not be far away."

The twain were married and went to live on the acres that had been so

generously ceded to them, and for a time all went well; but the true disposition of the husband, which was sullen and selfish, soon began to disclose itself; disagreements arose, then quarrels; at last the man struck his wife, and, seizing the deed of the Accabee land and a paper that he had forced her to sign without knowing its contents, he started for the settlements, intending to sell the property and sail for England. On the edge of the village his flight was stayed by a tall form that arose in his path-that of the Indian. "I gave you all," said the chief, "the woman who should have been my wife, and then my land. This is your thanks. You shall go no farther."

With a quick stroke of the axe he cleft the skull of the shrinking wretch, and then, cutting off his scalp, the Indian ran to the cottage where sat the abandoned wife, weeping before the embers of her fire. He roused her by tossing on fresh fuel, but she shrank back in grief and shame when she saw who had come to her. "Do not fear," he said. "The man who struck you meant to sell your home to strangers"--and he laid the deed of sale before her, "but he will never play you false or lay hands on you again. Look!" He tossed the dripping scalp upon the paper. "Now I leave you forever. I cannot take you back among my people, who do not know deceit like yours, nor could I ever love you as I did at first." Turning, without other farewell he went out at the door. When this gift of Accabee land was sold--for the woman could no longer bear to live on it, but went to a northern city--a handsome house was built by the new owner, who added game preserves and pleasure grounds to the estate, but it was "haunted by a grief." Illness and ill luck followed the purchase, and the house fell into ruin.

TOCCOA FALLS

Early in the days of the white occupation of Georgia a cabin stood not far from the Falls of Toccoa (the Beautiful). Its only occupant was a feeble woman, who found it ill work to get food enough from the wild fruits and scanty clearing near the house, and she had nigh forgotten the taste of meat; for her two sons, who were her pride no less than her support, had been killed by savages. She often said that she would gladly die if she could harm the red men back, in return for her suffering--which was not Christian doctrine, but was natural. She was brooding at her fire, one winter evening, in wonder as to how one so weak and old as she could be revenged, when her door was flung open and a number of red men filled her cabin. She hardly changed countenance. She did not rise. "You may take my life," she said, "for it is useless, now that you have robbed it of all that made it worth living."

"Hush!" said the chief. "What does the warrior want with the scalps of women? We war on your men because they kill our game and steal our land."

"Is it possible that you come to our homes except to kill?"

"We are strangers and have lost our way. You must guide us to the foot of Toccoa and lead us to our friends."

"I lead you? Never!"

The chief raised his axe, but the woman did not flinch. There was a pause, in which the iron still hung menacing. Suddenly the dame looked up

and said, "If you promise to protect me, I will lead you."

The promise was given and the band set forth, the aged guide in advance, bending against the storm and clasping her poor rags about her. In the darkest part of the wood, where the roaring of wind and groaning of branches seemed the louder for the booming of waters, she cautioned the band to keep in single file, but to make haste, for the way was far and the gloom was thickening. Bending their heads against the wind they pressed forward, she in advance. Suddenly, yet stealthily, she sprang aside and crouched beneath a tree that grew at the very brink of the fall. The Indians came on, following blindly, and in an instant she descried the leader as he went whirling over the edge, and one after another the party followed. When the last had gone to his death she arose to her feet with a laugh of triumph. "Now I, too, can die!" she cried. So saying, she fell forward into the grayness of space.

TWO LIVES FOR ONE

The place of Macon, Georgia, in the early part of this century was marked only by an inn. One of its guests was a man who had stopped there on the way to Alabama, where he had bought land. The girl who was, to be his wife was to follow in a few days. In the morning when he paid his reckoning he produced a well-filled pocket-book, and he did not see the significant look that passed between two rough black-bearded fellows who had also spent the night there, and who, when he set forth, mounted their horses and offered to keep him company. As they rode through the deserted village of Chilicte one of the twain engaged the traveller in talk while the other, falling a little behind, dealt him a blow with a loaded whip that unseated him. Divining their purpose, and lacking weapons for his own defence, he begged for mercy, and asked to be allowed to return to his bride to be, but the robbers had already made themselves liable to penalty, and two knife-thrusts in the breast silenced his appeals. The money was secured, the body was dropped into a hollow where the wolves would be likely to find and mangle it, and the outlaws went on their way.

Men of their class do not keep money long, and when the proceeds of the robbery had been wasted at cards and in drink they separated. As in fulfilment of the axiom that a murderer is sure to revisit the scene of his crime, one of the men found himself at the Ocmulgee, a long time afterward, in sight of the new town--Macon. In response to his halloo a skiff shot forth from the opposite shore, and as it approached the bank he felt a stir in his hair and a touch of ice at his heart, for the ferryman was his victim of years ago. Neither spoke a word, but the criminal felt himself forced to enter the boat when the dead man waved his hand, and he was rowed across, his horse swimming beside the skiff. As the jar of the keel was felt on the gravel he leaped out, urged his horse to the road, sprang to the saddle, and rushed away in an agony of fear, that was heightened when a hollow voice called, "Stay!"

After a little he slackened pace, and a farmer, who was standing at the roadside, asked, in astonishment, "How did you get across? There is a freshet, and the ferryman was drowned last night." With a new thrill he spurred his horse forward, and made no other halt until he reached the tavern, where he fell in a faint on the steps, for the strain was no longer to be endured. A crowd gathered, but he did not see it when he awoke--he saw only one pair of eyes, that seemed to be looking into his

inmost soul--the eyes of the man he had slain. With a yell of terror and of insane fury he rushed upon the ghost and thrust a knife into its breast. The frenzy passed. It was no ghost that lay on the earth before him, staring up with sightless eyes. It was his fellow-murderer--his own brother. That night the assassin's body hung from a tree at the cross-roads.

A GHOSTLY AVENGER

In Cuthbert, Georgia, is a gravestone thus inscribed: "Sacred to the memory of Jim Brown." No date, no epitaph--for Jim Brown was hanged. And this is the story: At the close of the Civil War a company of Federal soldiers was stationed in Cuthbert, to enforce order pending the return of its people to peaceful occupations. Charles Murphy was a lieutenant in this company. His brother, an officer quartered in a neighboring town, was sent to Cuthbert one day to receive funds for the payment of some men, and left camp toward evening to return to his troop. That night Charles Murphy was awakened by a violent flapping of his tent. It sounded as though a gale was coming, but when he arose to make sure that the pegs and poles of his canvas house were secure, the noise ceased, and he was surprised to find that the air was clear and still. On returning to bed the flapping began again, and this time he dressed himself and went out to make a more careful examination. In the shadow of a tree a man stood beckoning. It was his brother, who, in a low, grave voice, told him that he was in trouble, and asked him to follow where he should lead him. The lieutenant walked swiftly through fields and woods for some miles with his relative--he had at once applied for and received a leave of absence for a few hours--and they descended together a slope to the edge of a swamp, where he stumbled against something. Looking down at the object on which he had tripped, he saw that it was his brother's corpse--not newly dead, but cold and rigid--the pockets rifled, the clothing soaked with mire and blood.

Dazed and terrified, he returned to camp, roused some of his men, and at daybreak secured the body. An effort to gain a clue to the murderer was at once set on foot. It was not long before evidence was secured that led to the arrest of Jim Brown, and there was a hint that his responsibility for the crime was revealed through the same supernatural agency that had apprised Lieutenant Murphy of his bereavement. Brown was an ignorant farm laborer, who had conceived that it was right to kill Yankees, and whose cupidity had been excited by learning that the officer had money concealed about him. He had offered, for a trifling sum, to take his victim by a short cut to his camp, but led him to the swamp instead, where he had shot him through the heart. On the culprit's arrival in Cuthbert he was lynched by the soldiers, but was cut down by their commander before life was extinct, and was formally and conclusively hanged in the next week, after trial and conviction.

THE WRAITH RINGER OF ATLANTA

A man was killed in Elliott Street, Atlanta, Georgia, by a cowardly stroke from a stiletto. The assassin escaped. Strange what a humming there was in the belfry of St. Michael's Church that night! Had the

murderer taken refuge there? Was it a knell for his lost soul, chasing him through the empty streets and beginning already an eternal punishment of terror? Perhaps the guilty one did not dare to leave Atlanta, for the chimes sang in minor chords on several nights after. The old policeman who kept ward in an antiquated guardhouse that stood opposite the church--it was afterward shaken down by earthquake--said that he saw a human form, which he would avouch to be that of the murdered man, though it was wrapped in a cloak, stalk to the doors, enter without opening them, glide up the winding stair, albeit he bent neither arm nor knee, pass the ropes by which the chimes were rung, and mount to the belfry. He could see the shrouded figure standing beneath the gloomy mouths of metal. It extended its bony hands to the tongues of the bells and swung them from side to side, but while they appeared to strike vigorously they seemed as if muffled, and sent out only a low, musical roar, as if they were rung by the wind. Was the murderer abroad on those nights? Did he, too, see that black shadow of his victim in the belfry sounding an alarm to the sleeping town and appealing to be avenged? It may be. At all events, the apparition boded ill to others, for, whenever the chimes were rung by spectral hands, mourners gathered at some bedside within hearing of them and lamented that the friend they had loved would never know them more on earth.

THE SWALLOWING EARTHQUAKE

The Indian village that in 1765 stood just below the site of Oxford, Alabama, was upset when the news was given out that two of the squaws had given simultaneous birth to a number of children that were spotted like leopards. Such an incident betokened the existence of some baneful spirit among them that had no doubt leagued itself with the women, who were at once tried on the charge of witchcraft, convicted, and sentenced to death at the stake, while a watch was to be set on the infants, so early orphaned, lest they, too, should show signs of malevolent possession. The whole tribe, seventeen hundred in number, assembled to see the execution, but hardly were the fires alight when a sound like thunder rolled beneath their feet, and with a hideous crack and gr