



# *Big Indian*

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North American

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Intermarriages between white people and red ones in this country were not uncommon in the days when our ancestors led as rude a life as the natives, and several places in the Catskills commemorate this fact. Mount Utsayantha, for example, is named for an Indian woman whose life, with that of her baby and her white husband, was lost there. For the white men early found friends among these mountains. As far back as 1663 they spared Catherine Dubois and her three children, after some rash spirits had abducted them and carried them to a place on the upper Walkill, to do them to death; for the captives raised a Huguenot hymn and the hearts of their captors were softened.

In Esopus Valley lived Winnisook, whose height was seven feet, and who was known among the white settlers as “the big Indian.” He loved a white girl of the neighborhood, one Gertrude Molyneux, and had asked for her hand; but while she was willing, the objections of her family were too strong to be overcome, and she was teased into marriage with Joseph Bundy, of her own race, instead. She liked the Indian all the better after that, however, because Bundy proved to be a bad fellow, and believing that she could be happier among barbarians than among a people that approved such marriages, she eloped with Winnisook. For a long time all trace of the runaway couple was lost, but one day the man having gone down to the plain to steal cattle, it was alleged, was discovered by some farmers who knew him, and who gave hot chase, coming up with him at the place now called Big Indian.

Foremost in the chase was Bundy. As he came near to the enemy of his peace he exclaimed, “I think the best way to civilize that yellow serpent is to let daylight into his heart,” and, drawing his rifle to his shoulder, he fired. Mortally wounded, yet instinctively seeking refuge, the giant staggered into the hollow of a pine-tree, where the farmers lost sight of him. There, however, he was found by Gertrude, bolt upright, yet dead. The unwedded widow brought her dusky children to the place and spent the remainder of her days near his grave. Until a few years ago the tree was still pointed out, but a railroad company has now covered it with an embankment.

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