

TIPPECANOE

By SAMUEL McCOY

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This is a story of pioneer days in Indiana, when courageous frontiersmen fought the redskins and the wilderness and won vast territory

David Lawrence arrives in the frontier settlement of Corydon, in the Indiana territory, makes the acquaintance of kindly Pat O'Bannon and his pretty daughter Toinette, and gets work in the village store. David had followed an enemy from England to kill him. Almost immediately he becomes involved in strange plots in America. One of them develops in this installment.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

David looked up quickly at his questioner. She was younger than he and pretty and freckled; and when she wrinkled up her nose as she asked the question, David could not forbear smiling. In spite of the momentary smile, the utter hopelessness that returned to his cavernous eyes almost frightened her. She felt as though she had unwittingly knocked at the door of a house that hid a tragedy, and she was on the verge of a dismayed retreat. But under the funny little nose there was a kind little mouth and a square little chin; so she drew in her breath and ran up all her colors.

"Two pound ten a yard."

"It's dollars, not pounds here, you know," she chided. "You're English, aren't you?"

His smile was frankly bitter now. "I'm done with England," he flashed back.

"A Yankee then?" even more incredulously.

"Yes, thank God!" he burst forth. She hastened to remove the implication of scorn in her words.

"Well, I suppose we'll be, too—father and I. We just arrived at Corydon this morning. But I'm not thinking of God especially for the prospect."

His silence seemed to disconcert her. She may have been conscious of something in her that imagined a rebuke he did not intend. She bit her lip and threw a backward glance.

"Three cheers for the president!" The candor in her eyes lent a sincerity to her words. She turned and beckoned to her father, who was chatting at the door. He seemed to be used to her humors, for he came forward intently with, "Well, daughter—"

He had the broad, red face of a prosperous British farmer, a ruddy taw in which you might discern no sun-spot of guile. Heartiness radiated from him as from the maturing sun. His shrewd little eyes looked on David with so honest a kindness that David gave him instant trust. A strange thing, for David knew it was the farmers of England whose flour made the threepenny loaves whose price had made the weavers go hungry.

"Father, I want you to"—she turned wistfully to the young storekeeper—"What is your name?"

"The young man surrendered. 'David Lawrence.'"

"This is my father, Mr. Job Cranmer. My name is Lydia, and I'm his only daughter, and he does what I tell him to do, my father?"

She gave him a tug at his elbow. The name Lydia instantly became for David one of those on the calendar.

"Your daughter is very kind, Mr. Cranmer."

The girl hastened to impart the one piece of information she had gleaned about her countryman.

"He says he is going to live here."

"A fine country, this young man," approved Mr. Cranmer heartily. "I'll mean to settle here myself. They tell me land is as cheap here on the wilderness border as coals in Newcastle—I'm a farming man."

"You're no farmer!" hazarded the girl to David.

"No—I was a weaver."

"Oh, said Cranmer, comprehending, "then it hasn't been all skillies with you, hey, young man?"

A wave of dark red swept over David's face and he seemed unable to answer.

"Nottingham way, maybe?" pursued his questioner.

"Yes," he assented, and choked over the word.

"Your people have been hard trodden haven't they?" pressed Cranmer kindly.

"Oh, do not mind me of it!" broke from David's lips. He bowed his head to hide the tears he could not control. Lydia turned to her father for explanation.

"Likely this young man suffered with the Luddites," he remarked.

"Tell us," whispered Lydia, "we are sorry."

"Ay, 4—a England," blustered Cranmer, without an apology for the oath.

David looked at the man intently. There was something about him that roused question.

"Nottingham market place is a fair sight," observed the farmer.

"You've been there?"

"Ay, one Whit-Monday feast."

"Clifton groves were green then," cried Lydia eagerly.

"There was blood on the parade at Martins' two years ago," David burst forth, gazing smoldering in his eyes. "Our people gathered first at market goose-fair in October; maybe it was the plenty we saw there that made us wild. My father and my mother and I had eaten but one meal a day for weeks before. There were

others worse off than we. I saw a starving child knocked down and beaten that stole an apple from a cart. They drove us out of the market when we cursed England.

It wasn't until November—that we could bear the rent of the frames no longer. The men were fair wolves by then. Every night they gathered in front of the Exchange. Then when the cold began and we had no coals nor even peats from Sherwood—the men blasphemed. They shouted that it was the machinery that was taking the bread from us. My father . . . drew himself together to wait, though he was one of them. My father . . . I read to him at home the night they stormed the mills . . . out of St. John . . . his eyes were gone . . . they broke the looms that night."

He stopped. His eyes were burning like coals.

Newcastle sent his men from their quarters in Castlegate to help the constables. They took four of them in Wollaton street. And then they came to our cottage . . .

He stopped again, deathly pale.

"They took my father with them . . . he kissed me . . . David's voice was low. "There was one who said that my father had incited the riot."

He was trembling so that his two hearers watched him in pity, but he drew himself together.

"Of the twelve judges of England we did not know which one would try the rioters. We addressed pleas to all. I do not suppose any of our letters got beyond a clerk. We were very funny. In the assizes of Michaelmas term the cases were thought so unimportant that none of the judges was delegated to them—John Silverter, Esq., recorder, and Mr. Serjeant Bosquet sitting."

"Four of the five prisoners were hanged. The case against them was too open—they had been taken in the very act of violating his majesty's decree, crown law since the twenty-second year of his reign. My father thanked God for his release."

A cry of joy came from Lydia's lips. "Thank God, indeed," echoed Cranmer.

David smiled at them as a man smiles at his surgeon.

"In December we were a crowd of skeletons in rags. We stood in the wet snow and watched a man in a black hood fix the nooses about the necks of four men. Then the men fell the length of the rope and were still. They had little life to lose. The man who stood next me was my brother."

"The fourth felon they hung was my father."

"Your father?"

A man sobbing with dry eyes is dreadful to look upon.

"But the fifth man—who was set free?"

David's face was terrible.

"They set him free who betrayed my father . . . he fled from us. He was of our Brotherhood—traitor the worse—and had sworn—God help him!"

Father and daughter were silent. David could say no more, but leaned against the counter, his shoulders

talking in low tones. Even so, Lydia appeared to fear that someone might hear what they were saying. Now and then at some light rustle she glanced anxiously about and behind them. But the village street was empty. Only the tall, bending elms were near, and they might be expected to keep her father's secret.

CHAPTER III.

Vows.

Driving forward with her scattered velveties the vestiges of winter, spring began to intrude the main body of her army. The lilacs became delicious spreaders of fragrance, the japonica unfolded its exquisite single flower. Violets hallowed the dead grasses of winter. Then the dogwood trees hung out their snow-white blossoms like huge white butterflies. Against the drifting cloud and up into the warm air flamed the daring color of the red maple of the swamps.

The seventeenth of the month—Toinette O'Bannon met with a puzzling experience that afternoon. She was working in the garden behind her cabin, so that it might not lack for its wealth of bloom that spring. The tears gathered in her eyes as she bent over the task. She was thinking of the garden in New Orleans, whose first cool bloom had been gathered to be laid beside the still, white face that had grown cold at her birth. Now she herself was a woman and had found, with her father, a new home in the northern wilds.

She gathered some sprays of purple hyacinths that a late frost had withered on their stalks. These she twisted into a dejected posy and tossed into the lane, mourning even for them. Then she stooped and began to dig idly about the roots of some love-in-the-mist. Suddenly she was roused from her day-dream by the sound of footsteps passing on the side street that passed the garden. And then she heard an ejaculation like the moan of a beast caught in a trap, and a heavier voice speaking. Too startled to move, she listened behind the screening bushes.

"What ails you, man?"

"The mark! The mark!"

"What foolishness now? What mark?"

"There! The purple posy! Oh, my God!" The speaker seemed to choke.

The other laughed contemptuously. "Nonsense, man, those be but flowers someone has dropped. They mean naught."

"You cannot know," said the other convulsively. "If you but knew the oath—"

"A fidelstick for the oath," the gruff voice blurted. "Throw the thing away, I tell you, and forget it. Hast it with you?"

There was a pause, and then the commanding voice resumed:

"Throw it away, man. It was naught but a mummy."

The girl heard their steps pass on down the street. Rising quickly, she stared at their retreating backs. The one was a tall youth, whom she recognized as young Doctor Elliott; the other a broad-shouldered, portly figure, a stranger to her. As she turned back her eye caught sight of a crumpled bit of paper lying on the path outside the garden and with girlish excitement she hastily ran out and picked it up. Dirty and greasy it was, as if with long handling, and on it, written in a straggling hand and unorthodox spelling, were the words:

I, Edward Scull, of my own free will and Accord do declare and solemnly swear that I will never reveal to any person or persons any thing that may lead to the discovery of the same either in or by word sign or action as may lead to any Discovery under the Penalty of being sent out of this World by the first Brother that May Meet me after the people mark further more I do swear that I will Punish by Death any traitor or traitors should there arise any amongst us I will persevere with unswerving vengeance, should he fly to the verge of Statuta. I will be just true sober and indifical in all my dealings with all my Brothers. So help God to keep this my Oath Inviolated Amen."

What had Doctor Elliott had to do with "Edward Scull"? She puzzled over the riddle and tried to dismiss it with a laugh. But as she returned to the smiling garden it seemed to her that a cloud, no bigger perhaps than a man's hand but still a cloud, came over the place.

When Elliott, having ridden in from Louisville on his mare, called on Toinette later in the afternoon, they strolled, at his suggestion, along the river side. She had not known him long; but on each of his weekly visits to Corydon he had disclosed in every look and word a growing passion for her.

The girl, walking in a reverie that drew a veil of tenderness over the deep sapphire of her eyes, and the April day, fading out in a dream of amethystine blue and a dazzling glory of gold, seemed part of each other. By her side walked the tall young doctor; and he, too, was part, surely, of the beautiful fellowship of the happy world.

He speaks: "Toinette, here are violets. . . . Blue as your eyes, Toinette!"

She does not answer; the words are

only a part of the day, they need no answer.

"Toinette, you must marry me!"

"What?" She heard now. But she could not believe what she had heard.

"You do not know what you are saying," she laughed.

But he paid no heed to her. "Toinette, there is no one in the world, there will never be anyone—"

"Oh, please don't go on! I shall never marry. I do not believe I was meant for marriage. Aren't some girls born to be spinsters?"

"No, no! Not you!"

"Yes, I shall be an old maid. There is no one in the world that I shall ever marry. I shall be happy with my father all my life—and have only good friends, faithful friends," she added in a whisper so low that it seemed a thought, not speech.

"Your father is young no longer. He must wish you to marry—he will be happier if you do. You must not sacrifice yourself to him—it is unjust."

"While he lives I shall not leave him; and oh, do not make me think that there will ever come a time when . . ."

"Forgive me; I am sorry. But you may marry and still be with him? Wouldn't he rather gain a son? Oh, Toinette, if I could only tell you what I feel! You must marry me—I love you so!"

"I can never marry you."

"Why not? Is it because you love someone else?"

She was silent.

"Is it someone in your old home? Surely not—you would never have left him to come here! Besides, you were too young. Tell me—is it any man in Corydon? Answer, Toinette! Is it Toinette, is it this newcomer, this fellow-Lawrence?"

She did not answer.

"Lawrence or no one! Well, he's out of my way. You'll see little of him now—oh, I know, I've heard of you both! He's happy enough elsewhere."

"Don't! Don't speak of Mr. Lawrence!"

"You think I don't know? I've never met him, but news travels far. I tell you! There's a pretty English girl that he spends his time with now!"

"I am not concerned in Mr. Lawrence's actions," she answered coldly.

"Believe me or not, as you choose. The whole village knows it. But I know more—you think your heroic Mr. Lawrence is an honest American now? Bah! What is he, what is he doing here? Who knows anything about Lawrence? I tell you, he and Cranmer's daughter are a pretty pair!"

"Doctor Elliott! Take care of your words! You dare not slander Lydia!"

"Oh, she's honest enough, no doubt; but there's bound to be war with England—and soon. Suppose you were English, wouldn't you do what you could for your country? There's our forts and this frontier that the English would like to have, remember?"

"I will not listen to this! You cannot mean what you are saying."

"If you are a loyal American you will listen."

"I will hear nothing more from you about Lydia and Mr. Lawrence. And now let me go. I should not have let you say what you have. Forgive me—let us both forget it."

She turned away and Elliott hastened to repair his hasty speech.

"I have said nothing of this to anyone and I have only told you, Toinette, because I love you so. I don't want you to be misled by appearances. I shall say nothing more about this, but time will show you I am right. You are not angry with me, Toinette? I would die rather than displease you!"

The girl was evidently aroused, and only Elliott's good sense in dropping the subject saved the walk homeward from embarrassing silence. With ready tact he began to speak of other things, and before they had reached the village he succeeded in drawing a smile from his companion. He told her good night as if nothing untoward had happened.

Returning to the tavern, he sat a while in his room in moody silence and then began gloomily to pound some drugs with mortar and pestle.

"The fat nearly fell in the fire that time," he muttered, and cursed too devilishly his breath. "You're too careful and careful in the world. She loves him! But I'll spoil his fine game yet. The girl's rich—rich, why, that wretched old father of hers must be worth a fortune! And he can't live forever. He fell to grinding his drugs as though the simple remedies were poisons that should encompass O'Bannon's death."

He had been right in one respect. David had spent more than one pleasant evening at the Cranmers'. Under his friendliness the girl glowed into a rosy reiteration of the audacious sympathetic Lydia of their first meeting. It was sweet to hear the broad vowels of Nottinghamshire on her lips and to hear the names of places that struck a pang of memory that David thought would never stir again. Toinette, running over to see Lydia on the evening after Elliott's call on herself, found him and Lydia there alone in what seemed a most animated conversation acknowledged

his presence with the coolest of bows and invented an excuse to withdraw immediately. She took pains to avoid any repetition of the encounter; and Lydia, with the field clear, was as inwardly self-satisfied as a hen that had driven another hen from the barnyard.

David devoured Lydia's easy good-humor hungrily. They talked for hours of the old scenes they both knew so well:

"Did you ever climb Standard Hill, Lydia, and go on till you saw Sherwood forest? Going around Robin Hood's barn, we used to call it."

"Do you remember the three great oaks by the roadside? Father and I used to lie there and watch the drovers go by with their funny sheep and the silt little lambs."

"Ay, I've seen 'em come into market by thousands, like. Or did you ever see the Papist Holes, the caves in the red sandstone banks of the Lene?"

"By the Castle road?"

"Ay, we boys used to play at hunt-the-Captain in 'em—fair places to hide in, they were."

"I went a-Maying once to the Hemlock stone on Bramcote hill. It's near Mayday now, David. . . . It's a long mile between Corydon and Not-

tingham, bent it? . . . I remember we could see Colewick hall and Helme Pierrepont from the hill that day. . . ."

They both fell silent in the April dusk, their eyes seeing in fancy the old playgrounds on the sunburnt turf of Hunger hills or in the green groves of Clifton. The dusk deepened into night and still they sat lost in dreams of old friends, old childhood haunts.

The brown-breasted bird finished its song in the trees overhead; and at last Cranmer came home, stumbling uncertainly along the lane that led from the tavern.

David, having bidden Lydia a friendly good night, almost indeed ran into her unsteady parent. Stepping aside just in time to prevent a collision in the darkness, he caught a glimpse of a second figure—a man from whom Cranmer was just parting. "If you're sober enough," the second man was saying, "we'll have another talk at the new courthouse tomorrow night."

(David did not catch the name that followed) "will be on hand then."

Puzzled, David strolled slowly back to the tavern, where he still lodged. There was something about this man Cranmer that was not on the surface something he did not understand, or like.

CHAPTER IV.

The Special Agent.

Colonel Posey remained indefinitely in Louisiana, and David was still in charge of the shop. Late the next afternoon he closed and bolted the small apartment and started down the street toward the tavern for an early supper. As he passed musily along beneath the new-green elms and neared the courthouse, the words he had overheard the night before from the lips of Cranmer's comrade came sharply back. "The courthouse . . . tomorrow night. . . ."

The fascination of the little courthouse plucked David as with an outstretched hand. In a moment he found himself before it. Through the half-open doors David caught a glimpse of the shadowy and empty place of justice; and with a sudden determination he entered the silent and empty chamber. He would conceal himself within it and learn why Job Cranmer was meeting strange men secretly after nightfall.

He caught a glimpse of a second figure.

He caught a glimpse of a second figure.