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# MALAESKA

## THE INDIAN WIFE OF THE WHITE HUNTER

By MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS

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## THE INDIAN WIFE OF THE WHITE HUNTER

Sophie (Winterbotham)

*By* MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS

*NEW YORK*
THE JOHN DAY COMPANY

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# PUBLISHERS' NOTICE FROM THE FIRST EDITION

We take pleasure in introducing the reader to the following romance by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens. It is one of the most interesting and fascinating works of this eminent author. It is chosen as the initial volume of the Dime Novel series, from the chaste character of its delineations, from the interest which attaches to its fine pictures of border life and Indian adventure, and from the real romance of its incidents. It is American in all its features, pure in its tone, elevating in its sentiments; and may be referred to as a work representative of the series that is to follow—every volume of which will be of the highest order of merit, from the pens of authors whose intellectual and moral excellencies have already given the writers an enviable name, in this country and in Europe. By the publication of the series contemplated, it is hoped to reach all classes, old and young, male and female, in a manner at once to captivate and to enliven—to answer to the popular demand for works of romance, but also to instil a pure and elevating sentiment in the hearts and minds of the people.

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BEADLE & CO.

*New York,*
*June, 1860.*

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# INTRODUCTION

*Malaeska* was the first dime novel, the first complete book of fiction ever sold for ten cents, number one of the Beadle series which ran into the hundreds and circulated by the millions. It was published in June, 1860. The fine old house of Beadle, taking this pioneer step, proposed as stated in the original "blurb", not only "to answer the popular demand for works of romance, but also to instill a pure and elevating sentiment in the hearts and minds of the people." Such was the spirit in which was born the mighty line of little volumes which later became, quite unjustly, anathema to preachers, teachers and stern parents. And the first of those hated books was written, if you please, by a woman of considerable literary fame, the editor of eminently respectable household magazines and the author of *The Old Homestead*.

Now, after nearly seventy years, *Malaeska* is restored to the public in more pretentious dress. Few reprints of old forgotten works have been so important. For the dime novel was not only



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uniquely American; it was a distinct phase in the development of our literature and it may have been the principal origin of our present keen interest in the American pioneers and the winning of the West. Certainly it was held deeply in the affection of the American people, and when the time came for its passing more than one constant reader dedicated a little memory to it. The New York *Sun* voiced its regretful farewell in the editorial columns for June 8, 1900:

> In THE SUN the other day a Utica correspondent eulogized with affectionate regret "the good, old-fashioned, salmon-colored novels" of Mr. Beadle of this town. Many old or oldish codgers will share in the sympathetic expressions of the Utican for "Beadle's Dime Novel Series." It was a part of the youth of many of us. The dimpled chins that bent over it have felt the barber's shears for a generation; and the books that composed it have become almost as rare as the most treasured incunabula. There may be some of them hidden away in country attics, but in the book shops they seem to be seen no more. Their bright faces would be soiled and dusty enough now. It is better to remember them in their prime.
>
> We can see 'em now, with their fresh-painted look, staring from their shelves at the boy who gazes at them hopelessly. In his pockets is an old curiosity

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shop of unconsidered trifles, but in coppers only six cents. The youthful world is full of cork cakes and fig paste and brilliant, mysterious marbles. Even if you had a dime, too much of your income must not be devoted to literature. There are practical interests to be considered. At least you look, gaze your fill at Mr. Beadle's masterpieces in their rich robes. Not exactly salmon-colored, were they? A mellow Beadle color, we should say.

They had to be covered for school use. Otherwise their splendor would have betrayed them. What a sense of superiority and innocent crime you got by having a batch of them in your desk and sticking one into the arithmetic or the Latin grammar. Why, even that fellow of unapproachable genius and vast age who was just beginning the first book of the *Iliad*, and who spent, in examining his chin with the aid of a hand-glass and prospecting for down, much of the time he should have passed with the well-greaved Achaians—even *he* read Mr. Beadle's works, and was good enough to speak of them with condescending praise. As for the small boys, they would be so deep in the *Slave Sculptor* or some other of Mr. Beadle's productions, that they would forget to keep an eye on the schoolmaster. That tyrant would descend like lightning, pull two or three of your ears off and confiscate your whole stock of dime novels. Then the old humbug would sit on his throne with one of your treasures in his Virgil, and placidly read it—probably for the purpose of making those spirited remarks about

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vicious and sensational literature that were so much appreciated by the school committee and visiting parents. If Beadle's novels are now rare it is because so many of them were seized by the pedagogues. Every schoolmaster must have had a complete collection.

There was much prejudice against Beadle novels, chiefly, we imagine, on account of the brilliancy of the covers. The books were good, not bad. In their way they were of the school of—

> Kingston and Ballantyne the Brave,
> And Cooper of the Wood and Wave.

They can't have had less literary merit than the rapid-selling romances of today. They were written by decent and clever people. Mr. Edward S. Ellis, a favorite writer for Mr. Beadle, is gratefully remembered as a teacher by many persons. He published a *History of the United States*, which is an excellent piece of work. Orville J. Victor was the editor of the Beadle series. He, too, is a historian. He published a history of the Civil War which, while necessarily incomplete and inaccurate in many things, because written contemporaneously with the events described, is of much interest because it shows what a fair and intelligent Northerner believed to be the facts. His *Incidents and Anecdotes of the War* is also a good book to read.

Mr. Munro's work succeeded Mr. Beadle's, but not in the affections of the readers of the latter. Mr. Hiram Cobb, a Cambridgeport friend of literature, says in his *Recollections from the Library:*

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> The Grolier Club, the Kelmscott Press,
> With all their stately sumptuousness,
> Full-crushed levant and Roger Paynes
> I leave to men of greater gains.
> But when I get my pipe alight
> My fancy sees the shelves grow bright;
> I see—and I will have it yet!—
> Of Beadle's Novels one full set.

He will never get it For where is Beadle, and where are most of his novelists? Trampled out of memory by the fugacious years, alas!

My own interest in the dime novel began thirty years ago and has led me across nearly as many States in building up my collection, which now numbers hundreds of volumes. It began with my reading of the works of the Reverend William H. H. Murray, "Adirondack" Murray. His *In the Wilderness* inspired me with a fondness for exciting literature of the outdoors. I turned to dime novels and I was insatiable. Finding that the original series had been out of print since before I was born, having ceased in 1876, I wrote to those authors who were still living, trying with some small success to obtain old copies. In 1907, through the kindness of a friend I was admitted to the cellar of M. J. Ivers and Company, who

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had bought out the house of Beadle. And there, in the stacks of treasure, I first encountered a copy of number one in the series, *Malaeska*. It was one of the later editions, for this book was reprinted several times and reached a circulation of at least half a million copies.

Not until 1926 did I find my copy of the first issue of the first edition. It was in the attic of an old house in Ulster County, New York. The discovery of that day was notable in more ways than one, for in the same heap with *Malaeska* I bought an ancient bible, between the leaves of which was laid an autographed letter of Daniel Boone!

Since then portions of my collection have been exhibited at public libraries in various cities. These little salmon-covered volumes have become precious in the eyes of many others than myself. It is at the urgent solicitation of various friends, and through the appreciative enterprise of the publishers, that *Malaeska* is now reprinted.

Erastus Beadle and his scholarly editor, Orville J. Victor, surrounded themselves with clever writers, many of whom possessed marked literary ability. Most of these writers had lived the life upon which their realistic stories were founded.

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The little books embraced a wide range of subjects, such as history, biography, tales of chivalry, early pioneers, pirates and the Indian and frontier tales which are now so eagerly sought.

The historical note was struck in this first volume. *Malaeska* is the sad tale of the wife of the white hunter. Depicting the life and customs of the early Dutch settlers of New York, it undertakes an analysis of Indian character and psychology in its contact with the white man and his inherited prejudices. Against that background, the story develops from the then not infrequent intermarriage of white and red. The clash of the civilized, practical and proud Dutch burghers and an uncivilized, emotional, but equally proud savage princess, of dual natures and inherited inhibitions, reaches a tragic climax in the last chapter of a life permeated by heroic self-sacrifice and unrequited mother love.

The story is told gently with pathos and sympathy by the well beloved Ann Sophia Stephens. Of English parentage, she was born at Humphreysville, in the town of Derby, New Haven County, Connecticut, in 1813. Her father, John Winterbotham, a manufacturer of woolens near Manchester, came to this country to take charge

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of a woolen mill established in Derby by Colonel David Humphreys; subsequently he lived in Berkshire county, Massachusetts, and in Southbury, Connecticut, and finally removed to Ohio. Ann Winterbotham began to compose poems and sketches in her childhood and one or more of these found their way into print. In 1831 she married Edward Stephens, a native of Plymouth, Massachusetts, who established himself as a publisher in Portland, Maine, and in 1835 founded a magazine which Mrs. Stephens edited. Her first complete story, *The Tradesman's Daughter* and a poem entitled *The Polish Boy* appeared in early issues of this periodical and were much admired, especially the poem, which became widely known through the declamations of school boys. Success attended the *Portland Magazine*, but in 1837 Mrs. Stephens' health began to fail. Residence in a milder climate became necessary and she accepted the editorship of the *Ladies' Companion*, published in New York City, her husband at the same time obtaining a situation in the custom-house. The circulation of the *Companion* increased rapidly. Proprietors of other periodicals made tempting offers; and in 1842 George R. Graham persuaded Mrs. Stephens to

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become associate editor of "*Graham's Magazine.*" Two years later she increased her labors by accepting a similar position on *Peterson's Magazine* and to this she contributed serial stories, each running through twelve months, for more than twenty years.

In 1843 Mrs. Stephens founded the *Ladies' World* and in 1846 the *Illustrated New Monthly*, and for a time she also edited *Brother Jonathan*, a weekly journal published by her husband.

From 1850-52 she made the tour of Europe in company with friends, and received marked attentions from members of royal and noble families and from Thackeray, Dickens, Humboldt and others eminent in literature and science. Her first elaborate novel, *Fashion and Famine* (1854), had an enormous circulation and was translated into the French language.

Among her other novels which obtained great popularity were: *Sybil Chase*, or the Valley Ranch, A Tale of Early California Life; *Esther*, A Story of the Oregon Trail; *Myra*, The Child of Adoption, a tale of early days in New Orleans; *Mahaska*, the Indian Princess; *Ahmo's Plot*, a tale of the time of Frontenac, the first French Governor of Canada; *The Indian Queen*, a ro-

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mance of Indian life among the Senecas of New York State—and many more.

Her stories, whether of high or low life, were marked by great vigor and vividness and her style was pronounced more masculine and condensed than was usual with female writers. She passed many winters in Washington where her circle of friends included the familes of presidents and nearly every person of note who visited the city. Her husband died in 1862; her own death occurred at Newport, R. I., Aug. 20, 1886.

George L. Aiken, noted actor and playwright (1830-1876), dramatized in 1856 the novel, *The Old Homestead*, by Mrs. Stephens, and played the leading part at Barnum's Museum in 1859. The play then laid dormant until the early '80's when it was revived and thereafter played successfully by Denman Thompson for more than forty years.

FRANK P. O'BRIEN

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# CHAPTER I

**The brake hung low on the rifted rock**
**With sweet and holy dread;**
**The wild-flowers trembled to the shock**
**Of the red man's stealthy tread;**
**And all around fell a fitful gleam**
**Through the light and quivering spray,**
**While the noise of a restless mountain-stream**
**Rush'd out on the stilly day.**

THE traveler who has stopped at Catskill, on his way up the Hudson, will remember that a creek of no insignificant breadth washes one side of the village, and that a heavy stone dwelling stands a little up from the water on a point of verdant meadow-land, which forms a lip of the stream, where it empties into the more majestic river. This farm-house is the only object that breaks the green and luxuriant beauty of the point, on that side, and its quiet and entire loneliness contrasts pleasantly with the bustling and crowded little village on the opposite body of land. There is much to attract attention to that dwelling. Besides occupying one of the most lovely sites on the river, it is remarkable for an appearance of old-fashioned comfort at



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variance with the pillared houses and rustic cottages which meet the eye everywhere on the banks of the Hudson. There are no flowers to fling fragrance about it, and but little of embellishment is manifest in its grounds; but it is surrounded by an abundance of thrifty fruit-trees; an extensive orchard sheds its rich foliage to the sunshine on the bank, and the sward is thick and heavy which slopes greenly from the front door down to the river's brink.

The interior of the house retains an air of substantial comfort which answers well to the promise conveyed without. The heavy furniture has grown old with its occupants; rich it has been in its time, and now it possesses the rare quality of fitness, and of being in harmony with surrounding things. Every thing about that house is in perfect keeping with the character and appearance of its owner. The occupant himself, is a fine stately farmer of the old class—shrewd, penetrating, and intelligent —one of those men who contrive to keep the heart green when the frost of age is chilling the blood and whitening upon the brow. He has already

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numbered more than the threescore years and ten allotted to man. His habits and the fashion of his attire are those of fifty years ago. He still clings to huge wood-fires, apples, and cider in the winter-season, and allows a bevy of fine cows to pasture on the rich grass in front of his dwelling in the summer. All the hospitable feeling of former years remains warm at his heart. He is indeed a fine specimen of the staunch old republican farmer of the last century, occupying the house which his father erected, and enjoying a fresh old age beneath the roof tree which shadowed his infancy.

During a sojourn in this vicinity last season, it was one of our greatest pleasures to spend an evening with the old gentleman, listening to legends of the Indians, reminiscences of the Revolution, and pithy remarks on the present age, with which he loved to entertain us, while we occasionally interrupted him by comparing knitting-work with the kind old lady, his wife, or by the praises of a sweet little grandchild, who would cling about his knees and play with the silver buckles on his shoes as he talked. That tall, stately old man, and the sweet

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child made a beautiful picture of "age at play with infancy," when the fire-light flickered over them, to the ancient family pictures, painted in Holland, hanging on the wall behind us, in the old-fashioned oval frames, which, with the heavy Dutch Bible, which lay on the stand, secured with hasps and brass hinges, ponderous as the fastenings of a prison-door, were family relics precious to the old gentleman from antiquity and association. Yes, the picture was pleasant to look upon; but there was pleasure in listening to his legends and stories. If the one here related is not exactly as he told it, he will not fail to recognize the beautiful young Indian girl, whom he described to us, in the character of Malaeska.

At the time of our story, the beautiful expanse of country which stretches from the foot of the Catskill mountains to the Hudson was one dense wilderness. The noble stream glided on in the solemn stillness of nature, shadowed with trees that had battled with storms for centuries, its surface as yet unbroken, save by the light prow of the Indian's canoe. The lofty rampart of mountains

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