

Battle in the Stump Lot

The wet chill of the early spring, its blackness made tender by the lilac wash of the afterglow, lay upon the high, open stretches of the stump lots. The winter-whitened stumps, the sparse patches of juniper and bay, just budding, the rough-mossed hillocks, the harsh bowlders here and there up-thrusting from the soil, the swampy hollows wherein a coarse grass began to show green—all seemed anointed, as it were, to an ecstasy of peace by the chime of that paradisaical color.

Against the lucid immensity of the April sky the thin tops of five or six soaring rampikes aspired like violet flames. Along the skirts of the stump lots a fir wood reared a ragged, crested wall of black against the horizon.

Late that afternoon, beside a juniper thicket not far from the center of the stump lots, a young black and white cow had mothered her first calf. The little animal had now struggled to its feet and with its disproportionately long, thick legs braced wide apart was beginning to nurse. Its blunt, wet muzzle and thick lips tugged eagerly, but somewhat blunderingly as yet, at the unaccustomed fount; and its tail lifted twitching with delight as the first warm streams of milk went down its throat.

It was a pathetically awkward, unlovely little figure, not yet advanced to that youngling winsomeness which is the heritage to some degree and at some period of the infancy of all the kindreds that breathe upon the earth. But to the young mother's eyes it was the most beautiful of things. With her head twisted far around she nosed and licked its heaving flanks as it nursed, and between deep, ecstatic breathings she uttered in her throat low murmurs, unspeakably tender, of encouragement and caress.

The delicate but pervading flood of sunset color had the effect of blending the ruddy-hued calf into the tones of the landscape; but the cow's insistent blotches of black and white stood out sharply, refusing to harmonize. The drench of violet light was of no avail to soften their staring contrasts. They made her vividly conspicuous across the whole breadth of the stump lots to eyes that watched her from the forest coverts.

The eyes that watched her—long, fixedly, hungrily—were small and red. They belonged to a lank she bear, whose gaunt flanks and rusty coat proclaimed a season of famine in the wilderness. She could not see the calf, which was hidden by a hillock and some juniper scrub; but its presence was very legibly conveyed to her by the mother's solicitous watchfulness.

After a motionless scrutiny from behind the screen of fir branches the lean bear stole noiselessly forth from the shadows into the great wash of violet light. Step by step and very slowly, with the patience that endures because confident of its object, she crept toward that oasis of mothering joy in the vast emptiness of the stump lots. Now crouching, now crawling, turning to this side and to that, taking advantage of every hollow, every thicket, every hillock, every aggressive stump, her craft succeeded in eluding even the wild and menacing watchfulness of the young mother's eyes.

The spring had been a trying one for the lank she bear. Her den in a dry tract of hemlock wood, some furlongs back from the stump lots, was a snug little cave under the uprooted base of a lone pine, which had drawn upon itself at last by its superior height the fury of a passing hurricane. The winter had contributed but scanty snowfall to cover the bear in her sleep and the March thaws, unseasonably early and warm, had called her forth in activity weeks too soon. Then frosts had come with belated severity, stealing away the budding tubers which are the bears' chief dependence for spring diet, and, worst of all, a long stretch of intervale meadow by the neighboring river which had once been rich in ground nuts, had been ploughed up the previous spring and sown to oats and corn. When she was feeling the pinch of meager rations and the fat which a liberal autumn of blueberries had laid about her ribs was getting as shrunken as the last snow in the thickets, she gave birth to two hairless and hungry little cubs. They were very blind and ridiculously small to be born of so big a mother, and having so much growth to make during the next few months their appetites were immeasurable. They tumbled and squealed and tugged at their mother and grew astonishingly, and made haste to cover their bodies with fur of a soft and silken black; and all of this vitality of theirs made a strenuous demand upon their moth-

er for nourishment. There were no more bee trees left in the neighborhood. The long wanderings which she was forced to take in her search for roots and tubers were in themselves a drain upon her nursing powers, and at last, reluctant though she was to attract the hostile notice of the settlement, she found herself forced to hunt on the borders of the sheep pastures.

Before all else in life was it important to her that these two tumbling little ones in the den should not go hungry. Their eyes were open now—small and dark and whimsical; their ears quaintly large and inquiring for their roguish little faces. Had she not been driven by the unkind season to so much hunting and foraging she would have passed near all her time rapturously in the den under the pine root, fondling those two soft miracles of her world.

With the killing of three lambs at widely separate points, so as to mislead retaliation, things grew a little easier for the harassed bear; and presently she grew bolder in tampering with the creatures under man's protection. With one swift secret blow of her mighty paw she struck down a young ewe which had strayed within easy reach of her hiding place. Dragging her prey into the woods, she fared well upon it for some days and was happy with her growing cubs.

It was just when she had begun to feel the fastings which came upon the exhaustion of this store that in a hungry hour she sighted the conspicuous markings of the black and white cow.

It is altogether unusual for the black bear of the Eastern woods to attack any quarry so large as a cow unless under the spur of fierce hunger or fierce rage, but the she bear was powerful beyond her fellows. She had the strongest possible incentive to bold hunting and she had lately grown confident beyond her wont. Nevertheless when she began her careful stalking of this big game which she coveted she had no definite intention of forcing a battle with the cow. She had observed that cows accustomed to the protection of man would at times leave their calves asleep and stray off some distance in their pasturing. She had even seen calves left all by themselves in a field from morning till night and had wondered at such negligence in their mothers. Now she had a confident idea that sooner or later the calf would lie down to sleep, and the young mother would roam a little wide in search of the scant young grass.

Very softly, self-effacingly, she crept nearer step by step, following up the wind, till at last undiscovered she was crouching behind a thick patch of juniper on the slope of a little hollow not ten paces distant from the cow and the calf. By this time the tender violet light was fading to a grayness over hillock and hollow, and with the deepening of the twilight the faint breeze which had been breathing from the northward shifted suddenly and came in slow warm pulsations out of the south. At the same time the calf, having nursed sufficiently and feeling his baby legs tired of the weight they had not yet learned to carry, laid himself down. On this the cow shifted her position. She turned half round and lifted her head high.

As she did so a scent of peril was borne in upon her fine nostrils. She recognized it instantly. With a snort of anger she sniffed again, then stamped a challenge with her fore hoofs and levelled the lance points of her horns toward the menace.

The next moment her eyes, made keen by the fear of love, detected the black outline of the bear's head through the coarse screen of the juniper. Without a second's hesitation she flung up her tail, gave a short bellow and charged. The moment she saw herself detected the bear rose upon her hind quarters. Nevertheless she was in a measure surprised by the sudden blind fury of the attack. Nimbly she swerved to avoid it, aiming at the same time a stroke with her mighty forearm, which, if it had found its mark, would have smashed her adversary's neck. But as she struck out in the act of shifting her position a depression of the ground threw her off her balance. The next instant one sharp horn caught her slantingly in the flank, tipping its way upward and inward, while the mad impact threw her upon her back.

Grappling she had her assailant's head and shoulders in a trap and her gigantic claws cut through the flesh and sinews like knives; but, at the desperate disadvantage of her position she could inflict no disabling blow. Presently wrenching herself free,

the cow drew off for another battering charge; and as she did so the bear hurled herself violently down the slope and gained her feet behind a dense thicket of bay shrub. The cow with one eye blinded and the other obscured by blood, glared around her in vain. Then in a panic of mother terror, plunged back to her calf.

Snatching at the respite, the bear crouched down, craving that invisibility which is the most faithful shield of the furtive kindred. Painfully and leaving a drenched red trail behind her, she crept off from the disastrous neighborhood. Soon the deepening twilight sheltered her. But she could not make haste, and she knew that death was close upon her. Once within the woods she struggled straight toward the den that held her young. She hungered to die licking them. But destiny is as implacable as iron to the wilderness people, and even this comfort was denied her. Just a halfscore of paces from the lair in the pine root her hour descended upon her. There was a sudden redder and fuller gush upon her trail; the last light of long day faded out of her eyes and she lay down upon her side.

The merry little cubs within the den were beginning to expect her and getting restless. As the night wore on and no mother came they ceased to be merry. By morning they were shivering with hunger and desolate fear. But the doom of the ancient wood was less harsh than its wont, and spared them some days of starving anguish, for about noon a pair of foxes discovered the dead mother, astutely estimated the situation and then, with the boldness of bood appetite, made their way into the unguarded den.

As for the red calf, its fortune was ordinary. Its mother, for all her wounds, was able to nurse and cherish it through the night; and with morning came a searcher from the farm and took it, with the bleeding cow, safely back to the settlement. There it was tended and fattened and within a few weeks found its way to the cool marble slabs of a city market.—Geo. B. Fowler.

Swept From Shore.

Tacoma, Wash., Jan. 25.—The forty-eight mile wind last night took a section of wharf in old Tacoma from its piling and blew it to sea, carrying along a small grocery store, the proprietor, Johnson, and two customers. For several hours the grocer and his customers were buffeted, but the dock finally was picked up by a tug and safely moored.

A large boom of logs got away in yesterday's storm and, rushing along the water front near the smelter, loosened other booms until all rushed on together toward old Tacoma. The logs stopped in front of Carison Pros's shingle mill, recently constructed, pounded it and a dry kiln to pieces, and destroyed many yachts and other small craft. The total loss by the logs is between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

Seattle, January 25.—Yesterday's storm damages on the water front aggregate at least \$39,000. Accidents and disasters were numerous and of a varying character, including everything from the smashing of a row-boat to the total loss of a large steamer, the E. D. Smith.

The Stetson-Post mill was shut down today and six tugs from the Stevenson & Bleekum fleet were engaged in capturing twelve sections of logs which broke away and covered the bay. The tugs formed in a great loop connected by a line of logs, and as they steamed up along the water front all the stray logs were caught in the circuit.

Galbraith-Bacon's new pier, Lilly-Bogardus' pier, Jones' wharf and Myers' cannery each suffered \$1,000 damages, and at Myers' the tin shop went down. Several large fishing boats were injured. The steamers Roanoke and Oregon were tied side by side on the western face of Moran's pier and received a fearful pounding. The Oregon suffered the most damage. The Roanoke lost part of her rails and bulwarks. The tug Wanderer beat up against the dock, smashing in her bulwarks, broke down sections of piling and is damaged to the extent of \$2,500.

Winter in Oklahoma.

Guthrie, O. T., Jan. 26.—The coldest weather of the winter with the thermometer at zero all day and a howling north wind covers all Oklahoma. Possibly nowhere else in the southwest will its severity be so great. There are large cattle interests that will suffer greatly, no matter what provision has been made to protect them. The wheat crop will also suffer great loss, as not enough snow has accompanied the blizzard to protect the rank growth. In the Indian territory, principally in the Creek nation, where the full bloods are in destitute circumstances, the conditions are very bad for undergoing the rigors of such weather.

ALL RECORDS BROKEN

By Atlantic Skipper Capt. Pohle.

Who Has Crossed the Ocean 332 Times—Will Retire and Follow Farming.

Capt. Carl Pohle, of the North German Lloyd Steamship Lahn, which sailed for Bremen from New York Aug. 17, has a record unequalled among transatlantic commanders.

Capt. Pohle has crossed the Atlantic 332 times. With this voyage, which is his last one, he completes his 177th round trip.

He has tussled with the waves and gales on the water between the United States and Germany for 1,612,819 miles.

This is equal in distance to sixty-five voyages around the globe at the equator. He has been forty-seven years in the service of one company. During that time, in addition to his transatlantic trips, he has made twenty-five voyages to India and China together, and a number of long cruises in South American waters. There is not a port of any importance on the globe in which the captain has not set foot.

There has never been a serious accident to a ship which Capt. Pohle commanded. He never ran aground, never lost his course in a fog and never had a fire aboard ship. Summer and winter, in fair weather and in foul, it has been accepted as a truism at the New York office that "Pohle's ship will be in on time." In length of service and number of voyages made it is said that Capt. Pohle is the dean of all ship commanders. When the Captain guides the Lahn into Bremen harbor at the end of this voyage he will walk down the gangplank an ex-sea captain. He is retiring from service.

The North German Lloyd Company has a rule by which its officers may retire on pension at sixty years. Capt. Pohle is sixty-one, and is going to settle down on a little garden farm near his native city, Bremen. There he expects to raise the finest tomatoes ever grown in Germany, and to astonish the peasant farmers with a variety of New York potatoes which are bigger than those known to Bremen markets. Tomatoes are the captain's hobby, with potatoes and garden flowers a close second and third.

Capt. Pohle does not look like a seaman about to quit work. When the Sunday World reporter visited him aboard the Lahn he was just thinking of an hour's nap, he said, after forty-eight hours continuously on the bridge coming in. His step was as elastic and his eyes were as bright as those of the young first officer who stood beside him. There are some men whom you can describe by saying, "He looks as strong as an ox." This fits Capt. Pohle.

The captain radiates good humor. His tanned face wrinkles up in contented curves around his clear gray eyes when you ask him how it feels to cross the Atlantic 332 times.

"That is nothing," he laughs. "Perhaps I should say how it feels to quit crossing the Atlantic," and he brings his fist down with a bang on the table, still laughing. "I think maybe I shall feel lonesome without the sea," confessed the captain. "That remains to be seen. I have never had a vacation long enough to tell yet how I am going to like this farming business."

In the course of a pleasant talk the captain gave voice to several aphorisms worth remembering:

"To a sailor there are no perilous places on the ocean."

"It isn't how many times you're in danger that counts; it's how many times you get yourself out of it without mishaps."

"Unless a man's a coward he never remembers his worst perils long after they are past. They're disagreeable to think of, and so he simply forgets them."

"I have noticed that passengers sometimes become panicky when they are perfectly safe. In times of very great danger they are invariably smoking and playing cards and having a good time below."

"A great many more persons travel how than formerly, and they know how to do it a great deal better. In one thing only has there been no change. They ask just as many questions as they always did."

in the world. They know how to make themselves comfortable." "The time is coming when almost any old passenger tub will cross the Atlantic in five days." "China has the most interesting ports in the world."

"Thirty years ago when I sailed in to a crowded harbor I sometimes saw a ship flying an American flag. Now I never see one. This is not the way it ought to be, with all the money and enterprise that Americans put into other things. The sea is an immense free empire. It is worth taking."

During his forty-seven years of service the captain has seen a revolution in sea-going craft. He came into New York in 1854 as a cabin boy on the sailing ship Berlin.—New York World.

Mystery is Unsolved.

Butte, Mont., Jan. 26.—A special to the Miner from Thompson Falls says the mystery of the strange disappearance of E. A. Goodchild, one of Montana's prominent citizens, and a big millman of Thompson, remains unsolved.

W. E. Lindenbaum, his partner in the milling business, has had a regular party of ten men on day wages engaged in the search, but thus far they have met with no success.

Goodchild has been missing since last Tuesday, when he left home taking his dog and his gun and going on a hunting trip.

Goodchild was familiar with the country, and it is hardly likely that he could have lost his way, and grave fears are entertained that he has met with an accident and lost his life.

A severe blizzard with intense cold has swept the mountains, and it is feared that if Goodchild did lose his way he could hardly have survived the storm.

Body of Indian is Found.


Wenatchee, Wash., Jan. 25.—The body of George Washington, an Indian known all over the northwestern portion of the state, was found lying lengthwise in the centre of the railroad track this morning and apparently had been tied there. The back of the head was cut. The coroner says Washington was killed with an ax. Blood spots in the centre of the railroad track lead from town—to where the body was found.

For Sale.

THREE-QUARTER interest on lower half left hillside, 27 Gold Run, at a bargain. Apply R. N. Robertson, Log Cabin Hotel, South Dawson.

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