

CHAPTER V

After leaving Wiley's house the Indians took a general course leading to the head of Walker's Creek. They followed mountain ways and short cuts from one valley to another, coming to Brushy Mountain, which they crossed to the head waters of Wolf Creek. When the night was far advanced they halted in a large rockhouse¹² in the range between Wolf Creek and the Bluestone River. There they made a fire under the overhanging rock and broiled some venison which a Cherokee took from a pack he carried by thongs on his back. They made a hasty meal of this venison, which appeared to refresh them all, and when the rain ceased they again set forward after extinguishing the fire and concealing as far as possible all traces of its existence. It was still quite dark. The dull dawn found them on the head waters of the Bluestone, branches of which river they waded as they came to them, though all were running high from the recent rains. They crossed the Great Flat Top Mountain and ascended the south end of one of those ridges lying in the watershed between Guyandotte and Tug rivers. This rough range extends almost to the Ohio. The great Indian trail up the Tug

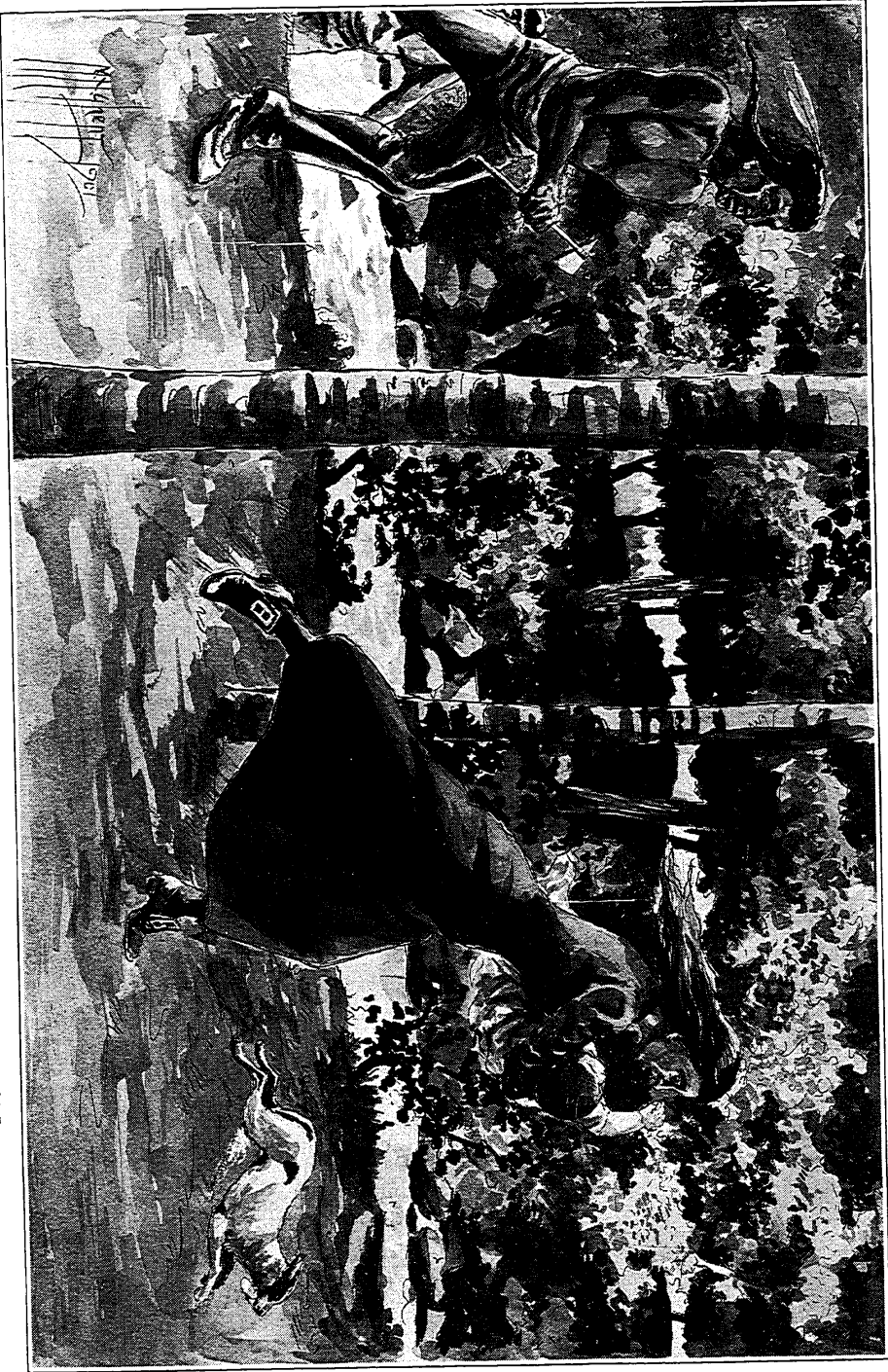
¹² The term "rockhouse" is heard only in the South, and principally in the region of the Alleghanies south of Pennsylvania. It is not used in connection with a cave. It does not apply to a cave; a cave is entirely distinct from a rockhouse. A rockhouse is the open space beneath an overhanging rock or cliff. Rockhouses are sometimes of large extent. I have known them to be used as stables for horses and cattle. They are the favorite resorts of sheep in summer. They are cool and pleasant in the warmest weather, but having a large opening along the entire front they are poor protection from cold in winter. They are found only where the prevailing rocks are sandstone.

River often followed along its tortuous and uneven crest and from that cause it was long known as Indian Ridge, especially in its southern reaches.

The Indians made no halt during this day's travel until late in the afternoon, when, believing themselves beyond any immediate danger of being overtaken by the whites, they made a camp in a rockhouse in the head of a creek below the crest of the mountain. They had not killed any game during the day, although both bear and deer were in sight more than once. Their meal consisted of venison from the pack of the Cherokee. This venison was dried until hard, but the Indians held it in the flames of their camp fire until it was cooked a little, then they ate it. Mrs. Wiley ate some of it, also some parched corn from the wallet of one of the Indians. She was exhausted with the long and rough march of twenty-four hours she had been forced to make. She had climbed mountains and waded streams; she had forced her way through thickets of laurel and ivy, and had tramped through quagmires and over stones; she had been compelled to ascend almost perpendicular cliffs and to descend sheer precipices. Much of the time she had been drenched to the skin. Her child was in great distress and had cried until it could cry no more because of hoarseness. At this camp she saw the warriors make hoops of green boughs and over them stretch the scalps of her brother and her children. In after life she often declared that at no other time did despair so take hold of her as it did this second night of her captivity.

When the Indians lay down to sleep they bound Mrs. Wiley with strips of raw deer skin. She was in a state of nervous delirium and could not sleep, neither could she rest. Every time she closed her eyes she seemed to behold the slaughter of her children anew, and more than once she shrieked aloud. Her cries aroused the old Shawnee, who finally unbound her. He lighted a torch and carried it into the woods, returning soon with some

Mrs. Wiley trying to escape from the Indians with her child



leaves from which he made an infusion in a small vessel he carried. He gave her some of this preparation to drink, after which she fell into a troubled sleep that continued through the night.

The Shawnee chief aroused Mrs. Wiley before the dawn. The Indians were preparing to depart. She was given some corn and venison for the morning meal, and the whole party again set forward. The mountain streams were running bank full from the recent heavy rain, and the Indians avoided them as much as possible by keeping to the paths which followed the ridges. It was with much difficulty that Mrs. Wiley could proceed. She was urged by the Indians to quicken her pace, but her progress was slow and painful. The only thing which enabled her to drag herself along was the fear that if she failed to keep up with the Indians they would kill her child. More than once was this proposed by the Cherokee chief, and it was acquiesced in by all the band save the old Shawnee. As the day advanced the reserve forces of her strong constitution came to her aid and she made better time, but her marching was not satisfactory to the Indians.

When the Indians were starting out this morning they sent two of their number back over the trail to keep watch for the whites, for they were confident that the hunters would follow them. Some of the younger members of the band believed the heavy rains had washed out their trail, but the Cherokee said such was not the case, especially if they should be followed by Matthias Harman. This was one of his strong arguments in favor of killing Mrs. Wiley's child. It was with difficulty that the old Shawnee withstood the demands of the Cherokee chief.

At the end of this day's march an encampment was made in a location much like that of the preceding night. The Indians halted before the sun was down because one of their number had killed a fat bear at the time, and they feasted most of the night. Though the march had been

severe the distance passed had been much less than was covered during the same time of the day before, and Mrs. Wiley's condition had improved somewhat, but her feet were terribly bruised and blistered. She had little hope that her child would live through the night. There being nothing better at hand she rubbed it well with bear's grease, and at the suggestion of the Shawnee chief she forced it to swallow some of the melted fat. This seemed in a measure effective, for the morning showed improvement in the child's health. The Shawnee chief made a decoction of some leaves boiled with the inner layers of the bark of the white oak, which he caused Mrs. Wiley to apply to her feet, and which gave her immediate relief. An additional application in the morning caused still further improvement, and this, together with the improved condition of her child, caused Mrs. Wiley to begin the day with more hope than she began the previous one. The party left the camp before it was light and continued the journey in the direction of the Ohio. A heavy rain had fallen in the night, and it rained most of the day. A terrific storm of wind and rain drove the party under a cliff shortly before darkness came on, and they built a fire and camped there. That camp was in the hills just west of the head of Twelve Pole Creek. The Indian scouts who had been sent back each day reported late at night, and here they said they had seen no pursuers on their trail.

The Indians left their camp, as was their custom, on the following morning before it was light. Insufficient food and the continuous marching was rapidly exhausting Mrs. Wiley, and she found herself unable to move forward so rapidly as on the previous day. She was failing under hardships and the burden of her child. The Shawnee chief warned her of the consequences of failing to keep up with the warriors. But try as she might she could not satisfy her captors.

The Indians who had been sent back as scouts this

morning returned late in the day and reported that they had seen a large party of white men on horseback following their trail. This was not unexpected intelligence, but the Indians discussed earnestly what it was best to do in the matter. Some proposed an ambush of the white men, but this was not taken as the best course to follow. The Cherokee chief proposed the immediate death of the child and a change of course. Mrs. Wiley promised to keep up with the march, and with the aid of the Shawnee chief saved the life of the child for a time. The Indians turned west and descended the hills toward Tug River. They sought a small stream and waded down it until it became too deep for that purpose, when they changed to another. Mrs. Wiley kept well up for a few miles, then began to fail. Despite her utmost exertions she could not march at the rate the Indians were then going. She fell behind the Indians marching in front of her, and began to feel that her child was in great danger. She suspected that her friends were near, although the Indians had told her nothing. At length the Cherokee chief stopped. He was leading the march, and he and most of the party were far in advance. Mrs. Wiley knew what he would do when he came back to her place in the line. His arrival there meant death for her child and possibly death for herself. The Shawnee chief was following her in the water. Mrs. Wiley ran out of the stream and with her last strength ran back up its course with her child.¹³ She had no partic-

¹³ This stream flows into Tug River. It is the first stream of any considerable size on the West Virginia side below Marrowbone Creek. The Indians waded down the last named creek until it got too deep to allow rapid traveling; then they crossed the mountain to the creek upon which Mrs. Wiley's child was killed. Ever since the country has been settled this creek has been called Jennie's Creek, in honor of Mrs. Wiley. After she moved to Kentucky Mrs. Wiley went to this creek and identified the place where her child was killed; she identified the big beech tree against which the Cherokee chief dashed out its brains. This tree was preserved, and it was standing twenty years ago, since which time I have not heard anything concerning it.

ular object in doing this except to carry her child out of danger, and that was a vain effort. The old Shawnee was surprised, but he ran after her and caught her just as the Cherokee chief came up. She was surrounded by the Indians. The Cherokee chief seized her child by the feet and dashed out its brains against a big beech tree. He scalped it, and she was pushed back into the stream and forced to continue her flight.

It was almost dark when the party reached the Tug River, which they found much swollen from the recent rains. As the Indians arrived on its banks a violent thunder storm broke over the valley. The Indians realized that in crossing the river at once lay their only hope of escape from the party in pursuit. Their only means of crossing the stream was by swimming. With the river at the stage at which they found it that was a dangerous undertaking. At all times a swift mountain stream, it was now a raging torrent covered with drift and all manner of river-rubbish. Mrs. Wiley was amazed and terrified when told she must cross the mad stream by swimming in company with the Indians. In the gathering gloom its contortions were visible only by the fierce flashes of lightning that burned in the heavens. It seemed impossible for any one to survive a conflict with this raging river. But she was seized by two Shawnees and dragged screaming into the surging flood. One swam on either side of her. They grasped her firmly by her arms and swam easily and swiftly. They went with the current of the stream and avoided the drift with the dexterity of otters. Their position was almost upright with much of the body above the water; and they pushed but slightly against the current but were all the time working themselves toward the opposite shore. After being carried down the river what seemed to Mrs. Wiley several miles they were all cast to the west bank and found themselves in "dead" water in the mouth of a small creek. There it was much more



The Indians crossing the Tug River with Mrs. Wiley

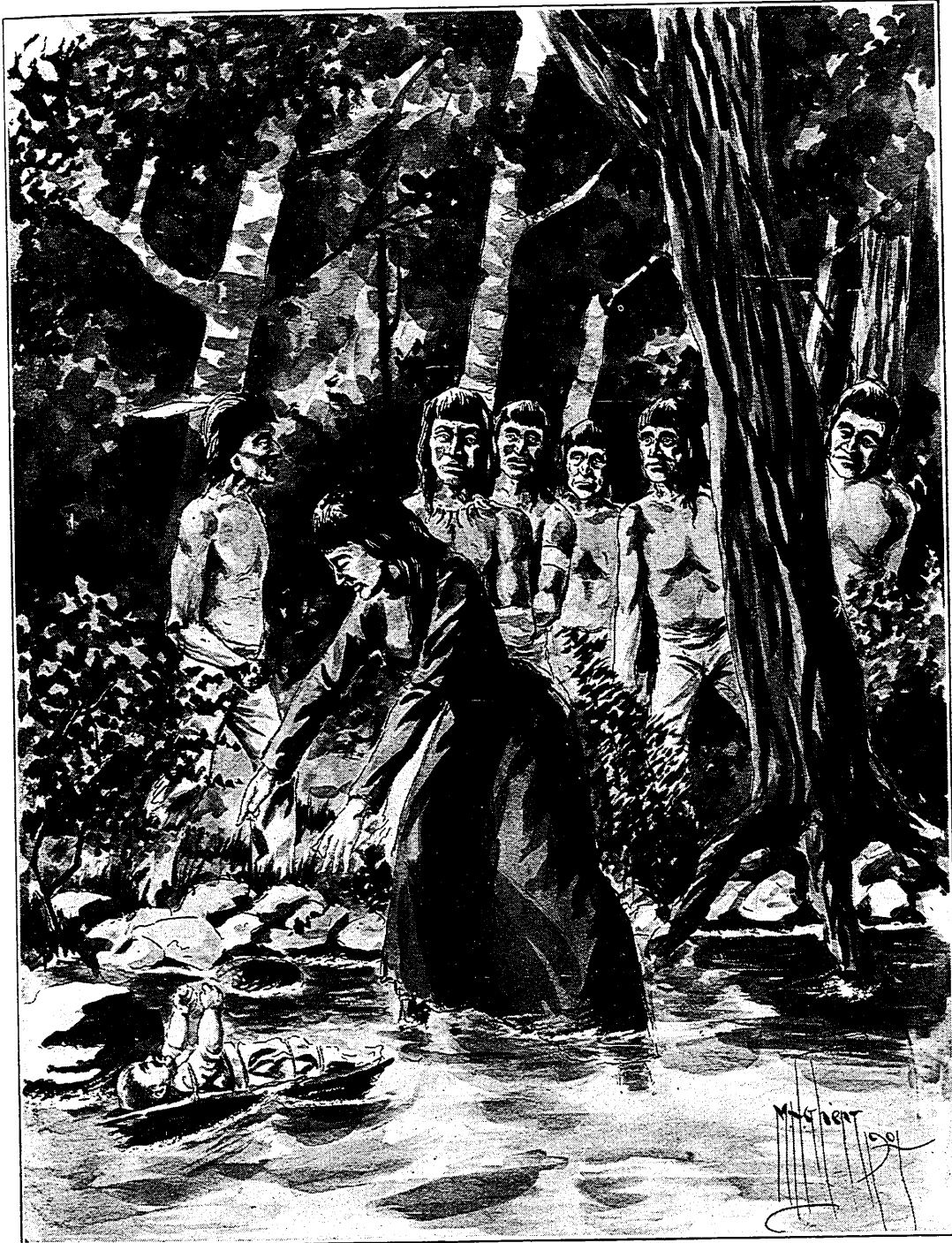
difficult to swim and support the captive above the water, but they succeeded in effecting a landing. The whole party was exhausted and some time was spent in resting, after which the journey was continued. The Indians waded up the stream into the mouth of which they had been cast by the river. It led up into a very rough mountain covered with bristling thickets of laurel and ivy. The storm cleared and the air became chill as they descended the mountain range they were crossing. A large rock-house was sought at the base of the range and a small fire made in it and the blaze screened. The Indians left this camp at dawn, and in the afternoon reached the Louisa River. There they cooked and ate a small deer which had been killed on the march and which made an insufficient meal for the party. The Louisa River was found full to the brim. After resting until almost dark the Indians crossed it as they had crossed the Tug. They went into camp under a cliff behind a mountain and built a roaring fire about which all slept through the night. In the early light of the following morning they sent out two of their number to hunt. In a short time the hunters returned with part of a buffalo they had killed in a cane-brake. The day was spent in eating and sleeping. The Indians believed they had made a complete escape from their pursuers and did not again give that subject any serious consideration. As the sun was nearing the tops of the hills in the western range the party set forward again. They followed a trail which led through valleys and over rough hills, but they marched in a leisurely way. It was well for Mrs. Wiley that they made no forced marches for she was by this time worn out. The loitering marches brought the Indians to the Ohio River on the ninth day of Mrs. Wiley's captivity.

CHAPTER VI

The Indians did not descend directly to the Ohio, but came down the hills west of the Big Sandy and followed that stream about a mile to its mouth. They found an immense flood in the Ohio, something they said was unusual for that season of the year. This flood increased the difficulty of their retreat. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the Indians appeared much pleased to reach the Ohio. The younger members of the band exclaimed "O-hi-yo! O-hi-yo! O-hi-yo!" seemingly in great delight.

How to cross the Ohio was now the question for the Indians. They discussed the matter for some time without arriving at a satisfactory conclusion and finally returned to the hills to avoid the backwater, pushed far up the small streams, and kept down the Ohio. Much of the time they were not in sight of the Ohio. They reached the mouth of the Little Sandy River without finding any means to cross the Ohio and again held council to determine upon a course. They were assisted in a decision apparently by the return of two Indians whom they had sent back from the crossing of the Louisa River to spy upon the movements of the pursuing party. Their report was delivered out of the hearing of Mrs. Wiley who was beginning to understand a few words of the different Indian tongues. After several hours spent in talk the party divided. The Cherokee chief, the Cherokee warrior, two Wyandots, and two Delawares swam across the Little Sandy River and disappeared in the woods.

The remaining Indians, with Mrs. Wiley, took their way up the Little Sandy. They appeared to be in no



Mrs. Wiley rescuing her child from the Indian Ordeal in the Cherokee Fork of Big Blaine Creek

hurry. They left the main stream at the mouth of the Dry Fork, which they followed to the head of one of its branches. They crossed the divide through the Cherokee Gap to the Cherokee Fork of Big Blaine Creek. As they were descending this creek Mrs. Wiley became seriously ill, but she concealed her condition from the Indians as long as possible, fearing she might be killed should they discover the truth. It soon became impossible for her to proceed, however, and the Indians went into camp near the mouth of the creek. They placed Mrs. Wiley in a small rockhouse near the camp and left her alone. There a son was born to her. The birth was premature and she was near death for some time, but she finally recovered and the child lived. She attributed her recovery to a season of fine weather which came on. The Indians brought her meat from the game they killed and from the first of her illness kept her a fire; but as soon as she could walk they left her to gather her own fire-wood. Knowing that it was impossible for her to escape the Indians paid little attention to her.

The Indian party spent the winter in camp at the mouth of Cherokee Creek and allowed Mrs. Wiley to live alone in the rockhouse with her child. She lost all account of time. She did not know the day of the week from the time they went into camp there until she made her escape. The Shawnee chief gave her child a name. The sojourn at this place was uneventful but for one instance. One day when the weather was becoming warmer the Shawnee chief came to the rockhouse and said the child was "three moons," meaning that its age was then about three months. He informed her that he was making preparations to give it the first test a boy was expected to undergo. He made no explanation and soon left the rockhouse. He returned in a short time and commanded her to take the child and follow him. He led her to the creek where the other Indians were assembled. The chief tied the child to a large

slab of dry bark and set it adrift in the swift water of a small shoal. The child began to cry as soon as it felt the cold water, and this action seemed to condemn it in the minds of the warriors. They brandished their tomahawks, and Mrs. Wiley rushed into the water and rescued the infant, immediately returning to the rockhouse with it. The Indians followed her, and when they arrived at the rockhouse the Wyandot killed the child with his tomahawk and immediately proceeded to scalp it. She was not molested, but she saw that the Indians were very angry. She was permitted to bury the child in a corner of the rockhouse.

Soon after the murder of her child and while the streams were full from melting snow the Indians left their camp at the mouth of Cherokee Creek. Mrs. Wiley was not strong but was forced to keep up with the party. They followed a trail which led up Hood's Fork of Big Blaine Creek. Crossing through a gap at the head of one of its branches they came to the Laurel Fork, which they followed to that fine rolling country now known as Flat Gap, in Johnson County. From that point they followed a small stream to the main branch of Big Mudlick Creek, which they descended to the great buffalo lick from which the stream derived its name. They camped at the lick in hope of killing some game, but none came during their stay. They broke camp one morning at dawn and went down the creek, arriving during the day at an old Indian town at the mouth of Little Mudlick Creek. The actions of the Indians there made Mrs. Wiley suppose that the end of their journey had been reached and that they would remain for some time. As that is a somewhat remarkable location and the Indians kept Mrs. Wiley there until the following October a description of some of its most prominent features will not be out of place here.

Little Mudlick Creek is about three miles in length. In dry summers there are times when little water can be

found in its bed. Its general course is from north to south, but it falls into Big Mudlick Creek from the east. It joins the larger stream about half a mile from where Big Mudlick and Big Paint Creek unite. A short distance above the junction of the Mudlick creeks each stream flows through narrows or gorges formed by their having broken through a range of low hills and cut deep channels in ledges of sandstone. In the space enclosed between the two streams there is a perfectly level tract, a miniature table-land or plateau, which runs from near their junction back several hundred feet to a succession of low hills. The beds of the streams are as much as two hundred feet below this plateau, the edges of which are perpendicular and overhang the creeks. These overhanging cliffs contain caves and fissures or rockhouses and projecting ledges of sandstone to which it is difficult to gain access. At some points the rock is steep and bare from the surface of the water to its utmost height. In other places great masses of sandstone are broken from the main ledges and lie piled about the base of the cliffs in great confusion. The broader ledges, huge crevices, and long interstices in these cliffs are thickly grown with laurel and ivy, shrubs indigenous to the sandstone hills and cliffs of the South. At the base and far up the sides of the cliffs at points where sufficient footing exists grow huge hemlocks, gnarled chestnuts, and misshapen black pines, many of these overhanging the creeks. Interspersed with these are holly-trees covered in winter with scarlet berries. Along the creeks are willows and sycamore trees and sometimes slender birches. The creek bottoms were formerly covered with beech trees which long since fell before the axe of the backwoodsman. The steep ravines are choked with thickets. The plateau itself is covered with a thin and straggling growth of stunted trees and indigenous shrubs.

On the face of the cliff overhanging the waters of the larger creek were formerly found many Indian hieroglyph-

ics and strange pictures. These pictures were usually skeleton drawings of animals native to the country, such as the buffalo, bear, deer, panther, wolf, turkey, and a few of turtles and rattlesnakes. These figures were put on the cliffs with black or red paint; no other colors were used. There was no mixing of colors; there were red groups and black groups, but nowhere were the two colors found in the same group. In no instance were the figures cut or scratched into the rock. Time, thoughtless and mischievous vandalism, and the weather have destroyed them all. In 1850, it is said, some of the groups were faintly visible, and as late as 1880 one group of deer in black, on the cliff over the larger creek, was yet very distinct.¹⁴

¹⁴ When Johnson County, Kentucky, was first settled there were found along the Indian trail from the mouth of Mudlick Creek to the mouth of Big Paint Creek occasional trees which had been stripped of their bark from the ground to a considerable height, sometimes as far up as thirty feet. Often a tree had the bark stripped from but one side, which made a dry hard surface on that side of the tree, while the other side still lived and preserved the tree. Trees thus treated were found all along the trail, but at some points there would be found groups of them all of which had been so denuded. The smooth surface thus provided was covered by the Indians with outline figures of animals and birds, put on with a tenacious and lasting paint of two colors only—black and red. As it is not known that trees thus treated and marked were found at any other place in the United States this circumstance may be regarded as very remarkable. The signification of these paintings was never discovered, and it is not known whether they were made by but one tribe or by all the tribes inhabiting the Ohio Valley. Trees so marked were to be found all along the valley of the Big Sandy, including both branches, but so far as I could ever discover no locality had them in so great abundance as the country around the lower course of Big Paint Creek. Whether the custom had prevailed among the tribes for ages, or whether it was of recent date and origin was never known. It is known that the Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandots, Toteris, Cherokees, and Iroquois, regarded the Big Sandy Valley with peculiar and lasting veneration. They clung to it with tenacity, and it was the last stream in Kentucky to be surrendered by them. It was a favorite valley of the Mound Builders, as evidenced by many remains of their occupation.

Big Paint Creek is a large and rapid stream. Just below the town of Paintsville it flows over an inclined sandstone bed. This point has various local names, such as the "flat rock," "flat rock ford," etc. The incline is sharp, and the water in passing over it was carried with force sufficient

Beyond each of the creeks the plateau is irregularly continued. To the east across the smaller creek there is a mound-like hill the base of which rests upon an expanse of country of the same elevation as the plateau. To the north between the smaller stream and Big Paint Creek stand two such hills with bases resting upon a similar elevation. To the west beyond the larger creek the continuation of the plateau is narrow, a ledge of sandstone with its east and south sides almost perpendicular. At a little distance south of this ledge and entirely detached from it is a large mass of sandstone with sides nearly perpendicular. This rock rises from the low-lying creek bottom and has a flat top of considerable area which can be reached with difficulty. From this elevation to the mouth of Big

to excavate in the bed of the creek below it a very deep pool and to cut away the banks, giving the expansion the appearance of a lake through which the creek ran. In early times the pool was spoken of as bottomless, so great was its depth, and it was always spoken of in my time as "the deep hole." The principal boat yards of the Big Sandy Valley were around this remarkable pool; hundreds of barges for carrying tan bark, hoop poles, staves, sawed lumber, and other products of that country were built upon its banks.

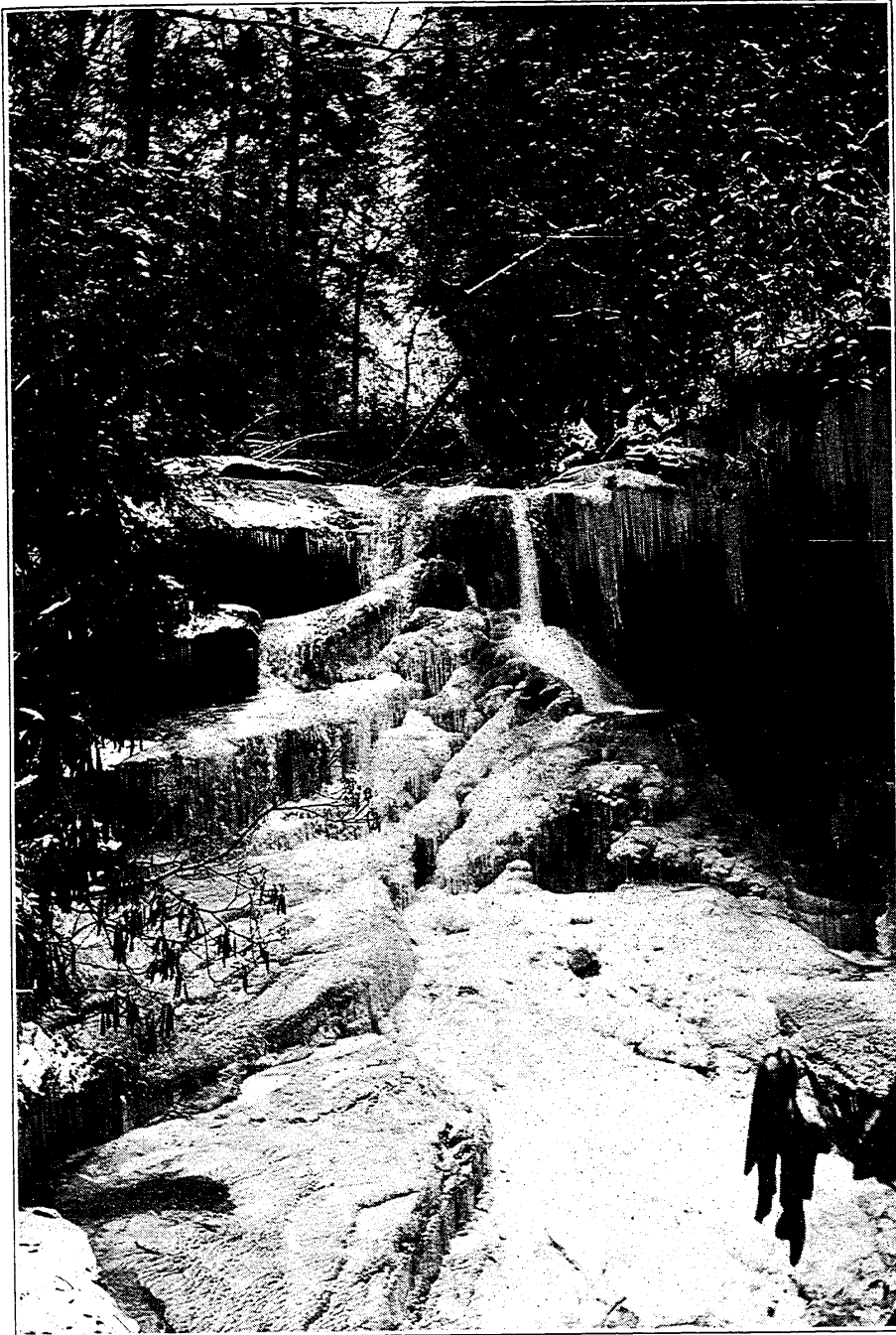
Upon the south bank of the creek against the "flat rock ford" is a low cliff, beneath which there is a small rockhouse which would afford shelter for fifty or sixty people. This locality seemed to hold a fascination for the Indians. On the top of the cliff a great elm had been stripped of its bark to a height of thirty feet or more. Winding about the tree and encircling all the smooth surface made by taking off the bark was a huge rattlesnake put on with black paint. Many other trees in the vicinity were stripped or partly stripped of their bark, and painted, various animals of the country being represented. One tree in the upper end of the creek bottom in which is situated the town of Paintsville, on the spot where Rev. Henry Dickson (Dixon, it is now written by his descendants) built a grist mill to be operated by horse, mule, or ox power, and called by the early settlers a "horse mill," was painted; it was a giant elm, and it bore a huge bear put on with red paint.

There were many salt springs or "licks" in the vicinity of where Paintsville was located. Several of them were at the foot of the hills back of the town and are now covered by the washings from the cleared hillsides above them. The trees about these licks were painted by the Indians, the characters being of the same nature as those already described. From this cause the first hunters and explorers of the country called these licks "painted licks," and they named the stream upon which they were found

Mudlick Creek it is half a mile, and the land is a bottom lying just above overflow. This creek bottom is an old Indian field. At the time of the coming of the white man it contained many mounds. There is one very large mound or mound-shaped hill covered with broken sandstone. Human bones, stone axes, spear and arrow heads of flint,

Paint Lick Creek, and it is so marked on the map of Kentucky in the 1797 edition of Imlay's America. The name was given by Matthias Harman and his associates. When Colonel John Preston, Judge French, and others of Virginia who speculated in the lands of the Louisa River Valley, wished to name the trading station which they established on the present site of Paintsville in 1790, they called it Paint Lick. The Rev. Henry Dickson came from North Carolina and bought the land about the old station and laid out the present town and named it Paintsville. Prestonsburg was also founded by Col. Preston and others, and first called Preston's Station. The station was established in 1799. After Vancouver left the forks of the Big Sandy a town was established there and named Balclutha. On the Imlay map already mentioned Paint Lick and Balclutha are both marked. To Johnson County belongs the honor of having within her bounds the sites of both the first and second settlements made in the Big Sandy Valley and in Eastern Kentucky.

Above the mouth of Big Paint Creek there is a river bottom extending up the Louisa River about a mile. At a point near the creek bank, and at an equal distance from the river, there is a large mound, the work of prehistoric inhabitants of the valley. Several hundred feet up the river, and directly south of this mound, there is another, not quite so large. At an equal distance south of this second mound there is a third one a little smaller than the second. And there is at an equal distance south from this third mound a fourth one still a little smaller than the third. There is a mound just back of the rockhouse overlooking the flat rock ford. These mounds were covered with large trees when first seen by white men. The original public highway up the Big Sandy River was laid out to cut the north side of the second mound. In making this public road the mound was cut, and the skeleton of a man of large size was found. It was enclosed in a sort of rude box made by placing flat thin river stones about and over it. It was on the land of Valentine Van Hoose, and I saw one of his sons wantonly destroy the skull of this skeleton. The large mound was opened a few years since, and the skeleton of a man was found, or rather the plain imprint of one, but the bones had perished. These mounds were made of layers of different kinds of earth, and there were several layers of clean river sand in them. Layers of ashes and charcoal were found, indicating that it may have been the custom of the builders to burn their dead there, or place the ashes of their dead there after the bodies had been burned at some other place. The Cherokee Indians said to the early settlers there, in speaking of these mounds: "There is fire in all those mounds." What they meant by this statement they could not explain.



The Falls of Little Mudlick Creek in Winter
[*Photograph by Luther, Louisa, Ky.*]

carved shells, and stone pipes were here turned up in great abundance by the plows of the first settlers.

The diminutive gorge of Little Mudlick Creek is a thing of wild and romantic beauty. The first fall is but ten feet. One hundred feet below is a fall of about six feet, below

Many pipes, arrowheads, spearheads, and stone axes were found in and about these mounds. The best specimen of the stone axe I ever saw was found there by my nephew and is now in my collection.

To the southwest of Paintsville and in plain view of the town there is a solid sandstone ledge rising from the top of a hill to a height far above the surrounding forest. This immense mass of sandstone is locally known as the "hanging rock." On the hilltop back of this great cliff there are a number of Indian graves covered with a great quantity of loose sandstone fragments which have evidently been carried there from a considerable distance. Indian graves of this description are very common in Eastern Kentucky, and they are always found on the tops of ridges. I never saw any account of such graves in any work on the Mound Builders.

Above the small cliff at the "flat rock ford" the first explorers found a number of decaying cabins. The Ohio Indians said that they and the French had built them many years before, and that they had lived there. They also said that the Toteros or Shatara Indians had lived there before they built the cabins. These Toterio Indians had a town on the Lick Fork of Jennie's Creek, extending from the forks of that stream to the point now known as Hager Hill. The Shawnees and Cherokees pointed out to the early settlers the sites of many towns occupied by the Toterio Indians. I shall locate them in some future work.

It is a tradition in our family that some of the Connellys, probably Harmon Connelly and his brother Thomas, Daniel Boone, Matthias Harman, Walter Mankins, and a number of other parties, among them James Skaggs and Henry Skaggs, descended the Louisa River about 1763 in search of a suitable place to settle. They camped about these old cabins at the mouth of Big Paint Creek for six weeks. The river and creek bottoms were covered with a rank growth of cane, much of it so high that it would conceal a man on horseback. The fierceness of the Indians made it impossible for them to locate there then. They killed much game. Great herds of buffalo roamed the country at the time. John Howe, Esq., the famous millwright, son-in-law of Rev. Henry Dickson, has often told me of this journey of the Connellys, Boone, and others. He also said that the river was sometimes so full of buffalo wallowing in the shoals that it was impossible to get a canoe either up or down until the shaggy animals had departed. Mr. Howe and many other pioneers of Johnson County have often told me that Simon Kenton occupied the old cabins at the mouth of Big Paint Creek two winters, or parts of two winters, 1773-74 and 1774-75. He hunted in that region during those winters and it is very probable that the old settlers were right in saying he lived in one of these old cabins.

which the stream expands into a lakelet fringed with mountain evergreens. A short distance below this lakelet the stream plunges some fifty or sixty feet into pools overhung with the ever-present mountain evergreens. From this point the stream has a rapid descent over shoals of boulders and brook-stones to the larger creek. The gorge was heavily timbered with hemlocks, oaks, beeches, holly-trees, laurel and ivy.

The Shawnees told Mrs. Wiley that in ancient times their ancestors had their villages about the junction of the Mudlick creeks, also all along Big Paint Creek from the mouth of Big Mudlick Creek to the Big Sandy River. They also told her that they never passed through that part of the country without visiting Little Mudlick Creek and the country about their ancient village.

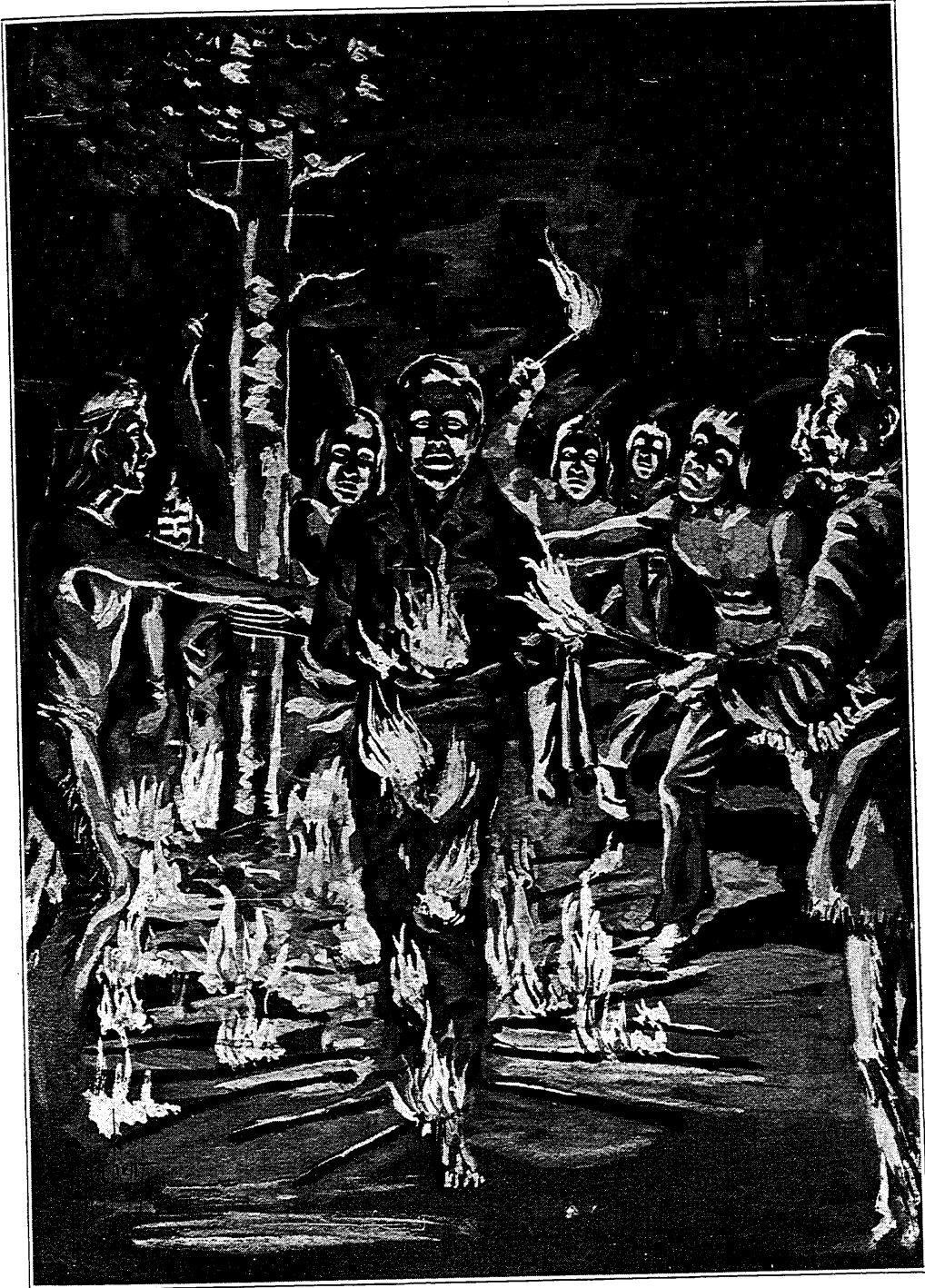
CHAPTER VII

The Indians holding Mrs. Wiley in captivity arrived at the mouth of Little Mudlick Creek about the first of April, possibly as much as a week or ten days earlier than that. They took up their abode in a rockhouse in the face of the cliff on the east side of the plateau. This rockhouse was just below the falls of Little Mudlick Creek, but at a higher elevation in the cliff than is the bed of the creek at the falls. The ledge at the entrance of the rockhouse overhangs the creek which runs a hundred feet or more below it, and the entrance is sixty feet at least below the top of the cliff. It is reached by following a narrow ledge along the face of the cliff from a point opposite the upper falls. This rockhouse is of considerable extent. It afforded a safe retreat for the party and one almost inaccessible to enemies if properly defended by even a few persons. It afforded a cool and pleasant habitation in summer.

The manner of life of the party was not unlike the daily life in an Indian village. Mrs. Wiley was compelled to perform all the drudgery of the camp. The warriors lounged about the caves and slept when not hunting or scouting. Hunting was not extensively engaged in, summer peltries being of poor quality. Only enough game was killed to furnish food for the party. Usually turkeys, deer, and buffalo were easily found near the camp, though the Indians often went to the great lick on Big Mudlick Creek to kill buffalo, especially when visited by other bands. They sometimes hunted on what is now known as Barnett's Creek, also on Big Paint Creek between that stream and Big Mudlick Creek. They sometimes required

Mrs. Wiley to follow them and bring in the game they killed. She was shown how to care for the skins of the animals killed. She gathered the wood for the camp fires. As the Indians had no axe she was obliged to gather the dry branches which had fallen from the trees, and before the summer was over these were exhausted near the camp. The French and the Indians had discovered lead in that vicinity, and Mrs. Wiley was made to carry the ore from the lead mines to the east edge of the plateau and there smelt it out to be used for bullets for the guns. To do this she had to collect a great quantity of wood and build a hot fire which had to be maintained for some hours. When the lead was melted from the ore it was conducted through small trenches to the bottom of a depression which Mrs. Wiley had made for the purpose and which was to be seen as late as 1880. It was just above the entrance to the rockhouse. She was also made to plant some corn in the old Indian field which had been the site of the old Indian town.

The Indians remained at the camp on some mysterious mission, as Mrs. Wiley judged. They were often visited by other bands, some of which contained as many as twenty Indians. Sometimes these visiting bands remained several days; at other times they departed in a few hours. Mrs. Wiley learned the Shawnee language, also something of other Indian tongues. She made many efforts to hear what the visiting Indians said to her captors, but was never able to get any information of benefit to her. The Shawnee chief told Mrs. Wiley he would take her to the Indian towns beyond the Ohio when Indian summer came on, at which time he expected a large force of Indians to arrive and relieve him. Mrs. Wiley sought an opportunity to escape after this conversation with the old Shawnee, but none presented itself that she could believe promised success. She was entirely ignorant of the general physical features of the country in which she was held, although



The torture of the Captive

she believed that she was nearer the Virginia settlements than when she was on the Ohio River. She had feigned sleep in the hope that her captors would say something about the settlements of white people that she might hear, but they never did so. There had been times when she was out of sight of her captors and might have escaped, but never having been able to bring herself to believe the effort would prove successful, she had waited for a more favorable opportunity. As the time approached when she was to be taken to the Indian towns she became more determined upon escape, or upon death in the effort. Her resolution in this matter was overturned by an event wholly unexpected.

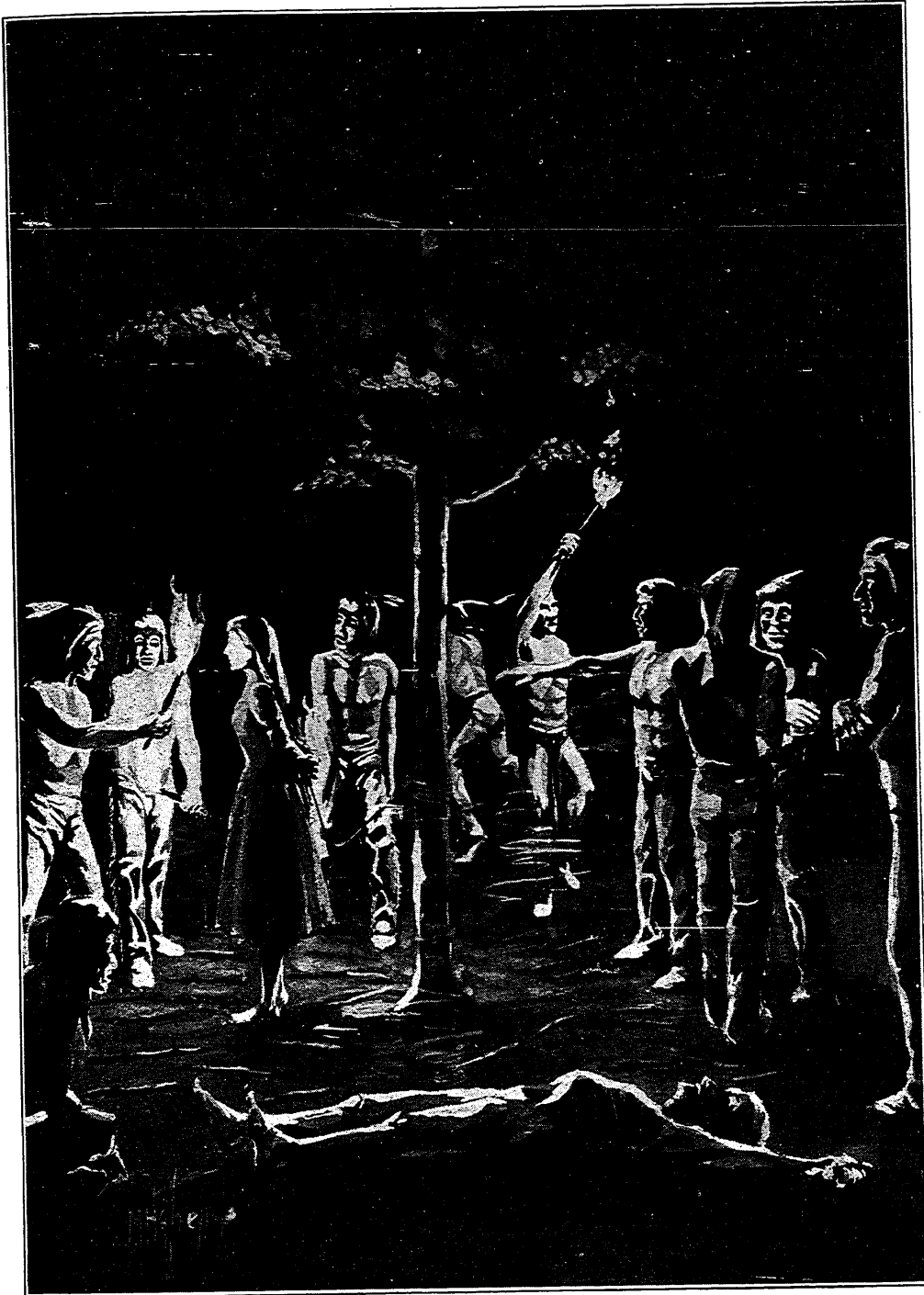
One day about the end of October the Indians were aroused from their indolent loungings by the quavering war-whoop cried by some party about the mouth of Big Mudlick Creek. The Shawnee chief answered the war-cry, and it was repeated. The Shawnee chief informed his party that the Cherokee chief had been on the war-path, had lost some of his warriors, and was now coming into camp with a captive white man. War-whoops were exchanged, and guns were fired by both parties. The Shawnee chief led his party to the plateau to receive the Cherokee chief and his warriors, who soon arrived. The Cherokee chief was followed by a mongrel band of some twenty Indians, and he brought with him a white man as prisoner. Mrs. Wiley supposed this prisoner to be about twenty years old, though she was not permitted to come near enough to him to have any conversation with him. This captive was terribly beaten when he arrived on the plateau.

Mrs. Wiley was sent back to the rockhouse when the Cherokee chief had talked with the Shawnee chief. The Cherokee gave her a kettle and told her to cook him some meat as soon as she could. She built up a fire in the rockhouse and slung the kettle, which she filled with bear meat

and venison. She could hear the mad howling, whooping, and screeching of the warriors on the height above her, also the discharge of guns and the thumping and stamping of feet in an Indian dance. Shortly after dark the whole band came down from the plateau, and the captive was not with them. It did not take her long to gather from the conversation of the Indians that the prisoner had been tortured at the stake. The Cherokee chief was in a great rage, sullen and savage. He did not remain long in the camp but returned to the heights above with his hands full of meat from the kettle. Mrs. Wiley was rudely treated by the Indians recently arrived, and the Shawnee chief and his followers were excited and blood-thirsty. The camp was overflowing with whooping Indians threatening to kill her, and for the first time the Shawnee chief did not stand her friend. She appealed to him but he did nothing to quiet the howling mob, and he left the camp to join the Cherokee. Finally the Indians left the camp and went above, yelling along the gorge above the falls. Mrs. Wiley was more at ease when she heard them whooping on the plateau, but what the night would bring forth she could not tell.¹⁵

An hour or two after dark a band of Indians, all of the late arrivals, came down from the assembly. They tied

¹⁵ Mr. Wiley was positive of the death of this white man. Mrs. Wiley did not see him tortured, nor did she see his dead body. She said the captive was tortured on the plateau overlooking Big Mudlick Creek. The fire about which the Indians were gathered when she was taken to the plateau was nearer the falls of Little Mudlick. Mr. Wiley and I searched the plateau more than once for evidences of fire, and at a point near where Mrs. Wiley believed the captive was burned we found charcoal, but of course there was no way in which it could be connected with the death of the captive. In many versions of the story of Mrs. Wiley there was no mention of the death of this prisoner. As his name was never known and nothing was known about him there was little to keep the interest in his death in the minds of the people. The older generation, though, had a distinct recollection of the burning of this young man. He came to Mrs. Wiley in her strange dream and pointed out the settlements of the white men.



Mrs. Wiley tied to the stake to be tortured by the Indians

Mrs. Wiley's hands with a strip of raw hide, by one end of which she was led to the height where the Indians were assembled about a big fire. The dancing ceased when she arrived. The Cherokee chief appeared as the commander of the Indians and told her that she was to be burned. She appealed to the Shawnee chief, but he made no definite answer. There was no sympathy for her in the mad band. She remembered the cruelties and many outrages she had suffered at the hands of the Indians, and as no prospect of escape came to her or seemed likely to come in the future even should she live, she was the more easily reconciled to death. In after years she affirmed that concern for her life and all earthly things departed from her, leaving her calm and collected. In this frame of mind she was bound to the tree, a small oak from which all the lower branches had been cut. Her demeanor seemed to please the Cherokee chief. Because of her courage or from some other cause which was never known to her, proceedings in the execution were suspended. The Indians retired for council and talked for a long time, as Mrs. Wiley believed. When they returned the Cherokee chief informed Mrs. Wiley that he had bought her from the Shawnee and that he would take her to his town on the Little Tennessee where she could teach his wives (he spoke as though he had quite a number of them) to write and to weave cloth like her dress. He unbound her and led her back to the camp in the rockhouse, followed by the Shawnee chief. There the fire was lighted anew. The Cherokee chief produced a buckskin bag from which he counted down to the Shawnee five hundred little silver brooches about as large as the silver dime of to-day, the price he had agreed to pay for Mrs. Wiley. They were received by the Shawnee as though he had a supreme contempt for money, and swept by him from the buckskin upon which they had been counted to him into a bag similar to that

from which they had been taken. This bag he placed in his pack and lay down by the fire to sleep.

The Cherokee chief bound Mrs. Wiley with raw thongs cut from a buffalo hide, which he drew very tight, causing her great pain. He returned to the plateau and was gone a long time. He came back with several of his band some time in the night, and all slept in the rockhouse.

CHAPTER VIII

It was late in the day when John Borders returned home from the search for his sheep, and a thick and foggy darkness was settling over the valley of Walker's Creek. When he found that Mrs. Wiley had not yet arrived at his house he feared that harm had come to her and her family, and her sister, Mrs. Borders, was distressed and anxious. Borders sought a neighbor who lived near him and together they went to Wiley's house, which they found partly burned. After some time spent in a cautious examination of the place they ventured to enter the house, where they found the bodies of the slain children. The animals about the place were excited and Borders believed the Indians were yet lying in wait to do further murder. Not finding Mrs. Wiley and the young child they were uncertain of their fate, but they supposed none of the family had escaped death. No light was kindled by Borders and his companion, and after a short time spent in making the examination by which they learned the facts set out above they left the house and alarmed the settlers.

The Indians had been seen by no one, and the uncertainty in the minds of the people as to their number and further purpose spread terror in the settlement. No attempt could be made to follow the Indians during the night. Those most capable of determining just what to do in this extremity were out of the settlement and it was not known when they would return. On the following morning a number of the settlers gathered at Wiley's cabin and looked the premises over carefully, but the trail of the savages was not discovered. From some cause

it was supposed that the Indians had gone down the New River. Thomas Wiley and a dozen settlers followed the Indian road down that stream hoping to come up with the Indians, but no tidings of Mrs. Wiley came from that pursuit.

In the afternoon of the day after the attack upon Wiley's house, Matthias Harman and the hunters returned to the settlement. The swollen streams and the heavy loads carried by their horses had delayed them twenty-four hours; but for these impediments they would have arrived in time to have prevented the murders committed by the Indians. The confidence of the hunters that they would arrive in the settlement before the Indians, had caused them to neglect to send a runner to warn the settlers of their danger.

Immediately upon his return Matthias Harman went to the house of Wiley where he found many of the settlers. He made a minute examination of the country around the house. In the hills north of the house he found evidences that the Indians had passed that way. He followed this discovery some miles, and upon his return to the cabin he assured the settlers that Mrs. Wiley was alive and a prisoner, that she was carrying her child which had been spared, and that the Indians would follow the Tug River war-trail and try to cross the Ohio to their towns. It was his opinion that the Cherokee chief was the leader of the band, the number of which he had determined from the trail. He was confident that he could overtake the Indians and recover the prisoners. His purpose to do this was determined upon at once.

Harman was a bold and active man. He believed this raid was made more by accident than design and that it indicated no uprising of the Indians nor any purpose to harass the settlements. It was not regarded as of sufficient importance to delay the settlement to be made at the mouth of John's Creek. He assembled those interested



Finding the Trail of the Indians who carried away Mrs. Wiley

in that enterprise and gave them instructions as to what they should carry with them, when to set out, what to do in case they should arrive before he could return there from pursuit of the Indians, and the most favorable route for them to take on the journey. There were about twenty-five men in this colony, but the exact number is not known, and their names are lost to us. We know that among them were Matthias Harman, Absalom Lusk, Henry Skaggs, James Skaggs his brother, Robert Hawes, Daniel Harman, Adam Harman, and Henry Harman. It is believed that a man named Horn, also one named Leek, were with the colonists. Harman selected ten of the most experienced Indian fighters to go with him in pursuit of the party having Mrs. Wiley and her child in captivity. Thomas Wiley was not a member of the colony and did not go out with them.¹⁶

Matthias Harman and his company of hunters set out early in the day in pursuit of the Indians. So confident that he was right did Harman feel that he did not at first attempt to follow the trail made by the savages, but went directly to the head waters of the Bluestone River and crossed the Great Flat Top Mountain. He found the trail of the Indians in the hills about the head of the Tug River; it followed the old Indian warpath as Harman had conjectured. This ancient way was so well defined that it required no effort to discover and follow it, which made their pursuit rapid and certain. Each camp of the Indians was discovered, and it was plain that the Indians were being gained upon every day.

If the Indians had not left the old war-path and turned down the small streams to Tug River they would have been overhauled by Harman and his party in a few hours.

¹⁶ Mr. Wiley had not returned from the pursuit made down the New River, so his son always said. He also said that his father was unnerved by the destruction of his family, and that he was at the time unfit for the war-path.

It was difficult traveling on horseback along the small streams, for they were frequently choked with thickets. This caused delay when rapid movement was so necessary. Harman saw that the Indians were not far in advance and were aware of the presence of the party in pursuit. Just before night they found the body of Mrs. Wiley's child, which they buried in a shallow grave hastily dug with tomahawks and scalping knives. A few minutes after the Indians had plunged into the water and crossed Tug River Harman and his men stood upon the spot they had left. It was impossible to get the horses across the river in its flooded condition on such a night. The party camped on the bank of the river and spent the night in building rafts upon which to carry over the baggage in the morning.

Harman effected a safe crossing early the following day. It was past noon when he again found the Indian trail, which wound through a country so rough and hilly that it was well nigh impossible to follow it with horses. When he arrived at the point where the Indians had crossed the Louisa River it was the unanimous opinion of all the hunters that it was useless to follow the trail further. They all believed that it would be impossible to come up with the Indians. Mrs. Wiley was relieved of the burden of her child, and the Indians being apprised of the pursuit would hold their course to the rough, bush-grown, stony ridges where horses could scarcely go. So, with regret, the pursuit was abandoned at the Louisa River.

From the point where the Indian trail was abandoned Harman and his company ascended the Louisa River to the mouth of John's Creek and went into camp in the old hunting lodge built there by Harman more than thirty years before. There the river runs against the bluff on its west side, leaving a broad bottom on the east side of the river below the mouth of John's Creek. It was an ideal place for a pioneer settlement. The great war-path

up the river ran on the west side of the stream at that point. There the stream is deep. John's Creek is a stream of considerable size, having its sources in the mountain ranges about the head waters of the Tug and Louisa rivers. Should the larger streams be beset with Indians the valley of the smaller one would afford a safe way to the settlements in Virginia.

The bottom in which it was designed to build the fort of the settlement was then covered with trees ranging in size from the shrub to the giant sycamore with its girth of forty feet. These trees were of several varieties—birch, beech, maple, linn, oak, poplar, and others. It was covered with a thick growth of cane which furnished winter pastures for buffalo, elk, and deer, and which was an indication of deep and lasting fertility.

The colonists expected directly from Virginia did not arrive for some days after the coming of Harman and his company. Their horses were heavily packed, and their progress through forests and over streams was necessarily slow. High water hindered much.

The site selected for the fort was almost half a mile below the mouth of John's Creek and about one hundred yards back from the east bank of the Louisa River. The fort was built on the plan common to the forts in frontier settlements. It was about twenty feet square and two stories in height. The upper story projected beyond the walls of the lower story about two feet on every side, and this extra space was floored with heavy timbers in which loop-holes were cut through which to fire down upon besieging Indians should they ever come to such close quarters. The walls of both stories were provided with openings through which to fire upon a foe. The door or gate was made of split oak timbers six inches in thickness. It was hung upon strong wooden hinges made by the hunters, opened inward, and was secured by an immense beam of oak. The roof sloped up from each of the four

sides of the fort to a point in the center, and was made of thick slabs of white oak timber "pinned" to the log "ribs" or rafters with long wooden pins or pegs driven into holes bored with an auger. A small stream flowed from the hills back of the bottom and passed close by the fort, and upon it the settlers relied for water. The timber about the fort was cut off close to the ground and burned back the full space of rifle range. This was done to deprive the Indians of cover should they ever besiege the fort.

This rude and strong building thus erected by the rough backwoodsmen of the Virginia frontier, all of whom were as brave and hardy as any who ever founded a frontier post, was the famous blockhouse. The settlement commenced by its erection was called

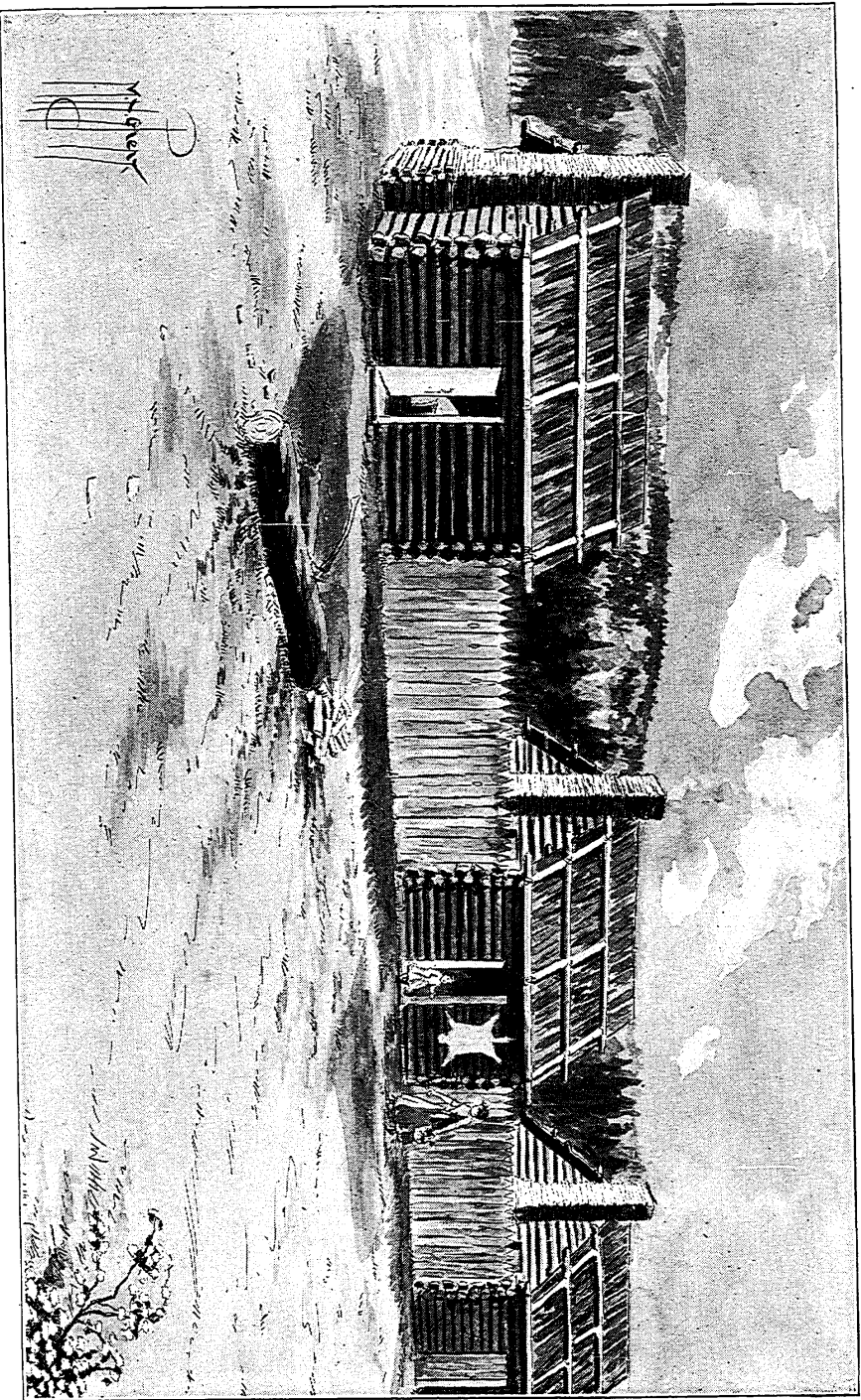
HARMAN'S STATION

It was the first settlement made in Eastern Kentucky. There was at that time no settlement in either of the present counties of Pike, Floyd, Lawrence, Boyd, Greenup, Carter, Elliott, Morgan, Wolfe, Magoffin, Breathitt, Knott, Letcher, or Martin. There were no settlements on the Tug River, and none in any of the present counties of West Virginia touching that stream.

This fort was built by Matthias Harman and backwoodsmen whom he had induced to cast their lots with him in the wilderness.

The fort was built in the winter of 1787-88.¹⁷

¹⁷ In the preface it was announced that the dates fixed by Mr. Wiley would be followed. This is the date fixed by him. I have no doubt as to its accuracy. I refer again to the map to be found in Imlay's *American Topography*. The author says: "In order to communicate a distinct idea of the present complexion of the State of Kentucky, I have drawn a map from the best authorities, from which you will discern that Kentucky is already divided into nine counties; and villages are springing up in every part within its limits, while roads have been opened to shorten the distance to Virginia." Harman's Station is correctly located on the said map. The site of Vancouver's attempted settlement is marked "Vancouver's." Relative to that attempt I set out an affidavit made by John Hanks in 1838,



Vancouver's Post at the Forks of the Big Sandy River, opposite Louisa, Kentucky, 1789

when Hanks was in his seventy-fifth year. It was first published by Dr. Ely in his work on the Big Sandy Valley:

“ I was employed by Charles Vancouver in the month of February, 1789, along with several other men, to go to the forks of Big Sandy River, for the purpose of settling, clearing and improving the Vancouver tract, situated on the point formed by the junction of the Tug and Levisa Forks, and near where the town of Louisa now stands. In March, 1789, shortly after Vancouver and his men settled on said point, the Indians stole all their horses but one, which they killed. We all, about ten in number, except three or four of Vancouver's men, remained there during that year, and left the next March, except three or four men left to hold possession. But they were driven off in April, 1790, by the Indians. Vancouver went East in May, 1789, for a stock of goods, and returned in the fall of the same year. We had to go to the mouth of the Kanawha River, a distance of eighty-seven miles, for corn, and no one was settled near us; probably the nearest was a fort about thirty or forty miles away, and this was built may be early in 1790. The fort we built consisted of three cabins and some pens made of logs, like corn cribs, and reaching from one cabin to the other.

“ We raised some vegetables and deadened several acres of ground, say about eighteen, on the point, but the horses being stolen, we were unable to raise a crop.

(Signed)

JOHN HANKS.”

The nearest fort, “ about thirty or forty miles away,” which was “ built may be early in 1790,” was the fort erected in rebuilding the blockhouse put up by Matthias Harman and his associates in the winter of 1787-88, and which had been destroyed by the Indians, who burned it. The settlers who had been obliged to return to Virginia at the time of its destruction, returned with reinforcements in the winter of 1789-90 and built another fort in the Blockhouse Bottom. Although often attacked, they never again abandoned the settlement.

CHAPTER IX

After passing through the horrors of such an ordeal as that to which she had been subjected Mrs. Wiley found it impossible to sleep. She had nerved herself to face death with resignation, and her nerves were unstrung with the relaxation following her unexpected deliverance from the stake. And she was troubled by the change of masters. She feared the Cherokee. He was in every way different from the Shawnee chief. He was quick and energetic of action, cruel, savage, and treacherous by nature, always restless and anxious to be moving. While she believed that she owed her life to his interference in her behalf she was not sure the future would prove that she would have much to be thankful for in that matter. Her chance of escape seemed cut off and that troubled her; she regretted that she had not made the effort to escape months before. While pondering over these things she fell into a broken and troubled sleep. She found this a most strange sleep for she seemed more awake than ever. She was never sure she was asleep at all, but she always insisted that she saw this vision or had this remarkable dream: The young man so lately tortured by the Indians came to her bearing in his hand a lamp made from the bleached skull of a sheep, the brain cavity of which was filled with buffalo tallow in which was a wick that was burning brightly. The young man did not speak, but by signs indicated that she must follow him. Then her bonds fell away. The young man threaded the deep defiles of the forest with the flame of his lamp fluttering in the wind. He did not look back to see if she were following him. Arriving at a steep mountain of great height he rapidly ascended it. When

he reached the top he blew strongly upon his lamp-flame which immediately leaped to a height sufficient to reveal the whole country below. She looked where he pointed across a river. There stood a fort erected by white men. As she was anxiously appealing to him for information as to who dwelt there the light paled, flickered a moment, then was gone. She was left alone in the darkness, and was immediately roused from her slumber. This dream or manifestation or phenomena, by whatever name, was repeated twice, the last time being just as the Indians began to stir in the camp.¹⁸

Mrs. Wiley was unbound by the Cherokee, and informed by him that it was his purpose to set out on the journey to his town in a day or two, but that he was going that morning to the great buffalo lick on Big Mudlick Creek to kill game. It was not long until the whole band of Indians left the camp. Mrs. Wiley was again bound and left in the camp in the rockhouse. She soon fell into a deep sleep from which she was wakened by the roaring of a heavy storm of wind and rain. The instant that she awoke the peculiar dream came to her mind with great force. It seemed to be a call to her to make an effort to escape; at least, she so regarded it, and she decided to act upon it. She saw the wind was blowing the rain into one corner of the rockhouse. She rolled herself over and over until she lay in this rain blown in by the wind. It was but a short time until the raw-hide thongs with which she was

¹⁸ To those familiar with psychology and psychical phenomena remarkable dreams or manifestations to one under stress of nervous excitement or great strain or disturbance of the mental faculties are not strange; they are not impossible, improbable, nor even unusual. Volumes could be filled with authentic instances of such dreams or manifestations. Mrs. Wiley always believed she was assisted by this dream to make her escape. She believed after this dream that there were white people in the country about her. The route by which the settlement could be reached was unknown to her and had not been seen in her dream. The young man led her straight through the woods to a high mountain which does not in fact exist. But she saw it in her dream, and from the top of it she saw the fort in a settlement of her own people.

bound were soaked and became slippery and easily removed. When free she bound her dog to a large stone to prevent his following her, seized a tomahawk and a scalping knife, and descended quickly to the bed of Little Mudlick Creek. She waded that stream to its junction with the larger stream, which she waded to Big Paint Creek. There she remembered that she had no well-defined plan of action, but after a little time spent in reflection she remembered that she had seen a river in her dream, and concluded that she might reach this river by wading continuously down stream. She acted upon that conclusion. She found it difficult to wade in Big Paint Creek. It is a deep, swift stream, and the heavy rain quickly raised the small streams flowing into it, and they carried in muddy water, which soon made it impossible for her to determine the depth. She was often carried off her footing, and more than once was in danger of drowning.

Big Paint Creek makes a big bend which she was compelled to follow around, and it was growing dusk when she was at the mouth of the Rockhouse branch. At the mouth of Jennie's Creek she crossed Paint Creek. She waded up Jennie's Creek, which the heavy rain had put out of its banks. Wind and rain continued all night. When she reached the forks of Jennie's Creek she was almost exhausted, and for a time there she was much puzzled as to which branch of the stream she should follow. Her choice of branches was right; she turned to the left and followed the Lick Fork. In half a mile she was again compelled to choose between two branches of the stream, for there the Middle Fork falls into the Lick Fork. She again turned to the left, and again her choice was right. She followed the Lick Fork to the mouth of a small branch coming in from the east. Here she left the larger stream and followed the little one to its head, where she crossed through a gap to the stream now known as the Bear Branch, which she descended to its junction with Little Paint Creek.

Continuing down the latter stream she stood upon the bank of the Louisa River as the dull dawn of a cloudy morning appeared in the east. It is unnecessary to dwell here upon the exhausted condition of Mrs. Wiley. She had waded against swift currents of overflowed streams for more than twelve hours, and had been wading for as much as eighteen hours. She dragged herself up the bank of the river and soon came opposite the blockhouse. She saw women and children there, but no man was in sight. She called out to make her presence known and for assistance to cross the river. So unexpected a cry alarmed the people at the fort, and they went in hurriedly and closed the gate.¹⁹

Here was a wholly unlooked-for discouragement. Mrs. Wiley was impatient and anxious, fully expecting to be followed by the savages. Seeing now the blockhouse, she reasoned that the Indians knew of its existence and would seek her in that direction. She was fearful that they might appear at any minute. She continued to call to the people in the fort, calling out her name and saying that

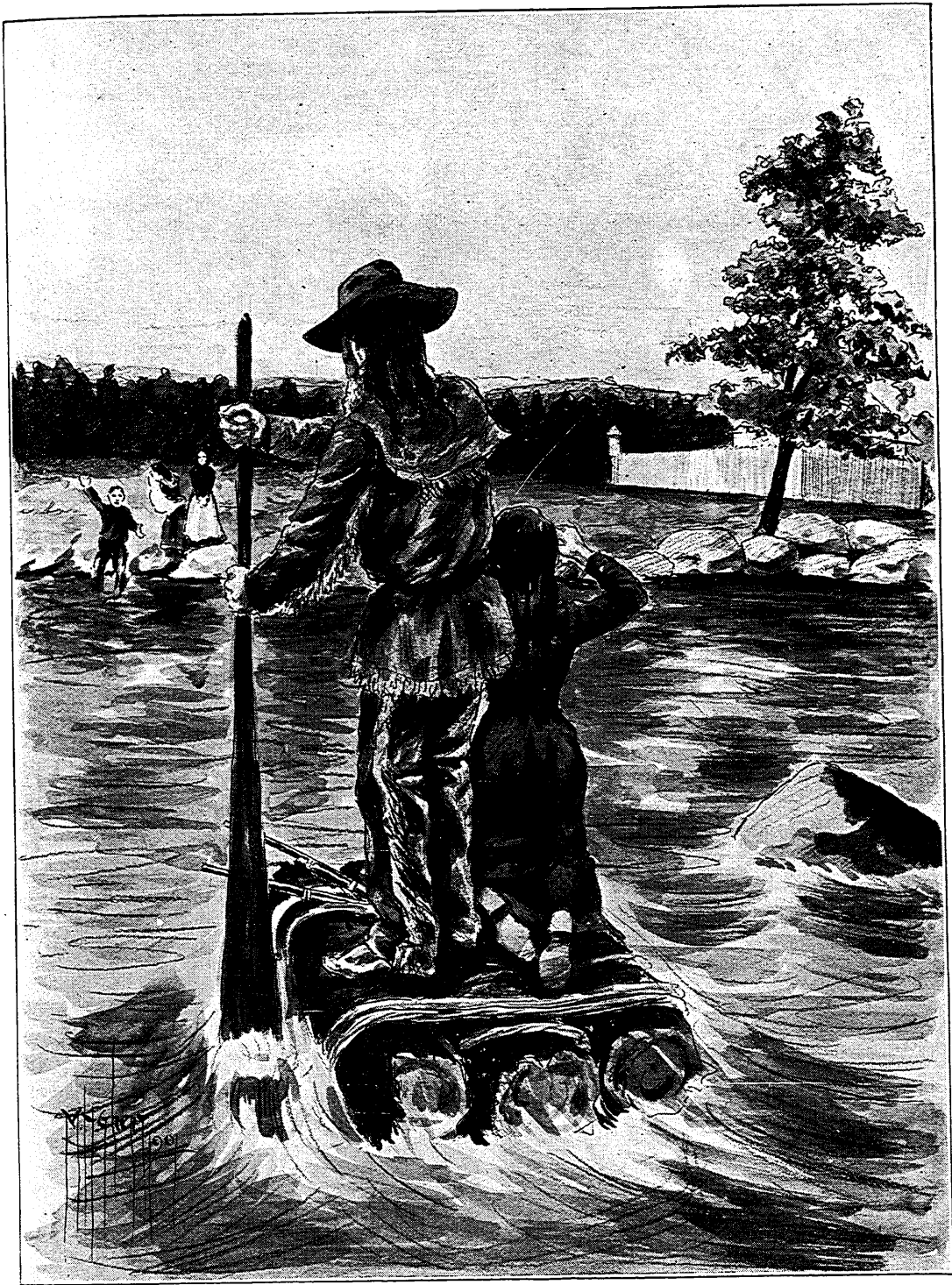
¹⁹ Mrs. Wiley always insisted that she had no knowledge of the existence of the blockhouse when she left the rockhouse at the falls of Little Mudlick Creek. She had seen a fort beyond a river in her dream the night before her escape, and she supposed that by descending the creeks she would reach the river. Her contention is upheld by the facts developed in the flight. It was almost dark when she was at the mouth of the Rockhouse branch, and at the mouth of Jennie's Creek it was dark and was raining very hard. She said something told her she must cross to Jennie's Creek and follow it. To do this was to abandon her original plan of following down stream until she found the river. At the mouth of Jennie's Creek she was not two miles from the Indian camp. If she had known anything of the route up Jennie's Creek she could have reached the mouth of the creek in less than an hour by following the route of the present highway between the two points, and the amount of rain falling would have enabled her to wade small streams all the way and conceal her trail. Her ignorance of the physical features of the surrounding country saved her; for it was afterward discovered that when the Indians found that she had escaped they supposed that she had gone directly to the mouth of Jennie's Creek, and they followed that route in their first search for her. While it was yet light they were scouring the banks of Paint Creek and those of the lower courses of Jennie's Creek seeking some

she had escaped from the Indians, whom she expected to follow her. After what appeared to her to be a long time an old man came out of the fort. She recognized him at once as Henry Skaggs, an old-time friend of her father. It did not require much time for her to convince him that she was Jennie Wiley, and that she stood in great danger of being recaptured by the Indians. Skaggs knew the Cherokee chief well. He saw that no time was to be lost in getting her across the river. He told Mrs. Wiley that the men of the fort, except himself, had gone away early in the morning with the canoes. He said they would not return for some time, and that he would be compelled to construct a raft upon which to bring her over. He advised her to endeavor to swim across should the Indians appear, as it was his opinion that she would suffer death if recaptured.

A dead mulberry tree stood on the bank of the river and Skaggs and the women went vigorously to work to fell it. It was tall and had but few branches. When it fell it very fortunately broke into three pieces of about equal length. These logs were hastily rolled into the river and bound to-

sign of her, and finding none they abandoned the idea that she had set out for the blockhouse over that route. From the footprints of the Indians discovered by the settlers and other signs left by the Indians, they supposed that the savages had not been gone an hour when Mrs. Wiley reached the mouth of Jennie's Creek.

Jennie's Creek was given its name in her honor and because she made her escape in wading several miles against its rapid current. Mrs. Wiley said that it was perfectly plain to her that she must take the left-hand branch, as she was traveling, at the forks of Jennie's Creek. And the same thing occurred at the mouth of the Middle Fork. And it would seem a miracle that any one could find the mouth of the small branch where she turned out of the Lick Fork. It must be remembered that it was pitch dark, and that the whole country was covered with a heavy forest, beneath the boughs of which it would be dark on even a starlight night. The darkness, dense as it was, had torrents of rain to augment it. The streams were running bank full, and for many miles she pushed against the current. Considered from any point, the achievements of Mrs. Wiley that night were most remarkable. I doubt if it is equaled in all the annals of the Border. Her adventures have in them all the requisites for a romance of border life, and the subject is worthy the ablest pen.



Mrs. Wiley and Henry Skaggs crossing the River on a Raft

gether with long grapevines pulled down from the forest trees where they grew wild. Placing two rifles upon the raft Skaggs pushed out into the river which was full to overflow, and which was carrying much drift. After being carried far down the stream Skaggs made a landing. Mrs. Wiley stepped upon the rude raft and it was again pushed into the stream. When in mid-stream the raft was caught by drift and nearly pulled to pieces but by hard work both raft and drift were brought to some overhanging trees standing on the east bank. The branches of these trees were seized and the raft brought to shore about half a mile below the blockhouse.

When Mrs. Wiley and Skaggs had gone up the river to the fort and were about to enter the gate Indian yells broke from the thickets over the Louisa. A moment later a large band of Indians came into view, among them the Cherokee chief; and with them was Mrs. Wiley's dog. The Cherokee chief saw Mrs. Wiley at the entrance to the fort. He called out to her to know why she had left him after he had saved her life and paid his silver for her. He insisted that she had not treated him as she should have done, and closed his appeal with the words, "honor, Jennie, honor!" She did not reply to him. Skaggs fired his rifle in the direction of the savages, though the distance was too great for the range of small arms. At the discharge of the rifle the Cherokee turned about, and with a defiant gesture²⁰ uttered a fearful whoop, in which he was joined by his warriors. Seeing that Mrs. Wiley had escaped and that he could not recapture her, the Cherokee chief disappeared in the woods, followed by his savage companions and Mrs. Wiley's dog.

The report of the gun discharged by Henry Skaggs brought the men back to the blockhouse. Later in the day, after some preparation, the men crossed the river and followed the trail of the Indians almost to Little Mudlick

²⁰ Patted his buttocks.

Creek. From Mrs. Wiley's account of the number of Indians at the camp the hunters believed they had a force too small to attack them, so they returned after having gone to the mouth of Jennie's Creek. It was not improbable that the Indians would attack the fort soon, and upon the return of the hunters things were put in a posture of defense. No attack was made upon the blockhouse, but the Indians prowled about it for several days, and they were in the vicinity for some weeks.

Mrs. Wiley found friends in the blockhouse. Most of the settlers were well known to her in Virginia. She was anxious to return to her husband and relatives. When the winter was well commenced a party commanded by Matthias Harman took her to her Virginia settlements and restored her to her husband and relatives. On the way the party was attacked several times, but succeeded in beating off the savages.²¹ It was unusual to find Indians in the woods in the winter, and from this circumstance it was feared that they would prove exceedingly troublesome to the settlers at the blockhouse the next summer.

Mrs. Wiley was in captivity about eleven months. After her return she and her husband lived in Virginia about twelve years; they then moved to Kentucky, settling on the Big Sandy River just above the mouth of Tom's Creek, in what is now Johnson County, and some fifteen miles from the blockhouse and ten or twelve miles from the old Indian town at the mouth of Little Mudlick Creek. The Presbyterians had no church organization in that part of Kentucky, and she and her husband were members of the Baptist Church. Thomas Wiley died where he first settled in Kentucky about the year 1810, and Mrs. Wiley remained a widow twenty-one years, dying of paralysis in

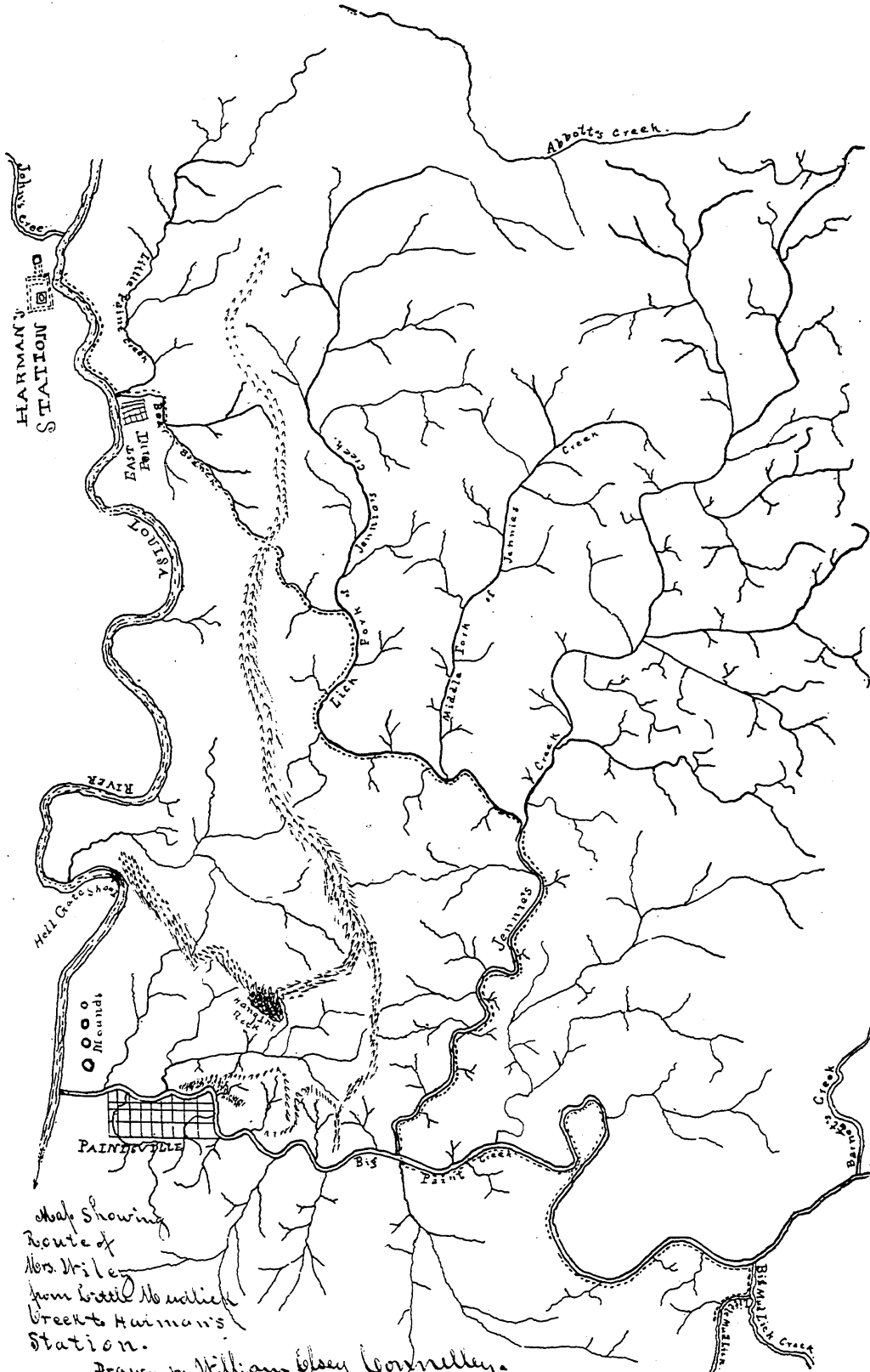
²¹ The attacks made by the Indians upon the party which escorted Mrs. Wiley back to Virginia and the devices practiced to evade the savages would in themselves make an interesting story. It often seemed as though they were lost, and Mrs. Wiley had to bear a rifle and fight with the others, which she did effectively and with a good will.

the year 1831. They left a large family and their descendants live now in the Big Sandy Valley and are numerous and respectable.

The Indians attacked the blockhouse several times during the summer of 1788. The settlers surrounded it with a stockade. The Indians maintained something of a siege which lasted for about three weeks. This was in September. On account of their presence all the time no crops could be raised that summer. Several of them were killed by the settlers. Some of the settlers became discouraged, and as soon as cold weather enabled them to do so they returned to the Virginia settlements. Thus weakened it was not believed that the fort could be defended another year. The settlers all returned to Virginia during the winter of 1788-89. The Indians immediately destroyed the blockhouse. It was burned, together with some cabins which the settlers had erected in the vicinity.

In the winter of 1789-90 some of these settlers returned to the blockhouse site. They were accompanied by other settlers, a majority of whom were from Lee and Scott counties, Virginia. They erected a second blockhouse where the first one had stood, but it was not so substantially built as was the first one. In the summer of 1791 many new settlers came. The settlement was troubled much by the Indians for several years, but it was never again broken up. It is believed that Matthias Harman did not again settle permanently in the Blockhouse Bottom, though he was there for some years. He died in Tazewell County, Virginia. Daniel Harman became a permanent settler in the vicinity of the first settlement, and his descendants in the Big Sandy Valley are many. They are industrious, and are good citizens. Henry Skaggs and James Skaggs both returned to Kentucky. They lived for some years in the vicinity of the Blockhouse Bottom, but when times were settled they went to live on the head waters of Big Blaine Creek. Their descendants live

now on Big Blaine Creek, the Little Sandy River, and the Licking River. The Leeks came with the second settlement, and their descendants are yet to be found on the Louisa River. The same can be said of the Horns. An account of the families which came with the settlers in the second colony will be furnished at some time in the future.



Map Showing
 Route of
 Mrs. Wiley
 from Littleton
 Creek to Harman's
 Station.
 Drawn by William Oley Coxnelley.