

CHAPTER XXVI.

A THRILLING NARRATIVE OF KATY SAGE, THE LOST CHILD OF GRAYSON.

The circumstances of the following narrative are most remarkable, certainly stranger than fiction, and involve more to touch the heart and enlist the kindlier emotions of our nature than anything the writer has been able to pick up in his long residence among the mountains.

On Elk creek, in Grayson county, Virginia, lived, in 1792, a young and happy family, consisting of James Sage, his wife and three or four small children. The morning of the 11th of April in that year was bright and balmy, the early wild flowers were bursting into bloom, the song-birds were trilling their melody in the budding forest, the be-spangled trout were sporting in the crystal waters of the mountain stream, and all was peaceful and joyous around the cabin of the pioneer. The husband and father was preparing his clearing for the summer crop, and the wife and mother preparing for the day's washing. She had gone to the little stream near by to build a fire, leaving her little daughter Katy, then only five years old, chasing butterflies among the shrubs of the garden. After starting the fire, the mother returned to the cabin for the clothes she intended to wash, when she missed the child that had been seen sporting in the garden a short time before. After a diligent but fruitless search for some little distance around

the inclosure, she became alarmed and called her husband from the field, and they both sought the little one till night fell upon the scene, and still she could not be found. The weary hours of the night chased each other slowly on, and still the agonized parents heard no cheering answer to their continued calls. On the morrow the neighbors gathered in, the country at that time being very sparsely populated, but some fifty or sixty of them came together, and day after day and week after week they searched every cove, thicket, stream, cave and mountain-side, and still no tidings of the little wanderer.

At length all except the father gave up the search in despair, who continued it for months, passing over nearly every square yard of ground for miles around, with the melancholy hope that at least the remains or some indications of the fate of the lost one might be found, which would be more satisfactory than the agonizing suspense that hung about the hearts of the parents. In his wanderings he heard of the fame of an old woman known by the name of Granny Moses, who lived beyond the mountain in North Carolina, and who was believed by the settlers to possess the faculty of revealing all mysteries and foretelling future events. He sought her out and consulted her. After consulting her occult sciences, she informed him that the child was still living, but that he would never see or hear of her, though his wife, who would survive him, would hear from her child in her old age.

Time wore on, thirty-one years had passed, and in 1823 the father died, and still no tidings of the lost one. Time was still on the wing, and amid its changes and revolu-

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tions and startling events, the mysterious disappearance of Katy Sage was unrevealed and almost forgotten. In the meantime the family became scattered—one of the sons settling in Lee county, Virginia; another in Missouri, and a third in Kansas. Years swept on, and in 1854 Charles Sage, who lived in Kansas, having business with the Government, visited the Indian Agency on the border of that Territory. On entering the office, he attracted the attention of the Agent, who asked him if he had a sister or other female relation among the Indians, stating that there was a white woman among the Shawnees, who sometimes visited the Agency, to whom he bore a most remarkable resemblance. He informed the Agent that he was not aware of having such a relative, but that, more than sixty years before, a sister of his had been stolen or lost, who had never been heard from. The Agent, believing the woman among the Shawnees and the lost child to be one and the same, propose to send for her and have the mystery solved.

She was sent for and came to the Agency with an interpreter, not being able to speak or understand a word of English. As soon as Charles Sage saw her, he believed her to be his long lost sister, from the striking family resemblance, got her consent to go home with him, and wrote at once to his brother Samuel in Missouri to come to Kansas immediately and see if he could recognize her features, as he was old enough to remember their sister when she disappeared. He made the journey, and as soon as he saw her he burst into tears, so certain was he that she was his sister Katy. But all suspense and mystery.

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were dissipated when she informed them through an interpreter that she had been taken from her home when a small child by a white man, lived several years among the Cherokees, then among the Creeks, and finally among the Shawnees, and that in all her wanderings, from tribe to tribe, and from country to country, she had retained the name of Katy. She had been three times married to chiefs of the Shawnee tribe, had lost an only child, and was now a widow.

To place her identity beyond all cavil or doubt, the brothers wrote to their mother, still living on the same spot in Grayson county, Virginia, and then ninety-five years old, to know if she recollected any mark upon the person of Katy by which she might be recognized. In due time they received an answer that she was marked with a ginger-colored spot on one of her shoulders, and on being examined the spot was found. This entirely and unmistakably established her identity.

The brothers now began to arrange to take her to their mother, but before their arrangements had been completed, Katy took the pneumonia and died, and although the parents and lost child never met again on earth, they all "crossed over the river, and are resting under the shade of the trees."

While the writer does not subscribe to human divinations, or human power to solve the mysterious providences in the womb of the future, he must regard the predictions of Granny Moses as the most remarkable since the days of the Witch of Endor.