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TO-DAY

4 Great Picture Features 4

A GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST

BY GENE STRATTON PORTER

(Continued.)

"All depends on how this fever leaves me. Uncle says the nights are too cold and the days too hot there for me. He thinks I had better stay in an even temperature until I am strong again. I'll have this cut out in a minute. You better say 'yes,' he persisted. 'It would be a real kindness. It would keep me out doors all day and give an incentive to work. I'm good at it. I'll show you if I am not in a week or so. I can 'sugar' manipulate lights and mirrors and am familiar with all the expert methods. I'll wager moths are thick in the old swamp over there."

"They are," said Elnora. "Most I have I took there. A few nights ago my mother caught a good many, but we don't dare go alone."

"All the more reason why you need me. Where do you live? I can't get an answer from you. I'll just go tell your mother who I am and ask her if I may help you."

The cocoon came loose. Philip Ammon stepped down the embankment, turning to offer his hand to Elnora. They went to Mrs. Comstock.

"Mother, this is Mr. Philip Ammon of Chicago," said Elnora. "He has been ill, and he is staying with Dr. Ammon in Onabasha. He came fishing down the creek and cut this cocoon from under the bridge for me. He feels that it would be better to hunt moths than to fish until he gets well. What do you think about it?"

Philip Ammon extended his hand.

"I am glad to know you," he said.

"You may take the handshaking for granted," replied Mrs. Comstock. "Daphnions have a way of making the fingers sticky, and I like to know a man before I take his hand, anyway. That introduction seems mighty comprehensive on your part, but it still leaves me unclassified. My name is Comstock."

At last Mrs. Comstock finished the greens.

"You are three miles from the city and less than a mile from where we live," she said. "If you will tell me what you dare eat. I suspect you had best go home with us and rest until the cool of the day before you start back. Probably some one that you can ride in with will be passing before evening."

Philip Ammon was on his feet. Picking up the pall of greens and his fishing rod he stood waiting. Elnora led the way. Mrs. Comstock motioned Philip to follow and she walked in the rear.

Elnora proceeded slowly, chattering about everything along the trail. Philip was interested in all the objects she pointed out, noticing several things which escaped her. When Elnora turned toward the gate of her home, Philip



Ammon stepped, took a long look at the big hewed log cabin, the vines which clambered over it, the flower garden ablaze with beds of bright bloom interspersed with strawberries and tomatoes, the trees of the forest rising north and west like a green wall and exclaimed, "How beautiful!" Philip Ammon was ravenous for the buttermilk, and when he stretched on the bench in the arbor the flickering patches of sunlight so tantalized his tired eyes, while the bees made such splendid music, he was soon sound asleep.

When Elnora and her mother came out with a table they stood a short time looking at him. It is probable Mrs. Comstock voiced a united thought when she said, "What a refined, decent looking young man! How proud his mother must be of him! We must be careful what we let him eat."

They returned to the kitchen where Mrs. Comstock proceeded to be careful. She broiled ham of her own sugar curing, creamed potatoes, served asparagus on toast and made a dandelion salad and a delicious strawberry shortcake. When everything was ready she touched Ammon's sleeve.

"Best have something to eat, lad before you get too hungry," she said.

"Please hurry!" he begged laughingly as he held a plate toward her to be filled. "It's mighty kind of you to take me in. I hope I will be man enough in a few days to do something worth while in return."

They talked of flowers, moths, drag on flies, Indian relics and all the natural wonders the swamp afforded straying from those subjects to books and school work. When they cleared the table Ammon assisted, carrying several tray loads to the kitchen. He and Elnora mounted specimens, while Mrs. Comstock washed the dishes. Then she came out with a ruffle she was embroidering. At last Ammon said he must go or his friends would become anxious about him.

"May I come tomorrow afternoon and chase moths awhile?" he asked Mrs. Comstock as he arose. "I've got to remain outdoors some place, and I'm quite sure I'd get well faster here than anywhere else. Please say I may come."

"I have no objections if Elnora really would like help," said Mrs. Comstock.

In her heart she wished he would not. She wanted her newly found treasure all to herself for a time at least. But Elnora's were eager, shining eyes. She thought it would be splendid to have help and great fun to try book methods for taking moths, so it was arranged. As Ammon rode away Mrs. Comstock's eyes followed him. "What a nice young man!" she said.

"He seems fine," agreed Elnora. The next morning Mrs. Comstock called to Elnora, "The mail carrier stopped at our box."

Elnora ran down the walk and came back carrying an official looking letter, in which the position of lecturer on natural history was offered to Elnora, at a salary of \$750 a year, with \$200 for expenses.

"It is a new position. They never have had anything like it before. I suspect it arose from the help I've been giving the grade teachers in their nature work. Mother, dear, I am going to accept this, of course. The work will be a delight. I'd love it most of anything in teaching. You must help me. We must find nests, eggs, leaves, queer formations in plants and rare flowers. I must have flower boxes made for each of the rooms and filled with wild things. I should begin to gather specimens this very day."

Elnora was on her feet. Her face was flushed and her eyes bright.

"Can I help you?" Mrs. Comstock's strong face was pathetic.

"Indeed, yes!" cried Elnora. "I never can get through it alone."

Ammon came whistling down the walk between the cinnamon pinks, pansies and strawberries. He carried several packages, while his face flushed with more color than on the previous day.

(To Be Continued.)

Sillicus—There is honor among thieves.

Cynicus—Nonsense! Thieves are just as bad as other people.

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