

Marion

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North American

Advanced
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Blooming and maidenly, though she dressed in leather and used a rifle like a man, was Marion, granddaughter of old Abraham, who counted his years as ninety, and who for many of those years had lived with his books in the tidy cabin where the Youghiogheny and Monongahela come together. This place stood near the trail along which Braddock marched to his defeat, and it was one of the stragglers from this command, a bony half-breed with red hair, called Red Wolf, that knocked at the door and asked for water. Seeing no one but Marion he ventured in, and would have tried not only to make free with the contents of the little house but would have kissed the girl as well, only that she seized her rifle and held him at bay. Still, the fellow would have braved a shot, had not a young officer in a silver-laced uniform glanced through the open door in passing and discovered the situation. He doffed his chapeau to Marion, then said sternly to the rogue, "Retire. Your men are waiting for you." Red Wolf slunk away, and Washington, for it was he, begged that he might rest for a little time under the roof.

This request was gladly complied with, both by the girl and by her grandfather, who presently appeared, and the fever that threatened the young soldier was averted by a day of careful nursing. Marion's innate refinement, her gentleness, her vivacity, could not fail to interest Washington, and the vision of her face was with him for many a day. He promised to return, then he rode forward and caught up with the troops. He survived the battle in which seven hundred of his comrades were shot or tomahawked and scalped. One Indian fired at him eleven times, and five of the bullets scratched him; after that the savage forbore, believing that the officer was under Manitou's protection. When the retreating column approached the place where Marion lived

he hastened on in advance to see her. The cabin was in ashes. He called, but there was no answer. When he turned away, with sad and thoughtful mien, a brown tress was wrapped around his finger, and in his cabinet he kept it until his death, folded in a paper marked "Marion, July 11, 1755."

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