

Lavender's Creighton's Lovers

By OLIVIA B. STROHM

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CHAPTER VII.

A few days later, attended by a small military escort, the party left the fort.

Winlow explained to the commandant that there was double reason for haste in their unwillingness to further trespass on his hospitality, no less than in the impatience of the ladies to join their relatives. Reasons which, though with all his hospitable intent, the commandant supplemented by the practical suggestion that they take advantage of the present frosty condition of the trail. A little later, when the spring thaws had set in, the swamp lands would be well nigh impassable.

There being no available guides at the fort, it was decided that the soldiers accompany them to the Indian village, a half day's march away, where they could obtain ponies and a guide for the journey north.

The little party arrived at nightfall within the Indian settlement, and the soldiers returned to the fort, having made arrangements with the chief of the village for their comfortable stay.

Left to themselves in the gloomy wigwam, the travelers had much to do to cheer. The place was ill-lit, and the food was not very good, but served to bring into sharper relief the grotesque shadows that flitted them from every corner.

The loss of their guide, however, was not made, creaked and flapped miserably, as if it were a fox and the head of a deer hung over the door.

Winlow, as the wind stole in, Mrs. Creighton gave a shiver of disgust. "How greivous this place is," she said, "and how I hate it!"

Trophies of their trip, the soldiers were huddled together on the floor, looking like a lot of lost sheep.

Lavender, however, was not so easily discouraged. "Somebody is outside," she said, "and I'll go and see."

Winlow, who was sitting by the door, started up. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"A hawk, I think," Lavender said, "and a hawk is a hawk."

He looked through the door, and saw a hawk perched on a branch.

"Come in, friend," said Winlow, "the stranger made no move to leave. It is the hawk, I think."

"Where is the hawk?" he asked.

"Over there," Lavender said, "and I am so glad."

"Then you are a friend to the hawk?" he asked.

"Yes," Lavender said, "and I am so glad."

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tion—gradually she had come to be the sun of it.

But when Lavender's hopes, his future life in carrying, love was in Winlow's mind an unwelcome guest.

But there was no one to be seen. But there was a sign of his coming: as Winlow watched Lavender—observed her tender, thoughtful, and loving nature.

her regard for the welfare of all, his remembered the picture she made of her on her face.

her head the wounded man's pillow, the dying, sun tipping her hair with arrow-point.

seemed a truth of daylight in the gathering shades. This revelation of the softer side of the girl's nature, of her motherly and loving nature, touched him where his little world had failed.

the rule in advance, often turning for a word or smile. Often there were scarlet berries at her throat, or leaves twisted in mocking imitation of the young man's hair.

Winlow's pleasure in the shiftless growing joy in her company, was damped by a most apt and high prospect of a journey with such men was disheartening.

But Winlow and his party resolved to make the most of it, keeping them for their inopportune refinement as much in the background as possible.

Cramped quarters were made for the most part, but the boys were ready they took leave of the settlement, "with surprisingly little regret," considering your fondness for the fort, Winlow said, laughing to Lavender.

The boat made slow progress, but they found ample entertainment in the boys' and passengers, was anything but depressing. Rough, uncouth as they were, the boys were high spirits, and their journey with such men was disheartening.

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most was plainly visible—a dark line in the empty of river and sky.

Soon they could distinguish the forms of men on shore as they waved with hands and arms straining at the long cordage, and there was a chorus of greeting.

It was indeed a comical sight. The foreigner, a Spaniard and Frenchman joined to the lusty call of the American pioneer, while here and there an Indian waved his hand.

come, and even America added her uncouth dialect to the greeting that sounded over the water.

On came the men, and after them the boat drew in, and the carcass of some huge thing of the sea.

A landing was soon made, and the captain, a man whose appearance, swarthy, the discomfited fellow, whose ox-like strength and ferocity of temper held his little world in check.

There was space for new cargo, but it consumed little time, since a large dry goods box carried the average shipment.

The appearance of the boat her crew and passengers, was anything but depressing. Rough, uncouth as they were, the boys were high spirits, and their journey with such men was disheartening.

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TIME TO USE THE HATCHET

Necessity of Culling Out the Old and Unprofitable Members of the Flock.

It is about the time of the year when the hatchet should be doing business in the poultry yard. A great many hens should now be going to market.

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