

GABE'S RUSE.

BY FRANK SWEET.

I'M glad I ain't livin' over on t'other side the mountain," remarked Gabe Carmel. "Count o' feud-in'?" commented his friend. "Yes, 'count o' feudin'." Over there a man can't kick a dog out the path without a right smart chance for trouble. They're blood-hunters over there, every dog-gone one of 'em. This side's plenty good enough for me.

"Skeered?"

Gabe colored, but laughed.

"You'n me's been in too many fhgts

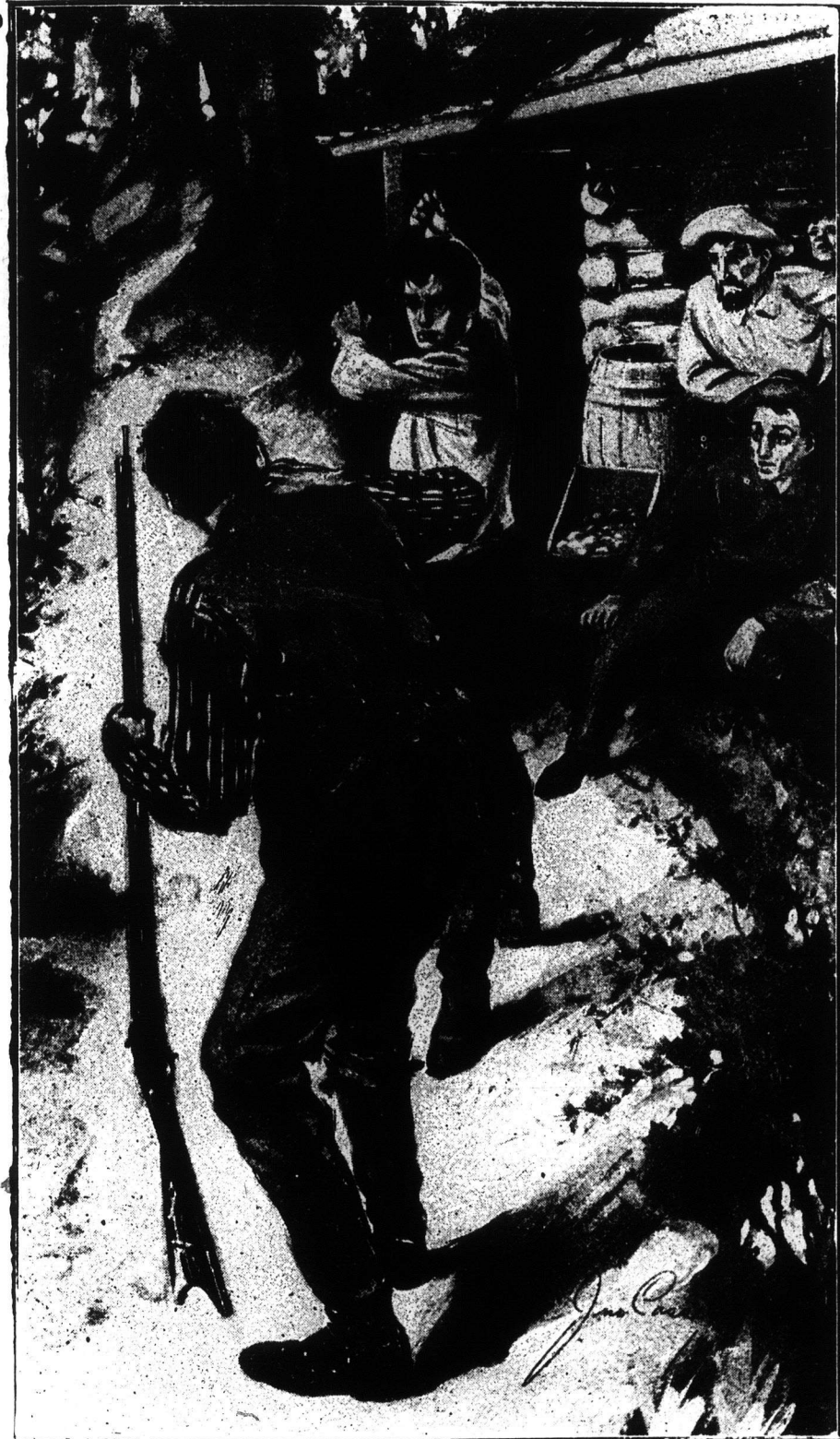
the door was a great pile of wood, the forced evolution of the felled trees into fuel. Tom's gaze followed that of his friend.

"Meanin' Sally?" he repeated.

Gabe laughed.

"Yes, meanin' Sally," he acknowledged; "though I an't spoke, not yet. But three months ago Sally told me that a man oughtn't to waste his life in idleness, an' that feuds an' drinkin' whiskey was lackin' o' sense. It's 'peared to me that way ever since she set me to thinkin'. An'-an' she hinted 'twas 'bout time I was makin' a start for myself—a house an' sich."

"That's consider'ble for Sally to say to a man," murmured Tom, with some-



"Swing up gun, Turkeyfoot, quick! I'll give ye two seconds. We'll fight with guns, butt ends!"

for that question, Tom Meeks," he said. "But I don't see no sense in buttin' my head into a grave—not jest now."

"Meanin' Sally, I s'pose?" said Tom. "Have ye done spoke?"

Gabe did not answer. His eyes roved down the mountainside to a small clearing in the midst of which was a log cabin. Fresh chips scattered plentifully about bespoke its newness. During the last three months Gabe's axe had echoed bravely through the forest, and besides the clearing and the cabin there were potatoes and corn in the ground; and in convenient distance to

thing like a sigh.

"So I 'lowed. But that ain't all. Yes'day, when the house was done, I ast her to 'come down an' see it, an' whilst we was lookin' 'round I ast her if sh'd go with me to the doin's at the Corners next Tuesday, an' she said yes."

"No!" ejaculated Tom, a look of envy coming to his eyes, but almost instantly fading. "Sally never done that before. She never went anywhere with anybody but wimmen an' children. It—it's got meanin'!"

"That's what I told myself," said

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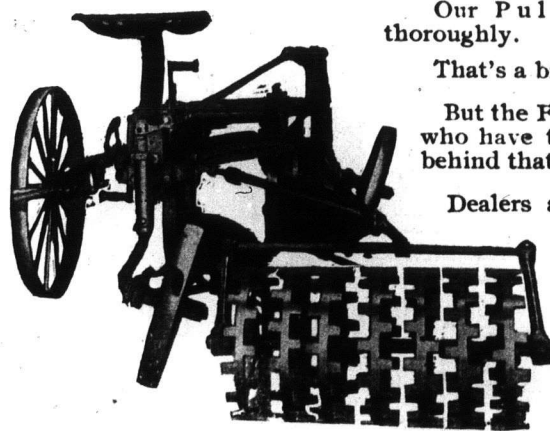
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