

1940

# Tales of Aroostook

Suzanne Reynolds

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## Recommended Citation

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SUZANNE REYNOLDS

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Tales of Aroostook

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FORTUNY'S

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*TALES OF AROOSTOOK*

SUZANNE REYNOLDS

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# Tales of Aroostook

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FORTUNY'S  
NEW YORK

TALES OF AROOSTOOK  
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*First Edition*

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*C o n t e n t s*

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THE OLD FLEWELLING HOUSE

SHALL WE SHOOT THE KING?

THE BLUE STOCKING WITCH

# The Old Flewelling House

By

Suzanne Reynolds

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**T**HE old Flewelling house was haunted. There wasn't a doubt about it. Although most ghosts have been accounted for or explained in some way the ghost of the old Flewelling house has never yet been laid by the heels.

I sought out old Aunt Betsy Walters who had at one time dwelt beneath its roof and who had always insisted that no one could remain in that house for long. Aunt Betsy was busily spinning on this bright March morning, but she was only too eager to sit down and talk. After I had explained my presence by telling her I was after a ghost story she was glad to tell me all she knew of the ghost which, she insisted, still haunted the very spot where the old brown house in the hollow once stood.

She drew on an old clay pipe of the kind formerly known as a Woodstock. It was as black as ebony: the stem was about three inches long, the tip having been broken off. Aunt Betsy claimed to have had "her old companion" for over forty years.



Aunt Betsy was nearing ninety. She had smoked since she was thirty, could take a neat drink of gin and although she was fond of her bitters she had never been "the wuss of liquor." She proceeded to fill her pipe and was soon puffing away. Her old black cat, Jim, came from under the stove and stretched himself on the floor at her side. One ear was gone, frozen or chewed off in a fight. Aunt Betsy claimed Jim could talk and she could always tell what he wanted. When I inquired how old he was she said twenty-nine and he mewed eight.

Aunt Betsy told me how she came by him. She said she had a cousin whom she thought the world of and one night when he was in liquor he killed a woodsman in a fight. That was down in the Province and he was hanged.

"I was feeling mighty down at the mouth about the whole thing. I remember just like it was yesterday knowing he had been hanged. I was busy feeling sorry for him as I peeled the potatoes for dinner. I opened the door to let in a little fresh air and in walked a little black kitten with a white spot on its breast. It seemed to think so much of me I decided to keep it.

"I never noticed what the white spot on his breast looked like until one day about a year later when he was sitting on the sewing machine in the sun. I was watching him wash himself and there before my very eyes them white hairs took on the form of a gallows. From that day I called him Jim after Jim Hanse." Hear-



ing his name Jim got up and, looking his mistress in the face, mewed "Tall" and Aunt Betsy said, "By the Jerusalem, Cherry Tallie will be here before the sun sets." By this time the cat was making me nervous so I asked if I might put him out. He straightway walked over to the door and out he went.

Here is the tale I got from Aunt Betsy.

"My husband Walter had just took up a new farm and it had no buildings on it. The neighbors were at least a mile apart in these days and as the old Flewelling house was less than a quarter of a mile from where we planned to build our house, we decided to move in. It had been vacant about five years and needed only a few panes of glass and a bit of shingling on the roof to make it shipshape once more. This old house was built of hewed logs and squarely faced the East. It was wide but low with a veranda on the south side overlooking the Aroostook river. There were four tall pines on the river bank, the limbs of one almost touching the saddle board of the gable end. The house was situated on one of the bends of the river and when the wind came howling down the river and hit full on those old pines, they would wail. When the wind blew, the one at the end of the house could reach out and thump the roof. It was the loneliest place I ever lived.

"We had lived there 'most a month when the old mischief seemed to take possession. There were two rooms upstairs and four down. The two boys slept

upstairs in the east room. Their Father and I slept downstairs in a bedroom overlooking the river.

"Well the boys kept complaining of not being able to keep the quilts on their bed. One night I woke up and George, who was ten, was standing by my bedside, white as a sheet. He said he would not go back upstairs for anything so I put him in with his father and went up and got in with young Walter. I had worked all day helping to build the new house and was very tired, so I soon fell asleep.

"Suddenly I was awakened by having the quilts yanked off the bed. I opened my eyes and found the room flooded with moonlight. It was so light you could have seen to pick up a pin. The window seemed to be open and it was bitter cold: the wind was hitting me square in the face. I sprang out of bed to close the window and suddenly the room was dark as a pocket and warm and still: not a breath of air. I found a match and lit the candle. Sure enough on the floor by the side of the bed lay the quilts. Picking them up I rearranged the bed and tucked the bedclothes in well at the foot. I lay down and was soon fast asleep. I was awakened twice more before morning to pass through the same experience.

"Well, morning came at last and I was sure glad to see the old sun shining over the treetops. I told Walter but he wouldn't believe me, so the next night George and I slept downstairs and he and young Walter slept upstairs. I don't know what happened but

the next morning Walter took the horse and high wagon and drove down to where we were building the new house and brought back some boards to make a trundle bed. During the day we pushed the trundle bed under our bed and at night dragged it out and set it down in the kitchen.

"The next thing we knew the door began unlocking. I would bolt the back door. The front door was fastened with a bar which crossed the door, dropped into a slot and was held in place by an iron pin on a chain. After being sure both doors were secure we would go to bed. We would no sooner get in bed than the bolt in the back door would slide back and then with a rattle of the chain we would hear the bar on the front door lifted and let fall.

"One night the moon was full and so beautiful shining on the river that we all sat out and watched it for a spell. The frogs were peeping and sort of singing. We enjoyed listening to them, and a nighthawk which would screech. The new house was coming right along. I had helped Walter all day. We had it all boarded in and expected to get a couple of men we knew to shave shingles for the roof. Walter spoke up: 'Them frogs sound like rain. I only hope it holds off a spell longer. We can get moved in about ten days.'

"Then he arose stretching and said, 'Guess we had better put our humps in the tick.' Young Walter had fallen asleep on a bench so I gathered him up and went in to light the candle and get the beds ready. Then we



turned in and I guess we were all soon fast asleep. I was awakened by the sound of footsteps walking upstairs. I listened and could hear the branches of the old pine whacking the gable end of the house. I made up my mind right then and there to find out what was making all these disturbances. I got up and found both doors unfastened. Taking the candle I ascended the stairs. But when I reached the top of the stairs I could go no farther. I stood there on the top step and all the rest of the house had vanished. The candle showed no light when held before me. Turning I swept the stairs with the candle beam. I made my way down somehow and when I reached the bottom my knees gave way. Walter heard me fall and came and picked me up.

We moved the very next day. The house wasn't ready yet, but we had a frolic and all the neighbors for miles around came and gave us a day. Pat Kelly split cedar scoots enough to cover the roof so we didn't bother with shingles that year."

. . . . .

At this point I had to depart. Whom should I meet but Tallie? I greeted him with "Jim is expecting you," and he said "Jim is always right. At least Grandmaw thinks so."

The next morning I went back to get a little more information. I met her granddaughter just leaving for high school. Margot Walters walked six miles to the

Lyndon High School and walked back after school. She milked the cow and did the barn chores.

I had always admired her very much for her loyalty to her old Grandmother. She could easily have worked for her board in town, but she knew her old Grandmother would be unable to keep house unless she stayed with her. Margot greeted me and said she was glad that I planned on spending the day with Gram. She had made new gingerbread in the early morning and the raised bread was in the pans. Would I bake it? She had been at home Saturday afternoon and her Father had told her everything he could remember about the old Flewelling house. Since she might not see me or have any time to talk to me, she left me a sheaf of notes which were of great help.

Jim was sitting on the doorstep sunning himself and I shut him out. Aunt Betsy was taking a few draws of her old pipe, but she put it back in the cigar box after wrapping it carefully in a clean rag. "Well," she greeted me. "Take off your wraps and draw up to the stove. The tea kettle is just galloping and I'll be making us a cup of hot tea." I waited for my cup of tea and a slice of chicken scrapple. It was a fine lunch.

#### The Fruits of my Day at the Twin Pines

"About the year 1839 Grimes Flewelling came up the St. John river on a raft, and camped at the mouth of the Aroostook river on a small Island. He was seeking a home in the wilderness where he might for-

get everything connected with his past life. He and his wife had sailed over from Belfast, Ireland, ten years before and made a home for themselves in St. John, New Brunswick. His wife fell in love with a man who made the trip over with them. The guilty pair managed to keep the affair from Flewelling until about a year before he came to Aroostook. Then they ran away together and were found to be living in Boston. He left St. John and obtained work in Fredricton.

"There were no roads from New Brunswick into Aroostook County. Everyone used the river as a thoroughfare. The raft with such possessions as he wished to take with him was towed along by a big sorrel stallion. Flewelling rode on the raft and poled it. A small Irishman rode on the horse's back: This man had long been a friend of Flewelling's and when he learned that his friend contemplated seeking a home in the wilderness he pulled up his stakes and came with him. This man was Bartley Conley. He was about fifty years old, a bachelor and woman hater. Both men were pretty well-to-do for the times. Conley planned to open a tavern. He was a great cook: his sourdough biscuits, home smoked bacon and bean hole beans were the talk of all who were to put up at the tavern.

"As Flewelling slept this night at the mouth of the Aroostook river he dreamed he saw five geese. They were flying low, about ten feet apart in a perfect V and as they flew over Flewelling the old gander hissed at him. "Unbolt your door or woe betide you." The



dream stuck in his mind and he told it to Conley as they were eating their breakfast of fried pork and buckwheat pancakes. Conley said the dream meant they were entering a land of plenty and he was in high spirits. Conley had six hens and a rooster in a couple of sacks, which were tied to the raft so they wouldn't lose them.

Flewelling had his shepherd pup, Watch, along. While they were packing to resume their journey, Watch scared out an old duck. Conley ran up and found her nest. There were eleven eggs in it, and these he wrapped in river grass and placed carefully in his hat. He told Flewelling, "I'll be sarving ducks at Conley's tavern." "They should be half mine as Watch found them," said Flewelling.

"While Flewelling got the raft ready Conley untethered the horse and led him down and climbed on his back. It was cool for they were getting an early start. They had a long way to travel and had to portage around the falls on the Aroostook river.

"The raft was built in two parts, nailed together by short pieces of board, and could easily be taken apart. Each part was built on two long logs, the ends of which were hewn to turn up like a sled runner. Part of the cargo was left on half the raft on the shore below the falls. Flewelling stayed with that part which consisted of their provisions and the hens. There were a great many wild animals in the forest in these days



and it wouldn't be safe to leave any provisions unwatched.

"After reaching the flat shore where they would again float the raft Conley sat down and had a few drags from his old pipe and let the horse rest. Then he went back to where Flewelling awaited his coming. The second load proved to be much heavier than the first, so they carried most of it up the bank, taking almost everything from the raft. The horse hauled that up easily. Conley had brought five kegs of rum along to sell in his tavern. They tied them one at a time to the end of the tow rope and together hauled them up over the bank. After they had everything up and had loaded it back on the drag they found they could not haul it very far at a time so they decided they would take everything they could load on the horse's back, and that both men would carry what they could and then return for the other part of the raft. They reached the shore above the falls and the first part of the raft. When Conley got almost back to the river bank where the rest of the raft had been left the horse reared up and tried to go back. Conley talked to him until he quieted down and then he led him back down the trail and found that a bear had smashed the end in the half barrel of molasses and was eating it. And the bear refused to retreat until Conley threw his small ax at it. Then it went off only a short distance. Conley hitched the horse to the drag and lost no time in getting away from the spot.

"They were soon back working to get the raft together. Then they set out on the breast of the friendly river. Going up the shore they found the current quite strong on their side of the river. They decided to swim the horse across to the other side. The horse could wade about a rod from the shore and haul the raft with the greatest of ease. Looking back they saw the bear sniffing around the spot where they had put the raft together. The horse, frightened, dashed up the river for all he was worth. The men were glad the water was high and that the bear wouldn't try to attack them in the water. They continued on up the river to the little settlement at Fort Fairfield where they spent the night.

"The next morning the two men continued up the river. There were a few settlers here and there along the river banks. About six miles up the river there was quite a settlement of about five families. Flewelling decided to settle on the opposite side of the river from this settlement, but Conley, ever mindful of trade, decided on locating near the settlement. These settlers had come up the river cruising for a lumber company which made a business of shipping lumber to England.

"Just opposite this settlement was a little valley between two hills. On one hillside there were five towering pines. As soon as Flewelling saw them he recalled his dream and decided he would build his home overlooking the river in the grove of pine. He and Conley built a bark shelter and covered it with boughs

and busied themselves building an outdoor fireplace. They could live in the bark leanto while they built a house. The weather was warm and living out of doors a pleasure.

"Conley decided to make his home with Flewelling for the time. The two men went to work with a will and before the summer was over had a large squared timber house erected. In one corner of the house was a huge stone fireplace that would take a log five feet long. They both gathered wood and had a great supply for winter and had built a snug little hovel for the horse.

"Flewelling hoped to let his horse out to a lumber company for the winter as hay was scarce. He and Conley had made quite a large clearing which they planned to plant with grain and potatoes. They piled the brush and had it ready to burn in the early spring, as soon as the piles of roots and brush were dry enough. As they had to wait for the river to freeze over before returning to Fredricton to buy their supplies for winter, they continued to fell the huge timber.

"Flewelling obtained title to a half section (320 acres) which he had staked off. He had chosen to settle over a mile from any of the other settlers as he wished to live apart from his fellow men. He became more silent as time wore on until by the time the river froze over he was scarcely speaking to Conley. Nevertheless they made the trip down the ice together.

"They made the trip on a sort of home-made sled,



Flewelling planning to buy a single sled at Fredricton on which they would haul their supplies back for the winter. Both the men seemed well supplied with money, although most of the settlers in these regions used shaved shingles or other timber instead of money. When they had enough shingles for a raft load they would float them down to Fredricton and exchange them for provisions, clothing or whatever they needed.

"Flewelling and Conley bought their supplies and made the return trip up the river. There was a good road on the ice and it was thought best to make a second trip. In winter the portage road around the falls was smooth and a team could drive around the falls.

"On the second trip down Conley got a job as cook in a woods camp in New Brunswick. Flewelling got work for himself and his horse in Fredricton yarding lumber, so the two men decided to spend the winter down river. This they did and returned in the spring while the ice was still quite strong. So late in March they made the return trip.

"Conley decided to build his tavern over in the settlement. He bought four acres of land from one of the settlers for a gallon of rum and two gallons of molasses. This was hard wood land and wasn't considered of any worth by the settlers.

"Flewelling was left to dwell alone and brood over his wrongs. Each year he became more surly and had nothing to do with his neighbors. He was a tall handsome man, and the women of the settlement often spoke

of him and commented on his looks. The women even went so far as to take Flewelling a bucket of Thanksgiving goodies and a pair of mittens: two of the most comely being selected to perform the mission. He shut the door in their faces and said if they didn't go away he would set the dog on them. He was left alone after this.

"On the eighth day of December the wind was blowing a regular gale down the river and the old pine at the end of the house was whacking the gable end with its long branches. Night had fallen early. Grimes Flewelling had rolled a big tamarack log upon the big andirons. It was full of pitch and soon flared up. The blaze from the old tamarack lit up the large room until it was almost light enough to read, had the lonely man had anything to read. The two bunks that he and Bartley Conley had built the winter before were plainly lighted.

"As yet the house had not been partitioned off except for two rooms upstairs. The house was large and it was such a job to warm it that he decided the next summer he would raft some boards down from Fairbanks mill. He vowed he would never spend another winter in this ark. 'I was crazy to build a big house—a man alone—but I suppose it was the old Flewelling pride of possession.' He sat there planning and thinking until the fire died down and the cold began to creep in. It seemed strange that he was unable to heat the place: it must be a violent night.

“He rolled a couple of big tamaracks upon the fire. It must be ten o'clock: he should have been in bed hours ago. The blaze from the burning logs began to take hold. The heat was intense. As he started to climb up to the top bunk he heard a pounding on his door. Who could be about on a night like this? The door toward the river in this end of the cabin was almost opposite the fireplace. He opened the door and the light from the burning logs fell full on the men standing in the door. The wind almost tore the door from his grasp. One of the men spoke: ‘Thank God you had a light or we would have perished.’ That voice! He must be going mad! But no, it was the man whom he had once called friend and who had repaid him by despoiling his home. He had heard when he went back to Fredricton last year that Tom Fisk had deserted the woman who had left home and husband to follow this blackguard into a strange country. He laughed aloud. Recognizing Flewelling the man staggered back. The door was slammed and the bar dropped in place.

“Knowing it was useless to seek shelter here the men turned away into the storm. They lost all sense of direction, wandered in a circle and came back to the edge of Flewelling’s clearing when one of them fell beneath the branches of a large white birch tree.

“It was in vain that the younger man tried to arouse him by begging him not to give up. Leaving Fisk there beneath the tree Semple stumbled on. This must be



the way to the river. If he could only get back on the river he would keep on until he found a house. Once more he entered the clearing but he could go no farther and he dropped down, curiously enough beneath a big white birch tree.

"Old Flewelling sat before his fire. It was no use going to bed now. He fairly gloated to think that that man would come to his door for succor away up here in the wilderness. He did not care what happened to that skunk. At about two o'clock he was aroused by his dog howling in the hovel. He went to the door and looked out. The storm had died down and the moon rode high in the heavens. It was bitter cold, but he never remembered a night when it had been as light as this. Looking at the moon and the starlit heavens he felt the old bitterness washed from his heart. Flewelling took one more look at the starry heavens and said fervently, 'I hope those poor souls have found shelter.' They had. Watch howled again and again. Flewelling closed the door and, going to bed, slept until morning.

"The next morning one of the settlers started up the river. His family needed meat and he knew where there was a yard of caribou in a thick tamarack swamp. Taking his snowshoes, musket and dog he started up the river. At the edge of Flewelling's clearing the dog went over the river bank and began barking. Thinking the dog had found some game David Parks followed and found the dog beneath the branches of a



spreading white birch nosing at a mound in the snow. This proved to be the body of a man. Parks returned to the settlement and he and the other four men came back with a hand sled to remove the body. This time Parks' dog ran up along the clearing about ten rods and found the other body.

"'It's a pity they froze so near a house,' one of the men said, 'but it was such a storm I don't suppose they could see Flewelling's house.'

"They loaded the two bodies on the hand sled and hauled them back to Conley's Tavern. Conley knew Fisk but did not let on to anyone his suspicion that Flewelling had turned the two men away. He did not want to be the one to spread Flewelling's story around.

"The snow had come early that fall and was quite deep, so the ground was scarcely frozen. Shoveling the snow back they dug the two graves in one and put each of the men in a rough board box. The two coffins were lowered side by side into the grave.

"This was the tenth day of December. On the fifteenth of April some men came to stay awhile with relatives in the settlement. They would return later to come down with the lumber drive. When they were told the story of the two men whom the settlers had buried on a little knoll on the bank of the river they said that two men whose names were Tom Fisk and Jack Semple had left the camp before Christmas thinking they might be able to beat they way to St.

John by way of the river. These must have been the men.

"The summer passed and was a beautiful one. Several colts had been foaled since Flewelling had brought his stallion into the region. If their luck held there would no longer be a shortage of horses. Sam Warks had a span of two year olds that he was breaking: he would get them used to hauling small loads of rock on a stone drag. By the next summer they could help clear land and plow. Flewelling planted quite a few potatoes. They were the variety known as purple christies. He was the only one around who grew that kind. He had a field of waving oats. What he did not use as feed for his horse he would sell to the lumber men who were lumbering up river.

"He had rafted boards down from Fairbanks mill and with Conley's help had partitioned his house off. It now contained four rooms downstairs and two up and was snug and warm. He would use one room as a wood room so he began filling the small room just off the kitchen with wood which had been cut and left in the sun to season. He planned to live in that one room the following winter. It would be so much easier to keep warm.

"Conley and Flewelling made the trip to Fr dricton again to get their supplies. They had built a flat-bottomed boat the past summer. They would float down the river and carry the boat around the falls. Having grown their own grain and potatoes they could easily

bring what they required back in the boat which they would pole up the river. There was now a small mill about six miles above the settlement where they could get buckwheat ground.

"Since the winter before when the bodies of the two frozen men had been found, Flewelling had surprised Conley by renewing the old friendship. He seemed reluctant to spend his time alone and after Conley had helped him to finish his house he asked him to come back and live with him for the winter. But Conley had his hens and ducks and the tavern and felt he would rather be in his own home. However, the two men made frequent trips back and forth to spend an evening with each other. Flewelling made a dug-out canoe and gave it to Conley, who made frequent trips to the home of his now fast friend.

"Time passed until winter was at hand. The snow began falling early in November and by Thanksgiving the snow was deep and high. Conley came over and invited Flewelling to have Thanksgiving dinner with him and spend the day. He had a large rooster, a duck and some spareribs roasted and had made some apple pies. There were five men stopping at the tavern. They were on their way up river to work in the woods, but planned to spend a few days at the tavern. A couple of the neighbors dropped in and they played cards and sang and had a few snorts of Conley's rum. The day passed right merrily.

"When Flewelling returned home he felt more lonely



than ever. Now he hated the very thought of being alone with his thoughts. Somehow he managed to live through the days and lonely nights until the eighth day of December was at hand: just one year since the two travelers had sought shelter at his door. He tried in vain to shut them from his thoughts. He was on the point of going down and spending the night with Conley, but pride conquered. He was ashamed to admit he hated being alone.

"He had fed his horse and bedded him down, but he had not left Watch out in the stable. He had taken him back to the house with him. Even a dog would be company on a night like this. It was a dark still night and the wind sobbed and sighed through the old pines. He banked up his fire and went to bed. Watch seemed uneasy as he roamed back and forth. Flewelling got up and poked the fire up and coaxed Watch to lie down in the lower bunk. The flare from the fire lit the room. It was not a cold night: it felt like rain.

"Flewelling dropped to sleep and dreamed he was travelling in a strange land. It was darkness all around him but ahead the sky looked light and he knew there were people there: laughter, comfort and song. It seemed he had walked for days, but he couldn't seem to reach the light. Suddenly he felt his wife was there, warm and happy, and he must join her. Then he was awakened by Watch howling. He sat up on the edge of the bunk. The dog was over by the door. Flewelling turned the log in the fire place over. It flared up

and began to burn, again the dog howled and the cold chills ran down Flewelling's back. He opened the door and was startled to see that the big white birch tree on the river bank was in flames. It was blazing from the ground to the top and the length of its spreading branches. He rushed to the corner of the house and looked toward the other white birch tree. It also was enveloped in flame. He turned to go back in, but it was so dark he had a hard time finding his way. He kept his hand touching a log of the house until he reached the door. He turned for one last look at the burning tree, but it had died down as quickly as it had flared up. Not even one tiny spark glowed to show that the tree had been blazing. He entered the house, piled a lot of pitch pine wood on the fire and sat down in his home-made rocking chair. His clothes were wet with sweat. With a sigh the dog lay down at his feet.

"The morning dawned at last. Rain was falling softly, the wind had changed and it looked as though the weather would soon clear up. Flewelling had sat before his fire until the first streaks of dawn appeared. He had come to the conclusion during the night that someone from the settlement had come forth and set fire to the ragged bark on the white birch trees to plague him, but the way Watch howled still bothered him. The dog had howled like that only once before and that was a year ago on the cold bitter night when—but he would not think of that.

"He put on his coat and went out to the hovel to

do his chores. When he came out of the barn door he saw Conley coming up the road. He had shot a moose a couple of weeks ago. He would make Conley stay and take dinner with him, he thought as he waited in the yard for his visitor.

“‘How are ye,’ greeted Conley? ‘I dreamed about ye last night and ye looked as pale as a ghost. Are ye feeling all right? Ye don’t look right to me.’ Flewelling thought if he feigned illness perhaps Conley might stop a few days, so he said he felt he was about to come down with the gripe and would his neighbor stay with him a few days and look after the horse if business wasn’t too pressing at the tavern. ‘There hasn’t been anyone but meself there these ten days,’ said Conley. ‘I will go back and arrange for the Kelly’s to look after me ducks and me hens. I had a warning that ye needed me and I come rain or no rain.’

“Flewelling said he thought he would lie down awhile. He asked Conley to bake some potatoes and fry some moose steak at noon. Conley replied, “I’m fair aching to sink a tooth in that moose, and if ye have any sour emptyings I’ll make ye a bannick.” Emptyings were a sour batter used instead of yeast. To make a bannick, he took two cups of this batter, thinning it with water, stirring in a spoonful of saleratus, as soda was then called, and mixing it with flour. This was put in a flat iron kettle and set in a corner of the fireplace with coals piled over it. The smell of steak frying woke Flewelling. He got up and made ready for



his dinner. Conley had the table set and was just dishing up the dinner. The potatoes were well done and the bread nice and brown. 'I believe I am hungry,' he said as he took his place at the table. 'I didn't feel like eating so didn't bother to get any breakfast this morning. I can't seem to make steak taste like that. You are a born cook Bart.' 'Am I?' said Conley. 'Sure and I was that sick of me own grub and eating alone that not a bite could I choke down me this morning. So I struck out brousing a snack of me neighbor's, not thinking it would be meself who would be cooking for the both of us, but it don't taste bad at that.'

"It had cleared up and the sun was shining after dinner when the two men started out for Conley's. Flewelling went with his neighbor, fearing he might decide not to come back. They stopped a while at the tavern. Conley packed his bed blankets, some home made coffee, butter, and a bottle of brandy in case of sickness. There was a pack of cards on the window-sill and Flewelling dropped them into his pocket. They would help to pass many a lonely hour. The two men returned to Flewellings before darkness set in.

"The first day the two men went out to cut wood Flewelling decided he would chop the big white birch tree on the bank. They felled a few trees and Flewelling cut a bit of brush around the big white birch on the bank: his heart stood still. The tree was covered with ragged bark which was white as snow. There were no traces or marks to show the tree had been on



fire. Could he have dreamed it? Well, he would cut the thing and have done with it. The first chop he made he broke his axehandle so he called to Conley. Showing him the broken handle, he said, 'I'll go to the house and put a new handle in my axe, while you cut this tree.' But Conley wasn't far behind him. He too had broken his axe. Several times during the winter the men tried to cut the two white birch trees and once they had tried to saw the one on the river bank, but the saw just doubled up and they were unable to make a mark on the tree. After that they shunned them both.

"The next morning Conley went back to his tavern. He began buck sawing his wood. The drive would be down in another month and he wanted to be ready for the trade he knew he could get. The Kellys had taken good care of the hens, and he planned to save all the eggs he could, for the river drivers couldn't seem to get enough eggs in the spring. He had several hams and a lot of bacon salted down, so he cut a hole in the ice and suspended the hams in a bag, to freshen them in the water. In twenty-four hours he replaced them with bacon. He soon had his smoke house full, and smoked the hams and bacon with maple bark. One day about a week after he came home he took Flewelling some eggs and a few fryings of ham. Flewelling had started tapping a few trees. He thought it wast time, but Conley wouldn't be tapping his maples until next week.

"That was the last trip Conley made over the river

until after the crop was planted. The drive came down early. Conley did a good business so had no time to be neighborly. When at last he took time to call on Flewelling he found him very seedy. He had scarcely planted a thing. 'Something is wrong with Flewelling,' he thought. All that summer he seemed to be ailing and when Conley went to ask him to come for Thanksgiving as of old he said, 'I'll try, but I have no strength.'

"The day before Thanksgiving Conley went up and harnessed Sandy on the sled and brought Flewelling to stay over Thanksgiving. He had decided on spending the winter with his neighbor just as soon as he could close the tavern. Flewelling seemed to brighten up when Conley spoke of spending the winter with him and said he would fix a place for Conley's cow if he wished to take her. He finally moved in on the first day of December.

"He could not help seeing that Flewelling was a sick man. He talked to himself a lot about the trees and in the night he would jump up from a sound sleep. 'The trees, the trees, why can't we cut them down?' and again 'the trees, the trees are on fire.' It was a hectic week for Conley. The night of December eighth the two men played cards until quite late. Flewelling seemed reluctant to go to bed. Conley decided to return to the tavern. Flewelling was getting on his nerves.

"When it came time to put the dog out it was found to be hiding under the lower bunk. He whined and did

not want to go to the barn, but Conley coaxed him out after awhile. He then banked the fire and went to bed in the top bunk. He lay and listened to Flewelling muttering and tossing about in the lower bunk. Finally he dropped to sleep. He was awakened by hearing the dog howl. At first he thought it was a wolf. He got down from his bunk. Flewelling was already at the door and was saying, 'The trees! The trees!' as he opened the door. 'They are in flames.' Sure enough, the old white birch on the bank was a mass of flames. Both men went to the corner of the cabin where they could see the other tree. It also was in flames. Both trees stood out in bold relief against the black night.

"Conley turned to look toward the house to see if the light from the burning trees were casting any reflection. All was darkness. He turned to look at the trees. There wasn't even a faint glow. He helped Flewelling back in the house. The man seemed to be in a panic. 'Someone has set the trees to scare us,' Conley told the sick man, but Flewelling said, 'No, they burned like that last year, just a year ago tonight. It was two years ago tonight I turned the men from my door. I have never known any peace of mind since that night, and Watch howled. I can't stand it I tell you.' Conley helped him back in his bunk. He could see his days were numbered and just as the sun came up, Grimes Flewelling died.

"Conley fed the horse and, leaving the dog in the stable, he started for the settlement to break the news.



When he came opposite the white birch tree he climbed the bank to take a look at it. He couldn't believe his eyes. The bark was very ragged but clean and white without the slightest trace of ever having been on fire.

"The six men of which the settlement was comprised gathered in Flewelling's kitchen to make plans for the simple funeral. The first step was to go through his effects. In that way they would know whom to inform. Conley knew the key to Flewelling's strong chest was kept in an old sugar bowl in the cupboard. Taking the bowl down he handed the key to David Parks, who, all agreed, should have the task of opening the chest and going through its contents.

"Kneeling down Parks opened the chest and found a very fine black broadcloth suit slightly out of style, several white shirts and collars, and some clean underwear. There was a tiny pair of women's shoes carefully wrapped in paper, a few pieces of old pewter and silver, a little over four hundred dollars in money, which seemed like a fortune to these settlers, and a package containing a width of yellow flannel—the kind used in the old days to make petticoats for babies—a Bible and a copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

"Conley knew the biggest grief of Flewelling's life had been the fact that his wife was expecting a child at the time of her departure: he had hoped for a son. With what high hopes the yellow flannel had been purchased could only be guessed. David Parks took the blessed book in his hands reverently. Men fre-

quently used the Bible for a place to store important papers, he said. On the fly leaf was the inscription, 'To my beloved son Grimes Flewelling from his Mother.' The Bible contained no papers or letters and seemingly nothing of importance. David Parks was on the point of putting it back in the chest when Pat Kelly reached out and took the book saying, 'Let us read a chapter and bow down in prayer.' So saying he read the twenty-third psalm and with bowed heads they listened to his prayer. He was about to lay the book down when something impelled him to look in the back of the Bible and there on the last page in Flewelling's bold hand writing was his last will and testament, written on the fifteenth day of the past October. In it, after stating that he had no relatives or anyone to whom he was bound by ties stronger than friendship he left his money and 'everything I die possessed of to my true friend Bartley Conley.'

"He asked to be buried in his wedding suit with the bundle containing the yellow flannel, 'which I bought for the son I never had, buried with me.' Conley spoke up saying, 'I will make my way down to the little store at Fort Fairfield and buy the goods with which to line his casket. I will see he has a decent burial. In this period of the early settling of this wild region there was no place in which one could buy a casket much less find an undertaker. The settlers performed these rites for each other and the coffins were home-made.

"Strapping on his snowshoes he started back to the

settlement where Nancy Parks would tell him what he needed to get to make the coffin. Then he would continue on down the river about seven miles to where the little store was situated. He returned that night and constructed a coffin of pine boards. A couple of the women helped to pad the inside and line it with the white muslin which Conley had brought back along with some black cloth with which to cover the outside of the coffin. They made a fresh white pillow case slip over his own pillow and put the yellow flannel under the pillow beneath his head.

"Not one of these early pioneers coveted any of his possessions or envied Conley any of the things which he had inherited from Flewelling. All did what they could in this hour of death without hope of recompense.

"The next day the funeral was held from his own house and he was buried on the bank of the river near the pine grove. Conley wanted to make it a temporary grave and later take the body to Fredricton for burial, but George Parks made him see that the lonely man had come up the river to this wilderness to get away from anything pertaining to his past life.

"Conley moved back to the tavern taking the horse and dog back with him. He could not help feeling sorry for Watch, who had lain under the lower bunk ever since the passing of his Master refusing to come out or to eat. Conley finally had to carry him out to the sled when he got ready to depart. He whined and sighed and on the third day he disappeared. The next



morning Conley went back up to Flewelling's: he would put that poor dog out of his misery. But there was no need. The old black shepherd dog lay dead across the new mound of earth where his Master had been buried.

"It had been a hard winter and spring was very late. The people in the little settlement were very hard up. In fact, they were in want for almost everything. Their food was very low and they had no chance to market the shingles which they had shaved during the winter. There had been a lot of wolves around the past winter and what caribou they did not eat they had chased out of the country.

"On the Twelfth day of April Conley called all his neighbors to a meeting in the tavern. He told them he had no use for very much money and his tavern business was ample to supply his needs. The spring being so late, there was no telling when they would be able to market their shingles and timber so he had decided to divide the money left by Flewelling equally among them according to the size of their families. 'Now,' he said, 'I think we can make a trip to the fort and if they do not have what you require in provisions as the ice is still solid we can get down to Fredricton and buy what you need.' Now having the money with which to purchase food, Sam Works and Larry Kelley hooked up their teams to their long sleds and all the men taking shovels they started on the trip down river.

"The ice was just starting to give way in some places



along the shore, but they knew they would find a safe landing somewhere near the little store at Fort Fairfield. Late that night one of the teams returned bringing what food they could get at the store. The other team continued on to Fredricton: the weather stayed cold so the ice was still strong a week later when they returned bringing some more food and seed wheat. They had stopped at Fort Fairfield and bought some potatoes which they covered with blankets and were able to get to the settlement without freezing them.

"The old house remained vacant. With the years a family now and then would live in it for a spell. After many years one of the old pines blew down and fell square across the house and smashed it to the earth. No one built on the spot again. In fact everyone shuns the place and they say that the two white birch trees stood for years flaming to the high heavens on each eighth day of December. One spring there was an awful flood: the bank where the big birch stood was undermined, throwing the old tree in the river where it floated away. That very summer the other white birch was struck by lightning and my husband Walter saw it burn. After it was burned down there was nothing left but a pile of ashes."

As I made my way home in the late afternoon I went around by the river road in order to pass the lonely spot where the old Flewelling house had once stood. My heart seemed to skip a beat as I stood on a little knoll and looked down the river at the place where the bank

had caved in and I could picture in my mind the big white birch that had washed away from that spot. One of the old pine stumps still marked the spot where the house had once stood. It was all that was left of the five towering pines.

THE END

# Shall We Shoot the King?

By

Suzanne Reynolds

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**O**LD Aunt Suzy laid down her newspaper and remarked, "I have no patience with the trash they write these days. Times sure have changed. It doesn't seem a body can read a good true story any more.

"When I was young my Grandmaw often told me about when she was a small girl. Her old Grandpaw told her many a tale about when he was young and served as chief gunner in the Royal Guards. He was stationed at the Royal Palace and helped to protect the King of Wishing Well—a sort of a body guard.

"Now this King was a very wicked man. He was mean to his subjects, a regular tyrant, and would not give them any privileges whatsoever." And old Aunt Suzy would rock back and forth in deep thought. She would then take a pinch of snuff and start in with this story.

"A great many years ago my Grandpaw had a distant cousin who was Captain of the Royal Guards. He was a right handsome chap—very tall with large romantic

eyes. He certainly could set a uniform off: when he was dressed in his plum-colored uniform with gold lace and gold buttons, he was a picture to behold. So it's no wonder the King's only daughter, the little golden-haired Princess Adora, fell madly in love with the dashing Captain.

"Of course Percivale Griffin did not dare so much as to cast a glance in the direction of the King's little daughter, who was pining away for love of him. She oftentimes watched him from an upper balcony as he strutted back and forth looking proud and gladsome. She sighed to think she was unable to attract his attention.

"Now the king kept five of the fiercest lions in the kingdom. They were wont to roar a great deal and on holidays or special occasions the King often fed a disloyal subject to the lions, by way of celebrating. All the populace were invited and no one dared refuse to witness the gruesome sport of this wicked king.

"One day the little Princess Adora was strolling around the courtyards and stopped to gaze down in the pit at the lions. She lost her balance and plunged to the bottom of the pit. As quick as a flash the handsome Captain of the Guards sprang down into the pit and jerked the Princess from the path of a lion crouched to spring. He drew his gun and one after another he shot all five of them. They lay dead at his feet.

"The fair princess had fainted and there was no place to lay her down amid the bones and dead lions with



which the pit was strewn. So he continued to stand and hold her in his arms and holding her thus he could not help noticing how fair she was. When she regained consciousness she clasped him about the neck because she was so frightened. He held her very tight and tried to soothe her. She thought this must be paradise.

“Everyone up and down the land secretly rejoiced when they learned that the fierce lions had been slain. Thy no longer need dread furnishing a meal for them.

“Now about this time everyone in and about the palace (save the King) could not help noticing that the dashing Captain was in love with the charming Princess. For this cause many a man about the palace had gone to bed in good health only to wake up and find himself be-headed.” And here Aunt Suzy would sadly shake her head. “At about this same time in a neighboring country there lived a very rich king. In fact it was said he owned over half the gold and precious stones in the world. He was a hunch back, cross-eyed, with a hare lip and fangs for teeth. He was King Scadsagold. Now King Grasper of Wishing Well coveted the wealth of King Scadsagold but did not dare invade his country because he was afraid of the large army kept by this uncouth king. So he conceived the vile idea of making a pilgrimage to the country and offering the hand of his daughter the fair and gracious little Princess to this deformed creature in return for a goodly part of his wealth.

“Before departing on this foul mission he talked the matter over with his Prime Minister and other advisors as was right and lawful. Although they pretended to fall in with his plans, they were horrified and because they adored their little Princess they vowed among themselves that it should not be.

“Very early the next morning the King of Wishing Well started out on his evil mission. He traveled all the first day without mishap. At about sunset he entered a dense forest. In a short time his carriage was surrounded by a band of masked men and he was dragged forth. Under cover of darkness he was taken back to the palace, where he was thrown into a dungeon and kept there while the hurried plans for the wedding went on. The Princess Adora married the dashing Captain of the Guards and there were twenty seven geese cooked and served at the wedding feast.

“The wedding over, it was plain to be seen that the wicked old King would have to be got rid of while the happy couple were away on their honeymoon. So one morning just as the first streaks of dawn began to brighten the East, they took the old King out in the court yard and much as I hate to say it the truth will out: they shot him with a cannon which seemed to me an ignoble way to dispose of a King.”

# The Blue Stocking Witch

(As Told by Aunt Betsy)

By Suzanne Reynolds

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## Chapter I

**S**OME called her Lize, others said her name was Mirindy, but all agreed she was a witch, possessed of the Devil, and had sold herself to the Prince of Darkness for a huge chest full of silver dollars and certain evil powers.

Her small shed-roofed cottage seemed to spring up over night. None of the early settlers could remember when she arrived or whence she come. Aunt Betsy said the first time anyone set eyes on her shack, it had a weather-beaten, aged look in the land where the houses were all new. The little cabin rested on the east bank of Brandy Brook, and the afternoon sun bathed it in a golden glow of amber light that cast a dazzling reflection upon the calm waters of the little brook.

The first thing one would notice along the brook as they approached Lize Derry's little home was a dead quiet; even the birds were not singing. Beyond the

patch of light in the small clearing around her home the swamp was thick and dark and the waters of the brook were like strong tea. Few fishermen ventured beyond her home although the trout were abundant.

Lize Derry dwelt alone save for the companionship of three cats, one a huge maltese tom cat with golden eyes. They were all short-haired cats and greatly cherished by their mistress.

It is said Lize could transform herself into any animal she wished. That was one of her certain privileges. The form she most often took was that of a cream-colored Jersey cow and as such she was a beauty to behold. She also had a strange power over men. Most men feared her greatly. In the small settlement of forty persons scattered over a range of fifteen miles only two men felt at ease in her presence: Conley the tavern-keeper and Larry Kelly. It was told of Larry, who was quite a little beyond middle age and should have known better, that as much as five minutes after she had passed his house on her way to the tavern he would still be bowing and smiling, all of which disgusted his wife. Old Conley would rush across the store to open the door as she approached. He showered her with most gracious attentions, and small wonder. She was practically the only cash customer he had and she spent exactly five shining silver dollars. The other customers paid him in furs, shaved shingles, and farm produce.

Lize made her trip by boat from Brandy brook to the Madawaska Creek, and down the Creek for about



five miles thence into the beautiful Aroostook river. She would float down to the Kelly Eddy where, after anchoring her boat, she would take a little path that led up through the Kelly's yard on her way to the tavern—Mrs. Kelly used to say, "Just so Larry kin make a fool of his self," and she with no looks to speak of.

On her trip down the river she would sit in the center of the boat and knit, while the boat glided on as though propelled by unseen hands.

Thomas the large Maltese cat rode on the prow of the boat and gazed straight ahead. There was a great deal of swift water along the river and as the boat approached a dangerous spot where the water rode high and white, Thomas shifted his position and the boat would change its course into more peaceful waters. Sometimes it would look as though the boat would be dashed to splinters on some forbidden rock, but Thomas would switch his tail over to the other side and the boat would sail around the rock. And all the while Lize would calmly sit and knit, paying not the slightest attention to the danger.

Twice a month she made the trip, bought her supplies and often stopped to play a few games of cards with the men. Needless to say she always won, and the men were in great awe of her. The amazing tricks she could perform with a deck of cards held them spell-bound. The women hated and feared her. She had dwelt among those simple folks for about three years

when they put two and two together and decided she must be possessed.

For one thing a very handsome Jersey cow was seen frequently in the fields or in someone's garden. In the fields she would wallow around and tramp the grain down, until the owner would be frantic. No one knew or could find out to whom this cow belonged. She ate garden after garden until it seemed there would be no vegetables to tide the settlers over the winter.

If a man and his wife dropped in next door to pass an evening the cow would appear at that home and look in the window and scare the children almost in fits. Some of the braver ones would chase her and pelt her with stones and clubs, and turning she would laugh in their faces.

One day Jan Frost caught her in his corn. Leading her into his barn he chained her to an iron ring in the wall. Being a very humane person he picked up a pitch fork to spread some straw under her that she might lie in comfort. He didn't leave her side for more than a minute, but when he returned with the straw there was no cow to be seen, and he heard a hoarse laugh around the corner of the barn. He knew that laugh. He could swear it was Lize Derry's.

## Chapter II

One night Katie Kelly was stealing home from the tavern where she had been keeping a tryst with the tavern keeper and was about to enter her home, when, looking in the direction of Brandy Brook she saw a big yellow light rise above the tops of the trees in the swamp. In about a minute another light arose and both lights danced around against the dark background of an almost black night. In fear she crept into bed. The two lights were seen frequently after this always dancing about. There were those who said it was the evil one himself dancing with the witch, and no matter what evil befell, everyone was of the opinion it was Lize Derry's fault. Conley and Larry wouldn't listen to a word of it. "It's just jealousy, that's what" they would tell each other. "That poor woman is living alone with no men folks and never a kind word from any woman. Kin she help it if her eyes sparkle and her teeth gleam so white?"

"You sly and sneaking rogue! Don't tell me you have been to see her. Why I have no respect for ye, a married man," said Conley in anger.

"I only stopped in one day to ask for a coal to place in me pipe bowl, when I went fishing up the brook. She made me a cup of tea and I rested up a bit."

"What else happened?" inquired Conley.

"She took a smooth red rock down from the shelf and put a few drops of oil on it. After she polished

that stone a bit she put it in her left arm pit and just sat there and looked at me. When she unbuttoned her basque to put the rock under her arm I couldn't help but notice her bosom, which was as white as snow. She saw me looking and smiled and she looked young and fair, but I can't remember what happened after that. I was far down the brook well on me way towards home before I regained me senses, and never again will I venture her way. She just makes me weak all over, and when she passes by on her way to the store, and stops to spake a word to me, me heart just pounds at the lilt in her voice."

"It's plain to be seen she has cast a spell over you. Take my advice and steer clear of her. She may be a fine lady. But keep your distance."

"You don't have to tell me that. Me coat smelled of brimstone for several days after my trip to her home. Even Betsy noticed what she called a queer smell, but just the same I ain't agin her, somehow I can't be.

The following winter the people began to notice that Larry Kelly was acting queer.

The winter proved to be a very icy one and it was noticed that Larry was seen skating about on the river a good deal. He was the only one in the settlement who had a striped coat, so it was easy to tell him as he skated up the ice in the afternoons fading light.

His wife said that on moonlight nights it was impossible for him to sit down or go to bed. He would just pace back and forth until she was ready to scream,



and then he would take down his skates from the wooden pin where they hung behind the door and go out and be gone until dawn.

Where he went no one knew, but it was suspected he was holding tryst with Lize Derry. One night David Parks was returning home. Darkness overtook him about four miles up the creek. The night before he had heard a wolf howl, and he hoped he would soon be home. He had an uneasy feeling. The moon rose full and bright and the ice gleamed like a ribbon of silver. He began to sing as he skated and he could hear the echo of his song from the hills taken up by the howl of a lone wolf on one of the ridges. Other howls sounded from the opposite side of the river and he knew the pack would soon be at his heels.

He skated around the bend. Just before the creek entered the river he saw a lone skater coming, a large black dog loping along by his side. The man was his brother-in-law Larry Kelly. He was gazing straight ahead and although David spoke to him he did not seem to hear. In the moonlight he looked like a sleep walker. The dog's tongue hung out and she looked as if she was smiling, and somehow he knew he was looking on the witch.

The wolves had seemed quite near but the skater and the dog neither heard or feared them. He soon arrived home and told his wife what he had seen. "The poor man isn't to blame. She cast her spell over him

and although I could have reached out and touched him when I skated past, he never knew I was there."

A few evenings later Parks was in the tavern when Larry was seen to start up the ice. His son Pat who was the spirit of mischief began to sing:

"Larry he went up the ice, as hard as he could clacket.  
He swore he'd see the witch that night, or lose his  
striped jacket."

David Parks rebuked him, saying "Your Father is bewitched and you should pray for him.

Word was passed about that Mrs. Works was about to do a bit o' dyeing. On his last trip down the river Conley had brought back quite a quantity of blue indigo. She had purchased several ounces, knowing where she could borrow a large iron kettle. The yarn was such a beautiful blue color that Nancy Parks who had been helping with the coloring ran to call the neighbors to see. Mrs. Works spread the yarn on the outside cellar door to dry in the afternoon sun. That night before going to bed she thought she would go out and bring the yarn in and hang it on a line behind the stove.

Much to her surprise she found the Jersey cow with the yarn wound around her horns. She was tossing it about the yard, and the minute she saw Mrs. Works she began to laugh. Mrs. Works was gifted with sec-

ond sight and could put a curse on anyone. So she said "Lize Derry, I know you and for the rest of your days you will have to wear a blue stocking. Until you get that stocking knit you will be unable to transform yourself again, and the leg wearing the blue stocking you can never change." The cow cantered up the road, one skein of the blue yarn swinging from her horns.

After Mrs. Works had put a curse on the witch, although she could transform herself into a cow as readily as before, she would now be unable to change the left leg which would be clothed in a blue stocking. Heretofore when the witch had taken the form of an animal she was immune from any harm or pain. In fact she had had musketload after musketload of buckshot poured into her side without even feeling it, but hereafter her left leg, on which she wore the blue stocking, would be vulnerable.

Several weeks went by before the cow was seen again, and when the men folks met in Conley's tavern to spend an evening over a game of cards they would ask each other why the evil one no longer roamed as a cow.

Two huge pine trees grew up from the very center of the black swamp about a half a mile from the witch's home. These pines were so tall that their trunks showed high above the other trees of the swamp. The taller had a double top. It was above these tall pines, which could be seen for a great distance, that the two

lights were seen to dance. Two fishermen were coming down the brook on a rainy afternoon and paused to view the tree-tops. They were speaking of the witch and the lights and Abe Montgomery said, "I don't believe a word of such trash. My wife is as bad as the rest, says Lize ought to be drove from the country."

"Well, we better hasten anyway as I for one don't want to be caught up here after dark," said his companion.

When they came down to the little clearing where Lize's cabin rested on the bank of the brook, the sun had come out and was shining on the woman who was knitting on a long stocking of blue. Thomas the large Maltese cat sat up straight in front of her and was holding the ball of yarn to his breast while he unwound it with his right paw.

The men bade her good afternoon, but she was so engrossed with her work that she apparently did not hear them.

Two days later, Abe Montgomery came home one night from where he had been cutting timber. As he approached his comfortable log cabin he could see the glow of an outdoor fire and knew the children had remembered to put a boiler of potatoes on to cook for the hogs. Imagine his surprise to see a cow eating out of the pot, the steam coming up around her head.

The fire, which had been piled high with dry pine and was flaring brightly, showed the cow plainly and he could have sworn she had a blue stocking on her



left hind leg. He tried to set the fierce dog that accompanied him on the cow, but the dog was cringing and dragging his belly on the ground: a dog that had helped him to kill a bear without turning a hair. He rushed up and tried to drive the cow away but she stood her ground and actually licked the bottom of the boiling pot. Then she walked out to the bank and vanished. Abe didn't mention this incident for several days, but he pondered over the matter and no longer scoffed at the idea that Lize Derry was possessed.

One night Betsy Kelly had been out until almost dawn. A child had been born at her brother-in-law's home: she had served as doctor and nurse, and had even administered private baptism to the puny child. When she was about a mile from home she could hear the pad-pad of footsteps following her. She walked as fast as she could and the animal seemed almost to catch up with her. Pretty soon she heard it turn off to one side of the path and circle around to get in front of her, and she knew it must be an Injun Devil, as the Indians called a panther. She was so frightened she could scarcely stand up when right by her side Lize Derry appeared. "Don't be scairt now Mrs. Kelly," she said, "there is an old rotten log just ahead. I'll build a fire and scare it away." And sure enough just to their left and a bit off the path was an old log and Lize quickly had a big blaze shooting up, although Betsy Kelly said she could swear she had neither flint or steel with her. She had split a long piece of cedar from the log and

got one end blazing, and now she passed it to Betsy saying, "This will burn brightly until you get home."

The panther was greatly frightened by the blazing fire—and started off through the woods emitting blood curdling cries. The stick blazed up until Betsy got home safely.

One night Sam Works returned home late from the tavern and found a strange cow devouring his garden. It was a beautiful bright moonlight night. He stole into the house, took his old musket down off the wall and quietly loaded it with very coarse salt. He crept forth. Yes the cow was still there. In the flood of moonlight he got a glimpse of the blue stocking, took aim and fired. With a bellow the cow made off up the road, and he had the satisfaction of knowing he had hit her.

Very early next morning Sam Works was about spreading word that he had shot the old witch, and asking the men to meet in Conley's tavern to decide just what steps they would take to rid themselves of her altogether.

Before six o'clock in the morning on this beautiful fall day they assembled in the tavern and it was decided that Conley and Larry, being good cronies of the witch, should call at her cabin. If they noticed any lameness in Lize where Sam Works had shot her in the leg it might be proven that she could and did transform herself into a cow. Then the fact that she was a witch would be established.

Conley and Larry reluctantly made their way across

country to the place where the brook emptied into the creek. They caught her in the act of binding her leg up with a thin slice of salt pork. She had her stocking off and quite a bad wound showed on the calf of her leg.

"Been shot, eh?" greeted Conley.

"What is that to you. Can't I even draw the pizen from this wound without your interference?"

Then Larry spoke up saying, "It has been decided that you must come down to Eaton where you will be given a hearing and the citizens will decide for a certainty if you are a witch."

"And what if I am?" she defied them.

"In that case you will either be burned at the stake just before sun set or be taken over to Lyndon where there is a four corners and have a stake driven through your heart at dawn, and from this moment until your case is decided you will have a strict watch kept over you," said Conley gravely.

"And how about you?" she threw back at Conley. "Who is going to keep watch over you and that yaller-haired hussy Katie Kelly. I suppose you think I haven't been spying on you. Remember the owl that kept hooting that night you met up with her behind the straw stack? That was me. I could reveal a lot if it was my way to gossip."

Conley turned pale, as with a roar Larry Kelly made for his throat. "She lies, she lies, she wants to make us bad friends so we won't drag her to justice. Don't be-



lieve her," he implored. "If I find she is telling the truth, 'twill be a sorry day for you. Me one friend whom I have trusted and now murder is in me heart for you."

Conley knew of her strange power of knowing every little thing that happened and it was suddenly clear to him, how as an owl she was able to spy on people without being suspected. Many a choice morsel of scandal had been picked up and passed around by Lize Derry. She seemed to know everything that happened and seemed to take keen delight in destroying the reputation of any girl who was careless enough to be caught away from her own fireside after nightfall. As a cow or an owl she had traveled the countryside over and seemed to be everywhere. If there was nothing to tell she made a story up out of whole cloth.

It was as an owl that she had spied on Katie Kelly and found out that after the little settlement was wrapped in slumber Katie often crept forth to hold a tryst with the old tavern keeper, who was more than three times her age. It was hinted about that Conley had somehow got her in his power. Her father being a very stern man, it was greatly to be feared for the safety of this erring daughter should any of these tales reach his ears. And now out of a clear sky she had flung the truth into his face.

The two men returned to the tavern and a meeting was held that afternoon. Conley described the wound he had seen in the back of her leg, while Larry com-



mented on the whiteness of her skin. Both men told of her admitting that as an owl she had flown around the countryside gleaning gossip which she managed to spread about. At this point a small boy rushed in to say that Lize Derry's boat was coming around the bend of the river. She was just pulling in to the shore as Conley opened the door. Entering the tavern she inquired what her fate was to be. Her manner was calm although her face was very pale, no doubt from the pain of her wounds. "We have decided that you must burn at the stake," said Conley who was feeling revengeful because she had spied on him.

But kind old Betsy Kelly came in and begged that the witch be allowed to depart in peace, saying, "She saved my life that morning when the panther was stalking me. As my path led through the wilderness there was no way to avoid the beast leaping down upon me. When she placed the firey stick in my hand as protection, only she had the power to keep that stick burning."

So the witch was allowed to depart, and in anticipation of just this, she had her few belongings in the boat with her, and had brought the three cats along. Thomas sat on the doorstep of the tavern and looked in during the hearing. He seemed to be listening to every word that was said, and his eyes, shining with a strange light, were a dazzling green.

Larry gave her his arm and helped her to her boat. She seemed to be very lame and leaned heavily on his

arm. Her nearness caused his heart to thump and there was a strange singing in his ears.

Thomas walked down the path before them and took his place on the prow of the boat. His tail was twitching and lashing about and Lize said it is plain to be seen that hearing was not to his liking.

No one seemed to feel any pity for her nor to fear for her welfare, knowing she had the protection of the evil one. Just before sunset she sailed out of sight to be seen no more. Then some one remembered her huge weather beaten chest. There was no room for it in the boat. Could she have left it behind and if so was it still full of silver dollars?

The next morning curiosity compelled Conley and Larry to make the trip back up to the cottage to find out if the chest were still there. On arriving, the chest was nowhere to be seen, but the table was set for two. Conley said, "I bet she and the devil will always haunt this place. Who would the extra plate be for? You know very well no one ever came here to eat unless it was you."

"What about that big brute of a cat? He made my skin crawl the way he sat and glared at me the day I dropped in: for all the world like a jealous husband. By Gorrie, I got it. I bet he was her husband and somehow she kept him turned into a cat."

While they were talking the sky became very black and the thunder began to roll. It got as dark as night in the little cabin and the wind blew a gale. Both men

were frightened but decided to wait until the shower was over: there was so much lightning that they feared for their lives. Suddenly the sun came out and the sky was as blue and cloudless as it had been when they arrived. It seemed like a rebuke. Both men were very quiet on their way to the place where they had left their boat, each knowing it would be his last trip to Brandy Brook.

Larry arrived home weary. He was not a man who worked very much and the trips up the brook two days running and the departure of the woman for whom he cherished a great fondness left him pretty well spent. It was not surprising that he kept his bed until quite late the next day and when he finally got around Katie had gone up to the little settlement of Fairbanks to help her aunt who ran the boarding house for the men who worked in the lumber mill. He raved around awhile about a man never knowing what went on in his home, and finally the matter was dropped save for an occasional hint.

No one came right out with anything the Kelly's could put their finger on, and Katie continued to work at Fairbanks until spring. When she returned home the finger of suspicion was once more pointed her way. It was suspected she had become fond of her bitters which would explain her frequent trips to the tavern. It was hard to believe she could be in love with the small homely old man who kept the tavern.

When the story finally leaked out, it was found that

Katie was so enamored of her aged suitor that she refused to give him up. About this time Conley locked up his store and took a trip down river. Two days later Katie disappeared. They were both gone over a year.

One morning a smoke was seen rising from Conley's stovepipe and it was found that he had returned alone. He never spoke of the fair-haired girl whom every one supposed was his wife, but he began erecting a small two-room cabin just below his tavern. When the cabin was completed he took another trip down river, returning in the night. The next morning there was smoke pouring out of the stovepipe of the cabin.

Seeing the smoke Betsy Kelly said, "I can stand it no longer. I'm going down there and see if my Katie came back with him." Looking in at the tavern as she passed she saw Conley busily setting his new supply of groceries on the shelf.

The small cabin door stood open and the afternoon sun was streaming in on the fair-haired woman on her knees scrubbing the floor. Mrs. Kelly paused at the door to wipe the tears that were streaming down her face. When her daughter, looking around, saw her she sprang into her mother's arms and both women were weeping.

"Mother dear, I have so longed for this day. I might have known you would come. It was so hard for me to keep from going home to ask your forgiveness."



"Oh! Katie, why did you do this to me and your poor old Father. People are saying you have a child and are yet not wed. Tell me that you have your marriage lines. It doesn't matter how old the child so long as you were married before it saw the light of day," wept the agonized mother.

"I am going to tell you everything and then you judge me. I don't know why that old creature had such power over me, but I couldn't keep away from him. I feared him but went where e'er he bade me. We were married the week I left home. Almost ten months later my son was born and just having him would pay for everything, no matter what other trials I am called upon to bear.

"My husband is jealous of everyone with whom I even speak. If a young man came along he would say, 'You are crazy over him,' and call me names. And he keeps the marriage lines hidden so I can't prove my marriage and denies both me and his son."

"I will see he rights the wrong. If I were to tell your father he would tear his throat out. He has never set foot in the tavern or spoken to Conley since he came back."

True to her word Betsy Kelly stopped into the tavern and took the man to task for trying to defame his wife's character, but he denied everything saying he had no wife and wasn't living with the girl in the next house. "What would a girl so handsome as she want with an old duffer like he? And so she has a baby? I'm not

surprised, but I have had nothing to do with her and if you ever come pestering around me again I'll kick her and that brat out. Then where will she go? Would you take her in. She will starve for all I care," he screamed.

People had often spoken of Conley as a man with a bad temper, but never had he seemed to let his wrath pour out as it did this day. But he couldn't frighten Kate's mother or keep her from going each day to see her little grandson and his mother.

No one saw Conley as he made his visits to his wife's little home. He put up the bluff of living in the tavern. Conley's wife came to receive her supplies, bringing her small son with her. As far as anyone could see, the tavern keeper paid not the slightest attention to the child.

Three years passed in this way. No one save the girl's mother ever darkened her door. Larry Kelly had forbidden his daughters and sons to have anything to do with the woman who dwelt in the little home in the maple grove beyond the tavern. It was indeed a dreary life for one so young and fair. How long she could have kept on carrying her heavy cross it would be hard to tell, but relief came from an unexpected quarter.

One morning Conley left the tavern to help a man get out lumber with which to build a barn, and before noon he was brought home to his wife's cabin. Somehow he had got in the way of a big spruce tree when it was falling, and now he lay dying. The men who

carried him from the woods were going to stop at the tavern to leave him, but he motioned them to go on.

As soon as he found he was dying he unfolded a weird tale. It seemed that one night he was about to close up the tavern when the witch entered, and insisted on playing cards. They played game after game, the witch always winning. She started to go home but returned and said. "Just one more game and if I lose I'll give you a priceless treasure."

He won that game and she gave him a charm woven of hair, to wear on his watch chain, saying anything that you wish for while holding this charm shall you possess. That was about a year before the witch's departure.

"Just as a joke I wished that Katie Kelley would love me and be my wife. From that day on I seemed to exert a strange power over the girl. I had only to beckon and she would come. The feeling I had for her was like a disease. It just wouldn't leave me. Day and night she filled my mind. Her blue eyes were everywhere. In all the land there was nothing to me as beautiful as the sun glistening on her golden hair. I lured her away and married her. Every day was filled with worshipping her, and she seemed to love me in return. Our son was born and we were as happy as two people could be. Then one day I lost the charm. From the minute I discovered my loss Katie no longer loved me. In fact she seemed to shrink from my embrace. I became so jealous lest every man who spoke to her was



trying to take her from me, that everything I could do that would hurt her I have done. It was Lize Derry who put it in my head to crave a young girl. She was always about putting notions in my mind. After the charm got lost I found Katie and I did not love each other, but there was the baby to grow up. He must have a home and so must Katie, and no one would believe she was married unless she was able to produce the marriage lines. I knew that if she could prove her marriage her father would welcome her back home and she would take the baby with her. If she took my son, life would mean nothing to me." And the sick man paused and looked up into the face of his wife who sat by the bed holding his hand.

He lived three days, his wife scarcely leaving his side. It was plain to be seen he adored his small son, and it was found that he had left a will, willing the tavern to Katie and "To my Son Bartley Conley I leave my beautiful chestnut colt." He also told Katie where the marriage certificate was hidden.

After the funeral when Betsy Kelly was helping to sort over Conley's belongings she came across the charm. So it wasn't lost after all, which makes me wonder if the charm did the trick. Why did he stop loving his wife when he fancied it lost? And without the charm, could he have won the affection of one as fair?

THE END



