

PROLOGUE.

One of the most interesting characters in fiction, November Joe, well deserves to take his place in the hall of fame alongside his more famous prototype, Shertock Holmes. In the woods Shertock Holmes no doub! would have been of little value in ferreting out criminals, because woodcraft was not in his line. In the city, too. November Joe would achievement with Holmes, but in the woods every leaf and twig, stone and bit- of moss where it has been in contact with human beings or animals tells its story to the keen eyes and analytical mind of November Joe.

CHAPTER L November Joe.

November Joe.

I happened that in the early autumn of 1908 I. James Quaritch of Quebe., went down to Montreal.

I was at the time much engaged in an important business transaction, which after long and complicated negotiations appeared to be nearing a successful issue. A few days after my arrival I dined with Sir Andrew McLerzick, the celebrated nerve specialist and iccturer at McGBI university, who had been for many years my friend.

On similar occasions I had usually remained for ball an locur after the other guests had departed, so that when be turned from saying his last goodby Sir Andrew found me choosing a fresh cigar.

a fresh cigar.
"I cannot call to mind, James, that I havited you to help yourself to another smoke," he said.
I laughed.
"Don't mention it. Andrew; I am accustomed to your manners. All the "smo".

mane"—
He watched me light up, "Make the most of it, for it will be some time before you enjoy another."

"I have felt your scarching eye upon me more thanone tonight What is it?"

"My dear James, the new mining maignmant in the papers are so full of, and of which I understand that you are the leading spirit, will no doubt he a great success, yet is it really worth the marther of your excellent nearth?"

"Blue I feel quite as usual?"

"Sleep as much as usual?"

"Sleep as much as usual?"
"Perhaps not," I admitted unwill

bgiy
"Appetite as good as usual?"
"Ob, I don't know."
"Tush, man, James: Stand up."
Thereupon he began an examination
which merged into a lecture, and the
lecture in due course ended in my de
eision to take a vacation immediately—
a ong vacation, to be spent beyond
reach of letter or telegram in the
Woods.

woods
"That's right! That's right!" commented Sir Andrew "What do the
thorns of that fellow with the big bell,
which you have hanging in your office,

"Then go and shoot one with a spread of sixty"

Epiread of sixty"
"I believe you are right," said I, "but
the worst of it is that my guide, Noel
Tribonet, as inid up with rheumatism
and will certainly not be fit to go with
me Just now Indeed, I doubt if he
well keep learning to the control of the control

a new man if I can recommend you new man?"
Thanks, but I have had the trouble of training Novel aircraft
I can guarantee that you will not flad it necessary to train November

"November Joe?"
"Yes, do you know him?"
"Curiously enough, I do. He was with me as dishwasher when I was up with Tom Todd some years ago in Maine. He was a boy then. Once when we were on the march and were overtaken by a very bad snowstorm, Todd and the boy had a difference of opinion as to the direction we should the o".

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"None better. The most capable on this continent, I verily believe. If Joe is free and can go with you, you will set your moose with the sixty lineh norms." I understand that he has entered into some sort of contract with the provincial police."

"With the police?" I repeated. "Yes. He is to help them in such cases as may lie within the scope of his special experience. He is indeed, the very last person i should like to have upon my trail and I committed a morder. He is a most skilled and minute observer, and you must not for get that the speciality of a Sherlock Holmes is the everyday routine of a woodsman. Observation and deduction are part and parcel of his daily existence. He literally reads as he runs. The floor of the forest is bit page. And when a crime is committed in the woods these facts are very for tunate. There nature is the criminal's best ally. She seems to tengue nerself with him in many ways. Often she delays the discovery of his fill doing; she covers his deeds with her leaves and her snow; his track she washes away with her rain, and more than all she provides thim with a vast area of refuge; over which she sends the appointed hours of darkness, during which he can travel fast and far.

"All things considered, it is supprising that so many woods crimes are brought home to their perpetrators."

"There you are forgetting one very important point. I have been present at many trials and the most dangerous witnesses that I have ever seen have been men of the November loc type—that is, practically illiterate woodsmen. Their evidence has a quality of terrible simplicity. They give minute but on-naswerable details. All their experi-

implicity. They give minute but on-masswerable details. All their experi-nces are first hand. They bring for-ward naked facts with sledge hammer results. Where a town bred man would see nothing but a series of blurwould see nothing but a series of blur-red footsteps in the morning dew, an ordinary dweller in the woods could learn something from them, but No-vember Joe can often reconstruct the man who made them, sometimes in a manner and with an exactlingle that has struck me as little short of mar-velons."

"I see he has interested you." said I, half smiling.
"I confess he has. Looked at from a scientific standpoint I consider him the perfect product of his environ-ment. There are few things I would this experience and his super-cal senses in the unraveling of crime of the woods."

I threw the stump of my cigar into

"You have persuaded me," I said "I will try to make a start by the end of the week. Where is Joe to be found?"
"As to that, I believe you might get into touch with him at Harding's farm. Silent Water, Rennee."
"The write to him"
"Not much use - He only calls for letters when he feels inclined."
"Then I'll go to Harding's and arrange the trip by word of shouth."
"That would certainly be the best plan, and, anyhow, the sooner you get into the woods the better Bestdes, you will be more likely to secure Joe by doing that, as he is inclined to be shy of strangers."
I rose and shook bands with my jost. "You have persuaded me," I said "I

ke that young man. Goodby and bod luck." uck.

Along the borders of Beauce and Maine, between the Entirel States and Canada. Both along the borders and States and Canada. Both along the Beauce forest and on submanife that you will not it necessary to train November of the near and of the necessary to train November of the near and pet hunters.

I left the cars at Silent Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night. Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night. Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night. Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night. Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night. Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night. Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night. Water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night water and rode off at once to Harding's the house of the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night water and provide off the Beauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night water and provide off the Reauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night water and provide of the Reauce farmer where I meant to put up for the night water and provide off the Reauce farmer where I meant to put up for the nig

of mine I hunted with him years ago when he dived on the Montmoreney. "Is that so?" Her face relaxed a little. "Well, perhaps"—she conceded "Of course Ull varry the message. "It's quite a way to his place. No vember doesn't care about strangers. He's a solitary man. You must follow the tote road you were on today fif teen miles. turn west at the deserted Joe flives about two acres up the far bank." She lifted the receiver. "Shall say you'll go?"

peared that the speaker was the chief of police in Quebec, who was of course well known to me! I will let you have his own words.

"Very good of you, I'm sure Mr Quaritch. Yes we want November Joe to be told that a man mined. Henry Lyon has been shot in his camp down at Big Tree portage, on Denot river. The news came in Just now releptioned through by a lumberinek who found the body. Tell Joe, please, success means \$55 to blin. Yes, that's all. Much obliged. Yes, the sooner he bears about it the better. Good night."

I hung up the receiver, turned to

I hung up the receiver, turned to
Mrs Harding and told her the facts
"So November is connected with poflee work now?"
"Didn't you read in the newspapers

fice work now?"
"Didn't you rend in the newspapers about the 'Long Island Murder?"
I remembered the case at once; it had been a nine days 'wonder of head line and comment, and now I won dered how it was that I missed the mention of Joe's name.
"November was the man who put to gether that puzzle for them down in



New York." Mrs Harding went on "Ever since they have been wanting him to work for them. They offered him \$100 a month to go to New York and take on detective jobs there."

"Ah, and what had be to say to that?" York." Mrs Harding went on

"Said he wouldn't leave the woods

"Weil?"
"They offered him the thousand."
"With what resurt?"
"He started out in the night for his shack. Came in here as he passed and told my husband he would rather be ded to a tree in the woods for the rest of his fife than live on Fifth avenue. The lumberjacks and the guides here abouts think a tot of him. Now you'd heat saddle Laura that's the big gray mare you'll find in the near stall of the stable, and go right off. There'll be a meon when the storm blows listelf out."

By the help of the lantern I saddled Laura and stiffubied away into the dark and the wind. For the chief part of the way I had to lead the mare, and the dawn was gray in the open places before I reached the deserted lumber amy and all the time my mind was busy with memories of November Boy though he had been when I knew him, his personality and impressed itself apon me by reason of a certain adequate quietness with which he fuffilled the duties, many and disappressible which bearded old Tom Todd took a delight in taying upon his young shoulders.

habitust fits of talking big. Once when Tom spoke by the camp fire of some take to which he desired to guide me and of which be stated that the shores had never been trodden by white man's foot Joe had to cover his

ailty
I feel that I shall never be able to
describe November Suffice it to say
that the roose kuit boy I remembered
had developed into one of the finest
spectimens of manhood that ever crew
up among the balsam trees; near six
feet tail. Ifthe and powerful, with a
neck like a column and a straight fea. feet tail. If the and powerful, with a neck like a column and a straight featured face, the sheer good looks of this son of the woods were disturbing. He was clearly also not only the product but the master of his environment. "Well, well, Mr. Quaritch, many's the time I've been thinking of the days we had with old Tom way up on the Rousrik."

They were good days, Joe, weren't

together"
"If it's hunting you want, I'm glad you're here, Mr Quariteh There's a fine buck using around by Widdeney pond Maybe we will get a took at him come sunset, for he most always moves out of the thick bush about dark." Then humor lift a spark in his splendid gray eyes as he looked up at me "But we'll have a cup o tea first."

his splendid gray eyes as he looked up at me. "But we'll have a cup of tea first."

November Joe's (by the way, I ought to mention that his birth in the month of November Joe's weakness for tea had in the old days been a target upon which I had often exercised my faculty for irony and banter. The weakness was evidently still alive. "I had hoped to have a hunt with you. November," said I. "Indeed, that is what I came for, and there's nothing I'd like better than to try for your red deer, buck tonight but while I was at Harding's there was a ringup on the phone, and the provincial police sent through a message for you. It appears that a man named Henry Lyon has been shot in his camp at Big Tree portage. A lumberman found him and phoned the news into Quebec. The chief of police wants you to take on the case. He told me to say that success would mean \$50."

"That's too bad," said Joe. "I'd sooner hunt a deer than a man any day. Makes a fellow feel less badlike when he coines up with him. Well, Mr Quaritch, I must be getting off, but you'll be wanting another guide. There's Charley Paul, down to St. Amiel."

"Look here, November, I don't want Charley Paul or any other guide but you. The fact of the matter is that Sir Andrew McLerrick, the great doctor who was out with you last fall, has told me that I have been overdoing it and must come into the woods for rest. I've three months to put in, and from all I hear of you you won't take three months finding out who murdered Lyon."

Joe looked grave. "I may take more than that," said he, "for maybe I'll

Lyon."

Joe looked grave. "I may take more than that." said he, "for maybe I'll never find out at all. But I'm right pleased, Mr. Quaritch, to hear you can stay so long. There's plenty of grub in my shack, and I dare say that I shan't be many days gone."

"How far is it to Big Tree portage?"

"Five miles to the river and eight up it."

"I'd like to go with you."

He gave me one of his quick smiles.
"Then I guess you'll have to wait for your breakfast till we are in the cance. Turn the mare toose. She'll make Harding's by afternoon."

Joe entered the shack and came out again with one or two articles.

again with one or two articles. In five minutes he had put together a tent my sleeping things, food, ammo-nition and all necessaries. The whole bundle he secured with his packing strap, lifted it and set out through the woods.

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