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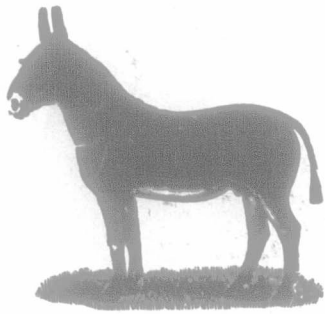
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howl, poor Fido dragged himself away out of reach and lay down, moaning pitifully.

The bear, realizing that he had got rid of one foe, now proceeded more cautiously to deal with the other, and began warily climbing the tree, keeping his wicked little eyes fixed on Hughie.

Meantime, Hughie was loading his gun with all speed. He emptied his powder-horn into the muzzle, and with the bear coming slowly nearer, began to search for his bullets. Through one pocket after another his trembling fingers flew, while with the butt of his gun he menaced his approaching enemy.

"Where are those bullets?" he groaned. "Ah, here they are!" diving into his trousers pocket. "Fool of a place to keep them, too!"

He took a handful of slugs and bullets, poured them into his gun, rammed down a wadding of leaves upon all, retreating as he did so to the higher limbs, the bear following him steadily. But just as he had his cap securely fixed upon the nipple, the bear suddenly revealed his plan. Holding by his front paws, he threw his hind legs off from the trunk. It was his usual method of felling trees. The tree swayed and bent till the top almost touched the ground. But Hughie, with his legs wreathed round the trunk, brought this gun to his shoulder, and with its muzzle almost touching the breast of the hanging brute, pulled the trigger.

There was a terrific report, the bear dropped in a heap from the tree, and Hughie was hurled violently to the ground some distance away, partially stunned. He raised himself to see the bear struggle up to a sitting position, and gnashing his teeth, and flinging blood and foam from his mouth, begin to drag himself toward him. He was conscious of a languid indifference, and found himself wondering how long the bear would take to cover the distance.

But while he was thus cogitating there was a sharp, quick bark, and a great black form hurled itself at the bear's throat and bore the fierce brute to the ground.

Drawing a long sigh, Hughie sank back to the ground, with the sound of a faraway shot in his ears, and darkness veiling his eyes.

He was awakened by Don's voice anxiously calling him.

"Are you hurt much, Hughie? Did he squeeze you?"

Hughie sat up, blinking stupidly.

"What?" he asked. "Who?"

"Why, the bear, of course."

"The bear? No. Man! It's too bad you weren't here, Don," he went on, rousing himself. "He can't be gone far."

"Not very," said Don, laughing loud. "Yonder he lies."

Hughie turned his head and pazed, wondering, at the great black mass over which Don's black dogs were standing guard, and sniffing with supreme satisfaction.

Then all came back to him.

"Where's Fido?" he asked, rising.

"Yes, it was Fido saved me, for sure. He tackled the bear every time he rushed at me, and hung on to him just as I climbed the tree the second time."

As he spoke he walked over to the place where he had last seen the dog. A little farther on, behind a spruce-tree, they found poor Fido, horribly mangled and dead.

Hughie stooped down over him. "Poor old boy, poor old Fido," he said, in a low voice, stroking his head.

Don turned away and walked whistling toward the bear. As he sat beside the black carcass his two dogs came to him. He threw his arms round them, saying, "Poor old Blackie! Poor Nipper!" and he understood how Hughie was feeling behind the spruce-tree beside the faithful dog that had given him his life.

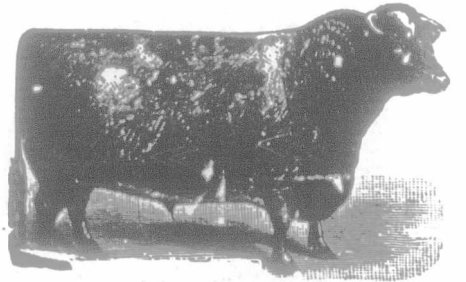
As he sat there waiting for Hughie, he heard voices.

"Horo!" he shouted.

"Where are you? Is that you, Don?"

It was his father's voice.

(To be continued.)



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