

stare at her in consternation the bundle leant towards him, and, raising a large projecting branch, which appeared to be a human arm much disguised and enlarged, to what Edna supposed must be her right ear, said, in a voice that seemed to come from under a feather-bed:

"Eh! William, William! What does she say she is?"

"She's to be private organist to Lord Lockington," shouted her dutiful husband, with his eyes still fixed in a sort of dazed way on the girl.

At these words the bundle woke into comparative animation; it removed several thick films from its face, and Edna, blushing more deeply than ever, found herself gazed upon by a pair of dull, fish-like eyes, which struck terror into her soul.

(To be continued.)

## The Year of No Rabbits

(Concluded from page 23.)

Nature is seldom so cruel. Stealing through the black shadows and darting across the patches of moonlight came the fox, anxious to see if anything new had happened at the knoll. Peering from a thicket, he marked the bear at his feast, and soon made out to understand. Stealing about to explore the knoll, he presently caught the cries of the kittens. This was a phenomenon not hard for him to interpret. After a prudent investigation he crept into the den. There was some spitting, feeble but courageous, and then the cries of loneliness and hunger stopped. The fox was too businesslike to play with and torment his victims, as one of the cat family would do; but killed them at once and made haste to carry them off to his den. Though not without a healthy edge to his own appetite, he thought first of his mate and cubs, to which he was untiringly devoted.

The knoll being now no longer occupied by the terrible lynx mother, the lesser folk of the forest began cautiously to revisit it, though they made no long stay in that neighbourhood, because they never knew when the den at the summit might attract some dangerous occupant. Before long the bones of those two bodies at the foot of the rock were polished clean and white; and then the place fell deserted except for the chickadees and the woodpeckers.

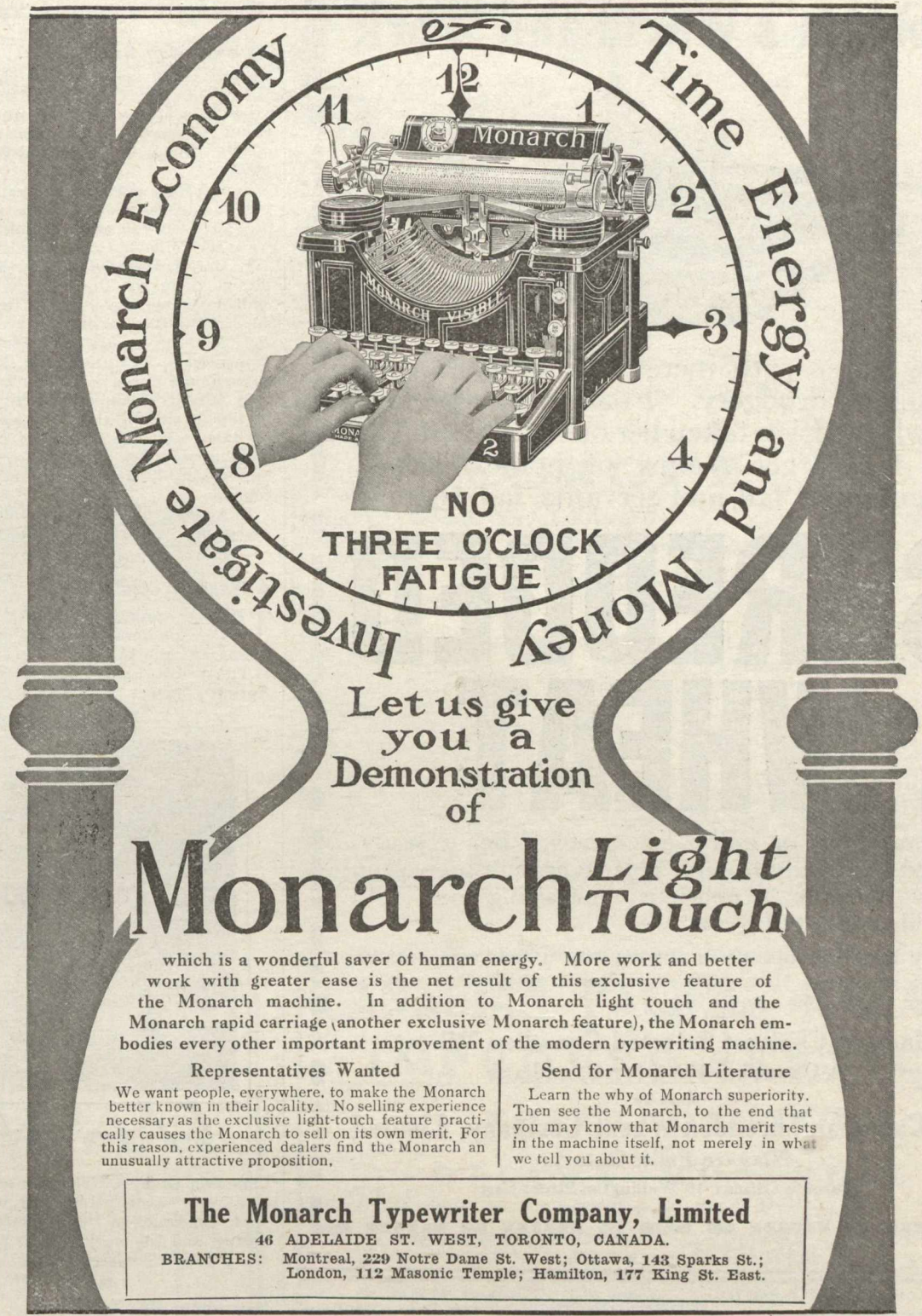
AS the summer drew to close and the first glimmers of autumn scarlet began to tip the maples, scattering here and there across the wilderness reappeared a few rabbits. Their enemies being now less numerous, they multiplied with amazing rapidity, as if thinking they had the earth to replenish; and soon again tall ears and bulging eyes were flickering through the coverts, sensitive, cleft nostrils questioning every air, and fluffy white tails bobbing up out of the gold-brown fern beds. The rabbits did not love the cedar swamp, with its wet moss and black, half hidden pools; but a few of their more adventurous spirits roamed everywhere.

One fresh October morning, when the birch trees were all gold among the grey rocks of the knoll, a roving buck rabbit came to the foot of it and stumbled upon that bunch of white bones. At first he was much frightened, and with two prodigious leaps took hiding in the nearest thicket. But the bones made no hostile move whatever, and presently he felt somewhat reassured. After he had stared at them for some time he concluded that they were harmless. With uncomprehending curiosity he hopped all around them, and then sat up beside them on his haunches, his long ears erect in foolish inquiry. The last thing he could guess was that he and his kind were responsible for that pile of bleaching bones.

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