

scented the midnight air, viewed his surroundings, blinked at the moon, and lay down to perform his cougar toilet. Rest and the drying of his robe brought strength to his thews and warmth to his veins. Crouch was himself once more.

His surroundings were strange and new, but hunger calls even on a foreign strand.

A pasture land sloped down to the rock-shelfed shore. Here dwelt flocks and herds. A flock of sheep lay drowsily beyond a distant fence. Two horses stood by the side of a spreading oak. A herd of cows and young cattle placidly chewed their midnight eud or slumbered in rural peace.

Crouch had usually avoided the herds of men, but hunger was calling to him. As the night wind brought him odors of flesh, his green eyes glowed with a gleam intense. Like a gliding shadow he stole from the bouldered shore. A young heifer rose from her grassy couch. A glowing light shone in the keen eager eyes of Crouch as he marked her rounded proportions. He sank to earth for a moment, and with a lightning spring, shot through the air and landed on the shoulder of the heifer. One flensing blow from his mighty paw laid his victim before him, a lacerated mass of quivering flesh, and Crouch drank deep of the warm life blood.

Before morning he had found a retreat on the Arbutus Hills. Here among wild freseoea rocks he found surroundings resembling the glens of Tehnami. He could look out across the gulf and view in the distance the scene of his former life from which he was barred forever. But game was plentiful on the hills and herds were numerous in the fields. All that the heart of cougar could wish except cougar society was his. He was the alien autocrat of the island hills.

Soon the settlers of Arbutus began to discuss mysterious doings. Some unknown marauder was devastating their flocks. Some thought the work resembled that of a cougar. But such thought was rejected as visionary. Arbutus was shut off from the larger island by six miles of gulf. No cougar could possibly make the journey, therefore it was impossible for a cougar to be on Arbutus, therefore it was not the work of a cougar.

The destruction continued. Many attempts were made to track, stalk or trap the unknown enemy. But the enemy of the Arbutus flocks was skilled in the art of eluding.

The shrewdest of the children of Nature make errors and the angel of the wild things is not always watchful. Had Crouch avoided the property of man, his life might have been long and lonely. But the ease with which he eluded the men of Arbutus made him too confident.

One dark night in late autumn he returned to the scene of a kill by the side of a babbling brook. The carcass lay where he had left it. It was partly devoured but sufficient remained for many meals.