

MOTHERING ON PERILOUS

(KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN SKETCHES)

V. THE BOY THAT FIT THE MARSHAL

BY LUCY FURMAN

Author of "Stories of a Sanctified Town"

ON Thursday of the first week Miss Loring came over to live at the small boys' cottage in the Settlement School on Perilous. While Philip, Taulbee, Joab, and Keats were building up the embankment under the back fence washed away by a "tide" in Perilous, Georgie Yonts, who had been left at the cottage to scrub Miss Loring's room with carbolic-acid solution (on account of fleas), came back to the stable-lot bringing a new boy, whom, with a flourish of his scrubbing-brush, he introduced as follows:

"Here 's the boy that fit the marshal that kilt his paw last spring 's a year. And one time he went to Virginia and seed a railroad-train. Killis Blair 's the name he goes by."

Killis was a handsome, blond boy of "very near twelve," as straight as an arrow, and pleasantly aware of his double importance as participant in a tragedy and as a noted traveler.

At study-hour in the cottage that night, when the boys and Miss Loring all sat about the sitting-room table, Georgie watched the hands of the clock for at least fifteen minutes before they reached eight, and at the first stroke slammed his geography shut and commanded:

"Tell about seein' the railroad-train!"

All the boys woke up at once, and Killis began: "About a month before paw got kilt, the officers was a-watching him so clost he was afear'd to sell any liquor round about home, so me and him we took a barrel acrost the mountains to Big Stone Gap, over yander in Virginia, where there 's mines, and it would fetch a good price. We loaded fodder on top of the

barrel. The going was awful sorry, and the steers was three days making the trip. When we got there, I seed men walking around with their hats afire, and went down to the railroad-train and rid on the engine."

"What did it look like?" inquired Philip, breathlessly.

"Sort of like a saw-mill sot up on wheels. And the rest of the train was long houses full of glass windows—never seed so much glass in my life. They was on wheels, too, like the engine."

"Wished I know'd I 'd ever git to see ary 'n'," sighed Philip.

"I aim to, when I 'm a professor," remarked Taulbee.

"I bet I see several when I go to be a soldier," said Nucky.

Georgie settled back in his chair, and folded his fat hands. "Now," he said, "tell about your paw gettin' kilt."

Killis said the officers had been spying around after his paw a long time for stilling liquor, but his paw was too smart for them, and moved the still about, and made liquor by night, so there would be no smoke by day, and also frightened them by sending word to the marshal he would never be taken alive. One night they had just "drug" the still up to a new place in the hollow near the top of the mountain, and boarded it up close, so the light could not shine out, and started up the fire, and he and his paw and his two uncles were sitting around it, when there was a yell, and the marshal and a deputy burst in, shooting as they came. The uncles returned the fire from their revolvers, but before his paw could grab

his gun, which leaned against a near-by tree, he fell, with a dreadful wound through his stomach. He himself, when he saw his paw fall, snatched a hunting-knife and cut the marshal in the forearm with it as he was running out. This last item he told without bragging, and quite as a matter of course. The other boys gave him looks of approval and envy.

"By Heck! though, I would n't 'a' stopped with his arm," declared Nucky.

"I hain't," replied Killis, quietly. Significant glances went round the table.

If Georgie was eager for Killis's story, Miss Loring was impatient for something else: she planned to dress her boys up on Sunday. In the attic of the Big House were friendly barrels and boxes containing clothing for the children, and Thursday and Friday she spent hours there hunting up coats, trousers, shirts, collars, and ties. Of course the boys were pretty enough in the homespun, home-made coats and trousers they wore when they came; still, she had a great desire to see how they would look in clothes such as outside boys wore. It was hard to find enough things to go around; but in a last trip on Saturday she succeeded, and that night she slept but little. The fleas had something to do with it, but the clothes had more.

Sunday morning, however, when she called the boys into her room, and spread out the garments before what she had expected would be admiring eyes, she was doomed to disappointment. They expressed boundless contempt for the short trousers, held up the knickerbockers with shouts of ridicule, calling them "meal-pokes," and declined point-blank to wear the pleated and belted coats, which they designated as "sissy," "foreign," and "fotch-on." The shirt-waists they accepted without great remonstrance, but collars and ties were a different matter. Taulbee, the oldest, said that even preachers did not wear those, so why should he?

Miss Loring was nonplussed for five minutes. Then an idea came. Sending them all out of her room but Killis, she told him she considered he had more style about him than any of the other boys (she did not mention his other grounds of prestige), and just for her own pleasure she would like to see him in some of the "brought-on" clothes. Selecting a dark blue suit, very little worn, with knicker-

bockers and pleated coat, she requested Killis to go inside her closet and put it on. He did, and then, when she had fastened a collar and a soft red tie on him, she invited him to look in her mirror. He was frankly delighted with the result. "By dogs! now, did you ever see anybody look as good as me?" he exclaimed.

"I think I never did," replied Miss Loring, with entire truth. "I suppose you don't want to keep them and wear them, do you?"

"Well, dad swinge my hide! I reckon I do!"

"Very well, then; I suppose you may. Go along now." She calmly laid out the white dress and hat for her own toilet.

Within three minutes Philip, Absalom, Georgie, and Hen burst into her room without knocking. "Lemme take another look at that 'ere brown coat and breeches," said Philip; and the others made a beeline for the pile. Then Taulbee sauntered in. "I don't mind to try on some of them new styles," he condescended. Then there was a general rush. Miss Loring let them take their pick, and fight it out over disputed garments. Then, having buttoned all the collars, tied all the ties, parted all the hair, and, at the last minute, washed difficult cracks in all the ears, Miss Loring at last set forth with her boys for the church-house down in the village, swelling more and more with pride at every step. Never anywhere had she seen such a handsome set of boys; and having a weakness for good looks, she was foolishly happy.

That night Miss Loring found that Killis spelled his name "Kls." He said the teacher in the five-month district school he had attended two terms over on Clinch had spelled it that way. When she asked him if he knew whom he was named for, he did not know. She told him she thought it probable his namesake was a man named Achilles, who had lived several thousand years ago, and had been the greatest fighter of his time. Afterward she feared it had been a mistake to mention this; certainly neither he nor any of the other boys needed encouragement in that direction. Also, she was compelled then and there to launch upon stories of the Trojan War, which were received with huge delight by the boys, but seemed rather bloody for Sunday telling.

To a person of such heroic antecedents as Killis, it was inevitable that some of the work required of the boys at the Settlement School should be humiliating. Imagine Achilles, Hector, Alexander, Cæsar, and such gentlemen making beds, sweeping floors, washing wash-stands, as the cottage boys were required to do every morning! To the outdoor work there was never any objection; but one morning during bed-making Killis and Nucky announced sadly but firmly that unless permitted to do men's work all the time, they would leave at once.

Miss Loring's reply, "But making beds is men's work," was met by a snort from Nucky and a whistle from Killis.

"Now, boys," she said, "what do you think of soldiers? Do you call them men?"

"By grab! them 's the only men is men," said Nucky. "I aim to be a soldier myself. I got a cousin fit in Cuby and got his arm shot off. And another went off to the Phillipynes and never was heard of no more. I'd ruther be dead as to not be a soldier."

"Gee! fighting 's the best job they is!" agreed Killis.

"Well," said Miss Loring, "the very first thing a soldier has to learn is to make his own bed."

The boys gazed at her, open-mouthed and incredulous.

"And he has to make it every morning just as long as he is a soldier," she continued.

Killis drew a deep breath. "Dad burn! if that hain't the beatenest ever I heard!"

"Your cousin, Nucky, will tell you the same thing," Miss Loring went on. "I myself have a cousin right now at West Point, where they train boys into soldiers, and his name is Thomas, and he makes his bed every morning, and if he did n't, he could n't stay and be a soldier. And as soon as he is graduated, he will be a lieutenant, and command a whole company."

The two stood, dazed and pondering, for some minutes. Then Killis grabbed his side of the sheet. "Here, take a holt, there, son, and pull them wrinkles out of that kiver, and lay it straight!" he commanded.

From that time difficulties were at an end. Killis promptly became the swiftest worker on the entire place, and more in

demand than anybody. The Heads, the woodwork teacher, the trained nurse, and the housekeeper were always sending for him when they wanted odd jobs done swiftly and well, and Miss Loring, being determined to keep him for her own outdoor department, had a fight on her hands all the time.

And not in energy alone was Killis remarkable. In grace and agility he could not have been surpassed by his famous namesake. To see him dance a breakdown was a perfect joy. Nobody could compare with him, nobody else knew half the steps he did. The boys danced a good deal in the evenings, sometimes to Geordie's one tune, "Hi, Mr. Rabbit," picked on his little home-made banjo, more gladly to the fascinating strains of "Hook and Line" and "Sourwood Mountain" played by Granville Dudley, a grown-up boy, who brought his fine banjo over to the cottage occasionally on Saturday evenings.

One night in early November, when the boys were tired of dancing, and had settled down to pop corn over the sitting-room fire in the wire poppers Miss Loring had sent away for, Killis remarked that he used to "cap" corn in a skillet under the still while he and his paw made liquor.

"You made liquor?" exclaimed Miss Loring.

"Can't ricollect the time when I did n't," he replied. "I holp paw from the time I could walk. I'd follow him up the hollow, and gather wood for the fire, and watch the singlings whilst he kep' a lookout for officers. And I'd help him mix the doublings, too. And when folks would come to our house to buy it, I'd circle around up in the corn-field to show where it were hid, and they'd go up and fill their jug and put the money under a stump, and I'd fetch it to paw. I knowed so much about the business I could have run it myself."

"I hope and pray that you never will run it, Killis," said Miss Loring, earnestly. There were rumors that the still had not ceased operations with the death of its owner, but that it was now run on his place by his brothers. "I'd rather see you dead, I think."

"Gee-oh!" he exclaimed. "What you got ag'in' it? You hain't no officer."

"No," she said; "but I think it 's wrong"; and she gave her reasons.

"Well, by Heck! that 's the quarest ever I heard!" said Killis at the end. "I never knowed nobody but officers was ag'in' it."

As Christmas approached, Miss Loring was astonished to see how apathetic the boys were about it. The girls were greatly excited, but the boys appeared dreadfully bored by the talk and preparations. One night, after she had had them practise the old English carols they were to sing through the Big House and down in the village street early Christmas morning, she asked them why they were not happier over Christmas.

"Nothing to feel happy about, by Ned!" said Nucky. "No chance for no Christmas doings here."

"But there will be great Christmas doings, and the best times you ever saw," she replied.

"What, you women aiming to get drunk and do a lot of shooting?" he asked, with dawning hope.

"Horrors! no!" Miss Loring exclaimed.

"Them 's the good times I allus seed a-Christmas," he said.

"Me, too," chorused the other eleven.

"Did n't you ever hang up your stockings, or have a Christmas tree, or get presents?" asked Miss Loring.

"Never heard tell of no such till I come here. Nobody but quare women does it."

"But it 's the greatest fun," insisted Miss Loring.

"Fun enough for women, maybe. But men! Gee!"

"Gimme a big jug of corn liquor!" shouted Philip.

"And a pistol in both hands!" cried Georgie.

"And a galloping nag!" added Killis. The others all joined in an ecstatic whoop.

"Oh, boys," sighed Miss Loring, "you can't mean to tell me you are in the habit of getting drunk Christmas!"

Philip whistled. "What you think we made of?" he inquired. "If there 's any boy here hain't been drunk or halfways drunk every Christmas he can ricollect, hold up your hand!"

Not a hand moved, till suddenly, as if by an afterthought, Killis's went up. "I were n't last Christmas," he said. "Paw axed me when he was a-dying never to drink nary 'nother drap, so I hain't toch it sence."

"Mighty hard on you!" remarked Joab. "I never passed a Christmas in my life without bein' drunk. Paw he used to fill me 'n' Iry up till we could n't see single, and then make us walk a crack in the floor."

"I used to lay around just hog-drunk from New Christmas to Old Christmas," said Killis. "Paw he 'd turn me loose in the doublings, and lemme swill all I wanted."

"Blant and Ezry they allus gives me all I can hold, and then lets me ride around behind 'em and shoot off paw's pistols," said Nucky.

"One time when I were a little five-year-old," contributed Georgie, "my uncles give me all the liquor I could drink, and then put a pistol in my hand, and p'inted it at Absalom—he were seven—and told me to shoot. I fired away. Good thing I were n't sober, I 'd 'a' kilt him sure!"

Hen Salyer, nine, cast a contemptuous glance at his elder brother. "Keats he hain't half a man," he said. "I can drink twice as much as him."

"Self-brag is half-scandal," exclaimed Keats, angrily. "It 's because I 've had white-swelling and typhoid I hain't able to drink as much as you, you sorry little scald-pate!"

"Paw and me we got so drunk last Christmas we could n't roll over in bed," piped up eight-year-old Jason. "He gimme a whole pint!"

Taulbee Bolling, the oldest, and a great stickler for propriety, summed up the matter authoritatively: "Folks would think they was bad-off if they could n't pass around a jug of liquor a-Christmas," he said slowly. "They would n't think it were showing hospitality."

After a moment Killis spoke again. "I want every boy here that can get to my house a-Christmas to come, and see a good time," he announced. "Come the Saturday after New Christmas. I can't drink myself, on account of paw, but I got good and plenty for my friends, by Heck! And maw she 'll give you all you can eat, too; and we 'll get out all paw's guns and pistols."

There was a unanimous acceptance, even by boys who lived nearly forty miles distant from Killis.

Miss Loring sighed again, deeply this

time. "Boys," she said, "you know what I think about drinking liquor; you know I think it's very wrong."

"Quare women has quare notions," murmured Joab, impartially.

"You know I hope the day will come when none of you will ever touch it," she continued; "but I suppose not a boy here thinks enough of me now to promise not to drink this Christmas?"

The silence that followed was broken at last by Philip. "We like you all right; but, by grab! a fellow's got to see some fun!"

With this conversation in mind, it is small wonder Miss Loring was loth to see her boys depart for their homes on Christmas day, after the tree, the stockings, the carols, and everything had ended. She called Killis into her room the last thing, and talked to him again, but without visible effect. Her heart grew more and more heavy during the two days that followed, so much so that she could not enjoy the other trees she helped with over on Wace and on Right Fork of Perilous. Friday night she did not sleep at all for worrying, and by noon Saturday she could endure the strain no longer, and saddling 'Mandy, and taking Jason, who had had no place to go, behind her, she set out for Killis's home, over on Clinch. Dark pictures rose before her all the way—her dear boys drinking and fighting and shooting and maybe killing one another. She might at least get there in time to avert the worst. All the ten miles she was too anxious and miserable to feel the cold wind that came down from the snowy mountain-tops.

On her arrival, about half-past-three, Killis's mother welcomed her at the door. They had met before at the school. She was a large, handsome young woman of twenty-five, only a dozen years older than Killis, having married at twelve.

"Where are the boys?" Miss Loring asked anxiously, seeing nobody but the little girls about the fire.

"They been in and out all day; now they're up in the deadening, shooting," was the reply.

"Have they been drinking much?" asked Miss Loring.

"A sight!" answered Mrs. Blair. Then she continued, smiling: "But what they've drank won't hurt 'em much, I reckon.

When Killis come home a-Wednesday, the first words he said was: 'Maw, I've bid a lot of the boys here a-Saturday to see a good time. I want you to gimme three or four jugs of liquor, and all paw's guns and pistols, and bake up a good batch of pies and gingercakes.'

"All right, son," I says; 'you know your maw never denies you nothing.'

"Maw," he says, 'Miss Loring she axed me not to give them boys no liquor and get 'em drunk; but I'm ashamed not to a-Christmas. But if I had something that were n't pine-blank liquor, but would just make 'em a little happy, dad burn me! if I would n't give 'em that to please her!'

"We got a barrel of cider left in the corn-crib," I says.

"Gee! Maw, I never thought of that. It's the very thing—hard enough to make 'em happy, but not wild-drunk!"

"So yesterday I cooked up, and this morning, a little grain before the boys begun to come in, he drewed off a kag of cider, and poured in two or three gallon' of water, so 's they would n't get *too* happy, and all day they been eating and drinking fit to burst, and then running out in the road to shoot a while, and then filling up again. And this evening, after dinner, Killis he took 'em up in the deadening to shoot at the trees. I never seed such a boy for shooting at trees as him."

Relieved and happy beyond expression, Miss Loring leaned back in her chair, relaxed her weary mind and body, and gave thanks to God. Jason ran in from stabling 'Mandy, and she told him he might join the other boys in the deadening. A few minutes later Killis burst in the back door with beaming face.

"I never give them boys nary drap to drink but cider," he said; "I done it to please you!"

Miss Loring threw her arms around him, yes, she even wept, so great had been the strain.

"And I watered the cider, too," he continued. "Them boys think they're drunk and seeing a big time, but they hain't. But it does 'em just as much good!"

Soon the other boys followed, piling up guns and pistols on one of the beds, and taking another round of gingercake and cider. Miss Loring looked at them hun-

grily, thankful to see them in possession of life and limb. Finding that they were not at all abashed or sorry to see her there, she accepted pressing invitations to spend the night. Taulbee, Philip, Hosea, Absalom, Geordie, and Nucky were the ones there, the Salyers and Atkinses not having come.

from his uncle. Of his picking, the least said the better, but the song was very good:

GROUND-HOG SONG

Oh, whistle up your dog, boys, and shoulder
your gun,
And up to the hills for to see some fun.



Drawn by F. R. Gruger

“SOMETIMES I FETCH A NAG UP AND GALLOP AROUND AND SHOOT”

All the boys spent the night, too, of course, and there was a very gay time, picking Killis's new banjo his mother had just bought, and dancing and singing. Miss Loring herself danced some fancy dances learned in her childhood, and while she could not hold a candle to Killis, never had she danced with such joy and freedom. Killis sang a new song he had just learned

Oh, shoulder your gun and whistle up your
dog,
And off to the hills for to ketch a ground-
hog.

One in the bushes, one in the ground,
One for me, and one for my hound.

One in the hollow, one in the log.
All I want is a gun and a dog.

Sold my steer and bought me a gun,
Got no money, and don't want none.

Run along, boys, run, rip, tear,
The meat 'll do to eat and the hide 'll do to wear.

Belle 's on the scent; hear her sing, see her scratch,
Up yon side of the pawpaw patch.

Hi there, Joe, bring a ten-foot pole
And root this gran'paw out of his hole!

Rufe 's struck another, there on the knob.
Dang my looks! we 're in for a job!

Four now, boys, and dark a-drawing nigh;
Hungry hain't the word: I 'm fitten for to die!

Here, Maw, fill up the pot.
Don't forgit the 'taters, and fire up hot.

Two little boys, Tom and Sam;
Tom grabs a shoulder, Sam grabs a ham.

Don't slight the babe, give hit a chunk of fat;
There, now, hit 's a-chokin'! Slap hit in the back!

Yonder sets Sam, with a snigger and a grin,
The ground-hog grease a-runnin' down his chin.

Oh, Maw, make Sam quit;
He 's et all the ground-hog, I can't get a bit!

Oh, Maw, look at him;
He 's et all the ground-hog and now wants the skin!

So whistle up your gun, boys, and shoulder your dog,
We 're bound for the hills for to ketch a ground-hog;

So shoulder your dog, boys, and whistle up your gun,
We 're off for the hills for to see some fun!

In the morning when Killis went to the stable to saddle Miss Loring's nag, she followed him, to express once more her appreciation of what he had done, and to tell him how happy he had made her. "And some day, Killis, you will do good and noble deeds to make God happy, not just me," she said. "You know He wants, even more than I do, to see you a great and good man."

"That 's what I 'm a-going to be," he declared confidently. Then, looking away thoughtfully, he spoke in a lower voice: "But there 's one thing I got to do before I can be any man at all. Do you reckon you could climb that 'ere knob?" pointing to a steep hill-shoulder that rose behind the stable.

"I 'll try," said Miss Loring, wondering. He led the way, pulling her up when necessary. Deadened trees rose gauntly on all sides of the knob, and from its summit they looked up into a great, dark hollow of the mountain, thickly wooded with hemlocks. Killis pointed to a spot high up. "Right there," he said, "is where paw got kilt."

Miss Loring gazed up with a shudder into the dark recesses, and shuddered again when she remembered that somewhere there, if report were true, the still even now continued its deadly work.

"And do you see this here tree?" Killis continued, turning toward the one dead tree, silvery and bare, on the level top of the knob. About this tree, nearly opposite Miss Loring's shoulders, was a broad, black band, which, on approaching nearer, she saw was made by innumerable bullet-holes. Killis spoke again. "I come here and look up yander where my paw was kilt, and then I make out like this here tree 's the marshal that done it, and then I shoot him. Sometimes I shoot walkin', and sometimes runnin', and sometimes I fetch a nag up and gallop around and shoot. Where them bullet-holes is at is his heart-band. 'T ain't often I miss it. And when I get so I *never* miss it, I aim to ride over in Boyne, where the marshal lives at, and tell him 'I 'm Steve Blair's boy, look out for yourself!' and shoot him down like a dog, and revenge my paw, and make God and everybody happy!"

Miss Loring's knees went suddenly weak, but with a great effort she controlled herself, and only said as quietly as she could: "Promise me, Killis, that you won't undertake this before you are eighteen. It is really a man's business, not a boy's, and a very solemn thing." She knew that only the long years could say the rest for her.

"I know it is," he replied, gazing off into the hollow; "and I want to do it right when I do it. I reckon I 'll promise you to wait till then."

CHIKIE, THE BURGOMASTER

BY BRISTOW ADAMS

WITH PICTURES BY CHARLES LIVINGSTON BULL

SOME time ago the United States Government sent a lot of men to the Pribilof Islands, in the Bering Sea, to find out how to keep the fur seals from being killed off altogether. Among these men was one scientist in particular who studied everything he could get his hands on—books, birds, bugs, and boys, even small boys of the Aleutian type. It was due to this latter trait that he made the acquaintance of Antone Melovidof, the most American of the Aleut children at St. Paul village, on the biggest of the misty islands. Antone had winning ways that were used mainly to obtain oranges from the scientist, who pocketed them from the government-house table. Antone in return brought his scientist seal-teeth by the bushel, and insects of every description.

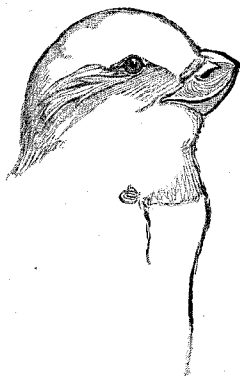
One day Antone learned that the scientist was to go in the revenue steamer to visit Walrus Island, the little rock he could see from his house during the ten clear days of the year. But Antone knew even more than this about Walrus Island, for he could remember that his father had been there twice the year before in the great *baidarra*, or skin boat, to gather guillemot eggs. He remembered it very well indeed because the fog had shut down on the first trip, and the boat was lost for two days, while the young men who stayed at home rang the chimes in the green-roofed Russian church during the gray days and the half-lighted nights that in summer-time were much alike. When the boat did come back, his father had

brought him a "Chikie," or young burgomaster gull; but it died before the second trip was made, only a week later. And on the second trip the father was too busy with the eggs to think of another Chikie. Antone knew all about these egg trips, for the Aleutian Easter eggs came only in midsummer, and only then when the villagers braved the fog and the tides to make the eight-mile trip to Walrus

Island. They could get eggs on the St. Paul cliffs, but these were only few and hard to get. When they really wanted eggs, they took a boat-load of men to Walrus Island, which is really only a great rock, and with brooms swept acres of guillemot eggs into the sea. They were laid so thick that one could not walk without stepping on them, and their brilliant, blue-green, mottled color made a beautiful carpet. That is, it was beautiful to see, though not to smell.

After the men had swept the rock clear of eggs, they would go away, to return in a week, after each guillemot had laid another egg; then they could be sure that all of the thousands of eggs on the cleared space would be comparatively fresh. They loaded the *baidarra* with eggs, four tons at a time, and the shells were so thick that they piled them like potatoes, and handled them almost as roughly, for, with so many, a little breakage was to be expected.

The scientist had heard of this wonderful island, but had never seen it close enough to verify the marvelous stories of the birds. So, when the revenue cutter



PARRAKEET AUKLET, OR
"SEA-QUAIL"