



# FRECKLES

By  
Gene Stratton-  
Porter

COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY DOUBLEDAY, PAGE  
& CO.

ments before the signal came. Then the saw stopped, and the rope was brought out and uncoiled near a sapling. Wessner and Black Jack crowded to the very edge of the swamp a little above the wire and crouched, waiting.

They heard Freckles before they saw him. He came clipping down the line at a good pace, and as he rode he was singing softly:

"Oh, do you love—  
Oh, say you love!"

He got no further. The sharply driven wheel struck the tense wire and bounded back. Freckles shot over the handle bar and coasted down the trail on his chest. As he struck Black Jack and Wessner were upon him.

## PROLOGUE.

This romance of Freckles and the Angel of the Limberlost is one of the most novel, entertaining, wholesome and fascinating stories that have come from the pen of an American author in many years. The characters in this sylvan tale are:

Freckles, a plucky waif who guards the Limberlost timber leases and dreams of angels.

The Swamp Angel, in whom Freckles' sweetest dream materializes.

McLean, a member of a lumber company, who befriends Freckles.

Mrs. Duncan, who gives mother love and a home to Freckles.

Duncan, head teamster of McLean's timber gang.

The Bird Woman, who is collecting camera studies of birds for a book.

Lord and Lady O'More, who come from Ireland in quest of a lost relative.

The Man of Affairs, brusque of manner, but big of heart.

Wessner, a timber thief who wants rascality made easy.

Black Jack, a villain to whom thought of repentance comes too late.



BLACK JACK STOPPED HIM WITH AN OATH. Wessner clapped an old hat over Freckles' mouth, while Black Jack twisted his arms back of him, and they rushed him into his room. At most before he realized that anything had happened he was trussed up to a tree and securely gagged.

Then three of the men resumed work on the tree. The other followed the path Freckles had worn to Little Chicken's tree, and presently he reported that the wires were down and two teams with the loading apparatus coming to take out the timber. All the time the saw was slowly eating, eating into the big tree.

Wessner went out to the trail and removed the wire. Then he stood in front of Freckles and laughed in devilish hate. Freckles found himself looking fear in the face and marveled that he was not afraid. Four to one! The tree halfway eaten through, the wagons coming up the inside road, he bound and gagged! The men with Black Jack and Wessner had belonged to McLean's gang when last he had heard of them, but who those coming with the wagons might be he could not guess.

If they secured that tree McLean lost its value, lost his wager and lost his faith in him. The words of the angel hammered in his ears. "Oh, Freckles, do watch closely!" And the saw ate on.

When the tree was down and loaded what would they do? Pull out and leave him there to report them? It was not to be hoped for. The place had always been lawless. It could mean but one thing.

A mist swept before his eyes, and his head swam. Was it only last night that he had worshiped the angel in a delirium of happiness? And now what? Wessner, released from a turn at the saw, walked over to the flower bed and, tearing up a handful of rare ferns by the roots, started toward Freckles. His intention was obvious. Black Jack stopped him with an oath.

"You see here, Dutchy," he bawled, "nobby you think you'll wash his face with that, but you won't. A contract's a contract. We agreed to take out these trees and leave him for you to dispose of whatever way you please, provided you shut him up eternally on this deal. But I'll not see a tied man tormented by a fellow that he can lick up the ground with, loose, and that's flat. It raises my gorge to think what he'll get when we're gone, but you needn't think you're free to begin before. Don't you lay a hand on him while I'm here! What do you say, boys?"

"I say yes," growled one of McLean's latest deserters. "What's more, we're a pack of fools to risk the dirty work of silencing him. I don't mind lifting the trees we came for, but I'm cursed if I want blood on my hands."

"Well, you ain't going to get it," belated Jack. "You fellows only contracted to help me get out my mark-

ed trees. He belongs to Wessner, and it ain't our deal what happens to him. It's all planned safe and sure. As for killing that buck—come to think of it, killing is what he needs. He's away to good for this world of woe anyhow. His dropping out won't be the only secret the old Limberlost has never told. It's too dead easy to make it look like he helped take the timber and then cut. Why, he's played right into our hands. He was here at the swamp all last night and back again in an hour or so. When we got our plan worked out even old fool Duncan won't lift a finger to look for his carcass."

"You just bet," said Wessner. "I owe him all he'll get. But I'll pay!" he snarled at Freckles.

So it was killing then. They were not only after this one tree, but many, and with his body it was their plan to kill his honor. To brand him a thief, like them, before the angel, the Bird Woman, the gear boss and the Duncan! Freckles' body sagged against the ropes in sick despair.

There was no hope of McLean's coming. They had chosen a day when they knew he had a big contract at the south camp. The boss could not possibly come before tomorrow, and there would be no tomorrow for him. Duncan was on his way to the south camp, and the Bird Woman had said she would come as soon as she could. After the fatigue of the party it was useless to expect her and the angel today, and God save them from coming!

The sweat broke out on Freckles' forehead. He tugged at the ropes whenever he felt that he dared, but they were passed about the tree and his body several times and knotted on his chest. He resolved that he would bear in mind what he had once heard the Bird Woman say. He would go out bravely. Never would he let them see if he grew afraid. After all, what did it matter what they did to his body if by some scheme of the devil they could compass his disgrace?

Then hope suddenly rose high in Freckles' breast. They could not do that. The angel would not believe. Neither would McLean. He would keep up his courage. Kill him they could; dishonor him they could not.

Yet, summon all the fortitude he might, that saw eating into the tree rasped his nerves worse and worse. With whirling brain he gazed off into the Limberlost, searching for something, he knew not what, and in blanching horror found his eyes fastened on the angel. She was quite a distance away, but he could see her white lips and wide, angry eyes.

Last week he had taken her and the Bird Woman across the swamp over the path he followed in going in from his room to the chicken tree. He had told them last night that the butterfly tree was on the line close to this path. In figuring on their not coming that day he failed to reckon with the enthusiasm of the Bird Woman. They must be there for the study, and the angel had risked crossing the swamp in search of him. Or was there something in his room they needed? The blood surged in his ears like the roar of the Limberlost in the wrath of a storm.

He looked again, and it had been a dream. She was not there. Had she not been? For his life Freckles could not tell whether he had really seen the angel or whether his strained senses had played him the most cruel trick of all. Or was it not the kindest? Now he could die with the vision of her lovely face fresh with him.

"Thank you for that, O God!" whispered Freckles. "'Twas more than kind of you, and I don't s'pose I ought to be wanting anything more, but if you can, oh, I wish I could know before this ends if 'twas me mother'—Freckles could not even whisper the words, for he hesitated a second and ended—"If 'twas me mother did it!"

"Freckles! Freckles! Oh, Freckles!" the voice of the angel came calling. Freckles swayed forward and wrenched at the rope until it cut deeply into his body.

Black Jack whipped out a revolver and snatched the gag from Freckles' mouth.

"Say quick, what's that, or it's up with you right now and whoever that is with you!"

"It's the girl the Bird Woman takes about with her," whispered Freckles through dry, swollen lips.

"They ain't due here for five days yet," said Wessner. "We got on to that last week."

"Yes," said Freckles, "but I found a tree covered with butterflies and things along the east line yesterday that I thought the Bird Woman would want extra, and I went to town for her last night. She said she'd come soon, but she didn't say when. I take care of the girl while the Bird Woman works. Untie me quick until she is gone. I'll try to send her back, and then you can go on with your dirty work."

"He ain't lying," volunteered Wessner. "I saw that tree covered with butterflies and him watching around it when we were spying on him yesterday."

"No, he leaves lying to your sort," snapped Black Jack as he undid the rope and pitched it across the room. "Remember that you're covered every move you make, my buck," he cautioned.

"Freckles! Freckles!" came the angel's impatient voice, nearer and nearer.

"I must be answering," said Freckles, and Jack nodded. "Right here!" he called, and to the men: "You go on with your work, and remember one thing yourselves. The work of the Bird Woman is known all over the world. This girl's father is a rich man, and she is all he has. If you offer hurt of any kind to either of them this world has no place far

# BARGAIN PRICES ON FENCING

Owin to the late spring we find ourselves greatly overstocked on woven wire fencing, and are making the following prices on stock on hand for SPOT CASH:

780 rods, 6 inch stay, 34 inches high, 9 bar, American fence, weight per 100 rods 1230 lbs, per rd	34 1/2c
80 " 6 " " 36 " " 9 " Kokomo fence " " 1230 " "	34 1/2c
160 " 6 " " 47 " " 10 " American fence " " 1460 " "	38 1/2c
580 " 12 " " 47 " " 10 " " " " " 1080 " "	28c
580 " 6 " " 26 " " 7 " " " " " 960 " "	26c
20 " 12 " " 71 " " 21 " " " " " 3120 " "	\$1.00
35 " " " 50 " " " " " " " " 2540 " "	80c
100 " 16 " " 47 " " " " " " " " " " "	38 1/2c
100 " 12 " " 47 " " " " " " " " " " "	28c
580 " 6 " " 27 " " 7 " " " " " " " "	26c
120 " 12 " " 27 " " 7 " " " " " " " "	22c
2 12 foot American gates, 50 inches high, each	\$6.50
2 14 foot American gates, 50 inches high, each	\$7.00
1 12 foot, 2 bar lowa gate	\$7.00
2 14 foot, 2 bar lowa gates, each	\$7.50
1 15 1/2 foot 2 bar lowa gate	\$7.75
2 14 foot, 1 bar lowa gate, each	\$4.00
1 15 foot 1 bar lowa gate	\$4.25

# JOHN BAUER

PLATTSMOUTH

NEBRASKA

enough away nor dark enough for you to be hiding in."

"Freckles, where are you?" demanded the angel.

Soul sick with fear for her, Freckles went toward her and parted the bushes that she might enter. She came through without apparently giving him a glance, and the first words she said were: "Why have the gang come so soon? I didn't know you expected them for three weeks yet. Or is this some special tree that Mr. McLean needs to fill an order right now?"

Freckles hesitated. Would a man dare lie to save himself? No. But to save the angel—surely that was different. He opened his lips, but the angel was capable of saving herself. She walked in among them, exactly as if she had been raised in a lumber camp and never waited for an answer.

"Why, your specimen case!" she cried. "Look! Haven't you noticed that it's tipped over? Set it straight quickly!"

A couple of men stepped out and carefully righted the case.

"There; that's better," she said. "Freckles, I'm surprised at your being so careless. It would be a shame to break those lovely butterflies for one old tree. Is that a valuable tree? Why didn't you tell us last night you were going to take a tree out this morning? Oh, say, did you put your case there to protect that tree from that stealing old Black Jack and his gang? I bet you did! Well, if that wasn't bright! What kind of a tree is it?"

"It's a golden oak," said Freckles. "Like those they make dining tables and sideboards out of?"

"Yes."

"My, how interesting!" she cried. "I don't know a thing about timber, but my father wants me to learn about just everything I can. I am going to ask him to let me come here and watch you until I know enough to boss a gang myself. Do you like to cut trees, gentlemen?" she asked of the men with angelic sweetness.

Some of them looked foolish and some grinned, but one managed to say that they did. Then the angel's eyes turned full on Black Jack, and she gave the most beautiful little start of astonishment.

"Oh, I almost thought that you were a ghost!" she cried. "But I see now that you are really and truly. Were you ever in Colorado?"

"No," said Jack.

(To Be Continued.)

## Flowers Vs. Shrubbery.

During recent years there has been a fad for seeding down the old-fashioned flower garden into green lawns, and substituting shrubbery on the boundaries of a home lot or nestling under the house. Lovely banks of flowering shrubs are arranged in this manner, and to one looking at a homestead as a whole, this foliage gives the garden a massive and heavy beauty that may be very impressive. Rightly arranged groups of shrubbery should give one continuous bloom all the year, by rotation and barberries or other colored berries will continue the touch of color all through the winter. Nevertheless, shrubbery is at its best only at a distance. The vitality that is concerned chiefly in making the woody fibers of tree-like shrubs like syringa and forsythia, can never produce the exquisitely delicate colorings of a tulip or a larkspur. A garden flower like a rose or a daffodil represents nature in her most exuberant mood, and is as much superior to anything shrubbery can produce as the precious stone is better than the handsomest woodwork.

## Commissioners Visit Omaha.

From Wednesday's Daily. County Commissioners G. R. Jordan, M. L. Friedrich and C. E. Heebner boarded No. 15 this morning for Omaha, where they went to call on the wholesale iron, steel and lumber companies and investigate the price of material going into the bridges this season. This is a wise move on the part of the board, as they will be in position to allow or refuse bids for contract work for the county.

## License Granted at Cedar Creek.

From Wednesday's Daily. In a session of the county commissioners yesterday a license to run a saloon was granted to Andres Thomsen of Cedar Creek, on a petition of forty-six freeholders.

## Married in Lincoln.

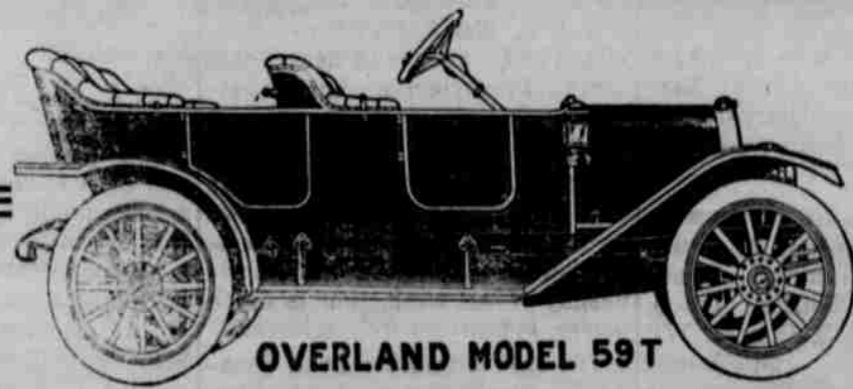
The office of County Judge Risser at Lincoln was the scene of a quiet wedding about noon last Wednesday, when M. A. Roblyer of Eagle and Miss Mabel Preston of Elmwood were united in marriage. The young people went to Lincoln on the Wednesday morning train, and about noon they appeared at the office of the county judge and made known their intentions which resulted in securing the necessary document. They then called upon Judge Risser to solemnize the ceremony, which the obliging official did in a very pleasant manner. The happy young couple returned home on the night train to receive the congratulations of their friends. They will make their home in this village.

The bride is one of Elmwood's most popular young ladies, and during her numerous visits here has made many friends. "Major," as he is familiarly known, is an Eagle boy and "all wool and a yard wide." He is an honest and industrious young man, and in the community where he grew to manhood he is favorably known. The Beacon joins with their many friends in extending hearty congratulations.—Eagle Beacon.



The Best Flour in the Market. Sold by all Leading Dealers

# Overland



OVERLAND MODEL 59T

\$900 for this elegant 30-horse power car.  
\$1,200 for the same, only larger and 35 horse power.  
\$1,500 for the 45-horse power, still larger.

The above models are made in two-passenger, four-passenger and five-passenger cars—just to suit size of family.

Phone or write us if interested. Cars in stock here for immediate delivery.

# Union Overland Company,

Agents Eastern Cass County, Union, Nebraska