

THE UNQUENCHABLE FIRE:

Or, The Tragedy of the Wild.

CHAPTER VI.—(Cont'd)

The moments slipped by. Presently she again sent the call hurtling through the trees. Again came the chorus; again she waited. And the sounds of the chorus were nearer at hand, and a crackling of undergrowth warned her of the presence of the savage creatures she had summoned. The deep blue eyes were alert and watchful, but she showed no signs of fear; nor did she move. Suddenly a less stealthy and more certain crackling of the frost-bound bush made itself heard; and the roving eyes became fixed in one direction. And through the trees a tall grey figure appeared, moving towards her. But this was not all, for several slinking, stealing forms were moving about amongst the barren tree-trunks; hungry-looking creatures these, with fierce burning eyes and small pricked ears, with ribs almost bursting through the coarse hides which covered their low, lank bodies.

But all the woman's attention was centered upon the form of the other—the hooded figure she had seen in the morning. He came with long regular strides, and truly was he calculated to inspire awe in the Wild. Even now, near as he was to her, there was no sign of his face to be seen. He was clad in the folds of grey wolfskin, and a cowl-like hood utterly concealed his face, while leaving him free to see from within.

As the man came up Aim-sa plunged into voluble speech. They talked together long and earnestly; their tones were of dictation on the part of the woman and subservience on the part of the man.

Then the Spirit of the Moosefoot Indians moved away, and the White Squaw retraced her steps to the dugout.

A look of triumph was in Aim-sa's blue eyes as she returned through the forest. She gave no heed to the slinking forms that dogged her steps. She saw nothing of the majesty of the hills which closed her in on every side, shadowing the forest in their overwhelming might. Her thoughts were upon other things; all her interest was in the dugout and those who lived there.

When she came to the house she received a shock. Nick had returned during her absence. He had come for the dog sled, and had since brought the vast carcass of a grizzly into camp. Now he was stripping the rich fur from the forest king's body. The five huskies were snarling around upon their haunches, waiting for the meal they hoped would soon be theirs, with shivering bodies and licking lips, and their jaws dripping saliva.

The man, still kneeling over his prize, greeted Aim-sa without pausing in his work.

"Where?" he asked, sparing his words lest he should confuse her. The unconcern of the query reassured her.

"The forest," replied Aim-sa easily, pointing away down the hill. There was a long pause while the woodsman plied his knife with rough but perfect skill. The thick fur rolled under his hands. The snick, snick of his knife alternated with the sound of tearing as he pulled the pelt from the under-flesh. Aim-sa watched interested, then, as Nick made no further remark, she went on. She pointed back to the forest.

"The wolves—they very thick. Many, many—an' hungry." "They've left the open. Guess it's goin' to storm, sure," observed the man indifferently. He wrenched the fur loose from the fore-paws.

"Yes; it storm—sure." And Aim-sa gazed critically up at the sky. The usual storm sentries hung glittering upon either side of the sun, and the blue vault was particularly steely.

Nick rose from his gory task. He drew the fur away and spread it out on the roof of the dugout to freeze. Then he cut some fresh meat from the carcass, and afterwards dragged the remainder down the hill and left it for the dogs. The squabble began as soon as he returned to Aim-sa. A babel of fierce snarling and yapping proceeded as the ruthless beasts tore at the still warm flesh. And, in less than a minute, other voices came up from the woods, heralding the approach of some of the famished forest creatures. Nick gave no heed. The dogs must defend their own. Such

is the law of the Wild. He had Aim-sa to himself, and he knew not how long it would be before his brother returned.

And Aim-sa was in no way loth to linger by this great trapper's side. It pleased her to talk in her halting fashion to him. He had more to say than his brother; he was a grand specimen of manhood. Besides, his temperament was wilder, more fierce, more like the world in which he lived.

She hearkened to the sounds of the snarling wolves, and her blue eyes darkened with the latent savagery that was in her nature.

"The dogs—they fight. Hah!" she said. And a smile of delight was in her eyes.

"Let 'em fight," said Nick carelessly. Then he turned upon her with a look there was no mistaking. His whole attitude was expressive of passionate earnestness as he looked down into the blue worlds confronting him.

She taunted him with a glance of intense meaning. And, in an instant, the fire in his soul blazed into a wild conflagration.

"You're that beautiful, Aim-sa," he cried. Then he paused as though his feelings choked him. "Them blue eyes o' yours goes right clear through me, I guess. Makes me mad. By Gar! you're the finest critter in the world."

He looked as though he would devour the fair form which had raised such a storm within his simple heart. She returned his look with some power to check his untutored passion. Her smile, too, was not wholly devoid of derision; but that was lost upon him.

"Aim-sa—beautiful. Ah! yes—yes, I know. You speak love to me. You speak love to White Squaw."

"Ay, love," cried Nick, the blood mounting with a rush to his strong face. "Guess you don't know love, my girl. Not yet. But maybe you will. Say, Aim-sa, I'll teach it. I'll teach it ye real well, gal. You'll be my squaw, an' we'll light right out o' here. I've got half share in our pile, an' it ain't a little. Jest say right here as ye'll do it, an' I'll fix things, an' hitch up the dogs."

Nick paused in his eloquence. The squaw's eyes danced with delight, and he read the look to suit himself. And he anticipated a favorable answer. But he was quickly undeceived. Aim-sa merely revelled in the passion she had aroused, like a mischievous child with a forbidden plaything. She enjoyed it for a moment, then her face suddenly became grave, and her eyelids drooped over the wonderful eyes which he thought had told him so much. And her answer came with a shake of the head.

"Aim-sa loves not. She must not. The Moosefoot—she is Queen."

"Curses on the Moosefoot, I say," cried Nick, with passionate impulse.

Aim-sa put up her hand. "The man—The Hood." Fear the Spirit."

And a chill shot right down through Nick's heart as he listened. But his passion was only checked for the moment. The next, and he seized the woman in his powerful arms and drew her to his breast. And he kissed her on her not too unwilling lips. The kiss maddened him, and he held her tight, while he sought her blindly, madly. He kissed her cheeks, her hair, her eyes, her lips, and the touch of her warm flesh scorched his very soul. Nor is it possible to say how long he would have held her had she not, by a subtle, writhing movement, slipped from within his enfolding arms. Her keen ears had caught a sound which did not come from the fighting dogs. It was the penetrating forest cry which rose upon the air.

"Remember—The Hood," Aim-sa warned him. And the next moment she had vanished within the dugout.

Now Nick knew that he too had heard the cry, and he stood listening while his passion surged through his veins and his heart beat in mighty pulsations. But reason was returning swiftly. And as he gazed over the forest waste he expected to see the mysterious hooded figure.

But what he beheld brought an angry flush to his cheeks. He did not see "The Hood," but Ralph walking slowly up the hill.

And a harsh laugh, which had no mirth in it, broke from him. Then a frown settled darkly upon his brow. What, he asked himself, had Ralph returned for? He bore no burden of skins.

And when Ralph looked up and

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fire she had kindled, and from sheer wantonness she fanned the flame with all the art of which she was mistress.

Slowly the hours passed. It was Nick who at last rose and gave the signal for departure. It was an unwritten law between these two that when one left Aim-sa's presence they both left it. Therefore Ralph followed suit, and they retired to their sleeping apartment.

Outside the night was fine, but the threat of storm hung heavily in the air. The temperature had risen, a sure indication of the coming blizzard. Ralph was the last to leave the woman's presence, and, ere he closed the door, he looked back at the smiling face, so beautiful to him, so seductively fair in his eyes. And the memory of the picture he looked upon remained with him.

(To be continued.)

THE WOUNDED TIGER.

Fascination of Pursuit—How the Buffalo Sometimes Helps.

Perhaps some of the fascination of tiger shooting lies in the mischief that results from bad shooting or methods. This entails a carefulness which invests the sport with a gravity, marking it as apart from other shooting.

For first and foremost stands the safety of one's companions, whether they be beaters, trackers or elephants. "Shoot dead or leave well alone" is a counsel of perfection which should ever be borne in mind, even if not always attainable. With the tiger lying dead or gone away unwounded the trouble is ended until you wish to start it again. With a wounded beast afoot the trouble is hardly yet begun save in the matter of getting beaters and such like up trees or out of danger's way elsewhere.

With elephants, especially howdah elephants, pursuit may begin at once or be delayed, according to circumstances. Without them an hour or two's interval or more on occasion should elapse before starting on what may be a pleasant or an unpleasant duty, according to the sportsman's taste in these matters. But a duty it (nearly) always is. Wounded tigers are not articles to be lightly left littering a place.

The intervals before pursuit allow of a chance of three things—and of one other which must be accepted unwillingly. The wounded tiger may die either directly from the wound or from the effects of drinking water on certain wounds. The wound may incapacitate him, from loss of blood or stiffening, for mischief. And his rage may have time to cool down. But he may also get clean away.

The pursuit begins. Its methods must vary under the many circumstances possible. Sometimes a tracker is necessary, and he works covered by rifles under the trunk of an elephant or close to the sportsman if he be on foot. Risk there is, especially in dense country, but with proper caution and precautions it is reduced to a minimum, such as previous reconnaissance by hawk-eyed experts up trees, stone throwing, the careful noting of the movements and sounds of animals, especially those

The evening was passed in the woman's company. Ralph sat silent, brooding. While Nick, with the memory of the wild moments during which he had held Aim-sa in his embrace fresh upon him, held a labored conversation with her. To him there was a sense of triumph as he sat smoking his blackened pipe, listening to the halting phrases of the woman, and gazing deeply into her wonderful blue eyes. And in the ecstasy of recollection he forgot Ralph and all but his love. There was no generosity in his heart; he had given himself up to the delights of his passion. He claimed the fair Aim-sa to himself, and was ready to uphold his claims so long as he had life.

And all that long evening he heeded nothing of the dark expression of Ralph's face. The furtive glances from his brother's eyes were lost upon him, and even had he seen them their meaning would have had no terrors for him. With all the blind selfishness of a first love he centered his faculties upon obtaining Aim-sa's regard, and lived in the fool's paradise of a reckless lover.

And all the time Ralph watched, and planned. The bitterness of his heart ate into the uttermost part of his vitals, the canker mounted even to his brain. The deep fire of hatred was now blazing furiously, and each moment it gathered destructive force. All that was good in the man was slowly devoured, and only a shell of fierce anger remained.

But what Nick failed to observe Aim-sa saw as plainly as only a woman can. Her bright eyes saw the

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The report of business done by this Company during 1910, as shown by annual report printed in another column, shows net profits of \$163,512.51 after deducting all expenses. The Company's assets are now well over \$2,000,000, and surplus to policyholders considerably over \$1,000,000. The losses paid by the British America since incorporation in 1833 total the tremendous sum of \$34,470,308.91. This splendid record of 78 years continuous business is gratifying to those interested in this Company whether as a policyholder or otherwise.

The re-elected President, Hon. Geo. A. Cox, and Vice-President, W. R. Brock, are well known to Canadians in this as well as in various other administrative capacities.

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FOOD TELEPHONES STOMACH.

Dainty Morsel Announces Its Coming by Wireless Method

Sir James Crichton Browne described recently at the end of a dinner in London, how a delicate morsel, perfectly served, of delicious flavor and good aroma, will send to the stomach, before it is swallowed, a telephone message 'o say that it is coming.

Such a morsel, he said, not only sets the mouth watering by stimulating the salivary glands, but it also induces a flow of the gastric juices by acting on the glands of the stomach. These glands it brings

into play before any portion is swallowed. It is, in fact, telephoning down to the stomach to say that something good is coming, and the stomach immediately prepares itself for its reception.

A nasty or insipid dish has no such effect. If it is nasty the stomach rejects it; if insipid, it receives it with comparative indifference. It is of the utmost importance, he held, that good flavor and good aroma should prevail, for nice food is more easily assimilated than that which is flavorless, and good cooking not merely tickles the palate, but it also contributes to the great work of nutrition.

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