



## One Summer at Sapphire

By Lida Ripley Barnwell

"Trixy and I have decided upon Sapphire for this summer. Mrs. Markham says it is an ideal place, and the Joiners are enthusiastic over it. Can you be ready next week?"

"Next week, or tomorrow, if you wish. Sapphire! As you and Trixy have decided to go there, we may consider our summer trip settled. Why not try Ruby, Diamond or Emerald, or do you just prefer Sapphires?"

"Do not be silly, you cannot be sarcastic," Mrs. Colton answered, as she and her husband discussed their summer plans in the handsome parlor of their Baltimore home.

"Well," continued the Hon. George Colton, "I have not the faintest idea where Sapphire is, but I have followed you around so faithfully for the past ten years that I suppose I can risk it, still I would like to know where I am going, and what I am to do when I get there."

Pretty Mrs. Colton gives him a pitying smile as she answers, "No doubt you are a very good lawyer, George, and a successful politician, but really you know very little of the geography of your own country. Sapphire is in Western North Carolina, there are magnificent views, fine drives, fishing and all sorts of things. It is a good place to rest, and Trixy and I think it would be the best place for you and the children."

"You are very kind to decide for me and the little folks. If you and Trixy want to go, you know it will suit me. Where is Trixy this morning?"

"She is making calls at the hospital, her hobby is sick children. George, I am not satisfied about Trixy, she worries me."

"Worries you? What has she been doing to fret you, little mother?"

"Nothing, but you know she is engaged to Mr. Bolding, and honestly, George, I do not believe she is one bit in love with him."

"Most women would find it easy to love a man with over three millions, and then he is all right, good-looking, good blood, a gentleman in fact, what else does she want?"

"I don't know, but it seems to me she is not enthusiastic over her lover, and as for marrying him, she says she will not think of it for at least a year."

"She may change her mind, women sometimes do, you know, and Trixy would never throw a man like Bolding over for any foolish romantic notion."

"No," said Mrs. Colton, "I suppose not, Mr. Bolding is everything he ought to be. A thoroughly proper person, never loses his temper, never makes a mistake. Oh, I could not stand a man like that."

"Then you mean to say," Mr. Colton smilingly replied, "that you care for me because I am not a proper person, because I do make mistakes and sometimes lose my temper?"

"Yes. I do," she answered with a becoming blush. "Your very faults are dear to me,

because they are yours. I do not want you perfect, because it would not be congenial.”

For answer he draws her to him, and kisses her with a warmth that deepens the color in her pretty cheeks, and makes them both silent for the space of a moment. Then he says: “Never mind, dear heart, it will all come right. Trixy has plenty of common sense and no doubt by the fall she will want your taste and advice in buying her trousseau.”

“I hope so,” his wife answered with a sigh. “But she has told him that he is not to come to Sapphire, and—hush, here she comes.”

The door opens and Helen Lois Lisle, known to her family as Trixy, enters the room. A stylish young lady is she, and yet with an indescribable naturalness about her that enhances the beauty of her costume. An oval face, shaded by wavy chestnut hair, hazel eyes, with drooping lashes, a perfect mouth and chin, a nose a trifle saucy but well suited to her pretty face, hands and feet that might have been models for a sculptor, and a figure that needed no art to improve its perfection.

“What are you two talking about?” she exclaimed as she entered the room, followed by a golden-haired boy, a miniature edition of Mr. Colton. “Sapphire, I am sure,” she continued without waiting for a reply. “Do say you will go, George; I have set my heart on it, and it is new and away from all these people we have met for the past four summers.”

“Oh, I like it, of course, if it suits you and Jean. I have just been looking at this little pamphlet, ‘The Sapphire Country.’ It seems to be the very place we have been hunting. Pack your trunks and we will be there in less than ten days.”

“George, you are an adorable brother-in-law. If Jean had not married you, you would never have escaped me,” said Trixy, giving him a gracious pat. The Hon. George Colton is indeed an indulgent husband and father, and Trixy Lisle has found a real brother and friend in his big heart, as well as a delightful home in his

handsome house. She is ten years younger than her sister Jean, who has been almost a mother to the little sister since their father and mother were lost on an ill-fated steamer returning from Europe.

Without any change of purpose, the Colton party found themselves a week later on their way to Sapphire, via the busy quaint little town of Hendersonville, then over the Transylvania Railroad, through the smiling valleys of the French Broad and the Davidson, a night in the picturesque village of Brevard, at the beautiful Franklin Hotel, then a short railway journey to Toxaway, the terminus of the railroad.

The drive from Toxaway to Fairfield Inn at Sapphire, the majestic mountains, the maiden-hair ferns three feet high with a diameter that put to shame the finest specimens of our city florists, the dark solemn forests of the tall spruce trees, whose restful stillness was only broken by the rushing of crystal trout streams. The dense thickets of laurel and rhododendron, the bewildering variety of flowers, the moss, the lichens. All of these combine to make this drive a never-to-be-forgotten pleasure.

As the Colton party left the train at Toxaway, they found two comfortable carriages awaiting them. Into one of these the three children and their good-natured nurse were placed. As the ladies and Mr. Colton went toward the other carriage, Trixy said: “Now, George, you have a headache, so get on the back seat with Jean and I will sit in front with the driver.”

After some slight demur the seats were thus arranged and they announced their readiness to start. The driver of this last carriage was a tall, slender fellow. He wore on his blonde head a big slouch hat, well over his keen gray eyes, and in his speech and manner gave one the impression that he was somewhat above his position. He quietly and courteously assisted them into the carriage, and then, gathering up the reins with the air of one who understood his business, they started for Sapphire.

Descriptive adjectives almost failed to express one's ideas, Trixy declared as they drove rapidly over the splendid roads through the beautiful woods. Frequently the driver was questioned as to the names of distant peaks and streams and asked for information concerning the country, to all of which he replied in a manner which betokened education and culture.

"Look at that," Mr. Colton exclaimed, as a wonderful wall of stone came into view. "What mountain is that?" he asked.

"Whiteside," the driver answered. "That wall is two miles in length and eighteen thousand feet sheer drop, the highest perpendicular face east of the Rocky Mountains."

"Indeed," said Trixy, "and to call that grand mountain Whiteside, they might have chosen a better name."

"The Indian name is prettier!" said the driver. "They called it Isundayga."

"Isundayga. How beautiful, have any of these points Indian names? Is Toxaway an Indian word?" she questioned.

"Yes. It means 'red bird'. There is one of them now," he answered, pointing to a handsome specimen of that family, who eyed them fearlessly and curiously from a small tree on the road side.

"The mountain you passed on your left as you came up was Kollassa, that mountain behind us is called Rich Mountain, the Indians called Jalone. The French Broad, which we have just crossed, has several Indian names. I think Zekleeka, Esseewah and Tockeeostee are the prettiest. They all mean about the same thing, racing river."

"How poetic," said Mrs. Colton from the back seat. "Trixy, look at that bed of lace ferns, it would be worth thousands in a city park."

Nature has indeed been lavish in her adornment of this favored region. From May

until November the woods are a continuous joy in their infinite variety of flowers and foliage.

"How the Indians must have loved this beautiful country. I wonder what they called it," Trixy said musingly.

"They called it Ottary, which means among the mountains or land of mountains," the driver replied.

"There is some reason in all their names," Mr. Colton answered. "I say Mr. —Mr. What is your name?"

"My name is Rex L'Ombre," said the driver.

"L'Ombre, never hoard that name before, how do you spell it?"

"It is rather unusual — L'OMBRE."

"The French for shadow," said Trixy.

"Yes, he answered with a quiet smile, "it is French."

"Well, Mr. L'Ombre." Mr. Colton continued, "I am told you have good hunting here. What do you hunt?"

"Partridges are plentiful in season, also pheasants and turkeys, then for big game there are deer and bear and a wildcat hunt for fun occasionally."

"Bears and wild cats; I'll never go out of the hotel," exclaimed Mrs. Colton.

"I shall," said Trixy. "I should like to see a live bear in the woods, some real wild untamed creature."

"You will be in no danger at Fairfield Inn," Rex L'Ombre answered. "They keep to the mountains."

"There are fish too, are not there?" said Mrs. Colton. "Mrs. Markham said she caught a trout with her hands one day."

Mr. Colton gives a low whistle, then says: "I thought fish stories were peculiar to men. I

never thought women would become addicted to that habit.”

“There are plenty of fish,” Trixy warmly answers in defense of her sister’s statement, “are not there, Mr. L’Ombre?”

Her satisfaction is complete when he answers: “They are very abundant. I have frequently caught good-sized trout with my hands.”

As he finishes speaking, a rustle near the road causes the party to look just in time to see a splendid gobbler hastily leading two hens and their families through the underbrush.

“Wild turkeys,” exclaimed Mr. Colton. “By Jove, that is a sight I never saw before. I can now almost believe those fish stories.”

“A great many things are true, George, that you know nothing about,” says Mrs. Colton, who is quite pleased over the confirmation of her story.

It is just about sunset when they reach Fairfield Inn. Trixy gives one rapturous “Oh,” as she steps on the piazza and gazes across the lake to the towering height of Toxaway Mountain, which rises like a grim fortress from the further side.

“A fire-place on the piazza, Trixy, look! did you ever? It really is enchanting,” said Mrs. Colton.

Mr. Colton too gives expression to his pleasure by saying, “I believe you two have found the right place. It was worth the trip from Baltimore just to take that drive.”

They have rooms assigned them on the second floor, and from their windows the lake and the mountains are ever in view. That night Joan came into Trixy’s room for their usual goodnight chat.

“Jean, said Trixy as her sister entered, “I shall never be able to sleep in this place. It would be a waste of time. Just look at that lake and those mountains by the light of this beautiful moon. Byron has well said, ‘Oh, night, most glorious night, thou wert not made for slumber.’”

“Yes,” answered Mrs. Colton, “it is solemnly and grandly beautiful. I shall not get dressed in the morning for a ten o’clock breakfast if I once allow myself to look at that view.”

“It is even better than we thought; it exceeds our wildest expectations.” “It does,” said Mrs. Colton. “This air is like champagne, and that drive —Trixy, I never will forget it. What a nice driver we had —he seemed to be a gentleman in spite of his clothes.”

“A prince in disguise,” laughed Trixy as she kissed her sister goodnight. In spite of her determination to keep awake, Trixy slept soundly until a call from Jean next morning made her make a hurried toilet to join the family at breakfast, immediately after which she went to the lake, there to select a boat for future use. “The Fairy, I like that. Now for someone to teach me to row.”

She lost no time in finding Mr. Wells, the hotel manager, and having expressed her wish he answered, “Why certainly, Miss Lisle. Rex L’Ombre is a capital oarsman. Would you like a lesson today?”

“Right this minute,” she promptly replied, but she was disappointed to find upon further inquiry that Rex L’Ombre had gone to Toxaway Station for other guests. “I can wait,” she said, “if I have to. Will you see that I go this evening?”

Mr. Wells promised, and under the excellent teaching of Rex L’Ombre, Trixy had her first lesson in rowing that afternoon. It must be confessed she spent more time in asking questions than in paying attention to her instructions, but then there was so much she wanted to know.

Their first drive was around the shores of the Fairfield Lake.

“It seems to me,” said Trixy, “that I never before was so near to nature’s heart. We have seen so many of the Northern pleasure resorts, but they

are so artificial and unnatural as compared to this. It is like Eden.”

“An Adamless Eden,” said Mrs. Colton, “so far as Trixy is concerned, but that is her own fault.”

“My preference, if you please, Jean,” answered Trixy with a faint frown. “I have you and George and the children, that is all I want for this summer.”

Another day they went to the Lodge on the summit of Toxaway. “I am actually awed by the sublime grandeur of this view,” said Trixy. “Words seem so inadequate to express what I feel, it simply impresses me until I am speechless.”

“It is the only thing that affects you in that manner,” murmured the Honorable George sotto voice.

“George, did you imagine anything so vast, so grand, so beautiful, so perfect? You can just see everywhere.”

“Good supply of adjectives, Jean, and as for everywhere, that would include China, Africa and other places, which my vision fails to discover.”

“Do not be so exact, it is tiresome. You know what I mean.”

And thus the summer days go by, and the country far and near has afforded them delightful drives and picturesque walks. It so happens that Rex L’Ombre is almost always their driver or guide on these excursions. In fact they usually request Mr. Wells for his service. There is never the slightest presumption in his manner, yet the man is so unmistakably a gentleman that he is, without thinking of their different positions, usually brought into their conversations.

Once Mr. Colton remarks to Mr. Wells: “Who is this driver, L’Ombre, he seems to be a gentleman, how came he here in his present capacity?”

“Can’t tell you anything about him, and he gives no information concerning himself. He simply appeared when this hotel was being built, and asked for a job. We were short of hands and took him. He worked well, but was so efficient at calculating and other brain work that in two weeks he was a paymaster. After the hotel was completed he wished to stay. We could give him nothing better to do, and he seems satisfied with his work and his pay.”

“Queer fellow, I’ll bet my hat he has a history.”

“Maybe so, we know nothing of his past. He never gets any mail, neither does he send any. You ought to see his house, an artistic cabin about half a mile from the hotel on this side of Toxaway, a cabin of two rooms. He stays there winter and summer entirely alone.”

Trixy Lisle proved a slow learner at boating, so slow that it seemed necessary that Rex L’Ombre should give her frequent lessons. One evening early in August they started for a row on the lake.

“Take me to the falls,” said Trixy as she comfortably seated herself in the boat. Swiftly the steady strokes brought them to the headwaters of the lake.

“I love this place,” she said: “I wish I could see it in winter, it must be even more beautiful then.”

“I think it is,” Rex answered. “I often skate to this spot and stand listening to the gurgle of the pent-up water under the ice. It sounds like an imprisoned spirit.”

“And yet,” Trixy replied, “in spite of all this grandeur and beauty, you must sometimes long for the activity of a great city, for the companionship of your equals, and the advantages that you are capable of enjoying.” It is a bold speech and she has never ventured to speak so before.

“The past is irrevocable, I try not to think of the

future. Shall I get you some of those ferns from the rocks?"

He evidently has no intention of discussing or explaining his position and Trixy wisely says no more on the subject.

"Yes, the ferns and some of that scarlet lobelia, please; its color is so gorgeous. I believe I am something of a gypsy, I do so love bright things."

He gathers the ferns and flowers, and after giving them to her, they both remain silent for some time, allowing the boat to drift toward the other end of the lake. Suddenly Rex snatches the oars, exclaiming, "This boat is well named the Fairy; I think it has bewitched me."

"I agree with you," said Trixy. "I forgot it was so late; how far we have drifted!"

"We have been drifting for some time," Rex answers as he raises his grey eyes to her face. A deeper color mantles her face as she replies, "It is so easy to drift, and sometimes so pleasant."

"But not always wise," he says, as with a few powerful strokes he heads the boat toward the boat house. The silence grows almost embarrassing when it is broken by Trixy saying, "Mr. L'Ombre, I want to go up to Toxaway from this side; there must be some path. I am sure it would be much shorter than going by the usual drive."

"There is a sort of trail very steep and rough. You might make it, for you have a firm step and steady eye."

"Miss Morton and her brother Hal were talking about it with me this morning and they want to try it. Can you go with us tomorrow?"

"Gladly, if Mr. Wells has made no other arrangements for me."

"Oh, I hope he has not. I want to see that wild, lonely path. It is near your house, too, I think you once told me you lived in that direction,"

said Trixy, pointing toward the mountain. "How solitary you must feel away up there alone."

Rex L'Ombre slowly answered:

*"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell.  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell.  
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;  
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a fold,  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean.  
This is not solitude, 'tis but to hold converse with  
Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled."*

"Byron!" Trixy exclaimed; "I love him, too; I understand what you mean—  
*'But midst the crowd, the shock, the hum of men.  
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,  
And roam along the world's tired denizen  
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless.  
Minions of splendor shrinking from distress.  
None that, with kindred consciousness endured.  
If we were not, would seem to smile the less.  
Of all that flattered, followed, sought and sued.  
This is to be alone, this, this is solitude.'*"

"Yes," he answered with a pleased smile, "that is exactly what I mean. I am so glad you know Byron. He is my favorite poet."

"And also mine," she said. "Here we are once more. Remember you guide me up Toxaway tomorrow afternoon, or I go alone."

"I hope you will do nothing of the kind, to go alone would never do, even if you knew the way."

"All right then, be sure you come with me. Good-bye until tomorrow," she answers as he helps her from the boat.

Tomorrow Rex is sent to the station, and Trixy, vexed and impatient, determines to go anyway. Miss Morton and her brother are quite willing to go with her, but when afternoon comes Miss Morton has a bad headache, and young Morton, thinking the walk would be deferred, goes fishing.

Trixy bites her pretty lower lip and gives her cap a vicious pull, as she steps out of the hotel bent upon carrying out her plan. She sets forth very bravely, but after walking for half an hour, she feels that she is not in the right path. The woods seem strangely quiet and the sun has disappeared behind a cloud.

About five o'clock Rex L'Ombre returns from the station, and remarks to Mr. Wells, as he comes up to question him, "We are going to have a storm very soon, I am glad we reached here first." Even as he speaks there is an ominous roll of distant thunder.

"A storm," says Mrs. Colton, who has been standing near the porte cochere watching the arrivals. "I hope not, Trixy and the Mortons have gone up Toxaway from this side. Trixy is mortally afraid of thunder and lightning. What shall she do?"

"I am sure," said the lady near Mrs. Colton, "that Miss Morton did not go; she is in her room with a headache, and Hal has certainly gone fishing. I saw Miss Lisle start off alone."

"Alone," said Rex L'Ombre under his breath. "Mr. Wells, please have the horses sent to the stable. I am going to look for Miss Lisle."

Without waiting for a reply, Rex disappears with rapid strides in the direction Trixy had taken. Darker and darker grew the sky, and nearer and nearer came the thunder, as he almost ran up the steep path.

After a fruitless search of nearly an hour he found a little brown glove. Snatching it up and pressing it to his lips he turns from the main trail into a path indicated by the glove and leading toward his own house. In less than ten minutes he sees her: A frightened, forlorn, pale Trixy, who is on the verge of tears.

She turns as she hears his step, and rising from the fallen log upon which she had been seated, she stretches out both hands to him, crying, "Ah, Rex, I knew that you would find me. Take me somewhere quick; I am afraid."

She is not aware that she has called him by his first name, but it fills the man's heart with a great gladness, as he goes up to her and takes her trembling hands.

"You need not be afraid now, my house is only a few hundred yards away. You are quite safe with me." He takes her arm and fairly lifts her up one or two steep places as they hurriedly go onward. Just as the storm is about to burst upon them they reach the house.

He leads her to a couch on one side of the room, a low couch covered with skins and having a high back over which is a gray blanket. Then he stands leaning on the quaint mantel as he looks at her.

She is the first to break the silence. "You are not afraid of a storm like this?"

"Not at all; there is no danger for us, too many tall trees for the house to be struck."

"It terrifies me so," she replies. "The bright light, the awful noise. If you are not afraid, please sit by me. I think I would feel more safe."

Obediently he seats himself by her side, and as he does so there comes a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a crashing of timber. Trixy gives a suppressed cry and unconsciously lays her hand upon his knee. Instantly his own closes over it.

"Do you mind," she says, "if I shut my eyes and don't talk. I am so tired."

"Do just as you please," he answers, still holding her hand. "Let me put this blanket at your back; you can lean on it and be more comfortable."

With his disengaged hand he arranges the blanket, but does not remove his arm from the back of the couch. With a sigh Trixy leans against Rex L'Ombre's shoulder and not the gray blanket. It is only this once, for one brief hour, and she is really very much afraid. They do not talk, that would have broken the spell,

but once or twice Rex L'Ombre's breath comes deep and quick, as he feels Trixy Lisle draw closer to him in her fright. Her wavy chestnut hair touches his cheek, and as he bends his head for one sweet moment his lips rest upon the soft coil.

Oh the madness of it for him, the joy of holding her thus, even though he feels that she must regret it afterwards. The storm passes and Trixy suddenly springs up. "We must go. Are you ready?" she continues with feverish eagerness.

"Yes," he quietly replies, "in a few minutes. We will go as soon as the rain ceases." As he speaks the setting sun lights up the little room with its radiant glory, and Trixy glances about her, at the artistic arrangement of the rustic furniture, the gun and fishing rods over the mantel, the rustic chairs, the odd table, the curious stones, the skis on the floor, all arranged in a manner pleasing to the eye.

"You are very comfortable here." said Trixy. "But are not you often lonely?"

"I never used to be," he answers, with a sigh, and Trixy sighs too and says no more.

"Come," he says, "your friends will be anxious about you. We will have a wet walk. I wish I could save you that."

"No, I deserve the wetting as a punishment for my folly, and it will not hurt me."

As they step forth from the door the sun is sinking in crimson splendor, illuminating the mountains around them, covering the trees with sparkling diamonds, and making a mirror of the waters of Fairfield lake below them.

"How beautiful," said Trixy as she pauses for a moment to gaze upon the view. "When I see a sunset like that I always think, if it is so perfectly lovely here, what must it be on the other side. Do you ever think of that?"

"No," he slowly replies. "I am not sure of another side. The law of compensation

demands, but we have no proof; does your belief satisfy you?"

"Of course," she earnestly insists. "I cannot prove it, but I know that it is true."

"I can believe it for you," he says, as he turns toward the path leading from the house.

Trixy pauses for a last look, then she says: "Beautiful, beautiful, but some day you will leave it all, and go into the great world where this will be but a memory."

"My world is here and I shall never leave it."

"But if you should marry," said Trixy, looking away from him.

"If I should marry," he answers with a harsh laugh. "Let us not discuss impossibilities."

It is indeed a wet walk back to the hotel, and almost a silent one as well. As they near their destination Trixy says: "One moment, stop, please, Mr. L'Ombre. When we get to the hotel do not tell them how frightened I was, I am ashamed of being such a coward. I do not mind your knowing, but anyone else—you will not mention it?"

His heart gives a glad throb as she says she does not mind his knowing it, and he gravely answers: "There is no reason why I should mention it, Miss Lisle. We are all cowards about something or other; I would not wish anyone to know what I am afraid of."

"You afraid of anything!" she says with a laugh. "Since you know my weakness you might tell me yours, it shall be our secret."

"Our secret"—does she know how sweet her words are—is she tempting him or is she really unconscious of her power? "To tell you would be happiness, and yet I sometimes think you know. I

| will tell you if you ask no further questions," he continues recklessly.

"Agreed, what is it that you fear?"



"I fear one woman," he replies. "You understand, let us say no more."

"Yes, I will ask no questions; now let me thank you before I meet all those people on the piazza. You have been so good to me I cannot tell you what I feel, but you know I am grateful."

"You have no need to thank me; you have given me the happiest hour of my life. Good night and good-bye, Trixy," he softly whispers as he kisses her hand in the gathering darkness. Jean greets her with smiles and tears as she comes up to the hotel, and Trixy declares that she will never be so foolish again and apologizes humbly for having given her sister such a fright. "I really am all right. Mr. L'Ombre was very kind."

"And we never thanked him," says the contrite Jean. "How ungrateful he must think us. I will see him tomorrow."

"Never mind, sister, never mind, he will not be offended. Now I am going straight to my room; I am tired," and Trixy disappears for the night.

As for Jean, she sits alone for some time after Trixy's safe return. "It is queer," she says to herself. "He is not an ordinary man. I wish I knew, and Trixy! She never could—but then—oh, I wish she loved Henry Belding, or something."

From these incoherent musings it will be understood that pretty Mrs. Colton was vaguely troubled about her beloved sister. August closed with several days of rain, so there were no drives or excursions on the lake. Trixy was rather glad, and during her enforced stay indoors she did some very serious thinking.

One morning early in September Mr. Colton and several gentlemen were discussing a fishing trip to one of the beautiful streams in the neighborhood. "You go across one of the foothills of Toxaway to the left of the lake, then on the other side down for about half a mile. L'Ombre says that is the

best of all these streams; why not go this afternoon, if he can show us the way?"

"That suits me," said Mr. Colton in answer to Mr. Hale's question. "Scoville and Granby will go; we might start about three o'clock; that will give us time to catch all we want."

Promptly at the appointed time the above-named gentlemen, including Rex L'Ombre, are ready for the start.

"Look at Scoville with that gun, will you? Does he expect to shoot trout? I say, Scoville, do you fish with a gun?" laughed Mr. Granby.

"My gun will not trouble you," answers Mr. Scoville, as he settles it comfortably on his shoulder and arranges his fishing tackle. "I might see a rattler or a hawk; it is well to be prepared."

The way to the trout stream lies partly over the steep path that leads to Rex L'Ombre's cabin. Rex is walking in front, followed by Mr. Scoville, who is rather stout and somewhat breathless from the unusual exertion. As they walk along a rock bluff Mr. Scoville's foot slips and down he falls toward the dangerous descent.

Almost instantly Rex L'Ombre's strong arm clutches him and draws him to a place of safety, but at the same instant Mr. Scoville's gun catches on a rough twig, and the entire discharge enters Rex's side. Without a groan he drops to the ground.

The others are for a moment too paralyzed to speak; then Mr. Colton says, as he kneels by the bleeding form, "Quick, the doctor, quick! Hale, run. My God! this is awful." Poor Mr. Scoville wrings his hands despairingly. "If I had never brought that gun! He isn't dead, Colton; he can't be, surely; it is not serious."

"His heart is still beating, but it looks grave to me. Here, Granby, help me with him; his house is only a short distance from here."

Tenderly they lift the unconscious man, and bear him as gently as possible to his home. As

they lay him on the couch his eyes open and he gasps, "An accident, a bad one for me."

In an incredibly short time the doctor is with them. Rex smiles as the doctor approaches him, and says: "I may have to leave Sapphire sooner than I thought, doctor; I feel strangely weak."

"I hope not, my dear fellow; let me see what I can do for you." He kneels by his side and removes the blood-stained garments from the wound.

After a brief examination he bites his lips and walks to the door. "Mortally wounded," he says to the dejected Mr. Scoville, who is sitting on the step. "Bleeding internally; I can do nothing."

Once more he approaches the couch and as he does so Rex says: "Is this really my discharge, doctor? You need not fear to tell me; I have met worse things than death."

"I fear it is, L'Ombre. We doctors feel very helpless in times like this."

"How long have I to live. You can tell me that?"

"An hour or two, perhaps, my brave boy. If only I could help you."

Between 5 and 6 o'clock Trixy Lisle, in a dainty white dress with fluttering satin ribbons, the very ideal of girlish loveliness, comes out on the hotel piazza. As she does so she sees Mrs. Colton with a horrified expression on her face, and several other ladies listening to something Mr. Wells is saying.

"What is the matter, you all look as if there had been some awful calamity; what is it?"

"There has indeed," Mr. Wells answered; "our best guide and driver, Rex L'Ombre, has been dangerously shot by the accidental discharge of Mr. Scoville's gun."

Trixy goes white to the lips, and her voice sounds strange and unnatural as she asks:

"When did it happen?"

"About two hours ago; the doctor is there now. Of course we do not know just how serious it is until he returns; but Mr. Hale seems to think it pretty bad."

Trixy turns to Mrs. Colton, saying: "I am going to Rex L'Ombre, Jean; will you come with me?"

Mrs. Colton imploringly replies: "Wait until George comes, Trixy; he will tell us what to do."

"I am going this minute. If you do not come with me, I will go alone." Immediately she leaves the hotel without waiting for farther parley, and Mrs. Colton, who would never desert her sister under any circumstances, followed her closely. How fast they walked, and yet the way seemed endless.

Rex was lying with his face to the door, and, oh, the glad look of recognition that lighted his grey eyes as Trixy entered. Swiftly to his side she came, and as she knelt beside him, she sobbed: "Rex, what is it? Are you badly hurt?"

He answers with a smile: "I leave Sapphire forever tonight. It is better so, Trixy. Why have you come to me?"

Supreme love triumphs over every other feeling as she answers: "Because I thought you wanted me, Rex, and because I love you."

With marvelous strength the dying man raises himself upon his elbow, and gazing intently into her face, he says: "Say that again, my girl; for God's sake say that again."

"I love you, I love you," she repeats.

With a smile of ineffable content he sinks back upon his pillow, saying: "There can be no lull for me now; to know that you love me will make heaven of any eternity. Once more, sweetheart, once more," he whispers as he draws her closer to him. And Trixy again repeats the words. "I love you."

Closer he draws her to him until her lips meet his in one long kiss of passionate love and pain, and then her face is laid upon the pillow beside that of the man she loves, now growing cold and white.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes pass. The stillness is awful. Finally it is broken by the doctor, who glances at the couch, and then goes to Mrs. Colton, saying softly: "It is all over—take her away."

The next day Rex L'Ombre is laid for his last long sleep in the little church yard at Sapphire. Where did he come from? Who was he? What was his real name? The secrets of his life lie buried with him in that lonely grave amidst the everlasting hills of the Blue Ridge.

Three days later the Coltons and Trixy Lisle leave Sapphire. In tender consideration for Trixy, her sister and Mr. Colton never again mention Rex L'Ombre's name, nor do they ever refer to that strange scene enacted by his death bed.

Mrs. Henry Belding is considered a beautiful woman, though she is usually described as cold, stately and statuesque. Her sister, Mrs. Colton, sometimes says under her breath: "If we had never spent that one summer at Sapphire..."

Mrs. Belding ought to be a very happy woman. She has a most indulgent husband; she travels a great deal; she has an elegant home on Fifth Avenue and a handsome cottage at Newport. Her entertainments, her gowns, her jewels are all frequently mentioned in the society columns of the leading papers. She has in fact everything that money can buy, and yet—could a woman want more? #

## THE AUTHOR

Lida Ripley Barnwell was born April 18, 1863 in Hendersonville, NC.

She was politically minded and in fact, at the tender age of 18, became a delegate and an active member of the first North Carolina Woman's Suffrage Convention in Charlotte. She was also active in the United Daughters of Confederacy, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Women's Club, Women's Auxiliary, and the Board of Public Charities.



*Lida Ripley Barnwell and Rafe Izard Barnwell*

At the age of 21, Lila Ripley married Rafe Izard Barnwell of Charleston, SC, though widowed while still in her twenties. Afterward, she began to write for newspapers including *The Washington Post*, the *Charleston News and Courier*, *The Charlotte Observer*, and *Raleigh's News & Observer*.

Echoing the sentiments of Lucy Camp Armstrong Moltz, Lida once noted, "I have travelled abroad having spent some time in Europe, Asia, and Africa. My foreign experiences were interesting and delightful, but I returned to my own land more satisfied than ever with our country, our ideals, our history, our opportunities, and our people."

She passed away on March 6, 1961, just shy of her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday, in Hendersonville.