

of the grimy face of Long Jackson snarling down into his, with an expression of murderous wrath.

"Now, then," hissed the Indian, "you no hand that hootch over I scalp you in two ticks." And from the decorated sheath at his hip he drew an ugly looking knife.

"We haven't any hootch," answered Dan, twinging with pain. "Le'go and look for yourself if you don't believe me. This ain't no blind pig joint I tell you."

No doubt the Indian would have proved only too ready to look for himself, but it happened that, at that moment, Unqua heard the noise coming from within, and evidently made up his mind to ascertain the cause. With his usual air of nonchalance the animal strolled in at the open door behind Long Jackson, and seeing the Indian's back towards him he exercised a playful little trick he had recently acquired. He seized one of Long Jackson's black locks in his firm, square teeth, and gave it a snag that almost dislodged the lock by its roots.

The Indian turned, and seeing himself face to face with the great wide-eyed moose, started back in amazement. Quickly he recovered from his surprise, realising what the animal was. It happened that, on the great iron stove beside him, a pot of glue was simmering. Long Jackson seized the pot by its handle and in an instant had flung its scalding contents at the moose. The animal staggered back, blindly, frantically, the clinging liquid dripping from its face and neck. It dashed down the clearing and plunged into the river, seeking to cool its wounds in the still, refreshing water.

This act of cruelty was more than Dan could stand, though he knew well the folly of rousing the drunken brave to further anger. He snatched up the empty glue pot and flung it in Long Jackson's face. The bowl went home in fine style, and with a guttural oath the Indian sprang forward. Dan tried to leap aside and gain the door, but he tripped over a steel bear trap, and Long Jackson fell upon him. The boy struggled frantically, knowing that murder was in his opponent's heart, but his arms were too short to grasp the Indian's uplifted hand in which the knife was held.

That moment would doubtless have been Dan's last had not his father appeared at that moment in the doorway. At a glance Carl Berry took in the situation. He was still carrying his canoe paddle, and with a swinging blow he dashed the knife from the Indian's hand, incidentally disabling one or two of the cowardly wretch's fingers.

Carl Berry was a powerful man, and when roused was known to be a formidable fighter. The next ten minutes were doubtless the most eventful Long Jackson had ever experienced. Carl licked him into sobriety, then licked him again in order that he would fully understand the folly of his misdoings. Finally he frog-marched him down the clearing, and tumbled him head first into the canoe. The canoe, of course, capsized, whereupon Long Jackson swam the width of the creek in order to get as far as possible from his tormentor.

"That's what we do with such quitters as you who come to the store," Berry shouted after him. "When you want some more come back and let me know."

The trader knew, however, that Long Jackson was not likely to return for a day or two. He had taught the murderous brute a lesson it would take him long to forget.

Next the two turned their attention to Unqua. The poor young moose was badly burnt, and as he emerged from the river his owners saw a light in his eyes they had never seen there before. It was the light of rage, and hitherto nothing had occurred within the smooth routine of the animal's life to anger him.

They rubbed the burnt patches with flour and goose grease, after which the boy made a hood for the animal to wear to keep off the flies.

That evening, when one or two Indians strolled in to the storeroom for their customary smoke and chat, the trader and his son drew them into conversation regarding the unwelcome visitor of that afternoon, and soon learnt a good deal about Long Jackson's character. The sole redeeming point the Indian seemed to possess was that he was a good dog driver, which probably meant he had no scruples as to the treatment of his dogs. Finally an old brave ended up by saying:—

"He no blame good, that man. Such

men as him best out of the country. Ten years ago he set out for the woods with a partner, Long Jackson came back alone with heap good pelts—no partner. I tell you—him no blame good."

Which clearly hinted that Long Jackson was suspected of having murdered his partner in order to acquire sole possession of the harvest of pelts.

Then another brave, warming up on the subject, added with slow vehemence:—"Him go to Winnipeg City; learn heaps of bad things there; him run mails and earn good pay. Him drink heap hootch—firewater, then come back to the woods—starve his squaw, beat his children, and take all the fur they collected and trade it at Winnipeg City for more hootch. Him no blame good—that Indian."

Thus the assemble went on talking, every man of them having some story to tell of Long Jackson's disreputable character and his cruelty. The trader and the boy looked from one to the other of the little picturesque group, as they lolled against the packs and smoked unlimited

quantities of Bluejacket, and Carl Berry shook his head gravely, knowing that, though Long Jackson's people were his friends, he had made a bad enemy of Long Jackson himself.

II

Next morning Carl Berry said to Dan:—"Just you keep that gun handy, sonny, and if the Indian who called yesterday comes when I'm away let him see you mean business before he has time to lay hands on you."

Autumn was the busy time of the year at the trading post, however, and soon in the general bustle Long Jackson was forgotten. The Indian trappers were heading out for their far off hunting grounds, and daily they called to get outfit and supplies. Since many of them were grubstaked—that is, provided by Berry with the necessary outfit to be paid for when the season was over in fur—there was a good deal of book-keeping to be done which for the most part kept the

boy busy. Carl was no scholar, and since he had become a widower Dan had managed the clerical part of the business while his father did the real hard work.

In the general bustle Unqua too was forgotten. Had his owners watched him they might have noticed that a change was taking place in the young bull moose. He was no longer so demonstrative as in his younger days—indeed, he often ignored Carl and the boy for days on end. It seemed that some new interest possessed his soul. He would stand for hours together, ears acock, head up wind, as though striving to detect some far off sound in the vast silence of the woods. The Indians, perhaps, saw and understood. They knew that Unqua was listening for the call of his own kind, and that, ere winter came, he would partake himself to the woods and the trading post would know him no more.

So it happened in due course. Late one evening Unqua plunged into the river and began to swim across. The boy called to him, but he took no heed.

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