



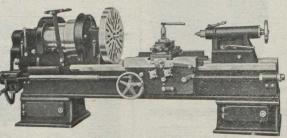
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## THE MAN AT LONE LAKE

(Continued from page 12.)

crippled wrist ached. Complaining softly, but persistently, he drew out of the warm bag and pulling the tent flap open with his foot stooped and looked across at the shack given over to his mother and Nance.

He paused in his monotonous anathematizing of things present and to come, long enough to whistle a birdlike staccato note, that was his usual call to Wanota.

Dropping the tent flap again, the

Dropping the tent flap again, the half-breed threw himself back on the sleeping bag resting on its springy bed of balsam.

She was long in coming, this time.

Wanota.
Francois stirred restlessly, and impatience took the short step forward that turns it into anger. The anger seethed after a few moments longer waiting, and broke into a foam of white wrath across his handsome evil mouth.

SUDDENLY rising to his feet, he threw the tent flap wide open. Then he stood as though the cold had Then he stood as though the cold had congealed his blood. No—no smoke rose thin and blue and comforting from the rough little lean-to a half hundred yards away. No smoke. The sun sparkled on the snow and the indigo blue of the spruces. A little wind swished with the sound of ruffled silk through the big Jack-pine at his tent door. Nothing else was to be seen or heard.

He lifted his right hand and brushed.

He lifted his right hand and brushed

He lifted his right hand and brushed it across his eyes, heedless of the pain that shot through the bruised half-healed tendons and muscles of it. It had been his order that the fire was to burn night and day in the small sheet iron stove he had toiled to bring so far into the hills; low the fire might get, but it was never to go out, and Wanota understood his commands and the force of them. No matout, and wanota understood his commands and the force of them. No matter how film-like the thread of smoke from the short tin pipe above the shack-roof, he would have seen it against the morning air. He stared a moment, then strode across furiously

moment, then strode across furiously The place was as empty as a last summer's bird's nest, and the chill of fireless hours was on it.

With a snarl of rage he wheeled out into the open, and shading his eyes against the snow-glare, searched the land. Everywhere the desolate white mocked him. There was but little wind, yet for awhile the moose-willows edging a frozen brook at the foot of the hill where he stood seemed to sway back and forth, as though beaten upon by a burricane, and the earth beneath his feet rocked.

WHEN the world steadied, the half-breed entered the shack and ate of cold bacon and hardened bannock. From his own teepee he took a bottle of the most precious liquid an Indian knows of and putting it to his blue of the most precious liquid an Indian knows of, and putting it to his blue lips he drank deeply, and with reckless disregard of the fact that this bottle was the last of those he had stored He drank, his dark head far back, his wrathful eyes half-closed. Drank till the blood in his veins began to grow hot and race mpdly, and the old devilmay-care spirit of luck'er days took possession of him and drove out rackhot and race mpdly, and the old devilmay-care spirit of luck'er days took possession of him and drove out racking anger and all fear. He forgot he was Francois the hunted, the fugitive from justice. Francois of the crippled right hand. Francois disdained of the one he loved. A wave of bold assurance swept over him, and he only remembered the young pretty faces that had smiled at his coming through all the camps of his mother's people in lone hours, and in the out-of-the-way holes and corners of the wild lands he had crossed. He remembered the tears that had fallen at his going. What cared he for banishment or the indifference of one girl? The world was wide, and there were other women, women with as fair faces, as soft arms, as golden and glittering hair. He was again Francois, the bold young half-breed traprer, with the grace and charm of his father, the soft beauty of his mother, and the strange blend in him of French warmth and vivacity, and Indian pawarmth and vivacity, and Indian pa-



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