

UNQUENCHABLE FIRE:

Or. The Tragedy of the Wild.

CHAPTER III.—(Cont'd)

And so the days wore on; a fresh snow was added to their daily toil. Each morning Ralph would set out with a feeling of a possible something happening. And that something was a pleasurable anticipation of the day when his mind succumbed to the influence of the snow. It communicated its message to the execution of his craft. They were started and rushed through the forest. He would pause ere he raised his rifle to assure himself that it was not a woman, garbed in the parti-colored blanket of the Moosefoot Indians, and with a face radiant as an angel's. His slow-moving imagination was deeply stirred.

From the beginning Nature has spoken in no uncertain language. "Who shall not live alone," she said. Victor Gagnon had roused the two simple creatures. There was a woman in the world other than the mother they had known, and they began to wonder why the mountains should be peopled only by the forest beasts and solitary man.

As February came the time dragged more heavily than these men had ever known it to drag before. They no longer sat and talked of the White Squaw, and speculated as to her identity, and the phenomenon of her birth, and her mission with regard to her tribe. Somehow the outspoken enthusiasm of Nick had become silent. And Ralph, the slow wit, needed no longer the encouragement of his younger brother to urge him to think of the strange creature. Each had taken the subject to himself, and nursed and fostered it in his own way.

The time was approaching for their visit to Gagnon's store. This was the reason of the dragging days. Both men were eager for the visit, and the cause of their eagerness was not far to seek. They wished to see the halfbreed and feed their passion on fresh words of the lovely creature who had so strangely come into their lives.

They went about their duties as men who live in methodical routine in which talk is a luxury. When night closed in Nick saw to the dogs. The great huskies obeyed only one master, who fed them, who cared for them, who flogged them on the trail with club and whip; and that was Nick. Ralph they knew not. He cooked. He was the domestic of the abode; and as just as it should be, for he was of a slow nature which could deal with the small details of such work. Nick was too large and heavy in his mode of life to season a stew. But in the trapper's craft it is probable that he was the better man.

So the brothers' nights were passed in long, Indian-like silence, which ended in sleep. Tobacco scented the atmosphere of the hut with a heaviness that was depressing. Each man sat upon his blankets alternating between his pannikin of coffee and his pipe, with eyes lowered in deep thought or turned upon the glowing stove in earnest, unseeing contemplation.

The night before the appointed day for starting came round. Tomorrow they would be swinging along over the snowy earth with their dogs hauling their laden sled. The morrow would see them on their way to Little Choyeuse Creek, on the bank of which stood Victor Gagnon's store.

There was an atmosphere of suppressed excitement in the doings of that night. There was much to be done, and the unusual activity allowed a bustle in so quiet an abode. Outside the door the sled stood piled with the furs which represented their winter's catch. The dog harness was spread out, and all was in readiness. Inside the hut the two men were packing away the stuff they must leave behind. Although there was no fear of their home being invaded, it was their custom to take certain precautions. Besides, there were all their savings in that hut, to lose which would mean to lose the fruits of their life's labors.

Nick had just moved a chest from the depths of the patchwork cupboards in which they kept their food. It was a small receptacle hewn out of a solid pine-log. The lid was attached with heavy rawhide hinges, and was secured by an iron hasp held by a clumsy-looking padlock. He set it down upon his blankets.

"Where'll we put this?" he asked abruptly. Ralph looked at it with thoughtful eyes. "Considerin'," he ob-

served. And he leant himself against a heavy table which stood by the wall. "We ain't opened it since last fall," said Nick presently, after a long and steady survey of the object of their solicitude. "No."

"There's a deal in it." Ralph groped at the neck of his shirt. Nick watched his brother's movements.

"Maybe we'll figure it up again." Ralph fell in with his brother's suggestion, and drew out the key which was secured round his neck. He unlocked the rusty padlock and threw open the lid. The chest contained six small bags filled with bursting point, and securely tied with raw-hide; one bag, half full and open; and a thick packet of Bank of Montreal bills.

Nick knelt down and took out the bills, and set them on one side.

"There's a thousand dollars there," he said. "I 'lows they've been reckoned careful." Then he picked up one of the bags and held it up for his brother's inspection. "We tied them seven bags up all weighin' equal, but we ain't jest sure how much dust they hold. Seven," he went on reflectively; "ther's on'y six an' a haf now, since them woodbugs got at 'em. 'fore we made this chest. I 'lows Victor's 'cute to locate the dust in them furs. It wa'n't a good lay-out wrappin' the bags in black fox pelts. Howsum, I'd like to know the value o' them bags. Weighs 'em on to three poun', I'm guessin'."

Ralph took the bag and weighed it in his hand.

"More," he said. "There's a poun' o' weight ther'."

"Guess them bags together means fifteen to twenty thousan' dollars, sure," said Nick, his eyes shining at the thought.

"I don't rightly know," said Ralph. "It's a goodish wad, I 'lows."

Nick returned the store to the chest, which Ralph relocked.

"Wher?" asked Nick, glancing round the hut in search of a secure hiding place.

"We'll dig a hole in the floor under my blankets," said Ralph after a pause. "Maybe it'll be to-table safe ther'."

The afternoon was spent in barter, and the time was one of beaming good-nature, for Victor was a shrewd dealer, and the two brothers had little real estimate of the value of money. They sold their pelts in sets, regardless of quality, and when the last was traded, and Victor had parted the value in stores and cash, there came a strong feeling of relief to the trappers. Now for their brief holiday.

It was the custom on the occasion of these visits to make merry in a temperate way. Victor was never averse to such doings, for there was French blood in his veins. He could sing a song, and most of his ditties were either of the old days of the Red River Valley, or dealt with the early settlers round the Citadel of Quebec. Among the accomplishments which he possessed was that of scraping out woful strains upon an ancient fiddle. In this land, where life was always serious, he was a right jovial companion for such men as Nick and Ralph, and the merry evenings in his company at the store were well thought of. (To be continued.)

STRANGE RUNS OF LUCK

ONE OF THE LATEST "WINS" AT MONTE CARLO.

Mr. W. Darnbrough, an Englishman, Said to Have Made \$320,000 in a Month.

Now and again one hears authentic instances of large sums having been won at the gaming tables at Monte Carlo.

One of the most fortunate players at Monte Carlo for a considerable time past has been Mr. W. Darnbrough, whose exploits figured in the newspapers a few weeks ago.

A FORTUNE IN A MONTH.

According to one of the London dailies, he left with \$320,000 in his pockets, as the result of a month's stay and play. But this did not represent all Mr. Darnbrough's winnings.

To go a little into details, on the opening day of his play he staked \$6,000, and won all along the line. Emboldened by this success, he continued playing, winning again and again with marvellous luck.

At one period his credit balance amounted to no less than \$465,000, but from this point Dame Fortune ceased to smile upon him. He steadily lost from \$60,000 to \$80,000 per day, until, recognizing that luck had turned against him, he had sufficient strength of mind to turn his back on the tables and strike for home with the very substantial winnings that still remained.

On another occasion a certain well-known member of the London Stock Exchange was said to have walked off from Monte Carlo with little short of \$200,000. This remarkable performance occasioned no small amount of excitement in the rooms, as such an unusual incident invariably does.

Bent on embarking in more or less of a "plunge," he went from one table to another, placing the maximum on the same number. Marvellous to relate, at each table this number came up.

MAN WHO BROKE THE BANK.

Recognizing that this might be his lucky day, the fortunate player wended his way to the gaming room and put the maximum on three of the tables there. To his amazement he found that at each he had selected the right color.

According to one of the head croupiers, this was the worst day that the rooms had had for some time. He gave it as his opinion, too, that what the London stock-broker had netted by his spirited play was little less than the amount above mentioned.

One of the most successful players at the Monte Carlo tables was Wells, who, according to the once popular music-hall song, "broke the bank" there. He was at the zenith of his fame about twenty years ago, when his doings—and winnings—were widely talked about and envied.

In ten days he was said to have made upwards of \$200,000 at the tables after starting with so modest a capital as \$2,000. It must not be forgotten, however, that Wells denied this at his trial, stating that all he made was \$35,000 at three or four consecutive sittings. Even then he claimed to have in the end run out a loser.

The reader can take his choice of the two statements; but amongst frequenters of the rooms at Monte Carlo it is generally considered impossible to amass large winnings without risking large stakes. Even then the chances are a thousand to one in favor of the bank.

Yet there undoubtedly are occasionally wins running into four or five figures.

Skirting the forests wherever possible, and following the break of the mammoth pine trees when no bald opening was to hand, they sped along. The dogs hauled at the easy-running sled, with long gliding strides, the two men kept pace with them on their snow-shoes. The hills were faced by the sturdy animals with the calm persistence of creatures who know their own indomitable powers of endurance, while the descents were made with a speed which was governed by the incessant use of Nick's pole.

The evening camp was pitched in the shelter of the forest. The dogs fed voraciously and well on their raw fish, for the journey was short and the provisions plentiful. The two men fared in their usual plain way. They slept in their fur-lined bags while the wolfish burden-bearers first prowled, argued out their private quarrels, sang in chorus as the northern lighters moved fantastically in the sky, and finally curled themselves in their several snow-burrows to shut out the icy chill of the depths below zero.

The camp was struck at daylight next morning and the journey resumed. The dogs raced fresh and strong with their rest, and the miles were devoured with the greedy haste which only a dog-train knows. The white valleys wound in a mazy tangle round the foot of tremendous hills, causing the swift-moving sled to look like some crawling insect in the vastness of the world about it; and never a mistake in direction was made by the driver Nick. To him the trail was as plain as though every foot of it were marked by well-packed snow; every landmark was anticipated, every inch of that chaotic land was an open book to him. The unending ocean of mountain rollers and forest troughs continued. No variation; white, white, or shadowed beneath the patriarchs of forest creation. Always the mystic, grey twilight; the dull gleaming ocean of glacial crowns, the dazzling sparkle of glinting snow; the biting air which stung the flesh like the sear of a red-hot iron; the steady run of dogs and men, and the hiss of the sled-runners. On, on, with no thought of time to harass the mind, only the destination to think of, and the joy of laboring in the traces. This is the life of the trail dogs, and the men who claim the northern mountain world.

And when they came to little Choyeuse Creek they were welcomed in person by Victor Gagnon. He awaited them at his threshold. The clumsy stockade of lateral pine logs, a relic of the old Indian days, when it was necessary for every fur store to be a fortress, was now a wreck. A few upright posts were standing, but the rest had long since been used to bank the stoves with.

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GLASS VS. GRANITE.

Has Resistance of 1,800 Tons Per Square Foot.

Glass put to the crushing test is harder than granite. It has a resistance of 1,800 tons per square foot, while that of granite is 750 tons, limestone 625 tons, brickwork 60 tons, and concrete 97 tons. In view of these figures it is surprising that glass has not before entered into serious competition with the other building materials. Glass bricks are being introduced for a number of purposes, and they are recommended for their strength and hardness of surface, which is a guarantee against chipping and cracking, and entirely sanitary under all conditions. The glass brick consists of a shell with two flat surfaces which form the exposed portions when in place, and after being laid, wet cement is poured into the open ends so the bricks are bound together in a solid mass upon the hardening of the concrete.

RAPID RAILROADING.

In a review of recent progress on British railroads, presented before the British Association, Prof. W. E. Dalby calls attention to the remarkable results achieved with automatic power signaling on the underground lines of London. At the Earl's Court Junction box 40 trains per hour can be passed each way, making 80 trains per hour handled by a single signalman. Facing the signalman is a window containing 15 small frames. A click in the box announces the approach of a train, and simultaneously a tablet appears in one of the frames, showing by code the destination of the train. The signalman presses a plug, and a similar tablet appears in the next box on the proper line. As the train passes, the signalman presses another plug, and the warning tablet disappears.

A traveller for a firm of merchants gives a terrible account of the intense cold in Sweden:—"In Haparanda, the day before I left, I attended a performance at the theatre. It was a tragedy. Everybody wept; but it was so terribly cold that the tears of the spectators in the upper galleries fell like hail-stones among the occupants of the pit."

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MILLION ACRE FARMS

WONDERS OF WIRELESS

ITALIAN ASTONISHES FRENCH

WAR OFFICE.

POCKET WIRELESS MACHINE, TELEGRAPH PRINTER, AND TELEAUTOGRAPH.

Strange Origin and Marvellous Improvement of Australian Merinos.

C. E. W. Bean, of Sydney, has written in an Australian paper of the great sheep industry. His story is in part as follows:—

A century ago when Australia was but a dumping ground for England's scum, a British fleet received from a Spanish fleet a present of merino sheep, at a time when to export merinos from Spain was a criminal offence. The little flock reached Australia, and from it are descended the hundred million merinos which have made Australia great and wealthy, despite her small population.

Vastly improved is the modern merino, for the original of 3-1/2 pounds to a fleece has been raised to 12 pounds, and there are rams in Australia which shear 40 pounds.

Nowadays the good land near the coast is being given over to agriculture, and the sheep are driven back further into the desert.

A TERRIBLE DESERT

It is at times, where not one green leaf can be seen, when the red dust with which it is covered gets blown away—and only the bare hard bones of the earth are left. Then sheep die by the million for want of the smallest scrap of nourishment, and are sometimes killed by the thousand because it is hopeless to expect to keep them alive.

Then comes the rain, and as if by a magic miracle the whole land is green again, the flocks increase out of all bounds, and the men who have been nearly ruined, make new fortunes in a few years. That is happening now. From 1896 to 1903 occurred the biggest drought known, and many station-holders lost their all. Since then there has been a steady succession of good seasons and the problem now is what to do with the enormous surplus of old ewes. Such are the vicissitudes of that strange land, the oldest part of the earth's exposed surface.

HUGE, LONELY RUINS.

Some of the great sheep runs cover a million acres, or about 1,500 square miles. Each run is divided into paddocks, which cover all Australia. The average western paddock contains 100 square miles. If one fence is on the horizon behind the other is over the horizon ahead. You could walk till you died in that paddock without seeing a fence. Lost men have before now found the fence and died alongside of it before it led them anywhere.

There may be a hut in each paddock with a boundary rider—sometimes two, living together. Every day except Sunday, the boundary rider is expected to be out in his paddock. About one day in two he may spot something like a line of posts, which is probably a line of sheep in mirage on the horizon. Occasionally he cuts through a wing of them. He sees a man, or gets a mail, perhaps.

ONCE IN THREE WEEKS.

And yet, the boundary men get to like the lonely life.

Then, there is "the boss," the lord of many acres, a man of strong character and a liberal education, living a life not unlike that of an English country gentleman, in his remote home, but carrying on his work with the ability and keenness of a man who has been trained in business.

The third body of men who live by the sheep industry are the shearers, who work through the country from north to south, making plenty of money, and living in a rough way on the fat of the land as they pass from one shed to the other. They are a class unlike any other.

THE POCKET APPARATUS

is a little larger than a pair of field glasses and is operated by attaching its antennae to a post or tree, which, at the height of fifty feet enables communication to be made within a radius of two or three miles. The teleprinter, a local contemporary explains, is a simple little instrument with a keyboard like a typewriter, which can be fixed to any telegraph or telephone installation. This transmits messages which appear on printed slips at the other end, but it has the advantage of being infinitely more simple than anything yet invented, and, besides, can be used with wireless. This should be interesting to railway officials in particular, since such a machine could be put at the disposal of all signalmen, pointsmen, station-masters and others, permitting them to communicate quickly and accurately with the head office. It would also be exceedingly useful for small, out-of-the-way Post Offices, since no special training or practice is necessary to operate it.

SIMPLE APPARATUS.

The teleautograph is a most simple apparatus, which can also be affixed to any telephone or telegraph line. By this a signature, a drawing, or a holograph manuscript written with a pencil fixed to a flexible carriage is copied exactly on a machine at the other end. Hence a man in Paris could sign a document in Algiers, or a signature in Algiers could be verified from Paris. As if these wonders were not already sufficient, we are further assured that the greater the distance the better the machine will work, although we have not been told why this should be so. The tracing of one's signature seems to be no more difficult than with a pen, and a pencil repeats it automatically wherever we want it, even should it be at the Antipodes.

PRESERVES SECRECY.

Another invention of the professor is an instrument for preserving the secrecy of wireless messages. As is well known, a message sent out by a wireless station is received by all stations within a certain radius, although it is intended for one of them, because the Hertzian waves sent out affect all receivers alike. This new machine, however, allows each of a large number of stations to have its identification number, and when the Hertzian waves are set going with the transmitter at a certain number, only the station bearing the corresponding number can receive the messages, all the others being cut off by a short circuit arrangement.

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