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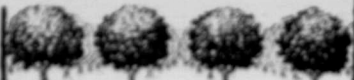


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Soil-bound trees



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We would be pleased to furnish color schemes and suggestions for Interior Decoration in "FRESCO-TONE" on application.

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On the Edge of the Barrens

Continued from Page 8

West might show up almost any day. His previous pickings of bear hides and walrus oil from the half-starved Iwiliiks was far from satisfying his greed. There was richer trade to be had with the Kenipatoos around Seal Point and Chesterfield Inlet.

There had been years when a silver fox pelt had been swapped for a single bottle of bad whisky; seasons when a ton of whale baleen worth four dollars a pound had been exchanged for a case of raw spirits.

That Whisky West would return, head for the Kenipatoos country, and lock horns with the two men of the mounted seemed inevitable.

This, then, was the situation when the two constables returned from a scouting patrol to Chesterfield Inlet, and Napier had complained of fever and a severe pain in his lungs.

For an hour after poulticing the sufferer Buck sat smoking his pipe and listening to the labored breathing of his patient. Then his wandering eyes rested upon the breakfast dishes, as yet unwashed.

Two paces brought the lanky constable to the door of the barrack. Softly he unlatched the door and called: "Oolah!"

Scarcely had his lips closed than the skin-curtains of a native tupik, a red away, were parted and a young woman appeared. Moving noiselessly in her seal-skin mukluks, the girl approached Walsh and came to a halt before him.

Slender, taller than most women of her race, with eyes and skin that spoke plainly of the white blood in her veins, Oolah made a striking picture as she stood demurely before the king's soldier, her winsome face turned full upon him.

"Time to clean up, girl," growled Buck not unkindly.

"Yes, sir," answered the native girl in purest English. Then she added: "And I hope the young master is feeling better today."

Walsh shook his head, knocked the dottle from his brier, and then turned toward the lead-colored waters of the open bay. A hair-seal popped up, its glistening head less than a hundred yards away, but Buck was in no humor to waste either glance or thought on the creature.

His mind was occupied with thoughts of the impending visit of Whisky West, the illness of his comrade in arms. His eyes were on the eastern horizon, soon to be notched by the sail of the liquor-runner.

CHAPTER II.

The Girl He Left Behind.

"Buck, I've been a bad egg," came weakly from the unshaven lips of the junior constable.

"That's all right, lad! You've been a man these two years, haven't yuh?"

It was the fifth day of Napier's illness. The high fever had passed, the patient breathed easier, but his weakness was pitiable.

"I—I've got pneumonia, haven't I?"

"Looks that way, lad," came un- easily from Walsh.

"And I may cash in?"

"Nonsense, man! You're sure to get well and strong."

The sick man studied the face of the other. Then his gaze roved over the interior of the tiny barrack and rested upon the mission-bred Kenipatoos maiden.

Oolah was preparing a broth of veni-

son. Her glossy brown hair, her soulful eyes, the pink and cream of her cheeks, might have been envied by women of position and wealth. Nothing but the fawn-skin garments, the seal-skin foot-wear proclaimed her to be a daughter of the wilds.

Once more the restless eyes of the never-do-well sought those of his com- rade. "Buck," said he, "I want you to do something for me."

"Sure, lad. Anything I can."

"Look in the bottom of my 'hold- all' for two small red books. One of them is our 'Service Manual.' I want the other one."

(To be continued next week.)

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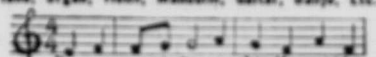
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