

**T. C. Harbaugh**



*The Girl Avenger; or,  
The Beautiful Terror  
of the Maumee*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[CHAPTER I.](#)

[CHAPTER II.](#)

[CHAPTER III.](#)

[CHAPTER IV.](#)

[CHAPTER V.](#)

[CHAPTER VI.](#)

[CHAPTER VII.](#)

[CHAPTER VIII.](#)

[CHAPTER IX.](#)

[CHAPTER X.](#)

[CHAPTER XI.](#)

[CHAPTER XII.](#)

[CHAPTER XIII.](#)

[CHAPTER XIV.](#)

[CHAPTER XV.](#)

[CHAPTER XVI.](#)

# CHAPTER I.

## Table of Contents

### STRICKEN OVER THE DEAD.

It was evening among the stately cottonwoods and poplars that lined the banks of the Maumee, and the dying day an August one in the year 1794.

A stag approached the historic stream to quench his thirst.

The proud king of the Ohio wood walked with antlered head erect; but his cautious tread denoted that he suspected the proximity of hidden foes. His eyes swept the wood on his left and right, and the opposite bank of the stream underwent a close scrutiny as he advanced.

Quite unmolested he reached the limpid water, and bathed his nozzle therein with manifest delight. It was a halcyon moment for his stagship.

But suddenly a puff of smoke shot above the clumps of wild pansies on the opposite bank, the whip-like crack of a rifle followed, and with an almost human cry the stag staggered from the water's edge, quivered like a stricken vessel, then sunk upon the verdant earth, the red tide of life flowing from a wound over his heart.

The fatal shot was followed by the spring of an Indian from the perfumed pansies, and a moment later he was swimming toward his prey. He breasted the current with the strength of a strong man, for he had nothing to incumber him, having left his empty rifle among the flowers.

He soon gained the stricken deer over which he stooped, and drove the scalping-knife into the delicate throat. A

stream of warm blood that made the Indian's hands redder than Nature's coloring, followed the withdrawal of the crimson blade, and the brave rose to his feet with a grunt of satisfaction.

Simultaneously with his rising, the quick sharp yelp of a young she-wolf rent the dense atmosphere, and caused the Indian to spring from his prey toward the nearest cottonwood.

He never reached the sheltering tree.

The report of a rifle scarce louder than the bursting of a percussion-cap, smote the air; the slayer of the stag halted in his tracks, threw his hands to his heart, retraced his steps with the reeling of a drunken man, and fell with a groan over the body of his victim.

In the agonies of death, he raised his head over the stag's breast, and his dying eyes caught sight of his slayer; then they closed to open in the lodge of the red-man's God—his Ka Jai Manitou.

Who shot the Ottawa?

A lithe figure bounded from behind the gnarled trunk of a monster ash.

The slayer of the Ottawa was a girl, rounding the last month of her sixteenth year!

A form and figure, admirably disclosed by the close-fitting garments, were faultless in grace and proportion, and her oval face was beautiful almost beyond description. The fair white skin, beautified by here and there a dimple, proclaimed the avenger the favored child of health. Her eyes were deep blue, like the patches of sky seen through the interstices of the broad leaves, and a mass of golden

hair fell over her shoulders like graceful plumage of orient birds.

She wore a close-fitting hunting-frock, surmounted by a doe-skin cape, the edges of which were fringed with beads, strung on thin sinews. Her nether limbs were clad in elaborately wrought leggings of the same material, cut wide at the bottom, which almost caused the hiding of the moccasins that incased the *petite* feet. From the head drooped the gigantic feathers of the nut-brown heron, and mingled with her golden locks as wavy as the stream toward which she hastened.

At her side trailed the weapon that had dealt death to the Ottawa brave. It was a delicate weapon, quite resembling a sporting gun, but a deadly one, as the dead man before her witnessed. The bore seemed out of proportion to the long slender barrel, which caught and reflected back from its polished surface the rays of the declining sun. The stock and butt of the gun were ornamented by silver crosses and crescents, arranged in alternate order. The first cross was punctured by many holes, the crescent was disfigured in like manner; then the next cross, and the succeeding crescent wanted two perforations, in the lower horn, of being completed—judging from the systematic perforating of the preceding ornaments.

The history of this Girl Avenger let the following pages detail.

A few bounds brought her to the body of her victim, lying across the stricken stag, and as her little hand drew a tiny scalping-knife from her girdle, a silvery triumphant laugh parted the lips and displayed two rows of pearly teeth.

“Ha! ha! ha!” said the laugh. “Another dark lock for my lone home—another puncture for my crescent—another red-man dead before the avenging rifle! How fast they fall before my eyes! When my gun speaks, the Manitou’s lodge opens to receive a spirit. How long will such work last?” and she glanced at her rifle. “How long? Until the last crescent is full of little holes; then—and not until then—the dead will have been avenged.”

With the last words still quivering on her lips, she stooped and wound the Ottawa’s raven scalp-lock around her left hand. A quick sweep of the scalping-knife, and with the gory scalp clutched in her hand, the Girl Avenger rose to her feet.

“Another brave and the second crescent will be completed,” she said, in French, thrusting the scalp into her girdle. “I know you, Jaguar-tail,” and her gaze fell upon the dead Indian. “Once my gun covered your heart—it was many moons ago—but you saw me, and falling flat in your boat, the rapids of the Miami of the Lake<sup>[1]</sup> bore you from my sight. This is my fortieth scalp-lock. Ha! my mark—the seal of the She-wolf. I’d—”

The sentence was broken by the crack of a rifle; the avenger’s head fell backward; an abortive shriek terminated on her now pallid lips, which a moment later lay motionless on the cold brow of the Ottawa!

From a clump of undergrowth, near the Ottawa’s covert, leaped the burly form of a man, whose shaggy red hair, low forehead, meeting above a short, flat nose, gray sunken eyes, dark and sinister expression of countenance, declared him to be Joe Girty, the dread renegade. He wore the Indian

costume, but without ornament, and his crimson handkerchief, while it supplied the place of a hat, hid an unsightly wound on his forehead. On each side, in his belt, was stuck a silver-mounted pistol; at his left hung a short dirk, serving occasionally the uses of a knife, and, as he ran toward the river, he trailed a clumsy rifle at his right.

“Hell has aided me at last!” he hissed, in triumphant glee, while swimming the stream, with the rifle above his head. “Long have I watched for you, my young She-wolf, and while watching trembled for my life. You are fast depopulating the tribe; but now I guess as how your yelp—the accursed precursor of death—has been heard for the last time. Won’t there be pandemonium in the village to-night, when I walk among the warriors and cast your dead body at their feet! Oh, Joe Girty, you’ve did a splendid thing to-day. The slaying of the young She-wolf will make you immortal. Satan remains true to the league you formed with him years ago, and now beneath your rifle, falls the Terror of the Maumee. This— What! did the She-wolf move her head?” he cried, as he bent over his victim.

The eyes of the girl opened and closed spasmodically, but without comprehending her situation.

A crimson furrow athwart her temple indicated the course of Joe Girty’s ponderous ball.

“By George! she’s not dead, after all!” exclaimed the renegade. “But I’m not sorry—be hanged if I am. I’ll carry the She-wolf to the village, and when Coocoochee and Leather-lips get through with their devilish orgies, we’ll have a big fire. I know Indians who’ll walk a hundred miles to see this girl sizzle. Snakes! she’s pretty. What a glorious squaw



she'd make for my boy, Kenowatha! But she's not for him, no, not for him! *She's for the fire.*"

A few drops of water restored the girl to consciousness.

She did not shriek when she found herself in the power of Joe Girty. On the contrary, she smiled triumphantly, with a glance at the dead Ottawa, as if to say: "Do your worst."

"The She-wolf has yelped for the last time," growled the renegade.

In reply the avenger stretched forth her arm, and significantly touched the records of her vengeance.

"I know what them means," said Girty. "Yes! girl, you've done bloody work; now for the burning. The red-skins have paid dearly for the deeds of that dark November night down the Maumee. I must go."

He bound the girl's feet and threw her across his shoulder as though she were a roe; then he gripped her rifle in the hand that held her from the ground, and stepped from the tragic spot.

A short distance up the stream he found a ford, and soon stood on the opposite bank.

To his questions and triumphant ejaculations, the girl never uttered a word, though the renegade rudely shook her as if he would break every bone in her body.

It was a proud hour for Joe Girty!

When from his covert he watched Jaguar-tail shoot the stag, he little dreamed of the rich prize so soon to fall within his grasp.

There was not an Indian among the tribes allied against Wayne, who would not have given his right hand for the young She-wolf.

And she was in their power.

[1] The Maumee was designated the *Miami of the Lake* in the early history of Ohio.

# CHAPTER II.

## Table of Contents

### THE EMPTY NEST.

The scene described in the foregoing chapter transpired on the left bank of the Maumee, almost directly opposite the mouth of the Little Turkey Creek, one of its insignificant tributaries, and between that stream and the present town of Napoleon, in Henry county, Ohio.

Joe Girty was obliged to cross the Maumee to reach the Ottawa village, which was situated near the river-bank, still nearer the site of the town just mentioned.

The evening of the Girl Avenger's capture was an auspicious one in the eye of the red-men of Northern Ohio. Mad Anthony Wayne, with the butchery of St. Clair's gallant troops fresh in his mind, had reached Greenville, and was preparing to punish the red nomads of the forests, for their bloody deeds.

The secret agents of Great Britain moved among the savages, and stirred them up to still more bitter hatred against the Americans. There were Capt. McKee, Elliot, Simon Girty, and other renegades equally as infamous, who whispered into the red-man's ears, until he threw back, with a bundle of arrows, into Wayne's teeth, the peace conditions his country had told him to offer.

On the night of the She-wolf's capture, a hundred renowned warriors from each of the allied nations, had assembled at a grand council of war in the Ottawa village.

There congregated Ottawas, Shawnees, Delawares, Miamis, Wyandots, Iowas and Chippewas.

To accommodate so large a throng, the council-house had been enlarged, and even then many could not force themselves beneath the birchen roof.

It was settled that Wayne was to be met with determined resistance, and the savages were sanguine of success.

British muskets had been freely distributed from Fort Miami by McKee and Elliot, whose faces, in the broad glare of the council-fires, glowed with triumph. It was mainly their work, for their bitter speeches carried the day when clear-minded chiefs advocated peace, without the needless effusion of blood.

Joe Girty reached the Ottawa town a short time after nightfall, and instead of making his way directly to the council-house, he sought his own lodge, a substantial wooden structure that stood in the outer circle of wigwams. He had slightly altered his mind regarding the immediate disposition of Nanette Froisart—for such was the name of his fair young prisoner. Were he to bear her into the council, unannounced to the assembled braves, she might be torn from his arms by the furious bands, and undergo a comparatively painless death. When, on the other hand, if he would leave her in his lodge, while he announced her capture, she would stand a fairer chance of being burned alive.

The last course he determined to pursue.

He reached his wigwam without being seen, for the women were congregated at the council-house, and hailing

with loud acclamations the hot speeches of the younger braves.

The heavy door of the lodge was closed, and the renegade thundered a series of loud blows upon it with his coarse boot.

At length the portal yielded, and a hideous hag, about the renegade's own age, greeted his flashing eyes.

"Was ye asleep, ye old lynx?" cried Girty, almost crunching her shoulder in his giant fist. "No! ye was at the bottle, durn ye!" and he shook his Indian wife till her teeth chattered as though ague-stricken. "Now, mind ye; touch that bottle ag'in to-night, and Joe Girty 'l be a widderer 'ginst day, cursed if he won't. Where's 'Watha? At the council, hey! Good place for the white spawn! See here, old woman, I've brought ye the devil's progeny," and he held his little captive up before the squaw. "Ah, ye know who she is!" he cried with delight, as he noticed the flash of recognition that darted from the hag's bloodshot eyes. "Ha! we'll have a big burnin' spree, mebbe to-night yit. Now see hyar. Come, shake off that drunken fit, what's comin' on ye, fur ye've got to do guard duty fur a short time," he shook her again. "I'm going down to the council, an' tell the red devils I've catched the young She-wolf. Now ye've got to watch her till I come back, and, mind ye, Loosa, ef she tries to get away," and he glanced at Nanette, "send the contents of that pistol through her head. Do ye hear, old lynx?"

"The white Ottawa shall be obeyed," stammered the hag, glad to get rid of her brute of a master. "My eyes shall never sleep."