

A Muskoka Adventure.

It was my day in camp; for it was not safe in that quarter of Muskoka to leave one's possessions very long unguarded.

Toward sunset there was a great whirling in the air, followed by an immediate splashing in the lake, near the camp shanty.

Looking out, I saw a flock of ducks some five hundred yards away, swimming and fluttering about as if half mad at the joy of new-found water.

For an hour I had been wondering what new dish I could surprise the boys with at supper time, and here now was my very chance, close at hand.

Catching up a shotgun and a few loaded cartridges, I went a little way down the lakeshore, where my game would be in easy reach.

So intently were my eyes fixed upon the ducks that I did not see a low-lying snarl of wiry vines just before me. Catching my feet in them, I was thrown face downward upon the ground so violently that one barrel of my gun went off, the charge tearing an ugly hole in my thigh.

A sickening sense of pain and weakness swept over me, but by making powerful resistance I escaped losing consciousness.

Though no artery was severed a torrent of blood rushed out of my lacerated member, which I stanchied as well as I could with shreds and bandages torn from my flannel hunting shirt.

Then I reflected upon the situation.

In an hour the boys would come to my rescue, as it was a strict regulation of ours to get back to camp at sunset. But to stay where I had fallen until then was out of the question, for the ground was covered with myriads of ants which were already crawling over me despite my efforts at keeping them off. Soon they would attack me in earnest unless I moved—and no man could stand their torturing apparatus for an hour.

Clearly, I must move at once, in spite of the danger of fainting.

Bracing for the effort with every nerve I began crawling back to camp, a fresh tide of blood eluding my bandages with each movement.

When half the distance was covered, I was so nearly exhausted that a halt for rest was necessary.

Then a new idea occurred to me, and drawing my revolver I fired three rounds of two shots each—the signal of distress which the boys and I had agreed upon for emergencies, when we first went into camp.

Soon I heard their answering shots, less than a mile away, and knew that they would come to me as fast as the dense undergrowth would permit—probably reaching me in about ten minutes.

Brushing off the murderous ants, which were causing me the most excruciating agony by setting their strong jaws in the edges of my wound, I again pressed on toward camp, leaving a trail of blood behind me as I went.

The last ten yards of that difficult journey I made with bright colors flashing before my eyes, and with loud ringing sounds in my ears, so near I was to fainting away.

Half way through the shanty-door my strength gave out, and I could go no further.

Again dislodging the ants and tightening my bandages, I settled myself to await the coming of the boys.

What kept them so long?

It seemed an hour since I had signaled them, the pain made time drag so.

Would they never get there?

Surely it was time I heard them, any way and yet there was no sound of them.

My throat was dry, and pains—first dull, then sharp and agonizing—shot through my wound. Altogether, I had never before so longed for the presence of my fellow-beings.

Ah! they were surely coming, for yonder a twig snapped under a heavy foot.

Raising myself upon one elbow, I looked eagerly in the direction of the sound to see who the first comer was, and saw—not a man, but a panther!

The sleek, tawny brute was coming slowly toward me, his head so low that his nose seemed to touch the ground as he came.

Wonderingly I looked closer, and then I understood his strange movements.

He was following my trail, from the place where I fell when shot, and was lapping the blood which marked my course, as he came.

What my fate would be when he reached me unless the boys got there first, it was not at all difficult to guess.

The gnawing of the vicious ants was now forgotten.

I had no thoughts nor eyes for anything but the panther.

Weak as I was I managed to keep my head elevated, first on one arm and then on the other, so I could watch every movement of my approaching foe.

Once or twice he paused for a moment to sniff the air, and then came on, lapping up the blood I had lost, as deliberately as ever.

When he was within ten feet of me I began counting the seconds which were likely to elapse before he reached my wounded side.

I no longer felt the pains in the wound—I was only conscious of one thing in the universe—the panther.

Nearer and nearer he came with apparent regardlessness as to how far away the source of his enjoyment might be.

At last, either a glimpse at me, or a sudden realization that he was uncomfortably near the abiding place of men, caused him to pause and settle backward on his haunches, with a slight growl.

A swift undulant quiver ran over him, as if he contemplated springing at me; but if this was his idea, he at once changed his mind, got up and resumed lapping my blood.

Such slight breeze as there was blew toward me from him, foul with the nauseous odors of his fetid breath.

Again a twig snapped.

Was it the boys?

Oh, it was only they—if help were only at hand!

I dared not attempt raising myself to see, the panther was now so near; and so I pressed every energy into the business of listening.

But aside from the slight noise made by the breathing of the blood-lapping brute, I could hear nothing.

Nearer and nearer yet came the panther—now less than two feet away.

Oh, why didn't they shoot, if the boys were there, as they must be—why did they suffer the prolonging of agonies which must have been so palpable to them?

Once again the panther lifted his head and sniffed.

Satisfied that no danger was menacing him, he took to lapping once more.

The sun was nearly down. Looking across the lake I saw its last rays paling on the western hills.

My hope of rescue waned with it.

Long before sunset time came again I should be dead. Of that I now felt certain.

The panther, though, gave me no time for moralizing.

He had reached my wounded side.

The bandages interfered with his pleasure, and with a low growl in impatience he lifted a paw and struck them away.

Then I felt his rough tongue lick the blood from my torn flesh.

A groan of anguish escaped me, he hurt me so.

Answering it with another growl, he lifted his head, poking his foul-smelling nose into my very face.

It is said that the human eye has power to intimidate dumb beasts, even in desperate quarters; but my eyes, full though they must have been of the strength of hopeless despair, had no apparent effect on him.

He seemed to regard me contemptuously, for, drawing in his breath and giving a little snort in my face, he actually spat a spray of my own blood in my mouth and eyes.

"Quick!" whispered a low voice just outside the shanty.

My heart gave a mighty and joyous leap. Help was at hand after all.

With a more menacing growl, the panther crouched back on his haunches, his head up and his nostrils quivering, listening intently.

But only for a moment.

Either disdain or thirst soon overcame his curiosity.

Again he gave a little snort, leaned forward and resumed lapping away at my now vigorously bleeding wound.

Despair reasserted its reign.

What were the boys waiting for?

No doubt they were there, for I had heard not only the snapping of twigs, but that one whispered word as well.

Couldn't they see that the monster beside me was lapping my life away?

Were they afraid—were they mocking me—why didn't they fire?

That rough, awful, tearing tongue seemed to lick straight through my quivering body, into my very heart. The pain from it made me sick and faint.

Again there were sounds in my ears—ringing sounds, as of many bells; and roaring sounds, as of a mighty and adjacent waterfall—and with these swift and bewildering alternations of vivid light and total darkness in my eyes. And through it all the cutting, drawing pain from that tireless tongue, each second growing more intense. O God, would it never end—

Crack—bang!

The noise of a rifle and a shotgun, fired so nearly at the same instant that they gave an almost simultaneous report.

Then the pain in my side stopped, and the panther screamed out and clawed the earth as if in mortal agony.

There was a confused murmur of excited voices, the noise of a great deal of rushing about, a great jumble of sounds altogether.

Presently some one's hand was thrust through my shirt and placed over my heart, and some one's voice said: "We were in good time—he is all right." And then so weak was I that with the consciousness of safety came utter unconsciousness of all things.

How Long Other Nations Work.

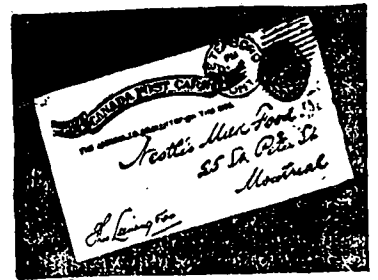
A Turkish working day lasts from sunrise to sunset, with certain intervals for refreshment and repose. In Montenegro the day-laborer begins work between 5 and 6 in the morning, knocks off at 8 for half an hour, works on till noon, rests until 2, and then labors on until sunset. This is in summer. In winter he commences work at half-past 7 or 8, rests from 12 to 1, and works uninterruptedly from that time to sunset. The rules respecting skilled labor are theoretically the same, but considerable laxity prevails in practice; in Serbia the principle is individual convenience in every case. In Portugal from sundown to sunset is the usual length of the working day. With field laborers and workmen in the building trades the summer working day begins at half past 4 or 5 in the morning and ends at 7 in the evening, two or three hours' rest being taken in the middle of the day. In the winter the hours are from half past 7 to 5, with a shorter interval of repose. In manufacturing the rule is twelve hours in summer and ten in winter, with an hour and a half allowed for meals.

Eleven hours is the average day's work in Belgium, but the brewers' men work from ten to seventeen hours, brickmakers sixteen; the cabinet-makers of Brussels and Ghent are often at work seventeen hours a day; tramway drivers are on duty from fifteen to seventeen hours, with an hour and a half at noon; railway guards sometimes know what it is to work nineteen and a half hours at a stretch, and in the mining districts women are often kept at truck-loading, or similar heavy labor for thirteen or fifteen hours.

The normal work-day throughout Saxony is thirteen hours, with two hours' allowance for meal-taking. In Baden the medium duration of labor is from ten to twelve hours, but in some cases it far exceeds this, often rising to fifteen hours in stoneware and china works and cotton mills, in sawmills to seventeen hours; while the workers in the sugar refineries, where the shift system is in vogue, work twenty-four hours; and in too many of the Baden factories Sunday work is the rule. In Russian industrial establishments the difference in the working hours is something extraordinary, varying from six to twenty. It is remarkable that these great divergences occur in the same branches of industry within the same inspector's district and among establishments whose produce realizes the same market price.

Has a Big Dog.

One of the striking figures in the Russian palace at Gatchina is the great Danish hound that stretches his powerful frame in the hall leading to the private apartments of the czar. This great dog is said to be the largest of its species in the world, and was presented to the czarina about four years ago by her father, the King of Denmark. It is said that the czar took a liking to the animal from the start, and never goes any long journey without his company. Having but little confidence in those about him, he seems to centre his faith in the dog as a guardian of untailing fidelity, and the dog apparently reciprocates the attachment. It was reported last summer, when Nihilist rumors were rife and documents of a threatening nature found their way to the very table of the czar's private cabinet, that the autocrat of all the Russias permitted the hound to sleep in the hall adjoining his bedroom. For some unexplained reason the dog became very suspicious of one of the guardsmen, and growled continually when this man was put on duty as a sentinel in the palace. Nothing could be shown and nothing was suspected against the man, but to satisfy the dog he was withdrawn from sentry duty. In the case of another sentinel it was reported in St. Petersburg that the hound leaped upon him and nearly tore him to pieces the first time he saw him. The czar, hearing the cries for help, went to the door of his apartment and hastily called the dog, which obeyed his summons. The sentinel was found to be sadly lacerated. The czar directed that the injured man should be cared for and compensated, but also ordered that he never be permitted to enter the palace



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again. The autocrat has faith in the sagacity of the dog, which he has named Peter, after the founder of Russian greatness.

Spontaneous Combustion.

The origin of many a fire remains a mystery, and no doubt many an innocent man or woman lives under the suspicion of incendiarism, when the true cause of the combustion was spontaneous ignition. For the benefit of those who have not made the matter a study, the following list of substances and conditions has been compiled.

Cotton-seed oil will take fire even when mixed with 25 per cent of petroleum oil, but 10 per cent of mineral oil mixed with 10 per cent of animal or vegetable oil will go far to prevent combustion.

Olive oil is combustible, and mixed with rags, hay, or sawdust will produce spontaneous combustion.

Coal dust, flour dust, starch, flour (especially rye flour) are explosive when combined with certain proportions of air.

New starch is highly explosive in its comminuted state; also sawdust in a very fine state when confined in a close chute and water directed on it. Sawdust should never be used in oil shops or warehouses to collect drippings or leakages from casks.

Dry vegetable or animal oil inevitably takes fire when saturating cotton waste at 150 degrees F. Spontaneous combustion occurs most quickly when the cotton is soaked with its own weight of oil. The addition of 40 per cent of mineral oil (density 890) of great viscosity, and emitting no inflammable vapors, even in contact with an ignited body at any point below 339 degrees Fahrenheit, is sufficient to prevent spontaneous combustion, and the addition of 20 per cent of the same mineral oil doubles the time necessary to produce spontaneous combustion.

Patent dryers from leakage into sawdust, etc., oily waste of any kind, or waste cloths of silk or cotton, saturated with oil, varnish, or turpentine.

Greasy rags from butter and greasy ham bags.

Bituminous coal in large heaps, refuse heaps of pit coal, hastened by wet, and especially when pyrites are present in the coal; the larger the heaps the more liable.

Lampblack, when slightly oily and damp, with linseed oil especially.

Timber, dried by steam pipes, or hot water, or hot-air heating apparatus, owing to fine iron dust being thrown off, in close wood casings or boxings around the pipes, from the mere expansion and contraction of the pipes.

The Babr.

One little head of golden hair,
Two little cheeks so round and fair,
Two little lips with fragrant sighs,
One little nose and two blue eyes,
Two little hands as soft as a peach,
Two little feet with two toes each,
Two little smiles and two little tears,
Two little legs and two little ears,
Two little elbows and two little knees,
One little grunt and one little sneeze,
One little heart, but no little sins,
Plenty of skirts and lots of pins,
One little cloak and plenty of frocks,
One little hood and two little socks,
A big disposition to haul and to pull,
One little stomach that's never full,
One little mouth of the rose's tint,
One little bottle of peppermint.

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