

A Girl of the Lumberlost.

[Continued from page 6, Col. 4.] "You'll do," she said. "Find the distinctive feature of each month, the one thing which marks it a time apart. I can't name all of them offhand, but I think of one more right now, February belongs to our winter birds. You should hear those musicians of this swamp in February, Philip, on a mellow night. Oh, but they are in earnest! For twenty-one years I've listened by night to the great owls, all the smaller sizes, the foxes, coons and every resident left in these woods, and by day to the hawks, yellowhammers, sapsuckers, titmice, crows and all our winter birds. It's about the best music we have. I just wonder if you couldn't copy that alone and make a strong, original piece out of it for your violin. Elnora?"

There was one tense breath, then—"I could try," said Elnora simply. Ammon rushed to the rescue. "We must go to work," he said, and began examining a walnut branch for Luna moth eggs. Elnora joined him while Mrs. Comstock drew her embroidery from her pocket and sat on a log. She said she was tired; they could come for her when they were ready to go. She could hear their voices all around her until she called them at supper time. When they came to her she stood waiting on the trail, the sewing in one hand, the violin in the other. Elnora became very white, but took the trail without a word. Ammon, unable to see a woman carry a heavier load than he, reached for the instrument. Mrs. Comstock shook her head. She carried the violin home, took it into her room and closed the door. Elnora turned to Ammon.

"If she destroys that I will die!" cried the girl. "She won't!" said Ammon. "You misunderstand her. She wouldn't have said what she did about the owls if she had meant to. She is your mother. No one loves you as she does. Trust her! Myself—I think she's simply great!"

Mrs. Comstock returned with serene face, and all of them helped with the supper. When it was over Ammon and Elnora sorted and classified the afternoon's specimens and made a trip to the woods to paint and light several trees for moths. When they came back Mrs. Comstock sat in the arbor, and they joined her. She went into the cabin, but she returned almost instantly, laying the violin and bow across Elnora's lap. "I wish you would give us a little music," she said. The violin played on until Elnora was so tired she scarcely could lift the bow. Then Ammon went home. The women walked to the gate with him and stood watching him from sight.

"That's what I call one decent young man!" said Mrs. Comstock. "To see him fit in with us, you'd think he'd been raised in a cabin, but it's likely he's always had the very cream of the pot."

"Yes, I think so," laughed Elnora, "but it hasn't hurt him. I've never seen anything I could criticize. He's teaching me so much unconsciously. You know he graduated from Harvard and has several degrees in law. He's coming in the morning."

Next morning Ammon came early, and he and Elnora went at once to the fields and woods. Mrs. Comstock had come to believe so implicitly in him that she now stayed at home to complete the work before she joined them, and when she did she often sat sewing, leaving them wandering hours at a time. It was noon before she finished, and then she packed a basket of lunch. She found Elnora and Philip near the violet patch, which was still in its prime. They lunched together. Then Mrs. Comstock carried the basket back to the cabin, and Ammon and Elnora sat on a log, resting for a few minutes.

"Do you remember your promise about those violets?" asked Ammon. "Tomorrow is Edith's birthday, and if I'd put them special delivery on the morning train she'd get them in the late afternoon. They ought to keep well that long. She leaves for the north next day."

"Of course you can have them," said Elnora. "We will quit long enough before supper to gather a great bunch. They can be packed so they will carry all right. They should be perfectly fresh, especially if we gather them this evening and let them drink all night."

Then they went back to hunt Catalpa. It was a long and a happy search. Ammon came to Elnora at dusk daintily holding one by the body, its dark wings showing and its long, slender legs trying to clasp his fingers and creep from his hold.

Elnora studied the black wings intently. "I surely believe that's Sappho," she marveled. "The Bird Woman will be overjoyed."

"We must get the cyanide jar quickly," said Ammon. "I wouldn't lose her for \$100. Such a chase as she led me!" Elnora got the jar and began gathering up paraphernalia.

"When you make a find like that," she said, "it's the right time to quit and feel glorious all the rest of that day. I tell you I'm proud. We will go now. We have barely time to carry out our plans before supper. Won't mother be pleased to see that we have a rare one?"

"I'd like to see anyone more pleased than I am!" said Philip Ammon. "I feel as if I'd earned my supper to-night. Let's go."

He took the greater part of the load and stepped aside for Elnora to pre-

cede him. She went down the path, broke up the grazing cattle, toward the cabin and nearest the violet patch she stopped, laid down her net, and the things she carried. Ammon passed her and hurried forward.

"Aren't you going to"—began Elnora.

"I'm going to get this moth home in a hurry," he said. "This cyanide has lost its strength, and it's not working well. We need some fresh in the jar." He had forgotten the violets. Elnora stood looking after him, a curious expression on her face. One second so—then she picked up the net and followed. At the blue bordered pool she paused and half turned back, then she closed her lips firmly and went on. It was 9 o'clock when Ammon said goodby and started to town. His gay whistle floated to them from the farthest corner of the Lumberlost. Elnora complained of being tired, so she went to her room and to bed. But sleep would not come. Thought was racing in her brain, and the longer she lay the wider awake she grew. At last she softly slipped from bed, lighted her lamp and began opening boxes. Then she went to work. Two hours later a beautiful birch bark basket, strongly and artistically made, stood on her table. She set a tiny alarm clock at 3, returned to bed and fell asleep instantly.

She was on the floor with the first tinkle of the alarm, and hastily dressing, she picked up the basket and a box to fit it, crept down the stairs and out to the violet patch. When the basket was filled to overflowing, she set it in the stout pasteboard box, packed it solid with mosses, tied it firmly and slipped under the cord a note.

Then she took a short cut across the woods and walked swiftly to Onabasha. It was after 6 o'clock, but all of the city she wished to avoid were asleep. She had no trouble in finding a small boy out, and she stood at a distance waiting while he rang Dr. Ammon's bell and delivered the package for Philip to a maid, with the note which was to be given him at once.

On the way home through the woods passing some baited trees she collected the captive moths. She entered the kitchen with them so naturally that Mrs. Comstock made no comment. After breakfast Elnora went to her room, cleared away all trace of the night's work and was out in the arbor mounting moths when Ammon came down the road. "I am tired sitting," she said to her mother. "I think I will walk a few rods and meet him."

"Who's a tramp?" called Ammon from afar. "Well, not you!" retorted Elnora. "Confess that you forgot!" "Completely," said Ammon. "But luckily it would not have been fatal. I wrote Polly last week to send Edith something appropriate and handsome today, with my card."

CHAPTER XXI.

Wherein Elnora Makes a Confession.

THESE days were the beginning of the weeks that followed.

After June the moth hunts grew less frequent—the fields and woods were scoured for material for Elnora's grade work. Mrs. Comstock was a great help. Always her practical thought and sterling common sense were useful. When they were afield until exhausted they came back to the cabin for food, to prepare specimens and classify them and to talk over the day.

One warm August afternoon a blue-coated messenger entered the gate. "I have a message for Philip Ammon."

Mrs. Comstock stepped to the back door and clanged the dinner bell sharply, paused a second and rang again. In a short time Ammon and Elnora came.

"Are you ill, mother?" cried Elnora. Mrs. Comstock indicated the boy. "There is an important message for Philip," she said.

Ammon muttered an excuse and tore open the telegram. His color faded slightly. "I have to take the first train," he said. "My father is ill and I am needed."

He said goodby to Mrs. Comstock, repeatedly thanked her for all her kindness and turned to Elnora.

"Will you walk to the edge of the Lumberlost with me?" he asked. Elnora assented. Mrs. Comstock followed to the gate, urged him to come again soon and repeated her goodby. Then she went back to the arbor to await Elnora's return. As she watched down the road she smiled softly.

"I had an idea he would speak to me first," she thought, "but this may change things some. He hasn't time. Elnora will come back a happy girl, and she has good reason. He is a model young man. Her lot will be mighty different from mine."

On the road Elnora spoke first. "I do hope it is nothing serious," she said. "Is he usually strong?"

"Quite strong," said Philip. "I am not alarmed, but I am very much ashamed. I have allowed him to overtax himself until he is down, and mother and Polly are north at our cottage. He's never been sick before, and it's probable I am to blame that he is now."

"You have had a fine time?" asked Elnora.

They had reached the fence. Ammon vaulted over to take a short cut across the fields. He turned and looked at her.

"The best, the sweetest, the most wholesome time any man ever had in this world," he said. "Elnora, if I talked hours I couldn't make you understand what a girl I think you are. I never in all my life hated anything as I hate leaving you. It seems to me that I have not the strength to do it."

"If you have got anything worth while from me," said Elnora, "that

should be it—just to have strength to go to your duty and to go quickly! Goodby! You must hurry!" Ammon gazed at her. He tried to drop her hand and only clutched it closer. Suddenly he drew her toward him. "Elnora," he whispered, "will you kiss me goodby?"

Elnora drew back and stared at him with wide eyes. "I'd strike you sooner," she said. "Have I ever said or



"Elnora," he whispered, "will you kiss me goodby?"

done anything in your presence that made you feel free to ask that, Philip Ammon?"

"No!" panted Ammon. "No! I think so much of you I just wanted to touch your lips once before I left you. You know, Elnora!"

"Don't distress yourself," said Elnora calmly. "I am broad enough to judge you sanely. I know what you mean. It would be no harm to you. It would not matter to me, but here we will think of some one else. Edith Carr would not want your lips tomorrow if she knew they had touched mine today. I was wise to say 'Go quickly!'"

Ammon still clung to her. "Will you write me?" he begged.

"No," said Elnora. "There is nothing to say save goodby. We can do that now."

Ammon held on. "Promise that you will write me only one letter," he urged. "I want just one message from you to lock in my desk and keep always. Promise you will write once. Elnora."

Elnora looked straight into his eyes and smiled serenely. "If the talking trees tell me this winter the secret of your own woods, I will write you what it is, Philip. In all the time I have known you I never have liked you so little. Goodby."

Elnora crossed the road, climbed the fence and sought the shelter of their own woods. She took a diagonal course and followed it until she came to the path leading past the violet patch. She went down this hurriedly. Her hands were clinched at her sides, her eyes dry and bright, her cheeks red flushed and her breath coming fast. When she reached the patch she turned into it and stood looking around her.

The mosses were dry, the flowers gone, weeds a foot high covered it. She turned away and went on down the path until she was almost in sight of the cabin.

Mrs. Comstock could not understand why the girl did not hurry to her with what she would have to tell. She went out and wandered around the garden. Then she stepped into the path and started back along the way leading to the woods, past the pool now framed in a thick setting of yellow lilies. Then she saw and stopped, gasping for breath. Her hands flew up, and her lined face grew ghastly. She stared at the sky and then at the prostrate girl figure. Over and over she tried to speak, but only a word came.

Elnora uttered one wild little cry and fled into her mother's arms. "Oh, mother!" she sobbed. "Will you ever forgive me?"

Mrs. Comstock's arms swept together in a tight grip around Elnora.

"There isn't a thing on God's footstool from a to Izzard I won't forgive you, my precious girl!" she said. "Tell mother what it is."

Elnora lifted her wet face. "He told me," she panted, "just as soon as he decently could—that second day he told me. Almost all his life he's been engaged to a girl at home. He never cared anything about me. He was just interested in the moths and growing strong."

"Elnora—the mother's head bent until the white hair mingled with the brown—"Elnora, why didn't you tell me at first?"

Elnora caught her breath in a sharp snatch. "I know I should!" she sobbed. "I will bear any punishment for not, but I didn't feel as if I possibly could. I was afraid."

"Afraid of what?" the shaking hand was on the hair again.

"Afraid you wouldn't let him come!" panted Elnora. "And, oh, mother, I wanted him so!"

For the next week Mrs. Comstock and Elnora worked so hard there was no time to talk, and they were compelled to sleep from physical exhaustion. Elnora took all the dragon flies and butterflies she could, and when she went over the list for her collection,

she found, to her amazement, that with Ammon's help she once more had completely saved a pair of yellow Emperors. From every source at her command she tried to complete the series with these moths and could not find any for sale.

Then came a notification that Elnora would be compelled to attend a week's session of the teachers' institute held at the county seat twenty miles north of Onabasha the following week. They went to Onabasha together and purchased a simple and appropriate fall suit and hat, goods for a dainty little colored frock and a dress skirt and several fancy waists. Margaret Sinton came down and the sewing began. When everything was finished and packed Elnora kissed her mother goodby at the depot and the train pulled out. Mrs. Comstock went to the bank and inquired for the cashier.

"I want to know just how I am fixed here," she said. The cashier laughed. "Well, you haven't been in a hurry," he replied. "We have been ready for you any time these twenty years, but you didn't seem to pay much attention. Your account is rather flourishing."

Mrs. Comstock sank into a chair and waited while the cashier read a jumble of figures to her. It meant that her deposits had exceeded her expenses from \$100 to \$300 a year, according to the cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry, butter and eggs she had sold. The aggregate of these sums had been compounding interest throughout the years. Mrs. Comstock stared at the total with dazed and unbelieving eyes. Through her sick heart rushed the realization that if she merely had stood before that wicket and asked one question she would have known that all those bitter years of skimping for Elnora and herself had been unnecessary. She arose and went back to the depot.

"I want to send a message," she said. She picked up the pencil and with rash extravagance wrote: "Found money at bank didn't know about. If you want to go to college come on first train and get ready." She hesitated a second, and then she said to herself grimly, "Yes, I'll pay for that too," and recklessly added, "With love, Mother." Then she sat waiting for the answer. It came in less than an hour. "Going to teach this winter. With fondest love, Elnora."

Mrs. Comstock held the message a long time. When she arose she was ravenously hungry, but the pain in her heart was a little easier. She went to a restaurant and got some food, then to a dressmaker. At night she was so tired she scarcely could walk home, but she built a fire and cooked and ate a hearty meal.

Later she went out by the west fence and gathered an armful of tansy, which she boiled to a thick green tea. Then she stirred in oatmeal until it was a stiff paste. She spread a sheet over her bed and began tearing strips of old muslin. She bandaged each hand

and arm with the mixture and plastered the soggy, evil smelling stuff in a thick poultice over her face and neck. She was so tired she had to sleep, and when she awoke she was half skinned. She bathed her face and hands, did the work and went back to town, coming home at night to go through the same process.

By the third morning she was a raw, even red; the fourth she had faded to a brilliant pink under the soothing influence of a cream recommended. That day came a letter from Elnora saying that she could not come



"Mother!" she cried. "You my mother! I don't believe it!"

home until after school Monday night. That suited Mrs. Comstock, and she at once answered the letter saying so.

The next day Mrs. Comstock was a pale pink and the following a delicate porcelain white. That day she went to a hairdresser and had the great rope of snowy hair which covered her scalp washed and dressed.

Then she went home, rested and worked by turns until Monday. When school closed on that evening and Elnora, so tired she almost trembled, came down the long walk after a late session of teachers' meeting a messenger boy stopped her.

"There's a lady wants to see you most important. I am to take you to the place," he said.

Elnora groaned. She could not imagine who wanted her, but there was nothing to do but go and find out.

[Continued next week.]

—Subscribe for the WATCHMAN.

and purifies the blood, thus removing the common cause of wakefulness and disturbing dreams. It contains no alcohol, neither opium, cocaine nor other narcotic. It cures ninety-eight per cent. of all those who give it a fair and faithful trial.

Buggies.

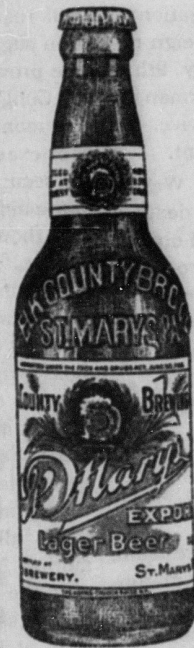
New Buggies and Carriages

Forrest L. Bullock, the Water street dealer, has just received a carload of fine New Rubber and Steel Tire Buggies and Carriages. They are all the product of the Ligonier Carriage Co., and in workmanship, quality and finish can't be surpassed at the price. If you are thinking of buying a new vehicle this spring you would do well to look this shipment over because he guarantees them and will sell them all at a figure that marks them as bargains.

Forrest L. Bullock.

St. Mary's Beer.

The sunshine of lager beer satisfaction radiates from every bottle of ELK COUNTY BREWING COMPANY'S EXPORT. Every glass is a sparkling draught of exquisite taste and is as pure as any brewer's skill can possibly create. Our ment is equipped with the very latest mechanical and sanitary devices known to the art of brewing, and the art of recently installed machinery filling the bottles, and the of pasteurizing has been automatically guaranteed the our product. We at the brewery bottles, as exposure to light injures flavor.



Elk County Brewing Company ST. MARYS, PENNSYLVANIA

Clothing.

Are You Going to Travel

The Fauble showing of Trunks, Bags and Suit Cases

WILL PLEASE YOU

Complete Assortment Now Here.

The Largest Assortment of Trunks Ever Shown in Bellefonte.

ALL PRICED HONESTLY.

FAUBLE'S

—Subscribe for the WATCHMAN.