

and gaped. As if to bowl us over entirely, the two dogs then joined the horses. With paws going at the rate of some thousands of strokes per minute, they were tearing up the ground. There could be no doubt about it. Those dumb animals were doing their best to save us. But would they be successful?

"'Here, Tom,' shouted O'Gorman, 'get busy!' We can give them a hand out. Use your jackknife and claws. I'll do ditto. It's better, anyway, than standing idle."

"With that, we both set to work with a will. Well, fellows, there we were. Two horses, two dogs and two men doing the same work on the same job, and the men showing up pretty poorly in comparison. It takes quite a while to tell this, but the actual happening didn't cover such a lot of time as you'd think.

"To make a long story short. Those animals and we men scraped or eat a fire guard just a couple of inches short of thirty feet square! Did I stop to measure it? Yes, sir. The incident was such an uncommon one that we both went over the cleared patch with a tape line, and took a note of the measurement, before continuing our journey. But your interruption, Joe Mercer, made me jump in my story.

"To go back. We got behind the wagon, with the horses and dogs, and escaped without a hair being singed. Yes, sir, that fireguard broke the flame, and it passed harmlessly by us on either side.

"I think you'll all agree that, although Old Simon's horse wasn't exactly stupid, the two I've told you about beat him all to fits. I guess the beer's as good as here."

"That reminds me," began Bald Harry, but he got no further. A hand was gently, but firmly, placed over his mouth. On seeing the sad suffering look in our eyes, he signed that he'd shut up, and he was forthwith allowed to resume the use of his chewing apparatus. One by one we slunk off to our bunks. Not a word was spoken. The tent, so boisterously merry some hours previously, now seemed like a house of the dead. One and all felt they required rest, mentally more than physically. In something less than two minutes from the time the last speaker had quieted down every bunk held a couple of motionless occupants. The stove alone remained where it had been, and even it seemed to have a far-away, pained appearance I had never noticed before.

## COUNTRY & SUBURBAN HOMES



BY

E. STANLEY MITTON M.I.A.C.

THE articles I have undertaken to write from time to time in this magazine under the title of "Country and Suburban Homes," are intended to give practical

information to those readers who are interested in building and desirous of obtaining professional advice on the subject.

I shall be pleased to answer any ques-