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nothing—a thing which, to most of his kind, would have seemed terrifying rather than alluring. But to him, with that inherited wildness stirring in his blood, it seemed the thing to be craved before all else.

Presently they came to a little cold spring, bubbling up beside the road and tinkling over the steep bank. The road at this point ran along a hillside, and the slope below the road was clothed with blueberry and other dense shrubs. The backwoodsman was hot and thirsty. Flinging aside his battered hat, he dropped down on his hands and knees beside the spring and touched his lips to the water.

In this position, still holding the rope in a firm grasp, he had his back to the ram. Moreover, he no longer looked either formidable or commanding. The ram saw his chance. A curious change came over his mild, yellow eyes. They remained yellow, indeed, but became cold, sinister, and almost cruel in their expression.

The backwoodsman, as he drank, held a tight grip on the rope. The ram settled back slightly, till the rope was almost taut. Then he launched himself forward. His movement was propelled by a gigantic spring. His massive, broad-horned forehead struck the stooping man with terrific force.

With a grunt of pain and amazement the man shot sprawling over the bank, and landed half stunned, in a clump of blueberry bushes. Dazed and furious, he picked himself up, passed a heavy hand across his scratched, smarting face, and turned to see the

down, he saw a small white ewe with a new-born lamb nursing under her flank. Here was his new realm peopled at once. Here were followers of his own kind. He stepped briskly down from his hillock and graciously accepted the homage of the ewe, who snuggled up against him as if afraid at the loneliness and the coming on of night. All night he slept beside the mother and her young, in the sheltered hollow, and kept no watch because he feared no foe. But the ewe kept watch, knowing well what perils might steal upon them in the dark.

As it chanced, however, no midnight prowler visited the summit of Ringwaak Hill, and the first of dawn found the great ram again at his post of observation. It is possible that he had another motive besides his interest in the new, wonderful world. He may have expected the woodsman to follow and attempt his recapture, and resolved not to be taken unawares. Whatever his motive, he kept his post until the sun was high above the horizon, and the dew-wet woods gleamed as if sown with jewels. Then he came down and began to feed with the ewe, cropping the short, thin grass with quick bites and finding it far more sweet than the heavy growths of his old pasture.

Late in the evening, when pasturing was over for the time, the ram and the little ewe lay down in the shade of a steep rock, comfortably chewing their cud, while the lamb slept at its mother's side. The ram, deeply contented, did not observe two gray-brown stealthy forms creeping along the slope,



"He kept his post till the sun was high above the horizon."

ram disappearing among the thickets above the road. His disappointment so overcame his wrath that he forgot to exercise his vigorous backwoods vocabulary, and resumed his homeward way with his head full of pains for the recapture of his prize.

The ram, meanwhile, trailing the length of the rope behind him, was galloping madly through the woods. He was intoxicated with his freedom. These rough, wild, lonely places seemed to him his home. With all his love for the wilderness, the instinct which had led him to it was altogether faulty and incomplete. It supplied him with none of the needful forest lore. He had no idea of caution. He had no inkling of fear. He had no conception of the enemies that might lurk in thickets or hollows. He went crashing ahead as if the green world belonged to him, and cared not who might hear the brave sound of his going. Now and then he stepped on the rope, and stumbled; but that was a small matter.

Through dark strips of forest, over rocky, tangled spaces, across slopes of burnt barren, his progress was always upward, until, having traversed several swampy vales and shadowy ravines, toward evening he came out upon the empty summit of Ringwaak. On the topmost hillock he took his stand proudly, his massive head and broad, curled horns in splendid relief against the amber sky.

As he stood, surveying his new realm, a low bleat came to him from a sheltered hollow close by, and, looking

from bush to rock, and from stump to hillock. But the ewe, ever on the watch, presently caught sight of them, and sprang to her feet with a snort of terror. She knew well enough what a lynx is. Yet for all her terror she had no thought of flight. Her lamb was too young to flee, and she would stay by it in face of any fate.

The ram got up more slowly, turned his head, and eyed the stealthy strangers with grave curiosity. Curiosity, however, changed into hostility as he saw by the ewe's perturbation that the strangers were foes; and a sinister glitter came into the great gold eyes which shone so brilliantly from his black face.

Seeing themselves discovered the two lynxes threw aside their cunning and rushed ravenously upon what they counted easy prey. They knew something of the timorous hearts of sheep, and had little expectation of resistance. But being, first of all, hungry, rather than angry, they preferred what seemed easiest to get. It was upon the lamb and ewe that they sprang, ignoring the ram contemptuously.

One thing which they had not reckoned with, however, was the temper of the ewe. Before one fierce claw could reach her lamb, she had butted its assailant so fiercely in the flank that he forgot his purpose and turned with a snarl of rage to claw her. Meanwhile, the other lynx, springing for her neck, had experienced the unexpected. He was met by the lightning charge of the ram, fair in the ribs, and hurled