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"As soon as it became known that Clytie and I were engaged, a devil seemed to get possession of Sims. He couldn't hide his rage; and often, I feel sure, my poor innocent girl felt the weight of his anger without telling me a word of it. I used to be afraid to meet him alone at night lest we should quarrel and he do me a mischief or I him one.

"Clytie and I had been engaged about two months when a new item was put in the bills. I was to do some shooting tricks, one of them being to split an apple lying on a lady's outstretched hand at fifty paces. There was nothing remarkable in this, but the feat was always a popular one—the public's always cruel at heart—on account of the danger they supposed the lady was in. The girl's name was Jane—she that held the apple. She was in no danger to speak of.

"One night—
Again my companion suddenly stopped and seemed unable or unwilling to go on.

Sims said "There's nobody else can do it except Clytie. She might do as far as looks go, but she's too much of a coward." So I want him to know that whatever else I may be, I'm no coward."

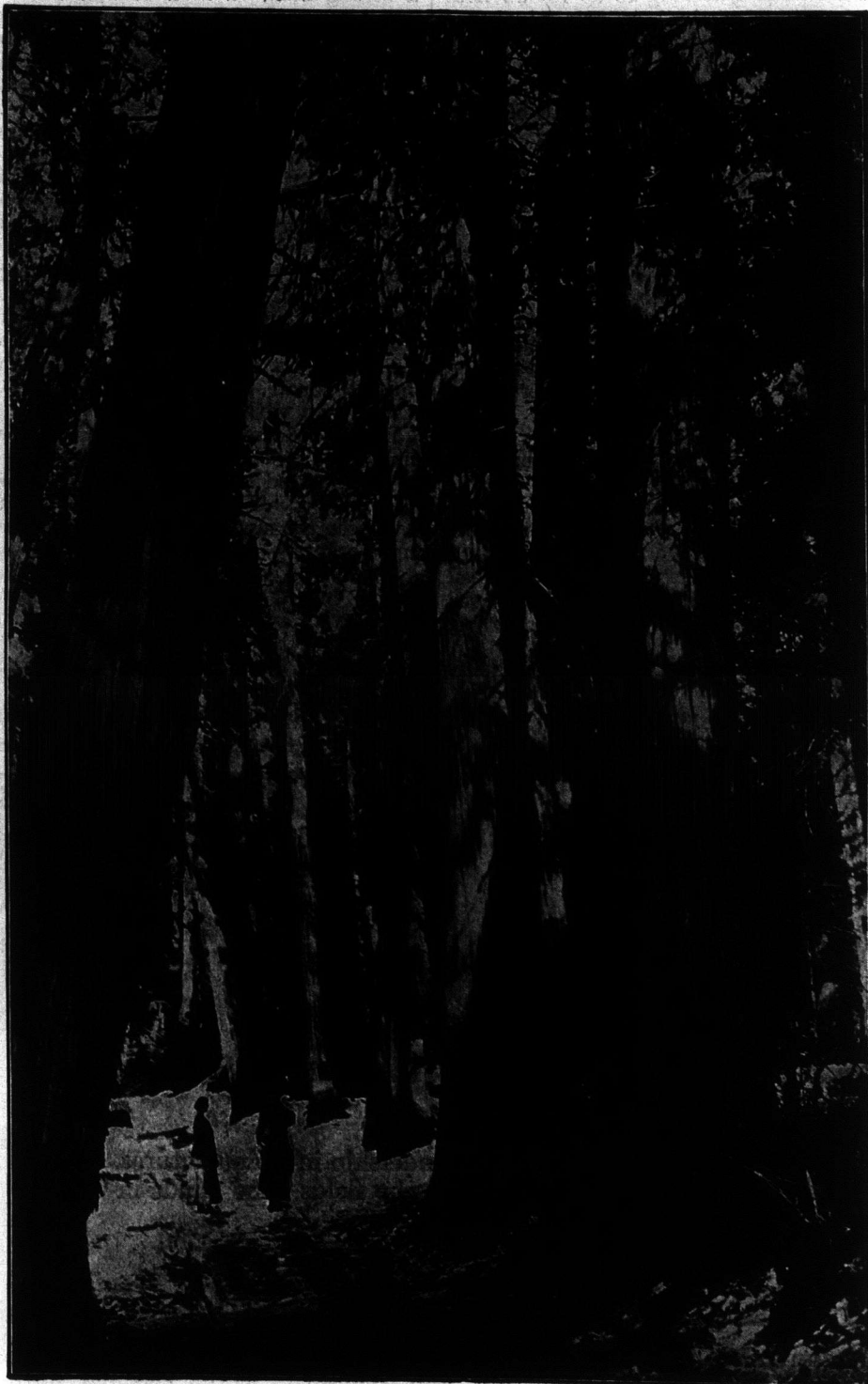
"I can't, Clytie!" I cried. "I dursn't!"
"Oh, nonsense!" says she, with a smile like a glint of sunshine, "when you do it every night of your life. See how steady I can hold it;" and, indeed, her slender arm was as firm as a rock.

"By this time the audience were getting impatient, and yelling for the show to go on.

"You must do it," says my little one, with another smile. Still I hesitated, and the howls of the crowd seemed as if they would take the roof off the circus.

"Don't put up your hand till I'm back in my place, and hold it right away from you, darling," I whispered.

"Then I turned and raced back to my



Giant Firs along the route to the Chateau Miette—the new Grand Trunk Pacific Hotel, shortly to be erected in Jasper Park.

He mastered his emotion, however, and continued, speaking in a hurried manner and almost in a whisper:

"One night, when the shooting part of the programme was nearly over, I took my rifle and prepared to split the apple on Jane's outstretched hand. It was not till I had brought my rifle to my shoulder that I noticed it was not Jane but Clytie that was holding the apple!

"My hand trembled so that I could scarcely support the gun. I walked up to Clytie, and under pretence of making her change her attitude a little, I said under my breath.

"Why are you here? Throw down that apple and go back to your room. Do you think I would shoot at you?" says I. "Do you think I would shoot at you?"

"Not at me, certainly," says she; "but you must split the apple on my hand. Jane has sprained her wrist—at least, so she says—and can't hold it; and Mr.

place. When the people saw me take my rifle and sign to Clytie to hold up the apple they became dead quiet. You might have thought the earth had swallowed them, and that the circus was empty, it was so still.

"I got my rifle up—and would to God my hand had been withered first!—and covered the apple. My finger was on the trigger. I was, I may say, in the act of firing when a loud noise startled me and Clytie as well—a sound as of a plank falling in a little gallery that ran round part of the circus a few feet above the ground. The noise was directly above the spot where Clytie stood. Without intending it I glanced up, and there I saw Sims' cruel, black-bearded face, grinning like a devil, peering over the edge of the gallery.

"The sight was so unexpected that my hand shook, the hair-trigger leapt from my finger, and Clytie was down, shot through the neck.

"The place, I know, was full of the shrieks of the people; but I did not hear their cries. I was at my dear girl's side, lifting her in my arms, and trying to staunch the blood that poured down her neck. The blood ran all over me, and soaked into my clothes. I have them still.

"Don't grieve, little one," says she—she used to call me little 'un because I was big and heavy—"don't grieve," says she; "it wasn't your fault." But the blood streamed out so, she had to stop speaking. Nothing would staunch the bleeding, and before we could get a doctor to her she was dead. 'I've been a happy girl since I was engaged to you, little one,' she says with a smile, and then she died. You see, sir, she thought of what would give me most comfort at the last."

"But was it really an accident?" I asked involuntarily.

"When I laid down her dead body," said Elijah, "I went to look for Sims. He was gone. No one knew where he was, and I couldn't trace him. But I found Jane Treacher, the girl who usually held the apple, and I got it from her that she never had sprained her wrist, but that Sims had made her say she had done so in order to get Clytie to hold the apple that night. More than that, I saw the man who did our carpentering, and he said that the manager had come to him for a bit of loose board that afternoon, and the board was found in the gallery (where there was no manner of need for it) exactly at the spot where he had startled me. I haven't the slightest doubt he did it on purpose to bring it about that Clytie should be wounded, and maybe killed outright, by my hand. He had his wish."

There was silence for a time, and then I asked:

"Was that your old circus you persisted in visiting just before we reached the town?"

"That? No, sir. Our circus was a much finer one than that."

"What were you doing there, then?"

"I was looking for Sims," said Elijah, looking me steadily in the eye.

The whistle of the approaching train warned me that it was time to go. I could only speak a few hurried words of warning to my companion, words to which, as I saw perfectly well, he paid no heed whatever.

Some years went by, perhaps four or five, and I had not seen Heavy Elijah again. Soon after my conversation with him he had wandered away from Heddington, no one knew whither.

My business took me occasionally to Bristol; and one day when I visited that city I found the walls placarded with enormous bills, giving notice of a menagerie which was then stationed in the town. In the evening there was to be a performance in which various wild animals were to play a part, the chief attraction being the "daring and unequalled feats of Signor Bottecini, the world-renowned Italian lion-tamer."

As I had nothing better to do in the evening, I went to see the show. It turned out to be a more ambitious affair than I had expected to see. In the centre of a great tent was a kind of pit, several yards in diameter, and perhaps two feet deep, guarded by high iron railings. All around the seats, crowded with spectators, rose tier upon tier. It was, in fact a reproduction on a small scale of the old Roman amphitheatre.

The performance began with a sham fight (as it might have been called) between two leopards, and one spectacle of that kind succeeded another until the time came for the grand event of the evening. The two lions were to be turned loose in the arena, and Signor Bottecini was to enter unarmed, lay his hand on their heads, and take other liberties with them.

The lions were introduced, one after another, from doors in the railing which communicated with their cages. Delighted with their comparative freedom, the two lions roared, and ran like enormous cats round and round the enclosure. In a few minutes the lion-tamer—a tall man, with a forbidding expression of face, wearing a huge black beard—walked into the pit, with nothing but a whip in his hand.

Hardly had he shown himself when the crowd gave a loud inarticulate cry of