

HER FATHER'S PROPOSAL.

The Romance of Rattlesnake Island and Its Termination.

It is remarkable what sizable romances small bits of territory are capable of producing under favorable conditions. Though containing but six or eight acres, Rattlesnake Island forms the scene of quite an interesting episode about this time. The island lies about two miles to the northeast of Put-in-Bay. Its surface, broken by outcropping beds of limestone, is partially covered with forest fringes and clumps of red cedar and its shores are rocky and precipitous. In shape it is elongated, with a hump in the middle, and two islets—mere dots—at the tail end known as "the rattles." Viewed from a distance a lively imagination may readily resolve this dark, couchant body of land outlined against the turquoise blue of Erie into a gigantic rattlesnake, with head erect and rattles in working order, coiled for action. From its peculiar formation the island is generally supposed to have derived its name, though some assert that the appellation was bestowed in consequence of the illimitable quantities of the rattle-tailed species which rendezvoused in and among the crevices and caverned rocks. From these fastnesses they were wont to lunge forth in aggressive prominence, hissing and clicking their spits and whipling the earth and surrounding vegetation until everything looked blue. Many "vets" were numbered among these reptilian inhabitants, regular old smokers, with wads of rattles. So thick were they—

there was no more peace for Rattlesnake. From time to time, his scaly skin was haunted by a spectral sail which circled about the island, edging nearer and nearer at each cruise: until one day it lay beached close by the "groat" house of Hank Hammond. At beck of the little winged god Tom Taylor and his boat followed the charmer to her rocky retreat. This being his first experience in courtship, however, Tom proved a bit fresh, and his baseness was exaggerated. His feebly advances were repelled with apparent disfavor, the coy maiden turning a deaf ear to his importunities, until in blank despair he shook the dust of Rattlesnake from his feet. The spectral sail retreated over the water, returning no more that season to haunt the mirrored waves of the little lake. Tom Taylor "darned" and "repacked" his boat, and he and his wife! himself and her in—well, in a clime made too warm for health and comfort. Having thus abandoned schemes matrimonial, he returned to his work, investigating into nets of tarred twine the unsuspecting "bluys," an occupation which he was much more familiar than that of love-making. One early Spring day, some months following the collapse of Tom's love affair, a terrific squall, such as sometimes sweep down upon the island unannounced, struck Put-in-Bay with a force that wrenched limbs from trees and sent the troubled sea sporting up the rocks in blinding shows. Looking from her window on an old woman who occupied a cottage on East Point thought she espied a small boat far out on the lake driving eastward before the gale. From a shelf she snatched a pair of field-glasses, through which she took a second observation. Yes, the boat was evidently drifting at the mercy of the wind and current. Not an oar was in motion. Only a single occupant could be discerned, and that a female. With breathless haste the old woman rushed along the shore to a little cave, where, among the trees, stood a fish shanty. Within an angle of the l-shaped dock several boats lay moored, and two fishermen, dressed in yellow oilers and sun-westers, were coal-tarring twice over a smoking kettle on the shore. One of these individuals proved to be her friend Tom Taylor. Tom took the field-glasses proffered by the scared old lady, and through them examined the drifting boat. "Blas't my buttons if it ain't a woman!" he exclaimed. With two or three long strides he reached the dock and began unfastening a boat. "What you goin' to do?" demanded his companion. "Goin' to pick up that skiff. Come on, Jim." Jim demurred, urging that no boat could live long in such a sea and that it was just foolhardy to venture. "You, however, struck her; but at last the castaway was overhauled. As they approached the woman stretched appealing hands towards them and Tom turned his seat to get a square look at her. "Great Scott!" The bearded paragon on his brow began streaming down his cheeks—it was Sadie, she who had so cruelly jilted him.

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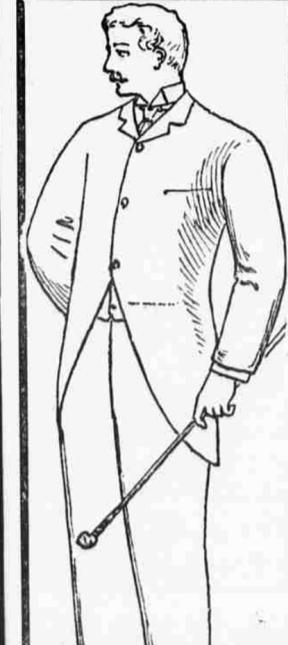
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