Susie: A Character Sketch

By Philip Verrill Mighels

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

The sun went down, the daylight waned. Exhaustion told the man he dare no longer cease and go to his cabin. Having loaded the bucket he labored slowly up the vertical climb on the ladder.

The Indian glided nearer to the edge. He could hear every step on the rungs of the ladder. He could even detect the sound of the roughened hands grasping the wood. Leaning far over, he saw the candle flickering on the miner's hat. Noiselessly he drew a long knife from a sheath at his side and, raising it above his head, waited grimly.

Above, a voice was heard singing in a low tone. It was the miner, unconscious of the presence of the Indian, who was whose of the cause of his misfortune. He was singing a song of the old home. It was the song of a man who had left behind him all that was dear to him in the world. The Indian, with knife poised, listened. The song ceased. The miner was silent for a moment. Then he began to climb down the ladder. The Indian waited. The miner reached the bottom and stepped off. He turned and walked toward the cabin. The Indian followed. The miner entered the cabin. The Indian crept to the door and looked in. The miner was on his knees before a bunk. His head was bowed in his hands. His shoulders were shaking with emotion. The Indian could hear every word of the prayer that was being offered up by the miner. He could hear every sob that escaped the lips of the white man. He could see the tears that were streaming down the face of the miner. He could see the miner's body shaking with grief.

The Indian turned away. He crept silently down the path. He reached the creek. He waded across it. He climbed the opposite bank. He entered the fringe of the wandering creek, was cheerless, dreary and oppressive to the girl. She sat alone, while the chilling wind was wantonly ripping the leaves from the bran her her head dropped low in hopeless despair.

A shadow thrown by the setting sun, betrayed a presence. Dimmis shrank from the figure.

"Uch," said a tall, swarthy Wallowa buck.

She knew Lawyer Mallory was dead. Mallory was dead. Mallory was dead. She knew it. She knew it. She knew it