

SIMPSON, LEBEL

INTERVIEW

1424

290

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

1424

Glen F. Curd
Field Worker
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An interview with Mrs. Ellen Simpson
813 South Main Street,
Hobart, Oklahoma.

The following story was written by Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Hill, deceased, who was born in Genevieve County, Missouri, in 1839. She came to the Chickasaw Nation in 1889 and gives a life story of that year. Mrs. Hill was a sister of Mrs. Simpson.

Miles and miles of cotton fields, boles empty, old dry stalks standing with a few white boles left here and there. Mr. Simpson looked out over the fields spread before him in the cold winter sunshine not warm enough to melt patches of snow. Then he proceeded to rob the bees for tomorrow. "John, don't take all the honey, the bees will starve you know 'tis winter," "Yes I know, I will leave some." But she goes out and puts a bowl of syrup in each hive before shutting them up again.

Then we all watched him as he examined the oxen's feet to see if they were in good condition. He has had them up treating their feet with hot turpentine for foot evil, a disease common from poison in the bottom lands.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

2

He had them shod by a regular blacksmith, like horses, now he lifts up each foot, rubs his hand over them and says: "All right we will be off tomorrow morning."

In the morning everything is packed snug and tight eight of us in the wagon, four grown-up folks, all our bedding, camping utensils and an extra wagon sheet for tenting. The steers started in a run. "Can't you hold them, John? They are running away." He is swinging two long ropes fastened around their horns close up to their heads. "Never mind they won't run long. They are too heavily loaded to run far." "I should say so," from Aunt Ella who had watched and wondered while helping load at the heap of things that an expert could get on a wagon.

On the third night we camped on the banks of Red River on the sand beneath the large trees around a camp fire. Then John said: "Tomorrow we cross Red River and leave Texas for good and all." For a moment Mrs. Simpson and Mrs. Hill held their breath and their hearts stopped beating for they were leaving their dear old mother beneath the sod in old Texas. They both began weeping bitterly. Very soon all retired for the night. The camp fire could no longer cheer. The great forest around them

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

3

looked sombre and the wind moaning among the branches oppressed them with its long wierd dirge. Late in the night such a howling of wolves, seemed to be right at the camp. Mrs. Hill called from the wagon, "John," "Yes", "Do you hear the wolves?" "Yes, they are only coyotes." "Well, seems like there are a hundred of them." "Oh, no! They won't bother us, they are across the river." Next morning, after breakfast a couple of families were just ahead of us, each having two horses to their wagon. They doubled their teams, hitching four horses to one wagon and with difficulty pulled through the deep sand, across the bridge and up the steep hill on the other side of the river. Then the two teams came back to take the other wagon across. John said, "Now just watch my husky steers take our wagon across that bridge and up that hill without any trouble." "Had we all not better get out and walk across this sand and up the hill?" asked Mrs. Simpson. "No, all get in", and away we went and were at the top of the hill in a jiffy. The men with the horse teams were still watching us climb the hill and both came back to us and offered John a trade for his yoke of oxen. Nothing doing, John knew what he had and knew how to keep it.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

4

We traveled west all day over bad roads, slowly winding our way through the dense unsettled forest of great timber and in the damp foul smelling miasma. North of Red River we camped in a desolated place, under a depressing atmosphere and heard cannons booming. "Hear those cannons at Marietta!" said Mrs. Hill. "No, that's at Denison." "I think they are at Marietta, John," said his wife. "Why, can't you tell that is in the direction of Denison"? Next morning John came to the breakfast table with-"I told you those cannons were at Marietta." The sisters exchanged glances but said nothing. He took his place at the head of the table, made of the endgate of the wagon, and as usual poured the coffee. The children had broken all the cups and only two tin cups were left. He had been giving a cup to Mrs. Hill but this morning he had a cup and Mrs. Hill had a saucer. The sisters exchanged looks again and a little smile. John was such a jolly fellow and loyal, but did not like to be caught in a mistake.

All were glad to break camp again and continue the journey. Turning north we passed a great cotton belt with

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

5

droves of cattle grazing and gleaning the scattered cotton left by the pickers in the fields. We camped that night on higher ground near a field of cotton white for harvest. The owner asked us to camp there and pick it for him as there had been none of it picked as yet. It looked pretty good. "We will look at it", said John, and so we did and our clothes picked up so many cockle-burs that we were hobbled and had to stop and pick them out before we could walk farther. "Well, I thought I had seen burrs before, but this is the worst I ever did see," said Mary. Mrs. Simpson laughed and Howard grinned, "Well, you women folks will have that to do at the end of every row you pick." "Sure, John but the cotton is fine," said Mrs. Hill. "Well - what do you say?" he asked, "We'll pick it if you agree, eh Mrs. Simpson?" "Well, just as you and Edith say." "We can stand the burrs Eh Howard?" "Yes sir," was the ready reply.

Ten days later we were on the road again with some money in our pockets. We camped one night on the banks of the beautiful stream of water clear as crystal. The bottom was covered with large white rocks, some places solid rocks

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

6

covering the bottom of the stream, we spent two days there washing and ironing and gathering wild grapes, berries and nuts while John fished and hunted. We might have stayed another day but heavy clouds and distant thunder warned us to cross the stream and reach higher ground while the time was good. So we hastily tumbled our belongings and selves into the wagon and moved on to another camping place by a large fine spring of water, where we bought milk and butter from the people living there.

Our next stopping place was a large field of cotton, looking large (only about fifteen acres) white and beautiful. A gentleman met us on horseback and asked us to camp on his place and pick his cotton. He was a doctor, he said, and wanted Mary to help his wife who was sick. His family consisted of a pair of twins, girls, four years old, a boy twelve and a baby, Louisa. Mary was used to out-door life and did not want to go but went on condition that he pay her as much as she could make in the cotton field, so she went and cared for them. The doctor's wife was a good woman and his son, Lester, was a good boy.

Mr. Simpson pitched a tent in a field which lay in the creek bottom. The cotton stalks were tall and strong

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

7

with large boles which had never been picked over. They worked hard and fast to get ahead of the snow storm, as the weather was threatening. After two weeks Mary was with them again. The weather was stormy, snowing and blowing, so John tightened his tent stakes and hitched a big chain around the old dead trees fallen in the field, which the fierce wind brought down with a boom at intervals, hauled some of them to the tent through the flying snow and piled them up in great heaps and fired them, and such fires! With the flaps of the tent thrown back the great log fires threw a glow of warmth across the tent. The wagon was on the north side of the fire and the steers stood between the wagon and the fire and contentedly munched their corn. John's wife had the young children to look after early in the morning. Mary was out with an old coat over her head filling the Dutch oven with biscuits, boiling coffee and frying the meat and with a table inside the tent everyone with good health and a good appetite, not forgetting to be thankful, had a cheerful breakfast. Even the baby was well and happy.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

8

Then John rented a cabin on the banks of the Washita River. About two hundred yards below the cabin on a hillside so steep that you had to zigzag down a crooked path to get to it, there was a spring of good water flowing out of the hillside among the rocks, forming a lagoon or marsh at the foot of the hill covered with green slime and snakes and frogs hiding among the lily pads and sunning themselves on the muddy banks of the river. There for a year we rented and moved in, with nothing to do, the cotton all picked and winter set in in earnest. So Beth, (short for Mary Elizabeth) began to cast about in her mind what she must do, for Mrs. Simpson and her grown daughter, Edith, were able to keep the home without the help of Beth, and a conscientious Christian must work.

Next morning she stood on the banks of the Washita with the children and dog, and watched the cows swim across the deep cold stream to their grazing grounds. At evening the cows stood on the bank lowing and hesitating as if they were waiting for help. Howard helped them by making the dog bark making the calves bawl, so, frightened lest the dog bite their bleating babies they would plunge into the

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

9

river and floundered across. Throwing their hoofs up out of the water they would soon gain the muddy banks where stood the children, shouting out the victory of the swimming cattle, and Beth delighted.

"I must go to Hazelwood today to get the mail and I want to see Mrs. Walden, the doctor's wife." "Why Beth", said Mrs. Simpson, "How will you go-it is five miles." "Oh, I'll go slow and rest along and maybe pick up a ride on a wagon." Arriving at the Waldens she found the doctor, his wife and son sick with the grippe. The doctor said the country was having an epidemic of the grippe, the most virulent type, several having died of it in the city lately. "Mrs. Walden don't you want me to stay with you awhile?", "I surely would be glad to have you stay but we cannot pay anyone to stay with us, Mrs. Hill, as we have no money." "Well never mind the money; I will stay for nothing." And poor Lester sitting on the floor as near the fire as he could get all drawn up with two small children playing near him and a baby to take care of. He looked sick enough to be in bed. He gave his mother a quick look of glad surprise. Then she tried to cough and Beth saw that she was

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

10

very weak and did not have breath enough to cough. The doctor in another bed a few feet from her poured out a spoon of medicine and called Lester to give it to his mother. Poor Lester!

Beth saw before her a long hard job with the family all sick but three babies. The doctor was very thankful, saying that he hoped that she would be able to stay with them awhile anyway. "Oh, yes, Doctor I will stay." Beth looked at the open fire and knew the ventilation with a good will to do right in the sight of God and men would help her to help the helpless. So she resolved in her own mind, the Lord willing, to do her best. Time went on, the doctor and son improved but the mother still kept very sick. As the shades of night closed in every evening she would try to cough and lose her breath and strength and call for morphine, "Doctor, please quick". Then she would cough until her voice would die away to a whisper from sheer weakness. "Carrie, you don't know how I hate to give you such medicine." He gave her the medicine and she sank into a quiet slumber and was quiet until the next evening when the dose had to be repeated sometimes twice

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

11

before rest came. But the doctor said she was gaining strength and appetite. After two weeks the washing must be done, with no one to do it, but Lester was well enough to help now and Beth did the family washing after which there were no more such large washings as she did them regularly.

At the end of the month the doctor said, "Mrs. Hill bring your chair near us I want to talk to you." "They were both in bed yet, Beth had the baby in her lap combing its hair and she moved nearer with it still in her arms. The doctor said, "Now if I understand right, as soon as the winter storms are over you want to travel with your books and Bibles." "Yes that is right," she said. "If you will stay with us until we get well I will furnish you with a horse to drive until this time next year." "But maybe you will be sick a long time." "Oh no we are both on the road to health again and will soon be all right." "I'll try it doctor." After five long weeks the medicine man was up to stay and his wife could sit up a little while every day. As time wore on the doctor and his family could go about their duties.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

12

"Doctor why don't you get that horse up for Mrs. Hill as you promised." "Yes Carrie I will see about that this very day," and after a few more days, "Doctor I thought you were going to get that horse up right away." "Yes Carrie, I hired a man to bring him in from the range but he hasn't done it yet. Yes he will be thin but will soon pick up, there is not a better pony in this country; tough as a horn and a good traveler." Beth decided to walk around in the neighborhood with her books until the pony was in sight.

About four hundred yards from the doctor's lived Mrs. Woden who had big brown slanting eyes, coal black hair, dark complexion and pleasant manners. She invited Beth into her widowed home. She had one small child, a boy, and her sister with her. Her sister, Lenora Ludwig, a beautiful girl with her long shiny black hair hanging in satiny waves below her waist, and large expressive brown eyes, not slanting like her sister's and as slim and graceful as a fawn, a brunette but not brown like Mrs. Woden. Beth opened her young people's Bible prospectus, which was a pictorial representation of the Bible

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

13

entitled Beautiful Story. Turning the leaves she told in a few words what each picture represented, trying to bring out the characters in their true light, and took two orders, one for Beautiful Story and one for another carried as a side line.

Then on through the post oak glades, across small streams to a log cabin. A low rail fence was built around the house, the top rail down in several places where you could step over and waded through oak and shumac leaves that lay thick on the ground. A great oak with its long mossy branches and crooked elbows hung lovingly across the yard and over the door. The sun filtered through its branches and across the steps and along the rough oaken floor of the quiet little cabin. A tap at the door and a plain little woman with a pleasant "Come in" met her at the door. As Beth turned the leaves she wondered at the sadness of the woman's face and manner and wondered if she knew the sun was shining or if she had ever had an hour of happiness in her life or had she ever smiled, for she could not have looked more unhappy if she had been a criminal

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

14

condemned to hang. The old lady said with misty eyes, "I would like to have that book but cannot promise to pay." As Beth closed the book and resumed her walk through the smiling woods a little farther on hidden almost stood an empty cabin with a tragic history. A mile farther on another widow's home, Mrs. Hadden; she wore a long sun-bonnet, seemed to have bad eyes, the bonnet - an old fashioned split bonnet(that means slats or strips of paste-board slipped into cases to hold up the head of the bonnet). This bonnet had lost some of its slats and flopped together in the front until she had to hold it open with one hand in order to see in front of her. She had a son about twelve who was so delighted with the book that she ordered it for him.

After stopping at a few more places Beth turned her steps toward home, passed the empty cabin again with the dilapidated fence and a door creaking on one hinge. I mention this empty cabin because of its gruesome history, will talk of it later on. She reached home about sundown and was met with a warm welcome by everybody even to the baby. After supper Mrs. Walden asked: "Where did you go?"

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

15

"Well first place I stopped was at Mrs. Woden's, our neighbor, and she ordered two books. "What did you think of her?" "I thought she was Spanish," "Yes she is."

The Woden Brothers' store belonged to her husband. He was shot in a feud between the cattle kings of Hazelwood and Holdenville. Mrs. Taylor's first husband, Mr. Holden, owned all Holdenville and miles of wild land surrounding there, for his cattle range. The Camdens owned all the county around Hazelwood. Adrien Hayomme, one of the wealthiest and most popular of all Holdenville cattle kings, was accused by Hazelwood of letting his herdmen brand Hazelwood cattle, of course that was stealing and he was waylaid and shot. Not long after, James Camden was waylaid and shot as he was driving home late one night, the men stepped out from the woods and shot him while he was in the buggy. He had a stranger in his buggy whom he had picked up on the road. This stranger jumped out of the buggy and knelt behind the buggy and begged for his life. He said he knew nothing of the trouble and that Mr. Camden was just giving him a lift home. But they shot

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

16

him as he knelt there and gave the horses a cut with the whip, sending them through the woods and left them as they fell. Mr. Camden lies up there in the Hazelwood cemetery and Mrs. Taylor buried the stranger, whose name was Ludwig, at Holdenville.

After that every man in this whole country went armed to the teeth and spent their nights in the woods ready for war; the women gathered at one house nights. A crowd of Hazelwood men came by our house for the Doctor and another doctor to take up Camden's body and draw the bullet to see what kind of a gun he was shot with, for if they could find out just who did the murder, his doom was sealed. It was night and my house was packed with all the women of the neighborhood, everyone in a nervous strain, almost in hysterics, listening for a gun fight at the graveyard for of course if the Holden cattle men knew they were examining the corpse for evidence there would be a fight. When some drunk fellow let his gun go off accidentally every woman in the house screamed as loud as she could, and pandemonium reigned until a messenger arrived, sent to tell them the cause of the shot. Those were awful times."

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

17

The doctor asked: "What do you think of Mrs. Warren? "Well, surely if I ever saw despair it looked at me from that woman's eyes." The doctor said, "No wonder her son was hung." "Oh how horrible! No wonder she has despair written on her face. But think! She knows it and lives. Oh how can she?" Beth pitied her before but now her whole soul went out to her in heart pity. Mrs. Walden took up the story with, "Yes the day he was hung she was in violent hysterics all day and night following. The doctor and I stayed with her all day and night. You don't know Lydia Washburn, but you will, she was Lydia McDowell, and was a very pretty girl. A young man was coming to see her whom her brother did not like. The brother told the young man that if he did not stay away he would kill him. After that they met stealthy at the Widow Warrens. Her son, Marlow Warren, went and told McDowell that they were at his mother's house, and had been meeting there. McDowell said let's kill him and they layed for him right at the gate of that old empty cabin beyond Mrs. Warren's and killed him.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

18

A widow Hempston and her grown son lived there at the time and they both saw the killing. John Camden came by a few minutes later and saw the body lying there. He dismounted and found the body still warm and bleeding and the widow told him the two young men did it. McDowell's sister Lucy and another sister fed their brother and watched for him while he hid in the big timber in the bottoms for year, but the United States officers captured Marlow Warren and he was hung on the evidence of Mrs. Hempston and her son. About a year after this the widow and her son both died mysteriously. After their death McDowell surrendered and stood his trial and is now a free man and is married, but there is more tragedy yet. "Do not tell me now, I cannot stand it," Beth pleaded.

The next place was Widow Haddens cabin, seems strange to find so many widows. "Yes, to you but these men all died with their boots on as people here say when they are killed or died by accident. There has never been a man buried in Holdenville cemetery that has died from natural causes, and only one in Hazelwood cemetery. Widow Hadden is Mrs. Taylor's sister and Mrs. Taylor sup-

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

19

ports her. She has a son in the pen and that is who she bought the book for instead of the lad. Mrs. Taylor's first husband, Holden, was drowned trying to save his son. They were out with the herders rounding up the cattle and driving them in from the floods. The river was out of banks and the bottoms were flooded. They were driving the cattle into the stream, making them swim over. Edgerton plunged his horse in after the swimming cattle; his father, afraid he would not be able to reach the other side, spurred his horse in after him and was washed from his horse and was drowned or killed by a blow on the head from his horse's hoofs in the struggling mass of swimming cattle and horses. He met death like a woman or child on a bed, but frightened to the last breath. He left his only son, the ideal of his heart, and his widow very wealthy in land and droves of cattle and horses.

The next day in Holdenville Beth called at Mrs. Taylor's mansion, surrounded by an acre of enclosure covered with grass and studded with towering forest trees trimmed up to about thirty feet. She came down in answer to the summons herself, met Beth at the foot of the stairs

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

20

and stood there tall, slim and dark and as silent as the forest trees in her yard, while Beth turned the leaves and read the pictures to her. She gave an order for a three and a half binding, a beautiful book inside and out.

Next place was the home of Earl Layomme. He was stone blind, a fine looking man with courtesy and grace of a courtier. He introduced himself, his wife and two daughters. His wife looked at the book and described it to him while the daughters prepared lunch, or dinner as we southern people call the noon meal; in the conversation he spoke freely of what he would like to do if he had not lost his sight. Beth asked him how long since he had lost his sight. He said about two years. "You must miss your sight much more than if you were blind from childhood." "Yes but I guess it was a good Providence I went blind for there would have been a good many more dead men in Hazelwood today than there is if I had not gone blind." They bade her goodbye at parting, inviting her to call again and pointed out Mrs. Ludwig's house with instructions that she call there as they were the parents of Mrs. Woden and Laura Ludwig of Hazelwood.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

21

The sun was an hour high when she reached there but the old people would not hear of her going farther that night; said they had plenty of feed for her pony and room and a bed for her. After supper their son came in and talked to Beth through his mother, which was annoying to his mother and sister, as he was deaf and not dumb. He could tell by the motion of his mother's lips what she said, that made her interpret for him. He was an infidel and she was a believer and that was the subject he wanted to talk on.

After he left, the old man who was blind, told Beth that he had seen the devil. "No, you are joking," "Yes truly I saw the devil and no mistake. If you ever see him you will know." "What did he look like?" she asked, seeing that he was in earnest and felt sure he had seen the devil. Like a white shoat. Beth glanced at the mantel above the fire place, on which stood a fat, white shoat made of white plaster. "Is that him on the mantel piece?" "Oh, no that is nothing, you need not laugh for truly I have seen the devil and he was a white shoat." Beth did not feel surprised that he went blind after that for he

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

22

said he went blind right after. The old lady said: "Daddy it is your bedtime, Mrs. Hill and I want to talk." After he retired she resumed: "I suppose you know how we have had such a dreadful war, and how Mr. Woden was killed and my son, Digby, a fugitive, wandering homeless over the face of the earth alone, or dead, I don't know which." Beth told her she had never heard of their trouble, so the old lady continued, "You see Mr. Woden owned that store where the Waldon Brothers are now, and he kept drink for sale, mostly whiskey. My son, Digby, who was only a boy, would hang around the store till he would get drunk and his brother-in-law would kick him out and that left him mad so Mrs. Taylor planned to get Mr. Woden killed and they kept it all from me and Betty. Mrs. Taylor sent Woden word that they had fought long enough and if he would bring his crowd to her house, she and her crowd would meet him half way and lay down every man his gun in a stack and they would do the same, stacking their guns at the gate, and they would make friends and all shake hands. So Mr. Woden and his bunch rode up and dismounted, she and her crowd stacked their guns and Mr. Woden's party did the

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

23

same, and they advanced to meet each other. She had my boy hid behind a tree in the yard. As soon as Woden came near enough my boy stepped from behind the tree and shot him dead. There was no more shooting after that as I think they had all drawn their cartridges when they had put down their guns. The Hazelwood gang grabbed their guns and ran for their horses. When I saw Woden approach the tree where Dig stood and Mrs. Taylor standing near him so that he must come near Digby to shake hands with her I hid my eyes in dread lest something awful should happen; when the gun fired I was sure Woden had killed Digby, but when I looked Mr. Woden was lying on the ground at Mrs. Taylor's feet bleeding to death and Digby held the smoking pistol in his hand. Oh, how I suffered! After a paroxysm of trembling she continued, "I have never seen him since and it is nearly two years now. Mrs. Taylor gave him the money to go on and I guess she knows where he is if he is alive, which I doubt, for they have searched for him high and low, and his sister, Betty Woden, offered a large reward for his capture although he is her brother, and Mr. Jones has been trailing him, and he seldom fails

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

24

to either capture or kill anyone he follows. Betty has with_{drawn} the reward and Jones is at home now. He claims Digby is dead but I cannot give him up, and expect to see him some day for he will come back to see me I know if he is still alive." Beth sat speechless; after a silence of suffering she said, "How can you ever sleep?" "I do not sleep much! I work till I drop from exhaustion and sleep without undressing.

The next trip was over the steep hills and along the beautiful valley, up and down deep canyons where the wind roared through the gorges and rushed howling and storming, driving the fallen leaves in whirls before it, circling around rail fences which enclosed farms standing full of dead trees, having been deadened by chopping a broad band around and removing the bark and leaving them to die. Every now and then the distant boom of a falling giant of the forest as it struck the earth. The wind came whistling and whizzing by as she entered the houses of those strange people who always seemed delighted to have her tell over the beautiful stories, mostly new to them because Bibles were very few there. Every woman wanted

SIMPSON, ELLAN.

INTERVIEW.

25

a book but few had the money. Many subscribed for it that Beth knew would never have the wherewith to take it, so their names would be put on the doubtful list.

Home again, family circle gathered around, some sitting, some lolling about, all resting from a long hot day in the cool of the evening. "What success Mrs. Hill? You seemed to have traveled farther than usual. And she told them about what Mr. Layomme said about it being a Providence that he went blind as there would have been more dead men in Hazelwood than there was, and Mrs. Walden said that was about right as people did pipe down some after he dropped out, but every man in this country carries a revolver or sleeps with one under his pillow yet, and it would be ^{as} easy to start a war again as to put a match to powder. "Did you go to Mrs. Taylor's?" "Yes, and she ordered a book." "You are the only one in Hazelwood that would dare go in her house. Did she have her revolver belted on?" "No, I didn't see anything warlike about her. I talked to her in the hall." "If you had gone in the house you would have seen two revolvers on her center table and always carefully loaded."

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

26

"I spent one night with Mrs. Ludwig, and she told me the pitiful story of her son." "Did they seem to have plenty?" "Oh yes we had plenty! We had a nice supper and breakfast and she struck me as a woman who had been well raised and is very intelligent." Mrs. Walden, always the same quiet mannered woman, without spite to anyone told their histories to Beth.

I think like you but there seems to be something savage in Spanish blood. Mrs. Taylor supports the old people since she made Digby kill his brother-in-law, and she supports the family of the man who was killed in the buggy with Jim Camden. His name was Ludwig but no relation to these Ludwigs here."

Later on Beth traveled over in Mr. Camden's neighborhood and made many friends. She arrived at the Widow Camden's one evening about sundown. She found extensive stock yards and many hired men about the place and Mrs. Camden sick in bed with the grippe, but she had Beth brought to her room for she wanted to talk and had her pony cared for. She utterly refused to hear of Beth going home, which was not so far distant, and scolded her for not coming to see

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

27

her before now. The house was a plain old fashioned country home outside but furnished elegantly on the inside for that part of the country. Beth looked at the fine plush and velvet carpets and was afraid she would catch the grippe from germs hidden away in their depths, but there was nothing to be done but stay and take chances, for Mrs. Camden would be very much insulted if she went home that evening.

Beth had been intending when she had an opportunity to talk over the possibility of having a Sunday School in Hazelwood with Mrs. Camden. The doctor's house stood on the bank of a small stream of clear water and there was a fine spring near, and between six or eight hundred yards stood Weldon Brothers' store of general merchandise and about four hundred yards west of the store was Mrs. Woden's house and about six hundred yards southwest from the store and the same distance southeast from Mrs. Woden's stood a frame school house, in a grove, but trimmed up so people could ride in and hitch their horses to the trees. Mrs. Camden was favorable but said the effort must be in earnest and for the good of the people, and Beth agreed with her about that.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

28

So after talking it over with the Weldon brothers, who were sons of a missionary who, after many years service among the people, had died there some years before, they promised to post a notice on their store door, of the Sunday School. The school was well patronized by the several different denominations that were there but Beth insisted that they should not talk denomination but study the Bible together. The wild young men with their high top boots and spurs jingling, and a hump under their coats showing where they carried their guns, came in very quiet and teachable. In time the Bible school became popular. .

The next Monday morning Beth was ready to start, her pony harnessed up and had on her hat and gloves when the doctor came out. "So you go to the Harding neighborhood today, Mrs. Hill?" "Yes sir," "You had better stay tonight at Hardings. The old man is dead now but he was one of the oldest settlers and most influential men there. That is why the settlement is named for him. He and his people used to sometimes stop with me. You will have time enough to stop on the way at the few scattered houses on the road and reach there about sundown.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

29

On her way Beth heard her cart wheel squeaking; passing a farm house a man called from the yard, "Say lady do yo hear your cart wheel cussing you? Better stop and let me give it some dope." "Yes sir, I will stop and would be glad to have you doctor it. He came to the house after treating the wheel, and ordered his wife a book. At sundown Beth drove up to the Hardings and was kindly received and given an easy chair. Mrs. Harding, a very active old lady, busied herself about supper, leaving her daughter to entertain Beth. The daughter had an unnaturally large head and body, but if she had any lower limbs they were hidden in a wheel chair under full skirts. Her little nephew, a little boy three or four years old, stood at her chair while she fed him and answered his childish questions.

Young Harding, the old lady's son, and his friend came in later and sat down to the table and asked a mock blessing, and proceeded to eat, talking and laughing all the while over the days work. They told how, while they were rounding up the cattle, such a splendid young red cow, with horns as sharp as needles and eyes blazing had

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

30

made for Hunter's horse. Just as he wheeled to avoid her horns, she gave the horse a dig in the ribs with her horns and the horse and rider both sprawled on the ground in the mud. Then such a laugh from young Harding as he continued; "I cracked my whip at the cow to draw her attention from Hunter when she turned on me like a flash and the next moment I and my horse went sprawling in the mud. Then Hunter drew her attention and we wore her out at last, keeping her dodging from one to the other till she gave up and joined the bunch. Hunter drew his gun once to kill her but I told him not to, not unless it was the last chance."

Next day Beth called at Mr. Williams' home, a young doctor, who had a pretty girlish wife and baby. They both talked and acted like people of refinement. Then she called on the one fine house in the neighborhood, Mr. Hamilton, a half Indian who had a proud wife who was young and very white. Her husband ordered a five dollar binding of Beautiful Story. She never said a word but kept her big blue eyes on Beth.

Beth told Mrs. Walden, on her return, about the young man, Hunter, who was herding cattle at Hardings. Mrs.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

31

Walden said "his mother is a Christian and it is a pity for her son to be in such company as the Harding boy. His folks live in Edmond. Mrs. Woden came in and said, "Mrs. Hill, come stay with us tonight, Henry is sick with the pneumonia and we have no woman folks to sit up with Lenora and me, and I am afraid to trust him with brother and other boys." Henry Humphrey was a young man working on her farm. Beth told Mrs. Woden she would be right up after supper. Later Beth entered the general living room and found the sick man lying back in a corner of the room on a clean white bed, with Mrs. Woden quietly watching the patient calling to him to turn; she dropped a live coal of fire into a dipper of water and after it sputtered and cooled gave it to him to drink. Lenora sat in a dark corner quiet as a mouse, while Bud and Wade had a large fat chicken hanging by a wire string, roasting before the open fire to keep it roasting evenly. Plainly enough they meant to feast while they watched. Wade Camden, the wildest boy in the country, whose screams were known by everyone far and near (for there was nothing that could imitate it, man or beast); walked restlessly about

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

32

first in, then out, with his big brass spurs jingling. At last Beth said in her most persuasive tone, "Wade, why don't you take off your spurs?" He put his feet upon a chair close to her, and said in a low soft tone, "Mrs. Hill, will you please take them off?" Such a request from any one else would have surprised everyone, but from that spoiled boy it seemed quiet natural and right. She unbuckled and took them off, soon after she heard them jingling and looked at him and he had put them on again, but he soon after went to another room and slept.

After awhile everyone retired leaving Betty and Beth alone with the sick man. Beth asked if the doctor thought the man's case serious. Betty answered, "No, he says not, but I know he is a very sick man, and the worst of it is he doesn't seem to want to get well. He has never seemed to care whether he lived or died since he killed old Bostic." "What! Has he killed a man too?" "Yes, but he couldn't very well help it. The old Indian was drunk and shot Henry twice when he met him riding with friends. They had had no quarrel but the Indian was just drunk and blood-thirsty and when he raised his gun the

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

33

third time Henry shot him and he dropped from his horse dead, and Henry has never been the light hearted boy he was before.

A little later Lenora came in and drew a chair near Beth and sat down. Both women looked lovingly at this sweet girl then Betty began to laugh and tease, "Mrs. Hill you ought to have been here yesterday. Henry wanted some buttermilk and we begged Wade to go to Mrs. Hodges and get some but he didn't want to go, said his horse was not here and that he could not cross the creek. So Bud told him if he would go that he, Bud, would carry him across the creek and for him to call when he got back and he would bring him back again. Wade want, and you know how big and stout Bud is and Wade is such a little dude? Just as lunch was ready he called Bud. Bud said he would not go until he had his dinner. Lenora begged him to go said Bud had promised, and Wade kept calling, and Lenora said she would not eat dinner until he went and if he did not go right away she would go to the store and get one of the boys to go over with a horse and get him. Bud saw he had to go so waded across and brought Wade over on his back.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

34

"Hush Betty, Mrs. Hill don't want to hear all that nonsense." But she only laughed and Betty went on. Last night I lay down a while and left Lenora and Wade sitting up, they thought I was asleep, I was right here on the couch and Wade would say in his soft drawling way, 'Lenora I love you! let's get married. Wade, you can't work and you won't go to school, you could not support a wife if you had one. Why don't you go to college when your mother sends you? She pays all your bills and gives you spending money and then you run away and come home.' Well now, Lenora I will stay next time if you will go if mother will send you. I will go if you will promise to marry me after we come back." Wade I will wait to see if you go before I promise for I know your mother will not send me." "Yes she will, I will ask her." He was positive for his mother seldom refused him anything.

After another trip Beth called to see how the young man was. Mrs. Woden said, "He is well and all right, but I wish you would stay tonight. Lenora is sick and we are alone as my brother had to go away." Lenora was lying down and her sister was bathing her arms and hands with camphor.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

35

She had had an attack with her heart and was subject to them. Mrs. Woden said, "Lenora sat up last night with Mr. Wentlow's old maid sister, who has the fever. She complained to Lenora that she couldn't rest because her back ached so bad, said if she had something to support her back she believed she could rest a little, and Lenora lay down beside her and let the sick woman lean against her to rest. The sick woman slept, but of course Lenora did not rest. After such a strenuous night, small wonder she is sick." "Oh Lenora, how could you do that?" asked Mrs. Hill, "She seemed to be suffering so I was sorry for her," replied the girl. Beth felt humiliated to think of this beautiful girl, not claiming to be a Christian, sacrificing herself and endangering her life in that savage wild country, where there was none to know or care, or give the needful praise so sweet to some people. Would I have done that? thought Beth. Could I have had the courage to lie down in that contagious bed and let that poor sick, fevered body rest her aching back against mine? No! I am selling the Bible and suffering hardships, traveling over a rough country of miles and

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

36

miles of high divides and along whiskey trails, crossing swollen streams. But that life had its charm as well as danger, out in the free open air. Oh! God how hast thou taught this young girl the religion of the gentle Christ? So self sacrificing! So unselfish! While with many advantages I am yet selfish and incapable of such. She is noble and sweet, gentle like my mother, whose whole life was one of sacrifices. Why, Oh why was I not like my mother? These thoughts grieved poor Beth, while a halo seemed to hover over the dear, uncomplaining patient girl! Holding out her hands to her sister while she panted for breath, and that Spanish woman called herself a heathen, patted the girl's cheeks and caressed her saying, "poor little sis, you will feel better directly." Still rubbing gently and taking up the poor limp hand and kissing it gently. And Beth thought I never knew before that there was another noble, sweet, loving, gentle, brave and true character in the world like my beautiful French mother, but Lenora has the same long, black, silky hair, and soft brown expressive eyes and the same character. Beth's heart seemed to be bleeding inside as she sat silently watching while every

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

37

fifteen minutes Betty gave her a spoon full of medicine left by a physician, until she slept quietly and breathed easily.

Then they sat there and talked low till late in the night. Betty said, I begged my mother to leave Lenora with me because I cannot bear to stay alone since my husband was killed. His life was attempted many times, but he watched and they could not get him only by treachery, using a boy. A Mr. Turner came to my husband and told him Mrs. Taylor had offered him a thousand dollars to kill Tom, my husband, but he told her, "I couldn't do it, You once bribed me when I needed it." But watch she will get some one who will do the deed. About a month later Turner was found dead in the road, he had been shot in the back from the bushes.

After that when my little Buddy was only two weeks old, we had a bed in each corner of that east room. Mr. Woden was sleeping in this corner and the nurse in the other with the baby. It was a warm night and I had thrown a quilt on the floor in the middle of the room and was lying between the two beds, but out of the light

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

38

of the moon, which was shining brightly in at the window, when I saw a man's face pressed against the glass. He seemed to be trying to see the bed in the corner. I think he was trying to make sure which bed my husband occupied. The thought flashed over me that he would shoot and that he had not seen me, so I sprang from the pallet to the kitchen door screaming, "Morse, there's a man at the window!" He jumped out of bed with his gun in his hand, but the fellow had just fled through the woods, which grew thick near the window. I afterwards had the brush and trees cut away between the house and the store so I could watch better. We are always watching for a bullet. That is one thing that has helped to make Lenora have this heart spell. The other night when we came home from the singing school, you know it is the first here and we all go, when we came in Lenora came in a little ahead of me. Henry was sleeping on the settee on the latticed porch. She thought to startle him and grabbed him, as quick as a flash he was on his feet, his gun in hand and pointed in her face. She was begging him not to shoot saying, "It is I, Lenora, don't shoot

SIMPSON, ELLEN,

INTERVIEW.

39

Henry. I snatched the revolver away from him and he dropped back on the settee nearly fainting, he come so near killing Lenora. Even my baby, if you point to his navel ask him what made that hole? Buddie will answer, "A man shot me dere." and you saw what a time I had watching and stealing the guns out of the beds of the sleeping watchers when Henry was sick, lest a gun go off and kill some one in the house.

"Which way today?" asked the doctor as Beth was getting ready for another trip. She said out toward Judge Good's. "Well, that is a good neighborhood, comparatively speaking, and some wealth in land and cattle." Beth found the old lady seated on her front gallery. She was much pleased with the book because of the illustrations, but she could not read. She told the men to feed Beth's pony and lariat it out on the grass and that she must stay all night. Beth saw the men trying to rope the pony's foot and asked them what they were doing. They told her they were lariatting her horse. Beth, never having seen an animal tied any other way than by the neck, thought she might break her leg. "Oh, no, madam, that is the best way,"

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

40

a horse might break his neck if tied by it, but I never knew of one hurt tied by the foot." Being satisfied that they knew best, Mrs. Good brought her across the broad gallery, through a wide old fashioned entry into a big two story log house. After supper and a pleasant chat, the two old ladies retired, both sleeping in the same big room with a wide fire place and a cheerful blazing fire to drive out the evening chill. There were two great high posted bedsteads with deep feather beds filled with goose feathers, raised on the place, so full^{of} feathers that Beth's thin body hardly made a dent in it. She soon fell asleep only to be awakened by some one whispering so loud, to use an old saying, if not true, as loud as thunder. Beth held her breath and listened and finally tried to see. It was Mrs. Good kneeling beside her bed praying in a loud whisper; every word could be heard plainly, wish we could say as much for some of the singers in the modern church choirs. She prayed for her friends and neighbors, her herds^{men} and her cattle, and all of God's creatures, and for her enemies, and especially and fervently for the guest within her doors, and the husband she was separated

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

41

from, though he was at that moment sleeping on a couch in the hall. Her prayer finished she returned to her bed, having risen at midnight for her devotions, as Beth afterwards learned was her custom. She said next morning Beth could bring her a book but would not have her name on the list of subscribers.

Next place of importance was a negro minister in a colored community. He seemed a sincere Christian, intelligent and anxious to hear from Christian people in other countries, and ordered a large Bible in a twelve dollar binding.

She reached Judge Hamilton's that night. His wife was such a fine woman, a half breed Indian and so was he, but both had college educations and were Presbyterians. He was an own brother to the Hamilton in the Harding neighborhood who had a proud wife. Beth was warmly welcomed to their home. After supper Mr. Hamilton took her out to see the Judge's hunting dogs; they were well fed and cared for and there were nine of them. The Judge and his wife tendered her a cordial invitation to stop with them whenever she came in their neighborhood. Their fine

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

42

hospitality was appreciated, for they as well as most of the others, charged nothing for feed for herself and her pony. All was free as sunshine.

All ready for another start. "Doctor, I will go today to that other Mr. Walden's village." "All right, I will direct you how to go; it is a long drive and the people are poor. You had better stay at Mr. Hanks. He often stays here with us and he will do as well as he can by you. Take about three feeds for the pony." After getting her directions she drove off across a corner of Cherokee County and out on the Divide, which is a continuous chain of hills that you follow along from one to the other with only a dip between them like the waves of the sea. She had been warned to avoid herds of cattle, as they were sometimes dangerous. If one of them was to kick up its heels and bellow and start for you all the bunch would follow, bellowing and their tails flying and would run over and trample you to pieces.

Passed miles and miles of high prairies, passed the seven oaks, a prominent landmark, could be seen for several miles and was counted the highest point in that almost treeless country, and like the seven stars, was known as far

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

43

as could be seen. On and on, not a house in sight, not a person seen all day, the vast rolling prairie stretching out in every direction. Beth felt like a small speck in an endless world. The silence was so oppressive that even the pony seemed nervous, for when Beth spoke she started and pricked up her ears, and acted as though she wanted to run away. Beth got out and walked beside her, talking and patting her to quiet her, and to remove the great oppression of the great silence. She passed a herd of cattle about one half mile distant along about five o'clock. Just ahead was a fringe of timber, that meant a stream of water. As she descended the steep entrance to the valley, on the left was a thicket of red switches that must have been dogwood, that gave a beautiful haze to the atmosphere surrounding them. What a peaceful peace! The peace of God seemed to hover over that sheltered nook. At the foot of a steep bank was a clear stream rippling over the pebbles. Beth put her arms around a tree and rested her head on its trunk while her pony drank and talked to it with tears. Oh! beautiful!

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

44

beautiful tree! I thank the great heavenly Father for your presence. Then kneeling by the stream she leaned over it enjoying the sound of the running water. The sun was getting low so she hurried on. A half mile farther she reached Mr. Hanks place. Beth told Mr. Hank that the doctor had directed her to his ranch for the night. Hank was a gruff acting person; the kind of a man you would naturally avoid. His wife was a timid, scared-looking soul. They had supper in the kitchen, Beth seated with the family. The man mouth-pieced the conversation, which was anything but pleasing to Beth, as she had come a long journey and had had nothing to eat since early morning. The meal consisted of corn pone, bacon and greens, and everything smelled strongly of soap grease. She tried to chat cheerfully, sipping her can of sour milk and making lame excuses for not eating and was glad when the time came to retire for the night. In the morning her pony was gone. Beth was sure frightened, miles away from anywhere and afoot. "Oh, you found my horse, didn't you?" "Yes, she was standing around a neighbor's lot eating dry corn stalks," replied the boys. "Come to breakfast" called from the

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

45

kitchen. The call was welcomed by the traveler, hoping to find the breakfast eatable, biscuits and coffee at least, but what makes the butter so blue? what on earth was the matter with it? And the biscuits? Miserable! Both smelled like soap grease and tasted impossible. She forced one bite then managed to hide the rest under her apron, and the coffee was not coffee at all, but something with which she had never met before called coffee.

She was soon on her way again after giving that poor little woman a half dollar. On her way back she looked at some of the poor houses, but saw nothing to tempt her to delay her homeward journey. She thought as she drove along of the worst poverty ever thought of, and that poor little scared woman that stared and trembled everytime her husband spoke to her, and everytime he spoke to his family it was a command or a rebuke. The boys hurried wild eyed and with sullen looks to obey every word and their mother would hasten to help them, looking wistful and so unhappy.

Beth thought it all over as she drove along and bent her steps toward Mrs. Hershells, not the nearest road home but a road she was more familiar with that led through tim-

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

46

ber and was more settled. Besides she knew she would get something to eat and her pony fed, for she thought possibly the corn in the cart had been kept to feed the Hank family, instead of being given to the pony. She found Mrs. Hershell just starting down the rocky hill to the most beautiful stream of water, the hill so steep that had you fallen from the door of her house you would have landed in the creek. She had her fishing pole and her can of bait. "Lenna!" she cried "hurry up and get Mr. Hill some breakfast, she says she is hungry." Lenna was her auburn haired niece, young and pretty whose husband was in the pen. They were living on one of Mrs. Taylor's places or ranch where she had branding pens where the young cattle were brought in and branded and corralled that were in that section. She also boarded her ranch hands here and kept quite a few pensioners besides, who had rendered services to her. I had met this young woman before with her baby. The grass and bushes surrounded the cabin almost reaching the top of the door. People had an idea her husband was hiding out in the day time and staying home as much as possible at night; he was keeping away from the United States Marshals, but now

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

47

he was gone and she was cooking for the ranch hands. "As soon as you eat breakfast Mrs. Hill, come down and help me catch some of these fine trout," said Mrs. Hershell, cheerily. "You never saw finer, maybe bigger but never better. Lenna, give her a hook and line, I have two poles."

Beth told her she didn't think she could stay and enjoy such a treat as she always tried to be home on Saturdays and Sundays. What a breakfast! Snow white biscuits that fairly melted in your mouth and golden yellow butter, a bowl of rich creamy milk, right out of an old fashioned spring house where the milk crocks sat in the cold spring water all the time; this was a feast fit for a queen.

"Strange that these people in the little hamlet of Annie are all starving, while there is such plenty in the land!" exclaimed Beth. "Well it is the kind of people they are and you will find more like them," said Mrs. Hershell, for she had come back to get Beth and she continued, "You must stay with me tonight. It is twelve miles to Hazelwood and it looks like rain. Don't you see how cloudy it is getting? We'll have rain before night." "I hardly think so," said Beth, "I think I can get there all right if I can only spy the

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

48

seven oaks before dark. "Yes," and all laughed, "you will not spy them when the weather is murky. Why must ^{and} go home anyway?" "Oh, because, yes, that's a reason because I will be expected." "What will you do when you get there?" "Well you know I don't work more than is necessary on Saturday and Sunday for the Advents may be right and the Sunday keepers may be right, so I help with the housework and relieve others, and write to my people and friends, and visit the sick and sorrowful and the neglected and such like." Mrs. Hershell told Beth she would be back to her house before night because she would not be able to see seven oaks that day.

Beth thought she knew the road pretty well but after she had been gone about an hour a heavy mist began to fall which made it very disagreeable and she found there were more forks to the road than she had ever noticed before, but she did not want to give up. So after studying the roads took the one she thought was the right one, and drove as fast as she could, but after trying one, then the other she left the road and drove to a high knoll where she could see some distance, then she knew she was

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

49

lost. Just as she reached the road again a man driving a big team and covered wagon came up from the other way. He asked if she could direct him to the next village. Beth told him she was lost but did know the way back to the Hershell ranch. So back to the ranch she went with the wagon following. Heavy thunder and lightning, followed almost immediately by a pouring rain just as she came to an empty house. She thought she would have to rush into the stable and stay with her horse to keep dry if the house was locked, but just then the owner of the house galloped up and led the horse, cart and all into the stable and told her to run into the house. It was a hard storm and rain. After it was over the man with the covered wagon drove up. He said he had to turn his horses with their heads away from the storm, and let them stand till it was over as they refused to travel against it. "Now Mrs. Hill," said the host, "You will have to leave your horse here in my stable till tomorrow for this rain has made a torrent of this creek, and it would wash a pony like yours away, cart and all. There will be no one here for I am going away but the horse will be all right and Mrs. Hershell will send one of the

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

50

men after it in the morning. Now, you get in the wagon with this gentleman for his horses will make it all fine; and the sheet will protect you from the next shower. //

After assisting Beth into the wagon he bade them good-by, and swimming his horses across the swollen creek was gone in the darkness.

Next Monday Beth made a start for home, her trip so far a failure. "I believe I would go by old man Dutts' place if I were you," said her hostess, "as it is the nearest and best road. On the way she passed a bunch of men lying on the grass by the side of the road; they seemed to be taking the world easy. Their horses were grazing near, also a lot of donkeys in the bunch. They looked like travelers and one of them asked her what she had in her cart. She told them she had books. Two of them came to meet her and one of them looked through the cart and went back satisfied, to his grassy bed. Beth told old man Dutts about it and he told her they thought she had whiskey. "You could make lots of money and it is easy made, just soak some brown paper and brown sugar in water

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

51

with a little bluestone in it and just a little alcohol, and you can sell for a dollar what you can make for a dime."

She wanted to ask if the creek was up but hurriedly drove on, almost afraid of the hoggish old man who leaned on his fence, looking after her. On arriving home she found old man Dutts' wife there. The old lady said she had left the old man because he abused and starved her. "He ought to have money," said Beth, "he says he can make whiskey cheap and sell it high." "Yes; he can get hung if his boys did not watch him," she mourned.

Preparing for another trip Beth remarked that she was nearly sick and asked the doctor to lend her a quarter. The doctor was very sorry, would be glad to let her have a quarter and more if he had it. "The doctor rides all the time but there is no money in the country," said his wife, trying as usual to make excuses for her 300 pounds not having money. "You are going to Deep Springs today. Here are some matches in case you get lost, for that is a possibility, there being no one living on that road, for if such a thing should happen you will see a fringe of timber to your right. Drive straight to it and you will

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

52

find water enough , dead wood to keep you warm and scare the wolves away. There is plenty of water there in the creek but if you follow directions closely you can reach there about sundown. The first house you come to is Aunt Jenny's. She is an old Indian woman with a white husband. Stop there and she will treat you white. As the doctor gave directions Beth listened carefully and drove steadily, watching closely for land marks, such as sudden turns in the road to miss a gully or a flat rock beside the road. After passing the last land mark she decided she knew she was nearly there and just as the sun began to sink behind the horizon there was Aunt Jenny's house and Beth drew a sigh of relief and the pony gave a longer one when they halted at the gate.

Aunt Jenny came out to meet the stranger and took her in and told her husband to take care of her pony. But on first sight of the place Beth noticed a row of small houses along the north fence, and wondered what they were. They could not be sheep houses, they were too small and too low for chicken houses and two big and solid for coops, what could they be? And there was so many of

SIMPSON, ELLEN. INTERVIEW

53

them, about a dozen or more. She said to herself, I will ask about them later, after I have been here long enough not to seem inquisitive, but they were soon forgotten in the crowd that gathered for supper, and quietly sat down one, two and three at a time. They ranged all the way from two to fifteen years old. All orphans who that good old woman was raising, having raised many others, some of whom married while others were attending Indian schools or colleges. She talked pleasantly while her husband lingered outside. She said referring to her husband's slow motion, "my husband he lazy. My first husband Indian, he lazy. Folks say, you marry white man he no so lazy! But he lazy, too." As soon as he came in they had supper in the kitchen, fried ham and corn pone and sweet milk, very nice and good. Soon after the children slipped quietly to bed without a word. How different they were from white children! All were ready to retire by ten o'clock.

"Mrs. Hill, we have a good feather bed in the kitchen, if you would like to sleep in there? These children are afraid to sleep in the kitchen, so they all sleep in here." It was a very large room. I suppose it had been

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

54

built large to accommodate the children. Beth had noticed that the kitchen was neat, and a good fire burned in the open fire place. It was truly inviting looking room. There was an old fashioned candle stick with a tallow candle on the table and a nice clean white bed; piling a few more logs on the fire Beth was soon sound asleep, but dreamed and waked, saw in her dreams dead people crawling out from under the floor into the yard ; they came out one, two and three, six, eight, ten and after a while more came out and some crawled back again. They stood in bunches here and there and seemed to be talking together; others joined them and they seemed to be visiting together and went up to the curious little houses that she had noticed on her arrival. Dead people came out of those houses and seemed to talk with those that came from under the floor. They walked about together for some time. They seemed to be conversing like live people do, but finally they returned to their respective places, the same bunch crawling under the floor again. Well, thought Beth, what an uncanny dream, but the fire was still burning brightly and she soon fell asleep again and the same dream came back, the

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

55

dead people crawling out, visiting their neighbors over the way, but doing all their visiting outside; the same ones always coming back crawling under the house; all was silent once more, and the ones in the little houses would go back to their dark and silent houses; some remained outside seeming to talk, but no sound. All was quiet and still. Beth decided to remain awake the balance of the night, so she replenished the fire and kept awake as long as she could, but overcome by weariness she was soon sleeping peacefully this time without dreaming till daylight, when Aunt Jenny aroused her moving about getting breakfast after which Beth hurried off hoping to get in enough orders to pay for her trip, but forgot again to ask about those queer little houses that aroused her curiosity so much especially after such a strange dream. She noticed them again as she drove off and thought she would ask some one later about them.

The first cabin she entered was a drunken Indian's. The most terrible, fierce looking monster she had ever seen. His wife kept hold of him, pushing him firmly but gently towards the bed, and got him on it. By this time Beth was leaving and the Indian woman looked like it was

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

56

a wise move. That man's eyes, red eyes, followed her till they looked dangerous. Beth remembered what a friendly Indian woman had said to her. That she would be afraid to go, if she was Mr. Hill, among those people, so she drove straight for home having seen enough of the Deep Springs folks. On reaching Hazelwood she found Mr. Simpson at the Hazelwood store with his wagon. "Drive straight on home, Beth, I must go by a neighbor's for the folks, then I will come right on." Beth stopped when she got near home and filled her cart with slabs of bark off of the rail fence, then drove on home. It was getting dark when she reached the house. I will not unhitch until they come for if this pony should get loose in this big corn field she would be hard to catch. She built a fire with bark and cooked supper in the tent by the flickering lamp and sat down and waited for her sister's folks. She thought she heard something fall in the house, but it was so dark she did not go in to see what it was. She wanted a drink of fresh water but would not dare go down that steep trail for fear of making a misstep and falling over the bluff into the green slimy bog among the snakes, so she waited, watched, and

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW

57

listened and decided something surely must have happened and they were not coming. But just as she was about to give up all hope the dog came running to her. The family was not far behind him. John laughed at her saying that she was afraid of ghosts. "Well, maybe so" said Beth, "I did not know as they would be so peacefully inclined as Aunt Jenny's ghosts were." Then she told them about her dream and John said, "sure enough there are dead people buried under all the old Indian houses, just as close as they can get them and that is the reason the children would not sleep in that kitchen as they had seen them put there, and the little houses you saw there were graves, (and if an Indian of importance, once every year for about five years they have a feast and send a little of every thing they have to eat to the one in the grave, through a vent or opening they leave in the grave. (Mostly in Caddo tribe)."

"Are you joking, John?" "No," said his wife, "didn't you know, Beth that all the Indians in this country bury their dead under the floors?" "I have been told when a murder has been committed in a house the Indian leaves it, and no one ever lives there again. I know of such

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW

58

a cottage rotting down and the tom fuller patch grown up in weeds, but I never heard of grave yards under the floors before." "Yes," said John, "they are too lazy to dig graves deep enough to keep the coyotes from digging them up, so they bury them in shallow ones under the floor until there is no room, then they move out and nail up the house and build a new one. Do you see that old tumbled down cabin in the field yonder? That is why it has not been moved and the ground plowed, it is an old Indian cabin and under it is their dead, and no one ever goes there or bothers it."

As Beth got ready to take another trip, a lonesome feeling came over her. "I will have to make a cut on the price of my books at the places where I stay all night, but that will not be hard as every one will be anxious to get the book and glad of a chance to help pay for it that way." As she drove on she could not help thinking of that old saying, that is, 'For the want of a nail the shoe was lost; for the want of a shoe the horse was lost, and for the want of a horse a kingdom was lost. Beth always left home early on Monday morning feeling well, not so well Tuesday and by Wednesday evening she was feverish, every

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

59

night she went to bed supperless, after drinking a glass of water with a lemon squeezed in it. At night her fever would cool and she arose and felt refreshed and rested. But she thought, If I don't have a lemon I will be sick and could lose my life for the want of twenty-five cents.

As she drove to her field of labor she thought, I must go to the poor people or they will miss getting a glimpse of the Bible, and in many instances it will be their first glimpse of understanding. Along the river bottoms, following trails from one cabin to another, she found poor old women and some young ones, often surrounded by a swarm of frightened, timid children, their bodies scantily covered with rags, old and faded. They seemed pleased as well as surprised to have the book shown them. One poor old lady, not so old either, but worn, watched with deep interest while Beth turned the leaves slowly, telling the pictures that were a story in themselves. But especially was she impressed by the picture of Jacob fleeing for his life, leaving parents, home and friends, lying out on the far off plains, alone in the dark still night, the green sward for a bed and a stone for his

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

60

pillow. The tears trickled down her poor, wrinkled face and dropped on her poor faded dress, as Beth read from the book, 'Though like a wanderer, the sun gone down, the darkness be over me, my rest a stone. Still in my dreams I'll be, nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee.' Then pictures of Jesus, the gentle loving Christ, who loved the poor, the sick, the afflicted, both in soul and body, and only asked for love in return. And she said, "I have lived in this desolate wilderness for fourteen years, and have never been inside a church in all that time or looked inside of a Bible, or heard the name of God spoke in reverence." Oh! what a life, so sad, dreadful! Beth shed tears of sympathy and wished that she could give those poor people a copy of Beautiful Story.

Monday night tired, Tuesday almost exhausted, Wednesday stopped early, tried to rest but very feverish, Thursday night had bad night, Friday at home, had a bath and had some lemons and retired early, felt better Saturday, Sunday felt like she must be at Sunday school at Hazelwood. "Oh, Beth don't try to get there today," begged her sister, "you said you must leave your pony at home to rest, just as though

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

61

you didn't need it." "But, sister, I will start early and walk slow. I wouldn't go but I met Mr. Weldon Friday on my way here and he said the Bible school would go to pieces if I did not come, and others have been sending me word to come, so you see I must go." She reached Hazelwood tired and perspiring; she went up stairs at her old home, the doctor's, and had a bath and some clean fresh clothes, although Mrs. Walden was not at home, Beth was always home there, and found her room as had left it; feeling refreshed she went over to the school house.

The house was full and everything went off all right, except that Mr. Wanak wanted to talk up the seventh day sabbath. Beth coaxed him to wait till some other time and place. Beth now had between two hundred and fifty and three hundred dollars worth of books ordered that she considered good, to be delivered in November and December, all before Christmas, many of them were ordered for Christmas gifts for grown sons and daughters, and other members of the families and for friends.

Monday following Beth said, "Doctor, I must not get sick now, give me something to cool my fever so I can rest"

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

62

He did but told her she had better not try to travel that day, just wait a few days. Monday night, a terrible day fever set in and her bones racked with pain from the malaria. Every day Mr. Walden brought quinine to the bed till Beth could take no more. "No more quinine for me," said Beth, "I was so thirsty last night and every time I tried to get water I fell and had such a time getting back in bed. I was drunk. Mrs. Walden told her it was not quinine that made you drunk, it was morphine." "No," said Beth, "it was not morphine as I told the doctor not to give me morphine because it always puts me out of my head and does me no good." "Yes I know but he did give it to you, he put it in the quinine." Right here Beth lost confidence in the doctor. "Well, well, I wish you could let my sister know as I want to go home." "Oh, no, Mrs. Hill, the doctor can take care of you so much better here, and you are no trouble, the children will bring you water, they love to wait on you. You know how people will talk, they will say, Oh, yes, she was all right when she could work, but now that she is sick they will turn her out." "And you know how they talk about the doctor any way; he

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

63

has so many enemies, now take your quinine and you will be well again." Beth took the medicine and the doctor went to the city. When he returned Beth was in a raging fever and delirious. The doctor and his wife watched by her bedside all that night and in the morning of the next day, the doctor sent word to Mrs. Simpson, that Mrs. Hill was very sick, and if there was no change she could not live long. In the afternoon Mrs. Simpson came with a bed in the wagon. The doctor told him that she couldn't be moved though her fever had gone down and delirium with it.

That afternoon she lay in a stupor. Sunday morning Mrs. Woden and Lenora came over to see her though they were not friendly to the doctor. While they were there she felt the cold chills creeping over her. She said, please give me a cup of strong black pepper tea, I feel one of those dreadful chills coming back. Though she did not know just how sick she had been she felt like another chill would be the end of her. Poor Mrs. Walden dragged into the kitchen, more dead than alive, or it looked like that to Beth, who looked appealingly at Lenora who hastened out of the room and returned in less

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

65

out behind in the wind. By noon her folks were there. The sister whom she loved and trusted was sitting by her bed. She said, "Beth you know that tall bent-over tree that stands in our yard? I climbed that and called John. He was a mile from home with his dog and gun, but he heard me and came as quick as he could. He said he knew it was me calling him and that he was needed when I called like that."

They took Beth home in the cool of the evening and she took her chill tonic and improved steadily, but it was several weeks before she could get to work again. "Now it is too late to have my books come by freight. I will have to order them by express and don't have enough money, but I will order them C. O. D. and I have a few books here that I can deliver, and as soon as I can I will go see Judge Hamilton to see if he will lend me forty dollars. Then I can take the books on the installment plan, deliver the first installment, and then take out another." "Howard bring up the pony, and hitch him up for your Aunt Beth," called his mother. When Beth set her foot on the step of the cart she trembled. John saw how weak she was and

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

66

said, "Beth you had better let me deliver them books for you. They all belong in this neighborhood don't they?" "I wish you could, John." "I surely can and will." When he stepped into the cart with his shiny shoes he exclaimed, "this is fine, I wouldn't ask for anything better" as he drove in the crisp morning air. After he was gone Beth said, "if he had traveled all summer in the noonday heat of the sun, and the damp chilly air of the night, when the darkness seems to be filled with ghosts that float about and around you, following, still following settling down on you and seeming to smother and blindfold you, dragging you down and down till when you try to walk you feel as if there is a heavy weight hanging to your feet, and your poor body racked with pain, he would then tell a different story."

Dark came on and John hadn't returned, all went to bed at the usual hour, still no John. Soon after retiring we heard him calling Howard. His mother urged him to hurry as she knew by the way John talked that he must have a chill. He came in directly, his teeth chattering and breathing hard like he was struggling with some strong

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

67

monster. He stirred up the fire and squatted over the coals, shivering with ague. After getting good and hot he wrapped himself in a warm blanket and went to bed. Next morning he took a big dose of quinine and put another dose in his pocket.

By eight o'clock Beth was on the road again. She reached Mrs. Good's just as the sun was setting and such a time! It was the round-up season, and everybody was busy at the Good ranch. Pens and pens of cattle of every kind and color. Such bawling, bleating and whining, seemed like all those hundred cattle were bawling at once. Beth stood looking while the herdmen rode about with great coils of rope hung to their saddle horns and made things snug for the night, gathering the young in pens to themselves and unpacking and removing saddles from their horses, turning them out on the grass. Many of the cowboys had already unsaddled their ponies when Mrs. Good led Beth into the house. Such a strong scent of frying meat! So strong it was repulsive. Beth wondered why people worked so hard for money, and after having plenty would live on such a diet. But they were fine, hospitable people in spite of their hard living.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

68

The next morning she went to Judge Hamilton's but did not get the money, and like the robber kitten, went home feeling very sad, and found her dear brother there from Texas, to visit his sisters. "Oh, Thaddeus, how glad I am to see you, how did you come?" "I came on the train across the river and meant to walk the rest of the way but every man I met gave me a lift and one took me home with him and kept me over night, and sent me on miles farther with a neighbor and all because I was your brother, and everyone I met, men women, and children, were ready to help me on my way for the same reason. Your name brought me over many miles of rough roads and fed and rested me. I don't think I ever saw any one so popular except a candidate, what have you been doing to get the good will of the people?" "I have taken them the gospel of the good and gentle Jesus and that shows how they would receive a real missionary, although I didn't know I was so overly appreciated as all that. But I am so glad they were kind to you."

"I am so sorry, Mrs. Hill, that you didn't get the money," said the doctor's wife, "but the doctor says he knows that

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

69

Mr. Camden will let you have it if he has it. The next evening Beth sat alone on Mr. Camden's porch. The night was dark and still, no sound but the thud, thud of horses' hoofs as they moved about in the corral near by, and the gurgle of the river as it wound its way through the forest, deep and dark. The sleeping baby carefully put to bed, Mrs. Camden joined her. A minute later Mr. Camden stepped out on the porch bringing a chair with him, and seated himself near Mrs. Hill without making a sound, his steps were as soft as a cat's, and every movement silence itself.

He spoke in a voice so low and soft that it seemed to come from across the water and from no where. Beth looked at him or what she could see of him in the dark and wondered where that great, tall, rawboned, redheaded Indian got his strangely fascinating, gentle manners. He said, "I hear you have been very sick, Mrs. Hill." "Yes I guess I was more sick than I knew but I blame the doctor some for my being delirious, as I told him not to give me morphine, for it always affects me so." "Yes, Jim's wife told us about it, she was there when you first went out of your head; she said you had a dreadful hot fever." "Well I remember when she

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

70

was there. I was so worried because Mrs. Walden couldn't see her little girls climbing on Mrs. Camden's lap trying to reach her beautiful fan and purse, and she was holding them high over her head out of reach. You know how those children take everything out of people's pockets, gloves, handkerchiefs, anything they can get hold of, take pins out of ladies' collars, hairpins out of their hair, and all such liberties. But I don't remember anything that took place after that until I was well enough to go home. I have a kind vague recollection of things the day before, but Sunday morning my head was clear. I must tell you how the doctor treated me once, Mr. Camden said, "McDowell was to be tried for his life and I took the doctor in my buggy, I said on the way that I was feeling badly. He said "you had better let me give you a thorough course of medicine," No I told him I wanted to be at the trial, and I would be too sick to go if I took medicine. But we found on arriving that the trial had been put off. I was feeling so badly that he said again, "You had better take some medicine, if you don't by the time the trial comes off you will be too sick to go, sure enough." He looked

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

71

in his medicine case and said he had no medicine that he could give me and no money to buy any. I told him to look in my overcoat pocket. As I was lying down he took five dollars and spent it all for medicine. He bought enough to last for six months and gave me some. I was terribly sick all night. Next morning I said, "Dock, you must do better than that. I am feeling much worse this morning." "Oh, I see, I will give you something better," so he stirred up something in a glass and gave it to me, then he went to the courthouse and stayed all day. I was awfully sick all day, throwing up, deathly sick. When he came back I said, "Dock did you give me that medicine to make me sick?" "No, of course not, I gave it to you to make you well." I told him I never was so sick in my life before. Then he began to stir something in a glass and said, "I will give you something that will fix you up all right." I watched him stirring in the glass and I thought, Yes you are fixing to put me out of the way, I'll never want anything more after taking that dose. I felt under my pillow for my gun, but it was not there, then I remembered it was in my overcoat pocket. I tried to get to it but I fell as I

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

72

was too sick to cross the room; if I could have reached my gun he would never have given another dose of medicine to me or any one else, for I meant to kill him then and there and he knew it, so he went to another hotel. The landlady came in then and cured me with hot lemonade. After the fever left me she changed the treatment and gave ice cold lemonade, next morning I was able to be up after breakfast.

Beth felt sure every word he said was true, except, possibly a mistake about the bad intentions of the doctors. Though she wondered why she had felt the same about the doctor the morning of the day that she went home with her sister after being so sick, She watched him as he stood stirring up a glass of medicine and the very same thought came to her, now he is stirring up my last dose, I will never want anything more if I take that, and she determined not to take it but to go directly home. She argued with herself, that is a wicked and unworthy feeling and I must banish it but I cannot stay another day.

"The doctor told you I would lend you forty dollars," continued Mr. Camden in a surprised tone, "when he knew I

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

73

took him to the city and drew out every dollar I had in the bank and loaned it to him to help him out of a hard place.^u Beth was astonished dumb for a time, for she wondered how the doctor could ever pay him and wondered more how Camden could lend the doctor his last dollar, the man who had once wanted to kill him. But later she understood for all the doctor had to do was to get Camden drunk and the rest was easy. Well, thought Beth, I know where I can get the money by giving Shylock his pound of flesh. She borrowed the forty dollars but had to give four dollars usury for the use of it two months, counting on being able to sell enough books to pay the money back in the first month, but to make sure of plenty of time, giving herself two months. She had not ordered enough books to fill any orders in the thinly settled or out of the way places, knowing she could not reach them before Christmas. The people were expecting her in the Harding neighborhood, and had their money ready until she reached Mr. Hamilton's, the judge's brother, who said he could not take the book. Beth looked at him squarely and said firmly,^u I must deliver these books, Mr. Hamilton

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

74

to get money to get other peoples' books out of the express office and I cannot take no for an answer. His proud white wife looked on coldly and said nothing. When he saw he was not likely to get off so easily he paid for the book and took it. Beth was in hopes the proud woman would ask her to spend the night, as it was raining and any educated Indian woman would. But no she must try to reach the young doctor's before night, so she hastily drove off in the rain without umbrella or rain coat. She reached there at sunset to find no one at home, and such a lonely place! It was back in the timber with every bush and tree dripping from the rain. She must now go on nearly three miles farther. Her pony tired and the rain still falling, while Beth thought how awful it would be to get lost away out there in the wilderness.

She thought, I must be careful to pass around the right side of this little lake and take the right road on leaving it, for I remember when I was here before seeing several trails leading out from it, and there was not much difference in the looks of the trails at this season of the year as the fallen leaves lay deep every where and

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

75

darkness would overtake her, even if she made no mistake in the road, for the trees grew thick and tall on both sides of the road and clouds would hasten the night, and there wasn't one chance in a hundred of meeting anyone.

She gave the pony a tap, saying, "now travel, Maude, we're late and you want food and shelter as well as I."

After she thought she ought to be near her destination and was frightened lest she must stay out in the drizzling rain all night. She heard the trampling of horses' feet, which sounded like a bunch of shod horses coming toward her at a steady gait; she wondered if it was a bunch of herders out on a raid or a round up, or a posse of United States Marshals, for there was no talking; all were silent riders, they must be either Indians or officers, so she drove out to the side of the road to let them pass; it was a party of six Indians riding single file. The leader touched his hat instead of grunting, showing that he was educated, then she ventured to ask if she was on the right road to Mr. Wickhams. He answered in good English, "Yes Ma'am about a quarter of a mile farther on," and each one imitated his leader by touching their hats, then rode on in silence.

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

76

Mrs. Wickhams greeted her with fine hospitality, and soon she was resting in a good warm bed, with her clothes hanging by the fire to dry. They had an early breakfast next morning, but none too soon, for the two year old baby boy, that always wanted two butters, "butter, butter, Mama, give me two butters." He was partial to butter without salt, and as they did their own churning they had plenty as he liked it. We had hot biscuits and fresh, sweet butter for breakfast.

Beth left feeling fine after her hard experience of the night before. She delivered her last book on the installment before she reached the city, where she took out another batch and went over to the village of Loud, and there stopped with Mrs. Orde, where she had often stopped and gave them their book that she owed them for board, and heard sad news again. Mrs. Orde's father and mother who were old and blind, were living about a mile from their daughters when Beth was there the last time. They wanted her to visit them and read the Bible to them. Beth was having chills at the time and had been lost in the damp, cloudy weather, so she put them off

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

77

till some other time when she felt better, and now the poor old blind man was dead, and his wife had gone to another village to a son. Beth felt very sad that night thinking of another sin, the sin of omission. I could have gone to see those old people as they wanted me to and maybe they were sore disappointed at my not doing so, I might have weakened their faith. She lay long awake, thinking of them.

Having delivered all her books in the village and surrounding country she reached the river on her way home, just before the ferry man left for his home, by driving harder than she liked, for she knew he quit at sundown and went home. She called to him and while waiting for him to cross over, she had to take her apron off and fan the mosquitoes off of her pony to keep her from stampeding. They roared like a storm. She gave the good ferryman his book which he earned. He said it was too pretty to go with anything else in the house.

Beth was glad to get home and pay the hard old school master his forty four dollars. After a few days rest she was again in her cart. On her way to Judge Hamilton

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

78

she passed McDowell's. McDowell lived in a clearing on a hill in a new log cabin with his young wife and baby. Everyone knew Mack had done a killing, for which another man had suffered the limit of the law. While Beth was there McDowell's father-in-law rode up, got down and came in, greeted his daughter and baby but only stayed a few minutes, kissed them goodby and rode away. Beth watched him and thought, there goes a man who has been a terror in his day, having killed several men, but showing himself kind and tender to his own.

Mrs. Good took her book and would not sign her cross to the paper, she said, "Mrs. Hill, you will surely be robbed before you get back home, carrying that hand-bag full of money hanging to your belt. I believe I would take it off and put it in the bottom of the cart where it won't look so handy and tempting." "Well maybe you are right," answered Beth, "but I have already some in a flour sack in the bottom of the cart."

Beth made slow progress as she had a long box clamped to the back of the cart with about three hundred pounds of books in it, so she walked up all the hills to

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

79

help her pony, and knew that she had no chance if any one attempted to rob her. Mrs. Good insisted that she put it all in the cart. "I think I will as everyone seems to pay for their books in silver, and it is very bulky." So she did and drove on to the old colored preacher's house, who had ordered a twelve dollar Bible. The old man was anxious to know if it was wrong to have bazaars, suppers, festivals and such like in a church house. Beth told him she had a booklet that would help him and would bring it next time she came that way.

About a quarter of a mile before she reached Judge Hamilton's, a drove of horses dashed past her, and rushing through the woods, the timber was low and bushy and covered with dead leaves, so that she couldn't see what had caused the horses to run so, so she drove out of the road and waited in a clump of trees for them to pass. When they had all passed, she saw riding wildly behind them, an Indian his long hair flying and his holster pistols slamming on either side of his saddle. He didn't see her and she was a little frightened, wondering if it

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

80

was some thief stealing a bunch of horses and if there would be another feud, but the horses went racing off over the hill with their wild rider following. She hastily drove up to the house. Mrs. Hamilton came running out to the gate to meet her with the words, 'I never was so glad to see anyone in my life - but there comes Mr. Hamilton with the horses, I must go and open the gate for him.' The wild bunch of ponies and their wild driver turned out to be the good old judge himself driving his own bunch of ponies home. Returning Mrs. Hamilton asked Beth to come in seizing her by the arm and helping her out of the cart, talking fast for an Indian. She seemed to be very much excited as she said, 'We heard you had been robbed and murdered, and the judge has been sick with remorse, he couldn't sleep nights just grieving and saying over and over, 'Why didn't I lend her the money?' But he thought you wouldn't live to deliver those books; and that they would be left on his hands, and he wouldn't know what to do with them. Then after a little, he would say again, 'I could have given her forty dollars and never missed it; if the Lord will only forgive me this time but

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

81

I don't feel like I could ever forgive myself for being so cruel to that good old lady!' And now it's just like you had come back from the dead, we don't know how glad we both are to see you alive and well. After a pleasant evening and a restful night, spent with the most genuine Christian friends she thought she had ever met. The Judge took ten dollars worth of books and they both begged her to stay with them a week and attend a protracted meeting that was going on at the Presbyterian Church. But she thought it would be wiser to go home while she could, for it had been a strenuous summer for her and she felt worn and tired. She bade them good-by.

After a hard day she saw she couldn't make it home that night for she had several books to deliver on the way. Night found her still eight miles from home, and such a load of silver; she tried to carry some of it in her hose but it slipped down into her shoes, and she found she couldn't walk much less run from the robbers that everyone seemed to think the country was infested with, so she drove hard and reached a friend's house a little after dark. "Oh, Mrs. Emities! How glad I am to

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

82

see you, do put this sack of silver away and take care of it for I was afraid of being robbed.^H Now, if this was fiction Beth would have been robbed or had a hairbreadth escape but nothing of the kind. The next morning found her on her way with her sack of silver intact, with herself and pony refreshed. Like many others in that country her hostess would not have anything for keeping her.

On her way home after passing Hazelwood she had to pass Wanaks. His wife ran out to meet her at the gate and asked her to come in, said she wanted Beth to write a letter for her. She had the boy to put the pony up and then said, "They have arrested my husband and have put him in jail for selling whiskey, and he was not selling whiskey. I have sold his hog for ten dollars and want to send him the money by a friend, and I want you to write a letter to my uncle in the city, to pay his fine, so he can come home, for everyone else has their cotton picked out and have their cattle in the fields and there is no fence between the fields, and the cattle will eat up all our cotton, and we will not have anything to live on this winter."^H Beth
saying
wrote the letter to him/she was sending the money to

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

83

an uncle in the city to pay his fine and told him where his wagon and team were, and for him to bring them home when he came. Beth asked her if she was sure that this uncle would give the money to her husband for his fine.

"Oh! Yes, I think he will, his brother is in jail with my husband on the same charge and he is going to get him out, but be sure and tell my uncle that my husband didn't sell the whiskey for he wouldn't help him if he thought Bill was selling whiskey." "All right Madie, I will read the letters to you." "Oh, they are such nice letters and I thank you ever so much, Mrs. Hill, but you look sick," exclaimed Madie. The good Indian girl, although a wife and mother of two children, hurried and brought clean sheets and pillows and arranged the bed, and brought Beth a glass of cold water. Beth sank down on the cool clean bed, between the window and door, with a deep sigh of relief and lay still for about an hour.

Then thinking she must get on, tried to get up but sank back utterly exhausted. "Stay all night Mrs. Hill and I will bring you a nice cool glass of milk and I will make some good hot bread." The supper was prepared and

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

84

Beth spent the night there. The door had no shutters but a blanket hung up instead, and Wanak had a bunch of hound pups, for he was a hunter, and Mrs. Wanak made a pallet for the children on the floor and she slept on a cot, giving Beth the only bed she had. The pups would slip under the blanket and crawl in bed with the children and awaken them enough to resent the disturbance, with whines, so the mother would whip the pups out with a blacksnake whip. She was up four or five times whipping the pups, and their yelps would wake Beth and once she threw her hand over the back of the bed and struck an old hen with a flock of chickens. The hen scolded and the chickens cheeped; they were not roosting on the bed but the bed stood out from the wall a little and cottonseed was piled under the bed and back of it until it was almost as high as the bed, and the chickens were roosting on this seed. Beth was careful not to touch them again for the pups were making enough trouble. When morning came the fever and headache were gone and she was able to make it home after breakfast.

Next time Beth passed there, Wanak was home. He said he never saw the letter Beth wrote him in jail or the money

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

85

either, but his uncle got him out of jail, and he brought his wagon and team home, and he had had his long hair cut off; his wife called Beth's attention to the loss of hair, "Yes," said Wanak, "Old Big Medicine never was satisfied till he got my hair off, and I will steal something from him some day that will nearly kill him for that."

"Were you sick, Mr. Wanak?" "Yes, got home with malarial fever." "And the doctor had your hair cut? Well never mind, it will soon grow long again," for Beth knew how badly Wanak hated to loose his hair, as he took great pride in it and she loved those big simple children of the forest who were such true friends to her all that trying summer. They had proved that she could count on them in time of need.

Beth was on the road again and thankful that this was the last trip, as she hoped to deliver the last books before returning and her heart was full of thanksgiving. Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. How beautiful is thy world! The fine wooded hills, and peaceful valleys, long stretches of lonesome prairies! The blue heavens above, white fleecy clouds floating. How could there be sin?

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

86

Passing over a road now with a romance she recalled the time she had passed through that rocky canyon in a wagon with Mr. Woden, her mother and sister Lenora with their brother, Bud, driving. "Don't you remember Girls, the last time we passed this place?" said Mrs. Ludwig. "Remember! I should say," said Lenora, "It was here I last saw Phil. How grand he looked, riding so straight in his saddle, with never a sigh that he knew us, or the quiver of a nerve! His carrying his revolver at full cock in his hand, keeping his horse between it and those men, Poor Phil! said Betty, with five officers watching him only a few yards distant! The story goes like this:

The family out with their team and wagon, had stopped in the canyon to have a lunch, Phil and his friends were to join them and they were to have lunch together, but Phil and his friends were fugitives from the law and knew they were being hunted by the United States Marshals. Now Phillip was Lenora's betrothed, a splendid, looking young man and in her eyes the greatest hero of the age. He was to bid her good-by there; it might be for only a short time and then again it might be forever. But imagine

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

87

their surprise just as they were looking for Phil and his two faithful friends, five heavily armed men rode slowly past them and crossing a little ravine about fifty yards distant, stood with their horses close together, seemingly in conversation, but we took out our lunch boxes and spread the table cloth on the grass and laid out the lunch, acting as though we had not seen them, or had the least interest in them. Lenora said she thought her heart was going to break it was beating so fast and she was afraid she was going to faint, and Betty would keep saying, "be brave Lenora be brave." Of course they knew they were trailing Phil, they were all struck dumb as they watched them furtively. Not one of them could leave to give the boys warning, for that would have looked suspicious. Bud went around cracking his whip just as boys do, not seeming to notice them, when out rode Phil and his party. We all held our breaths and hardly looked at them as they passed, tipping their hats as though we were strangers, and rode on, each man holding his pistol in his right hand and his bridle in his left, ready for the worst. The five men watched them until they were out of sight then slowly

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

88

mounting their horses, rode off in another direction, and we have never heard from or seen Phil since. We do not know if those men were officers and captured and killed Phil and his friends, or got killed themselves, or whether Phil is roaming in strange lands and will return some day.

So the women talked as they drove on of their hair breadth escape and dangers, while the blue headed horse flies bit their horses sides till the blood ran down and dropped. Wild poppies grew profusely on the road side and on reaching a deep clear stream Bettie said, "The last time our team crossed here they ran away and turned the wagon over in the water and Mother and I were caught under the wagonbody, and Mother came very near being drowned before they could get us out." "That is why mother and Betty will not sit on the seat or on a chair, but always sit down in the back end of the wagon with their feet hanging out behind, so that if the team starts to run they can jump out," said Bud.

The day was warm and we camped, rather than to drive hard. Bud slept under the wagon as there was not room in the wagon for all of us, so Mrs. Ludwig said, she would sit

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

89

in the end of the wagon till tired, then lie down under the wagon with Bud, her big baby boy, eighteen years old. But daylight found her still sitting there with her back propped against the side of the wagon. "Oh! Mrs. Ludwig did you sit there all night?" cried Beth. "Oh! that's all right," she said cheerily. "How very tired you must be! Why didn't you wake me up at midnight to relieve you?" For Beth was grieved to think herself the cause of her friend having such a hard night of it, for there would have been plenty of room in the wagon if she had not come. Here again was the half civilized woman, sacrificing cheerily for a stranger in a manner that Beth wondered if she could do for anyone but her nearest and dearest. While all this past experience was passing through her mind her pony was steadily moving on, she reached the stream of of thoughts; just as she stopped in the stream to let her pony drink, four young men came riding from the opposite direction, talking and laughing; they rode into the stream all greeting her at once with: "Good Morning Mrs. Hill, how are you? What's the news? How's everything in Hazelwood?" They were returning from

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

90

a mining town some sixty miles off, where they had been to the races. Two of them were John Camden's sons, Charles and George. George was about fourteen years old and was one of the jockeys that rode the races. He rode his father's horse and was a splendid horseman, almost reckless beyond the limit. "Hazelwood is all right," said Beth. "Aren't you just from there?" they asked. "Yes," and "there has been nothing unusual there?" they asked. One of the boys rode up closer to Beth and said, "Hasn't there been a wedding there inside the last three days?" "No I haven't heard of any." They all looked very much interested and Charles said, "Wade left us three days ago and said he was going home to get married; when we refused to believe him he said if he wasn't married in three days he would give us the finest horse in his mother's stable." "Well I don't think he is married," said Beth, "or I would surely have known about it." Beth was sorry for Wade, for she knew that Lenora wouldn't have him. The young men rode on, joking and laughing in fine spirits.

Beth drove steadily on, leaving her books at houses by the way, until she came to Doctor Borden's where she

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

91

dreaded to go because of the story she would have to listen to there. About the first words after greeting were exchanged were "Mrs. Hill, I suppose you have heard of my being robbed?" "Yes," assented Beth, and there was nothing to do but hear the story over again. "I had been trying to get the doctor to take our money and my jewelry to the bank in town, but he kept putting it off and coming home fool drunk, or being brought home dead drunk about twice a week, and I saw that boy we had hired here talking to those Deckers. I thought they were up to some mischief and I told the doctor and he promised to take them that day, but they came that afternoon about four o'clock. They struck me in the head with a hatchet and I fell and they thought they had killed me but I knew all they were doing. They made the boy show them my room, and they broke open my trunk and jewel box with the hatchet and took out all the jewelry and money. As they went out Julius said to his brother! "You had better hit her again and make sure of her." "Oh! no let her alone she is dying now, see how she is bleeding." As soon as they went out I slipped out

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW

92

the back way. My nose bleeding fooled them; I am subject to nose bleeding and sometimes my folks think I am going to bleed to death. After getting out the back door unperceived I saw a team and wagon going along back of the field. I started running across the field, making motions with my hands to the driver and he stopped for me.

They discovered I had escaped and began plotting to kill me. They got Julian's father-in-law to come after me. He said that my husband was at his house, and for me to go home with him and they would protect me. So I went, and the doctor was lying there in Mr. Layonne's house, dead drunk. He had no more use of himself than a log; they had him on a bed made down on the floor against the hall door. I asked Mrs. Layonne if I could sleep upstairs in her and her husband's bed room. They said there was no bed up there. I said I will lie on a quilt on the floor, but they insisted that I would be perfectly safe with my husband as the hall door was securely locked. I went and found the door our bed was against was not locked. So I went back upstairs and wouldn't come down, and they had to let me stay, and when I heard foot steps on the stairs I

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

93

waked them up and I didn't sleep but lay between their bed and the wall all night. Such an awful night as I put in for I knew they wanted to kill me, and that is why we moved to this town. They are on trial now and have returned some of my jewels, but no money."

When Beth returned home again she found her daughter there to visit her; she had been away a year staying with a married sister for health. Doctor Walden had brought her from the depot and his little daughter, delighted with their new acquaintance, called her Princess Hilda; decided she was the Hilda of a fairy story they had heard, because her name was Hilda. They were busy as was their way, taking the hair pins out of her hair and the pins out of her clothing. They kept Hilda busy trying to keep her collar on and her hair up. Her handbag had already been gone through and they begged and tried to hire her to spend the night with them, offering her everything they could think of if she would stay. Then as a last resort, Sylvia decided to give up to her the greatest privilege in the world to induce her guest to spend the night with them; she said, "If you will stay I will let you sleep with my

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

94

papa." That had been her great privilege for over a year since her baby sister came, to sleep with her 300 pound papa. They didn't say Paw, Paw, like most southern children, but papa, accent on the first syllable, English sound.

"Oh, I am so glad you are here safe," said Beth. "But why didn't you meet me Mother?" The creek was so high yesterday, and the water came up in the cart this morning." Hilda looked grieved as she said, "I didn't know what to do or which way to turn, but the doctor happened to be there and asked me where I wanted to go and who I was looking for, and brought me out in his buggy." "Well, dear daughter, we will go to your aunt's and plan for next year. This year's work is done. I have two letters from Wentworth, wanting me to come out there and teach and make my home there, and one from Cottonwood. I will leave Hilda here with you sister until I can see those people and decide what to do, and Louise, I will not be gone longer than possible, for I see Hilda does not like to be left so soon."

Beth stopped on her way back to Hazelwood, as usual and Mrs. Walden related the latest gossip of the village.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

95

That Mrs. Camden had driven up to Mrs. Woden's gate and called Mrs. Woden down for leading Wade to think that Lenora loved him, and that she refused to marry him and the next day had taken Wade to a Catholic school and put him in custody of the priests with instructions not to let him escape or come home on any pretext whatever, and that she would come after him when she wanted him. "Well, well, that spoiled boy, who has never known obedience to anyone. I am surprised, Mrs. Camden is so opposed to the Roman Catholic faith", said Beth. Mrs. Walden continued, "It seems strange but everyone knows that she is going to marry the singing school teacher, and had to get Wade out of the way, or he might do some reckless shooting." "Well, I can't say that I am much surprised at that," said Beth, for Mrs. Woden said sometime ago that that would be a match. Lenora accused her sister of setting her cap for the singing teacher and Mrs. Woden retorted, "It will do me nor anyone else no good, to set caps for Mrs. Camden has hers set and it will fit" and when I said Mrs. Camden was fifty three and the teacher couldn't be over thirty, Mrs. Woden that she is older than that but she has the dough.

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

96

So Beth made a trip to Cottonwood and back and stopped with Mrs. Walden for lunch and to get her mail, as that was the nearest post office. The next nearest was thirteen miles distant; there was one nearer but out of her line of travel. She asked if they had heard from Wade, "Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Walden, "Mrs. Camden married the teacher, and Wade made his escape and rode up to his mother's house yesterday with some boys, and not finding them at home shot the organ full of holes and rode around the house and shot a few holes in it, then rode off with his unearthly scream. The servants hid as soon as they saw him coming and gave him plenty of room, and we heard that the new husband had decamped. He was seen buying a ticket to some point in Texas. I don't know how true that is but if he is wise he will keep out of that boy's way."

While they were talking Mrs. Woden drove past with a young man in her buggy, and Mrs. Walden said, "There is Betty Woden back from the city with her brother; she started early this morning to meet him, he has served his sentence out in the pen and arrived safely home." "I thought

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

97

Digby was the second brother, the one who killed Betty's husband." "No, the deaf one is the oldest, then Digby, Bud is the youngest. I suppose you know Bud is married?" "Yes, well he is having trouble, too." But Beth knew about that—was right there on Woden's porch when Lenora called Bud to the house and told him that Edd Warren had just ridden off from the store and that she wanted him to take a blacksnake whip, follow him and whip him. Beth had begged her not to send him saying, "Lenora, call him back before he mounts his horse, that man will kill him." "No, he is a coward!" said Lenora excitedly, her splendid eyes dilated and blazing. "Please Lenora, if Bud strikes him with that whip, Edd will shoot him," pleaded Beth. But Lenora called after him as he rode off, "Whip him within an inch of his life and tell him you have two sisters here backing you!" After Bud had gone she explained that Edd Warren had said, after his sister had married Bud, that he would as soon have had his sister married to a 'nigger'. and I hope Bud beats him nearly to death," said Lenora. But Warren had the start of Bud and that poor bleeding hearted little mother was spared another nail from being driven into her aching heart. I hope they

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

98

will not meet until the soreness wears off caused by foolish talk, mused Beth. The boys in this country don't seem to learn the lesson learned by some cowboys of the west, that it is safer to be polite to each other.

Mrs. Walden wanted to stay and teach their school at Hazelwood the next term, but Beth had her mind made up differently. No one saw her until she stepped in the door at her sisters; Mrs. Simpson sprang to greet her with, "I am so glad you are at home again, my dear old sister." "Do not call this home where people are so blood thirsty", said Hilda to her aunt, and continued, "Mother we cannot live here." "No my dear we will not live here," answered her mother.

Edith Headspeth, Mrs. Simpson's daughter, had arrived a little before Beth with the news that Ed Holden's white girl wife had come back to him, after leaving him about a year before; she walked into her husband's home while he was away. He came home and found her there, lying on the couch with a headache. He seemed to be glad to see her and sat down with a pan of water and bathed her head. His mother heard of it and sent for him to come to her house

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

99

and he went, then she came with a bunch of her hands and servants, and ordered her son's wife's trunk brought out and put in the wagon, and the girl wife to come out and go with it to the city, telling her she couldn't stay in Holdenville. But the girl was too quick for them; she got the drop on them and said, "The first man that enters this door dies, I have guns and cartridges enough to kill everyone of you." The men stopped and drew back and wouldn't try to go in; Mrs. Taylor walked around the house carrying her revolver in her right hand, resting it on her left arm, but finally all left. Beth asked Edith if she saw all of this from her house and Edith said, "Yes we live nearly in their yard in one of Ed Garton's houses.

Then Edith continued with the story saying, that they sent Mr. Layonne to her. He told her she would have to go, for the house would be watched day and night and that she would not be able to step out of doors or sit in the house at night with a light without being shot by an assassin hiding in the brush. After about an hour he coaxed her into letting him take her to the depot and send her home. "So she is gone again, poor little girl!"

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

100

said sympathizing Mrs. Simpson, "Raised in the city among civilized people and educated; how strange she picked up that wild Indian boy," returned Beth. "Did Mrs. Taylor treat you nice when you delivered her book, Beth?"

"Yes nice enough, she took her book and gave me the money and asked to look at a nicer one. I handed it to her and she stood there with her back to the stove where her sister was ironing for her" (the widow Woden), "she slowly turned the leaves looking very serious and every little while casting a sorrowful, lingering look at her son, who stood near, very still. He looked so young, just a slim, dark, quiet boy and such a mother! she was then regretting that she did not educate him, she wanted to give him one of those beautiful books but she knew he could not read," said Mrs. Simpson. Beth thought how pitiful that he cannot read and she realized the sadness of his heritage.

Beth said, "Well she handed me back the book and I am still alive you see, but I believe if I were you, Edith, I would rent some where else." "You are right, Aunt Beth, Sam has gone over the river today to rent another place."

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

101

Later on-- our home is in another town, much worse characters surround us than before, Belgian miners and other foreigners, so savage and beastly that the wild Indian seems angelic beside them but Beth seldom hears from Hazelwood or Holdenville, from the Walden's or from young Camden, the wild screech owl, or from Lenora, the self-sacrificing young angel, whom nothing could be too good for a friend, or nothing too bad for an enemy; or from the daring young jockey who was often facing death without the quiver of eyelid; or from his great rawboned, red-headed, Scotch Indian daddy(Camden) who lived in an atmosphere of silence that seemed to belong to the great stillness of the forest and deep flowing streams of his God given homeland, and in his presence you found yourself waiting in silence before him for the sound of the gentle voice that was sure to greet you in tones of friendliness and truth, a character so deep and so gentle, a heritage more to be desired than great riches.. Though he never spoke of it, neither could you to him, he carried an enemy's bullet near his lungs that often threatened to snuff out his life. A tragedy sure. Then poor Mrs.

SIMPSON, ELLEN

INTERVIEW.

102

Ludwig with her blind husband, who had seen the devil, and her life of tragedy, and a new tragedy was added to her life as Beth left there. Her son, who had just returned a short time from the pen, was arrested in Texas for murder and grave robbing, and was sentenced to death, this was the latest report but not authentic. But the evidence was against him. A young woman swore that the ring she wore was given her by him, and it was proven to be a ring that had been stolen from a grave, from the owner. Circumstance also pointed to him as the murderer of a doctor's wife.

Nor do we hear from Mrs. Taylor, who carried on her murderous schemes with as much sang froid as a sportsman catches fish. Oh, sin, sin! A monster of such frightful mien, that to be hated needs only to be seen.

About two years after leaving Hazelwood Beth was driving home a little before sundown when a wagon passed her, drawn by two ponies, trotting swiftly. There were five men and two boys in the wagon, a very jolly crowd, laughing and talking in the most hilarious manner. As soon as they saw her they began calling to her, 'Hello,

SIMPSON, ELLEN.

INTERVIEW.

103

hello, Mrs. Hill,' all trying to talk at once. Then with all their hats waving high above their heads changed their salutation to, "Goodby, goodby we are all going away to-morrow." Now Beth was puzzled, wondering who the well dressed crowd of happy, sunny faced boys were who were bidding her goodby with such a flourish of hats and where could they be going? And where did they belong? If only I could place them. After much conjecture she decided that they must be Hazelwood boys who had been up there to the races; surely two of them were Mr. Camden's sons, the youngest one was the jockey and the red-headed young man who swung his white straw hat so vigorously was the older son; not much like their quiet father. Oh! the joyousness of Youth! May they never go about so silent, carrying leaden slugs in their bodies dangerously near those happy hearts and healthy lungs.