

boldly into the cave. To my surprise, Cecil followed me.

“‘You’re not going along, are you?’ I asked.

“‘Of course I am. I’m not afraid,’ she replied, smiling.

“And then on we went into the depths of the cave. We had gone some twenty rods, when suddenly I stepped on something which rebounded and splashed into the stream at my feet. Curious, I glanced down at the object, and beheld, to my horror, a grinning skull gazing at me from the water in which it lay.

“Yes, I must confess, I was scared. And who would not be if such a gruesome object was suddenly thrust before him. Cecil, too, saw it, and started back with dilated eyes. I quickly recovered myself, however, and said:

“‘Here is where I shall search. That skull must be near the treasure.’ For I believed it to be the skull of Wetumka, and would he not guard the treasure till his death?

“Down on my hands and knees I went, and opening my clasp-knife I thrust it again and again into the sandy floor of the cave. But each time it sank to the hilt without meeting any obstacle. A quarter of an hour of such prodding over the spot and all around it failed to reveal any treasure, and I was about to give up in despair when a sudden thought struck me and I gave a shout of joy.

“‘What is it?’ asked Cecil, who had been watching me, silently.

“‘How foolish I have been,’ I said. ‘Where do you suppose they would hide it for safety but in the bed of the stream itself? Who would think to look for it there?’

“And down again on my hands and knees I fell, prodding the sandy bed of the stream. At the third thrust my knife struck something and stuck fast, and it required no small effort to get it out. I could not repress a cry of triumph. Cecil came and bent over my shoulder, while with feverish energy I dug at the sand with my hands.

“As fast as I excavated, however, the stream washed the sand in. So I dug another trough and drained the stream off in a new direction. Then I fell to work again and in a few moments I had uncovered a rotten wooden casket some two feet long by nearly as many deep. Wild with excitement, I took the precious box in my arms and rushed to the open mouth of the cave, where I laid it upon the grass. The box, as I called it, seemed to have neither lid nor hinges. It was a piece of log carefully hollowed out at one end and closed with a wedge-shaped block.