



A Day's Work Alone in the Woods.

LIVING as we do amidst the buzz of human society, it is hardly possible for us to understand or realize the lives of those who wander and work absolutely alone in our forest wilds, those who count it an event to meet one of their fellow men. Possibly a glimpse of such a life might be obtained from the perusal of the brief outline of a particular day's work.

He has pitched his tent on a rocky knoll, well exposed both to the sun and the wind. Past the foot of the hill runs a small brook which soon widens into a pond and then splashes over a beaver dam. Just as the first rays of "Old Sol" penetrate the tree tops and form a bright checkered pattern on the tent, he rolls out from his blankets, gives about half a yawn, lights a smudge, and grabbing a pail hastens down to the brook to perform his morning ablutions. Returning with his pail full of water, he empties part of it into a smaller one, blows up the smudge into a fire and sets them both on to boil. From the tent he now hauls out a canvas bag from which, after some little ferreting, he produces three smaller bags, a slab of bacon, a can of butter and a bannock. Corn meal porridge with lots of sugar, hot buttered toast, and clear hot tea form his menu. O, what a luxury it is for him to sit on a log by the fire, with his elbows resting on his knees, sipping the hot tea; what lovely visions that old tin bowl can conjure up, he only knows. After this light repast, he fries a couple of slices of bacon, which he places between two "hunks" of bannock, ties them up in his bandana handkerchief, fastens the bundle to his belt and sallies forth armed with a pick, a jack knife and a small pistol.

He beats northward, automatically, keeping the shadows on his left as he jumps, climbs and crawls among the fallen timber and thick underbrush. Now he is crossing the brook on a shaky pole, now diving among the tag-alders and consigning them to eternal damnation; now he almost bumps up against a rocky cliff. This brings to his face a smile and he glances around to see what he can see. A few feet to the left is some white quartz, so down comes his pick from his shoulder and for a few minutes he digs, hammers and scratches like one possessed. But, alas! the quartz ends unexpectedly: the vein has "pinched out." Up the hill he scrambles, momentarily forgetting his quest and wishing only to get a look at the country around him. To the top of a huge white pine, growing on the crest of the hill he finally makes his way and settles down to drink in the sights around him. Twelve little lakes he can count from his point of vantage, glistening like diamonds among the dark green of the surrounding forest. Far to the eastward he can discern a faint puff of smoke. This alone is there to remind him that he is living in a world inhabited by other human beings. A wave of home-sickness sweeps over him so he descends and gets to work.