

# THE UNQUENCHABLE FIRE:

Or, The Tragedy of the Wild.

## CHAPTER IV.

The mere suggestion of the possibility of the White Squaw's existence had rudely broken up the even calm of the lives of Ralph and Nick Westley. To turn back to the peace of their mountain home, without an effort to discover this fair and strange creature whom Victor had seen, would have been impossible. Therein lay the crux of their enthusiasm. Victor had seen her. The story would have been nothing without that. Victor had seen her, so why should not they?

It was the rejuvenescence of mature men who had ever lived the strong, clean life of the mountains. A dangerous condition in such, and needing the strongest curb to check. Nature prescribes youth as the time for extravagances of thought and feeling. At such a time life is fresh, its buoyancy and callow optimism make for transient infatuations. Sobriety of thought is the later result, when calm reflection weighs inclination against wisdom, and experience governs the actions. These men had known no real youth. They had fought the battle of life from the earliest childhood, they had lived lives as dispassionate and cold as the glaciers of their mountain peaks. Recreation was almost unknown to them. Toil — unremitting, arduous — had been their lot. They failed to realize their danger; they wotted nothing of the passions that moved them, and so they hurried headlong upon the trail that was to lead them they knew not whither. To them temptation was irresistible, or they had never known the teaching of restraint; it was the passionate rending of the bonds which had all too long stifled their youth.

Even the dogs realized the change in their masters. Nick's lash fell heavily and frequently upon the hardy brutes. It was not their nature to complain; their pride was the stubborn, unbending pride of savage power, and their reply to the wealing thong was always the reply their driver sought — pace. Faster and faster they journeyed as the uncooling ardor of their master's spirits rose.

The snow lay thick and heavy, and every inch of the wild, unmeasured trail had to be broken. The Northland giants thronged about them, glistening in their impenetrable armour, and crested by the silvery burnish of their glacial headpieces. They frowned vastly, yet with a sublime contempt at the puny intrusion upon their burdened solitude. But the fiery spirit which moved the brothers was a power that defied the overwhelming grandeur of the mountain world.

The dark day ripened, and as the full sun crept out from behind the grey, and revealed the frost in the air, the temperature dropped lower and lower. And the animal world crept furtively out upon the strange sight of creatures other than their own kind journeying through the silent wastes.

Then the daylight waned. The sky returned to its greyness as the light-shades rose, and a bitter breeze shuddered through the woods and along the valleys. The voice of the forest rose in mournful cadence, and as the profusion of the mountain night settled heavily upon the world, the timber-wolf, the outlaw of the region, moved abroad, wailing forth his cry of liberty and sad enjoyment.

Camp was pitched well clear of the forest, and a large fire kindled, and the savage night-prowlers peopled the encompassing shadows. The men proceeded with their various tasks in silence. Ralph prepared their own food, and soon a savory odor tickled the nostrils of those without the circle of the firelight. Nick thawed out the dog's evening meal and distributed it impartially, standing over the hungry beasts with a club to see that each got the full benefit of his portion. It was a strange sight for the furtive eyes that looked on, and a tantalizing one, but they dared not draw near, for the fire threatened them, and besides, they possessed a keen instinct of caution.

After supper the men rested in spells, one always sitting up by the fire whilst the other slept in the comfort of his fur-lined "Arctic bag." And as the night wore on the shadows grew bolder, and their presence kept the sentry ever on the alert. For the most part he sat still, swathed to his eyes in his furs; he huddled down over the fire smoking, every now and then pausing to thaw the nicotine in the stem of his pipe. But his eyes seemed to be watching in every direction at once. Nor was the vaguest shadow

lost to their quick-flashing glances.

Towards dawn Nick was on the watch. The aspect of the night had quite changed. The moon—large, full, brilliant,—was directly overhead, and the stars, like magnificent dewdrops, hung richly in the sky. Away to the north, just clear of a stretch of heaven-high peaks, the scintillating shafts of the gorgeous northern lights shuddered convulsively, like skeleton arms outstretched to grasp the rich gems which hung just beyond their reach. The moving shadows had changed to material form. Lank, gaunt, hungry-looking beasts crowded just beyond the fire-lit circle; shaggy-coated creatures, with manes a-bristle and baleful eyes which gazed angrily upon the camp.

Nick saw all these; could have counted them, so watchful was he. The wolves were of small account, but there were other creatures which needed his most earnest attention. Twice in the night he had seen two green-glowing eyes staring down upon him from somewhere up in the branches of one of the trees that stood out on the edge of the forest. He knew those eyes, as who of his calling would not have recognized them? A puma was crouching along the wide-spreading bough.

He stealthily drew his gun towards him. He was in the act of raising it to his shoulder when the eyes were abruptly withdrawn. The time passed on. He knew that the puma had not departed, and he waited, ready. Sure enough the eyes reappeared. Two glowing balls shining with hellish light. Up leapt the rifle, but ere his hand had compressed the trigger a sound from behind caught him up short. His head turned instantly, and gazing through the drifting fire-smoke he beheld the outline of a monstrous figure bearing down upon the camp. In size the new-comer dwarfed the trapper; it came slowly with a shuffling gait. Suddenly it dropped to all-fours and came on quicker. Nick hesitated only for a second. His mouth set firmly and his brows contracted. He knew that at all hazards he must settle the puma first. He glanced at the sleeping Ralph. He was about to rouse him; then he changed his mind and swung around upon the puma, leaving the fire between himself and the other. He took a long and deadly aim. The glowing eyes offered a splendid target, and he knew he must not miss. Simultaneously with a piteous, half-human shriek of pain; then came the sound of a body falling, and the eyes had vanished.

After firing Nick swung round to the figure beyond the fire. It loomed vastly in the yellow light, and was reared to its full height not ten yards away. A low, snarling growl came from it, and the sound was dreadful in its latent ferocity. Ralph was now sitting up gazing at the on-coming brute. It was a magnificent grizzly. Nick stooped, seized a blazing log from the fire, and dashed out to meet the royal beast.

It was a strange and awesome sight, those two going out to meet each other. But Nick, with his wide experience, was master of the situation. He boldly went up to within two yards of his savage and fearless foe and dashed the burning brand into the creature's face. Down dropped the woodland monarch upon all-fours again, and, with a roar of pain and terror, ambled hastily away to the depths of the forest. Strange it is that, of all dangers, only fire is a terror to the denizens of the forest world.

"Bar!" questioned Ralph, from the shelter of his fur bag.

"Yes—an' puma," replied Nick unconcernedly, as he returned to his seat to await the coming of morning.

And so the long night passed, and the slothful day broke over the bleak, pitiless world. The dogs awoke, and clambered from their warm, snowy couches. The routine of the "long-trail" obtained, and once more the song of the sled rang out at the heels of the eager beasts.

Nor were the short day and long, weary night in such a region without effect upon the men. A feeling of superstitious uneasiness seized upon Nick. He said nothing. He was possibly too ashamed of it to do so; but the dread steadily grew, and no effort of his seemed to have power to dispel it. As he moved along beside his dogs he would shoot swift, fearful glances at the heights above, or back over the trail, or on ahead to some deep,

dark gorge they might be approaching. He grew irritable. The darkness of the woods would sometimes hold his attention for hours, while the expression of his eyes would tell of the strange thoughts passing behind them. And Ralph, though more unemotional than his brother, was scarcely less affected. It was startling in such men, yet was hardly to be wondered at in so overpowering a waste of brooding night.

It was still the morning of the second day. Nick's whip had been silent for a long time. His eyes were gazing out far—sometimes up at the lowering sky, where the peaks were lost in a sea of dark cloud, sometimes down into the forest depths. Ralph had observed the change in his brother, and sympathy prompted him to draw up alongside him.

"What's aillin' ye?" he asked.

Nick shook his head; he could not say that anything ailed him. "Thought maybe ther' was somethin' amiss," went on his brother half apologetically. He felt himself that he must talk.

Then Nick was seized with a desire to confide in the only lifelong friend he had ever known.

"Ther' ain't nothin' amiss, zactly," he said. And he got no farther.

"Hah!"

Ralph looked round sharply. It seemed as if something were stirring about him. He waited expectantly. There was nothing unusual in sight. A wild panorama—mountain and valley and wood—that was all.

They traipsed on in silence, but now they journeyed side by side. Both men were strangely moved. Both had heard of the "Dread of the Wild," but they would have scoffed at the idea of its assailing them. But the haunting clung, and at each step they felt that the next might be the signal for a teeming spirit life to suddenly break up the brooding calm.

They passed a hollow where the snow was unusually deep and soft. The dogs labored wearily. They reached the rising end of it, and toiled up the sharp ascent. The top was already in sight, and a fresh vista of the interminable peaks broke upon their view. Without apparent reason, Nick suddenly drew up, and a sharp exclamation broke from him. The dogs lay down in the traces, and both men gazed back into the hollow they had left. Nick towered erect, and with eyes staring, pointed at a low hill on the other side of it.

Ralph followed the direction of the outstretched arm. And as he looked he held his breath, for something seemed to grip his throat.

Then a moment later words, sounding hoarse and stifled, came from the depths of his storm collar.

"Who—who is it?"

Nick did not answer. Both were staring out across the hollow at the tall motionless figure of a man, and their eyes were filled with an expression of painful awe. The figure was aggressively distinct, silhouetted against a vast, barren, snow-clad crag. They might have been gazing at a statue, so still the figure stood. It was enveloped in fur, so far as the watchers could tell, but what attracted them most was the strange hood which covered the head. The figure was too distant for them to have distinguished the features of the face had they been visible, but, as it was, they were lost within the folds of the grey hood.

(To be continued.)

## AGAINST HIS CONSCIENCE

### German Soldier Sentenced to Imprisonment.

For refusing to perform his military duties on a Saturday, a German soldier named Naumann, who is a Seventh Day Adventist, has been sentenced to five years and six months' imprisonment. At the hearing of his appeal before the chief court-martial of the Third Army Corps, he told the president that his conscience would not allow him to violate the commandments of God and work on the Sabbath. "One must regard God as the highest authority and obey Him in the first place." The authorities had him examined by experts to see if he was sane, and the worst they could report was that he was under the influence of an "exaggerated idea which could not be called morbid." Unless the Imperial court-martial reverses its sentence, Naumann will have to choose between abandoning his belief and spending the rest of his days in prison.

## A PIECE OF A MORTGAGE.

In another column is announced an opportunity to purchase 6 per cent. bonds of the Dominion Canners, Limited, of Hamilton. This Company has earned over six times their bond interest, and any one looking for an absolutely safe investment with a high interest return would do well to write the Dominion Bond Co., Toronto, or real or Ottawa.

## MOST REMARKABLE STORY

### WOMAN MOTHERED A LITTLE BLACK BEAR.

Sequel to a Story of the Canadian Woods Told to Camp Fire Club.

One of the oddest stories that ever came out of the north woods was told for a second time, after a lapse of many years, at the annual dinner of the Camp Fire Club of America at the Hotel Astor, New York, recently. Five years ago William Lyman Underwood, of Boston, told the story for the first time at a Camp Fire dinner. The other day he told what may be called the sequel to the story, backing it up with a series of very remarkable photographs.

The story concerns a woman and a bear cub. The woman in the case is still in the Canadian woods, and the bear is living a life of ease and luxury in Boston. It was by request that Mr. Underwood consented to tell the story, and show the pictures again. Ottomar H. Van Norden, who was the toastmaster, in introducing Mr. Underwood, called the story the most wonderful that ever originated in the snowy north.

### FOUND THE WOMAN.

"Several years ago," said Mr. Underwood, "I was in a little settlement in New Brunswick, and while there I was told that in a lumber camp, about twenty miles away, there was a woman who was nursing a bear cub. The story was so remarkable as to be almost unbelievable but I decided, nevertheless, to go into that lumber camp and investigate for myself. So early one morning I started for the camp, reaching it shortly before nightfall. It was the typical lumber camp of the north. In one of the little log cabins I found the woman with her own three children, all under five years; two others that she had adopted, and the little black cub. One of the children was a nursing infant.

"She was the only woman in the camp, and was the wife of the cook, a big, good-natured fellow. A good cook, as you all know, is a treasure in a lumber camp, and so when this one insisted on bringing his wife and little ones into the woods with him, the owners had no alternative but to grant his request, or else try to get another cook. So they built a little cabin for our friends, and he and his family moved in. And now comes the bear.

### THE CUB BROUGHT OUT.

"The lumbermen found the den a few hundred yards distant from the camp. They yanked the mother bear out, not knowing at the time that there was a twelve-ounce cub within the cave. It would have made no difference, however, whether they knew it or not; the old bear would have been killed just the same, for the lumbermen needed that meat, and they wanted the pelt. After the mother bear was killed the cub was brought out. It was a poor little fuzzy thing, weighing not more than a pound. When the men returned to the camp one of them brought with him the cub and dropped it in the snow in front of the kitchen. The little chap was helpless, and there was not a drop of milk in the camp. There never is in the north woods. "The cook's wife came out of her cabin and saw the cub there waiting for death. It was such a soft, fuzzy thing and so helpless that she picked it up tenderly. She knew there was no milk in that camp, and her motherly instinct told her that if the cub was to live the nourishment could come from but one source. 'Poor little thing,' she said; 'I am not going to let him die. He shall share with my baby.'

### A WONDERFUL PICTURE.

Here Mr. Underwood threw on the screen a wonderful picture. It was that of a kindly-faced woman. In her arms was a baby girl and a tiny bear cub. Both were nursing. Other pictures showed the cub a few weeks later, then a rollicking happy little bear. In the second picture he was eating jam. In another picture the bear was kissing the baby girl. Mr. Underwood added that it shared the crib with the baby when the night got cold.

The cub grew rapidly, and one day it scratched the face of the baby, and the woman realized that the time was at hand for the bear to get a new home, and so Mr. Underwood bought him and took him to his home near Boston.

"In the winter of that year, which was when I told this story to you the first time," Mr. Underwood added, "you will remember that you took up a collection, and I sent the money to that family up there in the woods. It will interest you to know that adversity had overtaken them at that time, the fa-

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ther had injured his foot, and was unable to work, and the two adopted children had been entrusted to others. With the money you raised medicine was provided for the man, and warm clothes for the children, and the adopted little ones returned to them."

BEAR WEIGHED 400 POUNDS.

But the man never recovered, and he recently came to Boston and had his leg amputated. When he arrived Mr. Underwood took him to the place where the bear, now a 400 pounder, was.

"I know him, but he don't know me," the woodsman said to Mr. Underwood, and then, turning to his friend, he exclaimed: "My, Mr. Underwood, but wasn't that a great thing? Just think what our kindness to that little cub has meant to us."

Another picture was that of a neatly dressed pretty little girl. It was that of the foster-sister of the cub.

"And when her mother asked me to name the little girl," said Mr. Underwood, "I thought for a moment, and then I christened her Ursula."—New York Times.

### STUDY OF AIR CURRENTS.

Tides in the Atmosphere Similar to Those on the Sea.

Until men began to navigate the air and study its currents and movements little attention was paid to the conditions of the upper atmosphere, and such matters as atmospheric tides and top currents completely encircling the earth were of seemingly little interest.

Since men have flown, and especially since men have flown and fallen, we have heard a great deal in a vague way of air currents. Recently Lawrence Hodges, in a paper before an English scientific body, gave some unique facts about air tides which are not generally known.

The moon, we know, causes the marine tides by its attraction. It draws the water on the surface of the earth toward it in a hump on the side that it exposed to the lunar influence, and draws the earth itself away from the water on the opposite side, leaving a corresponding hump of water.

The air, it seems, is affected in the same way. The layer of atmosphere about the earth rises, falls and flows more freely than water, because it is lighter, so the tide comes more quickly in the air at a given spot than the marine tide.

The rise and fall, however, means just as much to the navigator of the air as the tide in the sea does to the sailor, and has to be accounted for. The most remarkable current, however, is one constant stream in the atmosphere running from west to east completely round the earth in the upper atmosphere.

This was first brought to public attention when the volcano Krakatoa blew a cubic mile of matter into the upper atmosphere in the '80s. The lighter particles were seen to make a complete circuit of the earth seven times in this circumglobular current before they finally disappeared.

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