

## A MAID OF THE KENTUCKY HILLS

“Keep it,” said Father John in a low voice, making a slight upward gesture. “In itself it is ze ev’dence, in case ze papers be not foun’.”

A swift alarm struck at my heart.

“But—” I began.

With his rare, sunshiny smile the priest interrupted.

Then all at once a look of weary melancholy spread over his features, and I knew he was thinking again of the perfidy of his beloved niece. Every muscle in my body was pulling me toward the Lodge, and I now arose.

“I can’t thank you as I would for sending for me and confiding in me as you have,” I said, my words shaky, because I had been strangely wrought upon by all that had passed.

He made a deprecatory, characteristic gesture with both hands.

“Zey came zis mornin’, m’sieu,” he replied, sadly, glancing at the table. “I sen’ for you w’en I read zem.”

He sighed, shook his head, and reached for his tobacco jar.

“I sink zey will be zere, but—sings hap’n, m’sieu, an’ we can never tell. It has been ze twenty year’.”

“But a tin box, father—that will hold them