

In his paws, whined uneasily during the conversation, and finally got up and, approaching the table, laid his head in the old man's lap.

"See that, now," exclaimed he, with a knowing wink.

"Every time Marthy or me has any thing to say about movin' out that wise ole coon jes' kicks up a big fuss.

"Don't you fret, ole Maje; when we goes, you goes," and an assuring pat on the head set Maje's attenuated tail to wagging furiously as he resumed his place by the fire with every indication of perfect trust and contentment.

"I'm a pretty good talker, myself," said the old lady, laughing, "but you jes' git Jeff started about the tricks of that doag an' he can beat me all holier."

"Talnt tricks ezzactly, Marthy, when a dum'd brute like him saves anybody's life. I can tell things about ole Maje that 'ud make any honess man love 'im, and sometime, when the gentlemen's got time, I'll say somethin' about it, maybe."

How we did enjoy the homely hospitality and "yarns" of these "children of the woods," for we rested here two days; Sister Martha insisting upon washing and mending our clothes, while we wrote up our journals, read, talked and wrote letters home.

She brought out a photograph of a handsome young woman one evening which she told us was her daughter.

"Mighty fine looking gal, you say? Well, I ruther think she is. Don't know whether the balsamy breezes that Dr. Wharton used to talk about had any thing to do with it, fer I was a likely enough lookin' gal myself at her age—but you know Jeff an' I have lived up here in these pine woods for more'n twenty years, and of course Donna was born here.

"It was when Donna was a wee, tiny mite of a baby that Dr. Wharton first came to our little cabin in the woods, late one summer afternoon, and axed me if I couldn't manage another boarder fer a few weeks. Said he'd been stickin' to business ruther too close and had been obleeged to git out fer a while or peg out altogether.

"Pore critter, I felt sorry for him. He looked that pale and used up I was actually afraid we'd have a funeral over him if he did stay, or find him dead son'ers in the woods if we sent him to find other housen (houses).

"Jeff hummed an' hawed a bit, sayin' I had ruther too much on my hands now, with the baby to look arter an' four of the mill han's to cook for, with only a ten-year-ol' boy for ginerall roustabout; but I give Jeff the wink to let him stay, and stay he did.

"Who toted ye up?" axed Jeff, as Bob helped him off with his overcoat (for the evenin's is cold up here even in June)—and I set him a cheer clost by the blazing pineknot fire in the big fireplace.

"He held his thin, white fingers over the blaze as he turned half round to answer: 'One of your mill hands, out there,' pointin' to'ard the sawmill, 'and it was a pretty rough trip for a feller with one foot in the grave, don't you think?' and he coughed dismally. 'I've nearly killed myself physicing others. I thought I'd try this kind o' medicine to see by actual experience how it 'ud work, so when I found another feller in the same fix I'd know how to prescribe for him; but the first dose was rather too strong,' with a whimsical laugh, which ended in a fit of coughing.

cheerily, though he looked a little "— "Oh, your jes' tired," Jeff answered, easy. 'One of Marthy's rousin' suppers and a comfortable shakedown by the fire, an' you'll be all right in the morning.'

"I hustled round to git him a nice, warm supper, but it was Donna's bedtime, and, Oh, my, how she did howl.

I felt plum ashamed of the little cyclone. Bob took a turn walkin' the floor with her an' singin' to, la, la, tum, tum, tum, but Jeff got sidgety thinkin' he could do better an' trotted the mite till the doctor couldn't stand it any longer.

"Here, give that youngster to me," in regular doctor-order-about style. 'I've done more o' that sort o' business, I reckon, than you have.' And Jeff, with a blush an' a laugh, handed her over accordin'ly.

"Is she hungry?" he sez to me

"No," I answered, 'only sleepy. I'll take her in jes' a minnet for I'm a'most afraid you're too tired to nuss babies.'

"No, I think it 'ud rest me," he answered, with a twinkle in his eye that made me laugh.

"Umph," ejaculated Bob; a'most any feller 'ud be glad to get away from that sort of a racket, an' he walked off in high dudgeon.

"You see, Bob was jealous; for he thought that he could manage that baby all right if we'd only give him time enough.

"Well, sir, I al'ays knowd that doctor understood his business when I seen him manage that baby. I'd already told him I'd take her in a minnet; but law sakes, I needn't a' troubled myself, for he jes' laid her up against his shoulder and cooed, an' stroked, an' patted, and in five minnets she was fast asleep.

"I've got a little boy at home about her age," a wistful look comin' into his eyes, as I took her outen his arms to lay her in her crib. 'Born on the first of May.'

"Well, I swan," sez I.

"By gum," sez Jeff, with a grin; 'our baby was born on the first of May, too, at ten minutes to six in the morning.'

"That's quite a coincidence," said the doctor, 'for our baby got here just ten minutes ahead of her. What do you call her?'

"Oh, just Baby. She aint got no name yet. We aint found nothing good enough for her. I wanted her called Marthy, but my wife objected to being called big Marthy, or ole Marth for the rest of her nateral life, so there it stan's. Couldn't you suggest somethin' kinder high-soundin' like?'

"I'm not much up to that sort of thing," said the doctor; 'about the first thing that would occur to me would be Aconite Versus Belladonna, or somethin' like that.'

"Umph," sez Jeff, scra.chin' his head. 'high soundin' 'nough, I'm sure, but ruther long for an every-day name, don't you think?'

"The doctor laughed, though I declare I couldn't see a thing to laugh at. Then an idea struck me, an' I said:

"What's your baby's name?'

"Don Maynard," says he, and was as sober agin as a judge.

"Jeff winked at me, same's to say: 'He hates to think of the little feller, for fear he'll never see him agin.'

"I think the Belladonna part of it is real pretty," sez I, 'and its somethin' like your little feller's name—sort o' twins, like, you know.'

"How would you like Donna May?" says the doctor; an' that just settled it, an' Donna May she'll be to the end of the chapter.

"Well, Dr. Wharton staid with us pretty nigh all that summer an' went hum a hull sight better and lived many a year arter that, though he said at first he'd little left to live for. An' one day he told me his story.

"He said his people had lived in Chicago an' that his father had given him an excellent education an' expected great things of him, but he had fallen in love with and married their servant girl, a beautiful English emigrant who had joined the Mormons in the ole country an' was on her way to Utah, when her money gave out an' she stopped there to earn more.

"There was a terrible scene when his father learned of what he called his son's disgrace an' the ole man disowned him.

"His wife's health began to fail an' he brought her down to Aiken to see what the climate would do for her, but in spite of all his care an' skill, she died when her baby came, a victim of a remorseful conscience, he said, for havin' gone back on her religion.

"After he went away from here he settled in Columbus, an' a few years later married a proud, young society belle of the city which suited his ole father better an' reinstalled him in his good graces.

"For a number o' years they spent their summers here and sech times as Don and Donna used to have!

"When Don got big enough to go to school he used to bring his books up here in the summer an' teach Donna all he knew, and she wa'n't slow in pickin' it up, either. Bob used to git pretty jealous, for he'd considered Donna his special property, but Bob was sullen and techy, an' Donna couldn't abear him."

"Who was Bob?" we ventured to interrupt.

"Oh, a youngster who hadn't any folks, an' Jeff let him stay with us, thinkin' he mought be useful to chore about the house till he got big enough to help in the lumberin' an' earn suthin' for hisself.

"The summer Donna was 7 years old, Don brought her a beautiful puppy, an' that's where Maje comes into the yarn.

"Dr. Wharton called him Nufunlun, or some sech name; anyhow, he was extra smart an' knowin'; an' he's no fool yet, though he is gettin' ole.

"Thar never was any love lost atween Bob an' that doag, though he took to the rest of us powerful quick.

"When he was two years ole Bob an' Don had a tiff as to who was to help Donna across the mill bridge with the men's dinner, an' Bob, the big hulkin' coward, crowded the little un into the mill pond.

"The water was pretty deep an' swift, an' Don 'ud 'a been a goner, shure, for the men didn't hear Donna's screams, if Maje hadn't jumped in an' towed him to shore.

"Bob was pretty scairt when he saw thought what he came near doin' an' I reckon if Maje had a got at him he'd a' tore him to pieces, but Bob took to his heels for the woods an' he never came back to stay arter that. There was a camp o' moonshiners way up among the hills an' Bob tuck up with them, but he used to come here of errands some times an' then Maje showed his teeth in a way to make Bob keep hisself as scarce as possible. He laid strychnine for him twice, but as luck would have it we found it before Maje did, an' then Jeff told Bob if he set his foot on this ranch agin he'd be tempted to lay him out, so we haint seen Bob here since.

"When Donna was twelve we sent her to Columbus to school, for she couldn't abear for Don to be gettin' so fer ahead of her, an' las' year she cum hum all finished up, to stay fer good, we thought, but law, sez! human natur's the same the world over, an' she'd found some one she cared more fer than her ole dad or me.

"The day before Christmas, arter helpin' me with some extra fixin's, she said she'd take a walk down the road a piece as she was kinder expectin' some friends to spend Christmas with her.

"We didn't ax her any questions but we smelt a rat, you know, an' she started off lookin' as happy an' sweet as a rose.

"Blimey Jeff begin to gib oneasy an' said he'd walk down a piece arter her.

"Oh, she's all right," sez I, for she-