

Chapter 1 : Silbird Classic Stories

*The Cave by the Beech Fork: A Story of Kentucky [Rev. Henry S Spalding S.J.] on www.nxgvision.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. From the discovery of a secret cave to the winning of a David-and-Goliath shooting match, there is no lack of action in *The Cave by the Beech Fork*.*

And how are you this morning, Zach? And how is your wheat getting along? This is the third time the poor fellow has lost his corn-crib. They say he is very cruel toward them. Each one told just how much corn he expected from his summer crop, how much wheat he had planted for the coming season, the quantity of wool which his fold had yielded. The housewives, too, had their little stories to repeat. Each one knew how many sacks of dried apples her neighbor had stored away for the winter, how much apple-jam or peach-leather had been made. This, too, was the time for shy lovers to meet, and there beneath the great oak-tree, in rustic simplicity, many a vow was made and many a promise given. The children did not accompany their parents home. Most of them remained at Mr. When they had been dismissed, with the injunction to return for catechism on the two following days, the priest, accompanied by Owen, rode around to visit the sick who were unable to attend Mass that morning. Howard, who was sitting on the front porch reading a book which Father Byrne had brought, looked up, and to his surprise saw before him Louis Bowen. The two men had been neighbors for fourteen years, yet they had exchanged but few words; not once during this entire period did Louis Bowen enter the Howard house. As he did not on this occasion dismount from his horse or seem inclined to come nearer, Mr. Howard walked out to the gate to meet him. Lost four hundred bushels of corn! The dogs waited until I had worked like a slave, and then in a single night they destroyed all that I had made! This it is that brings me here to-day, Zach! I want your help! I cannot track the rascals alone; this I have tried to do for three years, but without success. Starving dogs who rob and then burn what they cannot carry away! Many of the poorest people of the neighborhood come here to your house for prayer-meeting. I suspect some of them--I tell" "Louis Bowen! I came to ask your assistance in catching the thieves. Let me tell you, Louis Bowen, every man in this section of the country is talking of your cruelty toward those poor negroes! Again I ask, will you give me any assistance in this matter? I have nothing else to add. The farmer returned to the place where he had been reading, but he could not read. He was anxious and troubled. He felt that there was something more than a fire and a robbery connected with this visit, but what it was he could not divine. In the meantime, Father Byrne and Owen had visited the different houses and were returning home, when they came to a place where two roads intersected. It was evidently written by one who knew more of rifle-shooting than of the rules of orthography. Do you intend to compete? He is the best marksman in twelve miles from here, in a place called Coon-Hollow. They say he is about six feet and a half high. If you only help me, I think that I have a chance for the prize. She may think that I am too young. But now, Owen, you will have to ride in silence while I say a part of my office. He rode a trusty animal with a quick and easy gait, and by long practice, could recite his office with as little inconvenience when traveling as when in his room. Not wishing to disturb him, Owen rode ahead several paces. Twice he glanced furtively behind him. The good Father seemed lost to all around, and to have his thoughts fixed only on heaven, so that Owen wondered and wondered how he could pray so long and fervently. Half an hour passed. Again Owen turned, and saw that Father Byrne had dismounted and was kneeling. As he knelt there upon a moss-covered root, a sunbeam stole through the golden and crimson foliage of the forest and rested like a halo upon his face. Shadow and sunshine checkered the gay, leafy carpet which nature had spread out around him. The foxglove and wild bergamot, yet untouched by the frost, offered their fragrance in unison with his prayers, while bough and leaf which canopied him stirred not, as if unwilling to break the holy silence. And again Owen wondered and wondered how Father Byrne could pray so long. I can bring down swallows on the wing; and they are harder to hit than robins. He selected an open spot in front of the house, where he had a clear range in every direction, while Father Byrne, with Mr. Howard, stood on the open porch near by. Robin, who was always frightened by the report of a gun, sought protection under a bed. It was about half an hour from sunset. The swallows were fluttering and diving through the air in quest of gnats and other insects, many of the birds passing not twenty

feet overhead. Soon one did come in the right direction. The rifle cracked, and the doomed bird fell to the ground with a flutter. Again the music started, again it was succeeded by the report of the rifle, and again Wash picked up the unlucky bird. Owen waited for his chance every time. Six shots and six swallows were the results of the trial. I predict success for you at the shooting match. Howard was surprised at the deftness with which his son handled a rifle. He himself when young had been something of a marksman, but in his best days he had never equaled Owen. To kill six swallows in succession was almost marvelous. Prize shooters, even with sporting guns, could not bring them down with certainty; and when rifles were used, not one bird in ten was killed. Rifle-shooting is an art. The marksman must know his gun, its exact range, the strength of his powder and exactly how much is required. Owen was not jesting when he told Father Byrne that he was not certain of his mark until he had tested the quality of his powder; this known, he could calculate the number of grains to use. Owen had one difficulty, however, which he had not yet mastered. In practicing he had observed that it was more difficult to kill a bird flying in a bee-line to or from him than one that flew to the right or to the left. When shooting swallows, he could wait for those which passed within the most advantageous range, but at the shooting-match he would be forced to take his robin as it flew from the trap. Happy Days

On the following morning the children were again assembled at Mr. Howard's. Those were happy days for the dear little ones whom Father Byrne gathered around him. Prayers, instructions and lessons finished, the boys scampered off to the river to fish, or played "hide-and-go-seek" in the great hayloft, while the girls spent their happy hours in the grape-vine swings which Mr. Howard had made for them, or wandered out into the woods or into the fields to gather clusters of golden-rods. No one enjoyed these days more than did Mr. Howard. They deemed it an honor and a privilege to have this troop of innocent children assembled beneath their roof. They insisted, too, on giving them a warm dinner each day, and supplying them with a bountiful repast before their departure. When the crowd began to break up in the afternoon or rather in the evening, for the country folks of Kentucky never use the word afternoon, Mr. Howard was always there to see the children off safely. He took great delight in bringing their horses to the stile-block, in strapping on the blankets which they generally used instead of saddles, and in seeing them nestled snugly in their places, sometimes as many as four in a row on one horse. Then off they rode, laughing and talking, and saying a dozen goodbyes, and munching the biscuits and jam which Mrs. Howard had distributed among them. If the day was pleasant, the benches were brought out from the chapel beneath a large oak-tree near the house. Here Father Byrne heard the lessons and gave his instructions. Early in the afternoon of the third day of class Mr. Howard came blustering into the room, and told Father Byrne to dismiss the children at once. Better get the children off at once! Just look at that sun drawing up water. Howard pointed toward the west to the long amber streaks, each one of which in his mind was a mighty pump supplying the rain-clouds from the distant ocean. I am going to send them home before it rains. Howard, "it has not been an hour since they had their dinner. And what makes you think it is going to rain? Just as soon as the sky is full, it will come pouring down. In former years, the catechism class numbered about ten; this season it had more than trebled. Aunt Margaret began to fear that the whole tribe of chickens would become extinct, and when she went out in the morning to scatter food to the younger broods, she uttered words of prophetic warning. The latter again surveyed the sky, where the amber streaks had grown to twice their size, an evident proof that the sun was drawing up an unusual amount of water. This was a deep-seated conviction of the farmer, of which it was impossible to disabuse him. It is going to rain pitchforks and millstones in less than an hour," said the farmer, emphatically. Howard then stalked into the class-room, and told the children that they would all remain until after the rain--after the rain which would begin in about half an hour.

Chapter 2 : Full text of "The cave by the Beech fork; a story of Kentucky"

From the discovery of a secret cave to the winning of a David-and-Goliath shooting match, there is no lack of action in The Cave by the Beech Fork, as we follow Owen Howard and Martin Cooper through their exploits in early 19th century Kentucky.

Bowen, why are you so cruel with your slaves? If you treated them kindly, they would not run away. Never again cross the threshold of my door, or enter this yard. If you do" "No threats are necessary," interrupted Bowen. Now that you have shown me how and where to find my slave, I have no further use for your company. Howard regretted that he had given the information. It was too late, however, to amend matters, so he went into the house, and from one of the upper windows, where he could get a full view of the scene, eagerly watched old Bowen in his vain attempts to follow up the trail. After riding up and down either side of the fence for about an hour, the master grew tired of the fruitless labor, and regretted that he had disposed of Mr. Still, not having the courage to return and ask for help, he spurred his horse on toward the river, where he hoped to find a new clue to the direction taken by the runaway. The escaped slave, trembling with fright, watched the whole proceedings from a crevice in the hayloft, and when his master had disappeared he sank back upon the hay exhausted. For days and weeks he suffered from his sore and emaciated back. The negro, Mose, came to him regularly three times a day, bringing him food and applying salve to his wounds. When asked why he had been whipped, the poor slave would only answer: But the poor wretch was afraid to leave his place of concealment, knowing that if he were caught a worse punishment, even death, would be his fate. It was the morning of the twenty-fifth of January, Martin Cooper rode up before Mr. I slipped it into the pockets just before we parted. You must not give it to me. You did as much to get the pistols as I. When I told them here at home that I had given you one of the prizes, they all said you deserved it. Our soldiers have whipped the English in a great battle at New Orleans. Not more than a dozen of our men killed. Two thousand of the red-coats have been captured, killed or wounded. Here is the account of the battle written by Jackson; and this is the flag carried by the Kentucky regiment. Hurrah for the Kentuckians! Howard heard the shouting, and came out into the yard. He was overjoyed at the report, and taking the bullet-rent flag he waved it three times over his head, invoking a blessing on his country. The man who handed it to me on the banks of the Green river killed his horse, he rode so fast. I have been on the road since four this morning, and my horse can not go a mile farther. Some one here must take my place. It is no small honor to carry such a flag and such news, and both of you shall have it," said Mr. Martin, leave your saddle pockets here, but take out the pistol which you and Owen were speaking of. It is yours; buckle it around your waist. It will look more like war. And now, stranger," he continued, turning to the man, "you are welcome! Walk into the house. They were intrusted to an officer of one of our Kentucky regiments. He changed horses eight times before he reached Tennessee. The last horse dropped in a marshy country, and the poor fellow was forced to push his way on foot for five miles before he came to a settlement. The message has been given to four persons since that time. If the boys can carry it to Louisville, the soldiers there will see it safe to Pittsburg; beyond that the forts are so close that it can be carried one hundred and fifty miles in twenty-four hours. Howard; "there is a friend of mine by the name of Sims, who lives twelve miles beyond Bardstown on the Louisville road; he is a true patriot in whose hands the letter will be safe. The boys can carry the message twenty miles, and friend Sims can take it twenty-eight more. The President, Congress, and the whole country are waiting anxiously for the news from New Orleans; but I have my reasons for suspecting that there are some unprincipled wretches who would gladly intercept such joyful tidings. Even if you die for it, my boy, do not give this letter to any one but the man who is to carry it to Louisville. The whole family came out to bid the boys "G. Little Robin, who, as the reader has seen, was always frightened at the report of a fire-arm, sought shelter behind Mrs. On they sped, their young hearts burning with patriotic pride. Firing their pistols to attract the attention of the farmers near the road, pausing for a moment to show the flag and tell the good news, then das. They remembered, however, that it was county court day, and that the town would be filled with visitors. They, therefore, determined upon a definite course of action. Martin, according to the arrangement, was to ride into the midst of the crowd, show the flag and

announce the victory. Owen, on his part, was to remain at one side, and if the written report of the battle were demanded, to put spurs to his horse and escape from the town; for they were determined to be true to their charge, and under no conditions to surrender the message to another for a single instant. The public square, as it was called, a large open lot in the middle of the town, was crowded with townfolk and farmers from all parts of the county. These were engaged in a variety of ways--some entered the stone court house to follow the proceedings of the bar, while others stood around in groups chatting about their crops, and inquiring about the latest reports of the war. But by far the greater number was engaged in trading horses and cattle, or purchasing various articles of the peddlers who came to town in great numbers on court days. Suddenly the attention of all was attracted in the same direction, for Martin and Owen rode into the public square, checking their horses in the midst of the crowd and crying out: The English army has been defeated at New Orleans! A wild shout of triumph answered the announcement of the victory. Then the crowd pressed around and demanded the particulars of the battle.

Chapter 3 : Henry S. Spalding - Wikipedia

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Chapter 6 : Cave by the Beech Fork

The Sheriff of the Beech Fork continues the adventures of year-old Owen Howard and Martin Cooper in the early 19th century Kentucky wilderness, as begun in The Cave by the Beech Fork.

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