

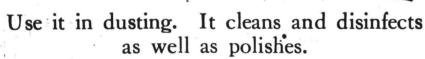
are—sparkling like little diamonds. "Now taste them-notice that they dissolve instantly.

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Everywhere was now hurry and laughter, and it was not until Joe put his head out of the cab window that we recalled the real state of affairs.

"We're about ready at this end," he stated, "if you're ready at yours!" "We have everything—grub, blankets, tents, bandages—except the doctor," I answered. "Guess there isn't one nearer

than Little Seal Lake.' A voice in the crowd attracted our attention. "Here he is," said the voice, "here's your doctor." and a nervous little red-haired man in ragged kharkis was

pushed to the fore, where he stood blinking and grinning. "He ain't a doctor," shouted someone in the crowd. "He's a prospector."

"I'm a doctor," snapped the little man, grinning and looking serious at the same time. "I was, anyway, before I came into this all-fired country!"

"Well," said I, "are you game to make this all-fired trip?"

"Yep!" said the doctor, and the little man was hoisted into one of the trucks, where he took his seat, grinn ng, on top

of the pile of freight.

I climbed into the cab beside Joe and as I looked through the open doors into the roaring furnace, I realized all at once what we were up against. realized that it was a hunared to one chance against our getting through; that, in fact, we were going out to meet almost certain disaster. During the rush and excitement of the last hour or so I had not realized this, and it was only now, when Joe and I came to shake and I followed his example.

would suddenly flash crimson. Save for these siniter crimson flickers, we might have been approaching a land of nightor a thunderstorm, worse than any thunderstorm you have ever seen or dreamt of.

As I leant out of the cab window, and listened to the roar of the wheels ringing over the silent valley, to return, echoing and re-echoing, verberating and re-verberating through the silence of the forest, I realized that there was something sinister in the very stillness of the place. It was like the silence that precedes a great storm, save that it was silence more impressive, for it was the silence that succeeds a great forest fire.

We were rattling along at breakneck speed, and once, when I almost fell from the cab, I asked Joe if we weren't going rather too fast.

after a moment, he added: "We're all right, boy. It's surprising how an engine will hold on to the metals when she's

Next moment we turned a corner in a manner that set the wheels screaming, and which made my hair stand on end, but Joe only grinned.

We could scarcely see the metals a hundred yards ahead, so dark had it become, while the smoke was almost stifling. Joe took the bandonna from his neck and secured it over his mouth,



Fishing in Circle Lake, East of Winnipeg.

climbed up on to the tender, that i realized it. Some of our chums must have realized it too, for they gripped our lands lingeringly.

At length Joe shook himself free. "Good-bye, lads!" he shouted. "We'll send a message through when we get there." Then he opened the throttle, and the old engine clanked and rattled her way out of the siding and away on the main line, which stretched like a narrow avenue through the interminable forests. that lay to our south.

As the old engine gathered speed, and her two noisy trucks jolted and rattled behind her over the uneven metals, something of the wild, devil-may-care nature of our mission began to appeal to me, and I struck up a rollicking hunting song of the old days, while Joe joined in with gusto. Ahead of us lay the single span of metals gleaming in the afternoon sunshine, now dipping down till they bordered one of those wonderful lakes with their countless islands and exquisite coloring, now turning a hairpin bend and guiding us, with a roar, between gigantic white ridges of rock, which rose up so abruptly that it seemed the very vibration, would set them toppling upon us. But each moment it was becoming darker; the sky overhead was becoming more overcast, and the smell of smoke becoming stronger. Far ahead we could see what appeared to be gigantic clouds overspreading the sky, and now and then one of these clouds quite appeared their anger, and were

chums as they! Next moment we plunged through scrap of bush which had been burnt over, and was still smouldering fiercely. 'We're on the edge of it," shouted Joe, and he closed the throttle a little. Then, before I could realize what was happening, we had plunged into the fire belt!

Words may be adequate for describing the ordinary scenes of life, but how can one describe a forest fire as we saw it that evening? Overhead, 1arknessimpenetrable, awe-inspiring. On every side forests—forests which we had previously known to be silent, and beautiful with soft tints, but which were now crimson and terrible-filled here with the soft, creeping rush of flames among the undergrowth; here with the multitudinous crash of mighty pine trees falling to the ground or bursting like the report of a cannon as the heat turned the sap within them to steam. Everywhere around and above us was the creeping, the crashing, the roaring, as though a mighty and invisible army were forcing its way through the brushwood.

The fire had passed, and there was now no wind, but by no means had the country burnt itself out. As though possessed of new life, a little holocaust would suddenly spring up, creating a superheated breeze of its own and dash on through the already smouldering forests. Hence the far off whispering, the booming, the crashing, as though the army of invisible giants that were waving war through the woods had not