

The gully was, I suppose, some forty or fifty feet deep, and perhaps as many wide, with a small stream flowing down its middle. The sides of the ravine were overgrown with strong creeping vines, and by these I determined to descend to the bottom. Slinging my gun over my shoulder, I lowered myself over the edge and began to go down hand over hand. A shower of small stones, loosened by my weight fell clattering down the face of the cliff. And then—a woman's piercing scream!

“I was so startled that I came near losing my hold upon the vines and following the goose. Then, with a rapidity bordering almost upon recklessness, I scrambled to the bottom. The sight that met my gaze almost took my breath. There, face upturned, lay a pretty young girl, from a deep bruise on whose temple issued a thin stream of blood, which crept down over her pale cheek; I understood it all. One of the loose stones had struck her and she fainted. But a more perplexing question assailed me. How did this young girl, with all the traces of good birth, as I could see by her dress and features, come to be here? Very evidently the only way to know was to hear it from the unknown herself. Taking a folding cup from my pocket I ran to the stream and soon returned with it full of cold water.

“Then, with my handkerchief, I managed to bathe the wound and bind it up. I had barely accomplished this novel task when my fair companion showed signs of recovering consciousness. In a moment more the dark eyelashes raised and a pair of deep brown eyes looked startledly up at me.

“‘Where—where am I?’ she asked in a frightened voice. ‘And who are you?’

“But before I could answer she had begun again:

“‘Oh, yes, I remember, I was walking here when a stone fell from the cliff and struck me and I felt myself falling. I guess I must have fainted.’ And she raised her hand to her forehead. ‘Oh, you have bandaged it,’ she cried.

“Then I told her all I knew of the accident; how I had heard her scream and later on found her in a dead faint; and how I had bound up the wound and brought her to consciousness. I concluded by asking her pardon for the injury I had unintentionally inflicted. She forgave me entirely, accompanying it with the prettiest of little smiles, and then asked:

“‘How is it that you, evidently a city-bred person, are in such an out-of-the-way place as this?’