

with a shrewdness which made his hair feel prickly. The lady's voice was soft as silk as she replied: "Of course not; we don't want any fibs. Truth is mighty, and it shall prevail. Oh, John, the black foxskin! We've forgotten all about it. Do go get it. It's the loveliest of all the beautiful things he's given me. I just love it," she rattled on. "It's so darkly smooth and so foxy. Really, I wonder they ever trapped it. John says a big black fox is the craftiest of all animals—that it can just play with traps. But then, I fancy those buck Indians are a stupid lot—don't you think so?"

Monroe was quivering with joy, but only the twinkle in his eye betrayed him as he solemnly replied: "Yes; I don't think the average buck Indian is much of a diplomat. He's a lazy dog, too, and makes his squaw do most of the work. Now it's just possible, don't you think, that a squaw caught this particular big black fox?"

"What's the joke? Haven't heard you folks laugh like that in moons," exclaimed Thompson, as he returned with the beautiful and almost priceless skin, but he was too full of his treasure to follow up the inquiry. "There it is, the finest, but one, that ever came into the 'Peg.' I couldn't get hold of the other, but this is her little birthday present. Let's see, how many birthdays—" but a crisp "John Thompson!" forever ended that palpable bluff, and soon the three were gloating over the glorious trophy. Then the conversation switched to furs, trapping, and the wilds far north, and presently