

• The Inglenook •

In a Wolf Trap.

Kennedy's plain was always a good trapping ground, because it was unfrequented by man, and yet lay between the heavy woods and the settlement. I had been fortunate with the fur here, and late in April rode in on one of my regular rounds.

The wolf traps are made of heavy steel, and have two springs, each of one hundred pounds' power. They are set in fours around a buried bait, and after being strongly fastened to concealed logs, are carefully covered in cotton and fine sand so as to be quite invisible.

A prairie wolf was caught in one of these. I killed him with a club, and throwing him aside, proceeded to reset the trap as I had done so many hundred times before. All was quickly done. I threw the trap-wrench over toward the pony, and seeing some fine sand near by, I reached out for a handful of it to add a good finish to the setting.

Oh, unlucky thought! Oh, mad heedlessness born of long immunity! That fine sand was on the next wolf trap, and in an instant I was a prisoner. Although not wounded, for the traps have no teeth, and my thick trapping gloves deadened the snap, I was firmly caught across the hand above the knuckles. Not greatly alarmed at this, I tried to reach the trap-wrench with my right foot. Stretching out at full length, face downward, I worked myself toward it, making my imprisoned arm as long and straight as possible. I could not see and reach at the same time, but counted on my toe telling me when I touched the little iron key to my fetters. My first effort was a failure; strain as I might at the chain, my toe struck no metal. I swung slowly around my anchor, but still failed. Then a painfully taken observation showed I was much too far to the west. I set about working around, tapping blindly with my right foot; I forgot about the other till there was a sharp "clank," and the iron jaws of trap No. 3 closed tight on my left foot.

The terrors of the situation did not, at first, impress me, but soon I found that all my struggles were in vain. I could not get free from either trap or move the traps together, and there I lay stretched out and firmly staked to the ground.

What would become of me now? There was not much danger of freezing, for the cold weather was over, but Kennedy's Plain was never visited excepting by the winter woodcutters. No one knew where I had gone, and unless I could manage to free myself, there was no prospect ahead but to be devoured by wolves, or else die of cold and starvation.

As I lay there the red sun went down over the spruce swamp west of the plain, and a shorelark on a gopher mound a few yards off twittered his evening song, just as one had done the night before at our shanty door; and though the numb pains were creeping up my arm, and a deadly chill possessed me, I noticed how long his little ear tufts were. Then my thoughts went to the comfortable supper-table at Wright's shanty, and I thought, now they are frying the pork for supper, or just sitting down. My pony still stood as I left him, with his bridle on the ground, patiently waiting to take me home. He did not understand the long delay, and when I called, he ceased nibbling the grass and looked at me in dumb, helpless inquiry.

If he would only go home, the empty saddle might tell the tale and bring help. But his very faithfulness kept him waiting hour after hour, while I was perishing of cold and hunger.

Then I remembered how old Girou, the trapper, had been lost, and in the following spring his comrade found his skeleton held by the leg in a bear-trap. I wondered which part of my clothing would show my identity. Then a new thought came to me. This is how a wolf feels when he is trapped. Oh! what misery have I been responsible for! Now I'm to pay for it.

Night came slowly on. A prairie wolf howled; the pony pricked up his ears, and, walking nearer to me, stood with his head down. Then another wolf howled, and another, and I could make out that they were gathering in the neighborhood. There I lay prone and helpless, wondering if it would not be strictly just that they should come and tear me to pieces. I heard them calling for a long time before I realized that dim, shadowy forms were sneaking near. The horse saw them first, and his terrified snort drove them back at first; but they came nearer next time and sat around me on the prairie. Soon one bolder than the others crawled up and tugged at the body of his dead relative. I shouted, and he retreated growling. The pony ran to a distance in terror. Presently the wolf returned, and after two or three of these retreats and returns, the body was dragged off and devoured by the rest in a few minutes.

After this they gathered nearer and sat on their haunches to look at me, and the boldest one smelt the rifle and scratched dirt on it. He retreated when I kicked at him with my free feet and shouted; but growing bolder as I grew weaker, he came and snarled right in my face. At this several others snarled and came up closer, and I realized that I was to be devoured by the foe that I most despised, when suddenly out of the gloom with a guttural roar sprang a great black wolf. The prairie wolves scattered like chaff except the bold one, which, seized by the black new-comer, was in a few moments a dragged corpse, and then, oh, horrors! this mighty brute bounded at me and—Bingo—noble Bingo—rubbed his shaggy, panting sides against me and licked my pallid face.

"Bingo—Bing—old boy—fetch me the trap-wrench!"

Away he went, and returned dragging the rifle, for he knew only that I wanted something.

"No—Bing—the trap-wrench!"

This time it was my sash; but at last he brought the wrench, and wagged his tail in joy that it was right. Reaching out with my free hand, after much difficulty I unscrewed the pillar-nut. The trap fell apart and my hand was released, and a minute later I was free. Bing brought the pony up, and after slowly walking to restore circulation I was able to mount. Then, slowly at first, but soon at a gallop, with Bingo as herald careering and barking ahead, we set out for home, there to learn that the night before, though never taken on the trapping rounds, the brave dog had acted strangely, whimpering and watching the timber-trail; and at last when night came on, in spite of attempts to detain him, he had set out in the gloom and

guided by a knowledge that is beyond us, had reached the spot in time to avenge me as well as set me free—Ernest Seton Thompson, in "Wild Animals I have Known."

Animals as Life Savers.

An interesting incident was that in which a pet pony was the direct means of saving his young master from drowning. The two had been out together for some miles for the usual morning ride, and on the return journey rode through some fields in which were some ice-covered ponds. These the venturesome lad attempted to cross, but in the centre of the largest the ice gave way, and both pony and rider were immersed. The pony scrambled out somehow and gained the ground, but returned to the aid of its young master, who, by holding tightly to its ample mane, was dragged safely to shore.

In another notable incident a young girl was rescued from what might have been a dreadful death by the action of a pet kitten. The two had wandered from their cottage home into the woods, where the curious girl had inspected the hollow trunk of an old oak tree from the top end, and in so doing had slipped down into a deep cavity, and was unable to extricate herself. The kitten which appeared to understand the trouble of its youthful mistress, returned home and mewed piteously until it induced a member of the family to go with it to the wood, where the cause of its distress became apparent. Help was soon forthcoming, and the girl was saved from what otherwise might have been a living death.

Only a Baby.

Something to live for came to the place,
Something to die for, maybe,
Something to give even sorrow a grace—
And yet it was only a baby!

Cooing and laughter and gurgles and cries,
Dimples for tenderest kisses,
Chaos of hopes and of raptures and sighs,
Chaos of fear and of blisses.

Last year, like all years, the rose and the thorn;
This year a wilderness, maybe;
But heaven stooped under the roof on the morn
That it brought there only a baby.

How To Go To Sleep.

At the meeting in Montreal of the British Medical Association, in the section of therapeutics, a physician gave his experience with many methods of inducing sleep without taking drugs. He sets the brain to work at once on retiring—it is to direct the respiratory process. It is to count respirations to see that they are fewer in number, regular, deep and somewhat protracted. In addition, certain groups of muscles are employed in routine order in silent contraction. By constant change other groups are brought into use. He has completed a systematized routine of contraction and relaxation. A slight elevation of the head from the pillow for a definite time by count of respirations is one of the many changes of position. All this without any commotion, and need not be recognized by a sleeping companion. Brain and muscles and all parts of the body soon come into the normal state that precedes and invites sleep. A sense of fatigue soon overtakes one while thus employed, and before he is aware the brain has forgotten its duty to regulate the breathing process, the muscles have ceased to expand to the call made upon them in the beginning, and sleep is in control of all the forces and all the organs.