

Scene from the shores of Vancouver Island, B.C. The Olympian range form the opposite shores of the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

morning the pet would be calling him —"whee—ee! whee—whee!" Through the open window of my room I could hear the rabbit-like cry of the pet deer. Then would come the answering call from the boy, "All right, Nimmy! I'll soon be there." Racing over the grass to the pen the happy boy sped along, calling, ever calling, "I'm coming, Nimmy!" Meanwhile, inside the pen the deer was dancing up and down, the tattoo of its arrow-pointed black hoofs beating out a morning welcome on the resounding fir floor. Soon the boy unhitched the gate and ran down through the deeryard and opened the

door, and out leaped Nimrod, with many a graceful caper. Up on his hind legs he would rear, gently pushing against Fritz with his forefeet to keep his balance. Then the joyful youngster would fling his arms about the neck of the prancing beast, and hug him and "rub noses," uttering many a loud, ringing laugh. Then backwards and forwards across the pen they would race, the deer leading and looking backwards, its big, lustrous eyes fairly beaming with the sport of the chase.

Thus the graceful beast wound itself about our heartstrings. It was fine to watch it when Fritz would stop play

and reach down the hoe and begin to clean out the pen. Then off to the hill he would run and fetch back a great armful of dry ferns for its bed—then "Nimmy" would prance and run before the lad and obstruct his course with many a playful motion. How alarmed the pet would be when animals ran past his pen, or when a vagrant dog sniffed at him through the wire netting. Every time the lad or I stepped out on the verandah of the little bungalow up would go the white brush of a tail and "Nimmy" would come leaping through the ferns, fairly inviting us to a game or pleading for a handful of fresh grass.

Like all owners of pets, we were over kind. Every morning after breakfast we took what was left of the cereal and the toast, and poured milk over it, and gave it to the pet. "Nimmy" would bunt and push and leap upon us until the dish was placed upon the ground. One strange habit from his wild ancestors always prevented him from taking shelter in his pen when the day was rainy. Hour after hour, no matter how

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The "Mother"

severe the storm, the timid beast would lie on the crest of a little knoll under a leafless alder and watch—as do the wild deer, for every movement, every motion, every rustle, for in the woods it is the great, tall ears that ever shift, as a deaf woman shifts her ear-trumpet, from side to side, the great black eyes that ever search the scene—for neither doe nor fawn have any means of defence. The buck, with fully grown horns, puts up so strong a fight that he has been seen to beat off two wolves that attacked him.

Day after day we fed and cared for the loving pet, until our last thought each night was, "Is 'Nimmy' all right," and our first in the morning, "Listen? I hear 'Nimmy' calling." So sped the happy days and Christmas time approached. On the morning of the day before, while Fritz was absent on some seasonable message, I went to the pen. For once no tattoo beat out, no rapid pawing of the anxious beast greeted me. I opened the pen. Nimrod raised his head slowly, got upon his feet and pressed his black nose into my hands, as if he wished to tell me just how miserable he felt this "day-before-Christmas" morning. I carefully cleaned his pen, made him up a dry bed of fern and excelsior, and, after petting him a bit, and watching, wondering at

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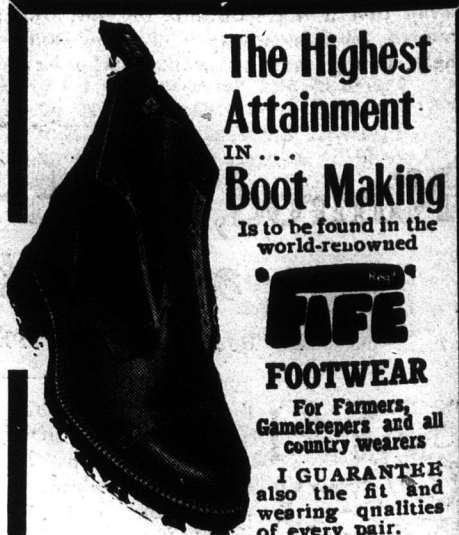
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