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Demi-Bloc System

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Double-Gun Manufacture

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to the superiority of the

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FIREARMS

One of these new features is the forging and compressing of the barrel and lug all in one piece. This gives the strongest breech mechanism possible to make.

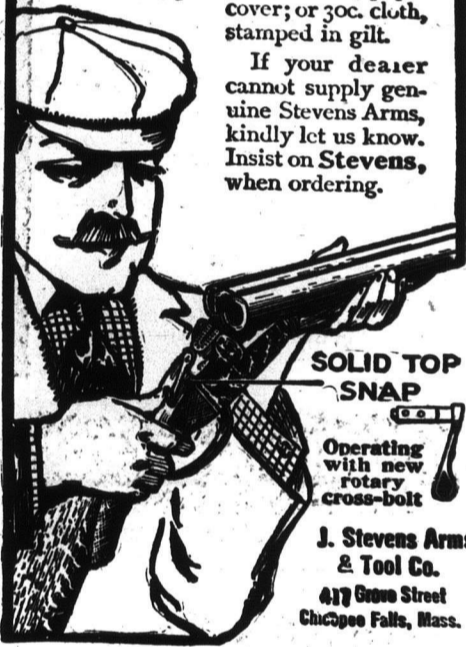
Then the barrels, loop and extension rib are brazed in one process. So the barrels are necessarily straight and true.

While the solid top-snap, illustrated below, operating with our new rotary cross-bolt, makes a fastening unequalled for strength. Thus Stevens Guns cannot shake loose.

If you'll send for the Stevens Catalog, you'll learn all about these new Demi-Bloc features, and all the many superiorities of Stevens firearms—shotguns, rifles, pistols. 5c. for postage brings it.

"Guns and Gunning," by Dan Beard—all about hunting and shooting, game, the care of a gun, etc., will be sent, postpaid, for 20c., paper cover; or 30c. cloth, stamped in gilt.

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SNAP

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rotary
cross-bolt

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set to the rather large mouth that could scarcely be described as pleasant. The long easy roll of the born artist on skates was not broken, but it was transformed by an easy alertness which seemed to bouy him in air and send him skimming along like a bird through the gathering twilight.

He was darting across the black shadows of hemlock boughs, limned upon the ice by a brilliant half-moon, and listening intently for the ring of his rival's skates through the frost-bound stillness, when he was aware of a low, tremulous sound which seemed to come from everywhere, and yet from nowhere. Gradually it increased in volume until it filled the forest like an all-pervading presence, and at last culminated in a prolonged, deep-chested howl upon the heavily wooded slope to his right. A moment later something went crashing away through the brushwood. Once before, in a remote lumber camp of his father's, he had heard that terrifying bass boom—the hunting cry of a hungry timber wolf.

Realizing that he was doomed if attacked in the narrow channel along which he was now passing, Garcyde made a desperate rush for the wider ice beyond, hoping to pass the wolf before it reached the bank of the stream; but the crashing through the underbrush went steadily on ahead of him, drawing nearer and nearer to the river, but sounding more and more remote. At length the truth flashed upon him. The wolf was pursuing Faulkner!

For a moment the temptation to desert his rival gripped Garcyde. Had not the man grossly insulted him? Why endanger his life? But the brown eyes of Eve Lovejoy looked at him with unutterable reproach from behind the mask of gay banter which she always wore in his presence, and made impossible the completion of the ignominious thought. Bursting from under the hemlocks into the clear white light of moon and frost, he saw Faulkner upon one knee not a hundred yards away, and between them, outlined against the sky, was a huge timber wolf bearing down upon the crouching figure with the speed of an express train. With a coolness that thrilled Garcyde with admiration the big lumberman was tightening the straps about his ankles, casting an occasional glance over his shoulder at the scudding gray shape. A moment's delay and the brute would be upon his back!

But Faulkner, with the precision of one who plays a game with life for the stake, sprang an instant before the wolf pounced upon the spot where he had been kneeling, and with a jangling snarl slid obliquely across the river, floundering in a gray jumble among the frosty tussocks along the farther bank. Before it regained its feet Garcyde dashed past and sped away down stream in the wake of Faulkner, who was now tearing across a strip of blueberry barrens. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw the wolf disappearing over a ridge in a southerly direction, and concluding that it was abandoning the chase, concentrated his wits upon the defeat of his rival.

But could he defeat him? That crude lunge that ended in a jerk was again widening the distance between them. He quickened his pace, but a warning catch in his breath made him drop back to his old stroke.

What was that? A train of sparks from Faulkner's skates! A strong north wind had sifted sand upon the ice from the open barrens, and instead of keeping to the south bank, where the wind had swept the surface clean, the clown was plowing straight through it. By the time he reached Salmon Rapids the bottoms of those old sled-runners of his would be made over into files again.

Yes, that was what he had expected; Faulkner was slowing down. In a few minutes he would be up with him. Now he could distinguish the St. Andrew's cross of the thick leather suspenders that stood out from the barn door of a back.

Crash! Garcyde looked over his shoulder. There was the wolf springing out of the brushwood not ten rods behind him. With devilish cunning it had cut across a neck of land and met them at the next bend of the river. Now it was upon its feet again, and coming on with great bounds. Well, he would give it a run for its money, that he would!

The moonlight flashed from the runners of Faulkner's skates, and "—sandals of lightning are on your feet," went through his head. Ha! ha! Sandals of lightning on Jake Faulkner! What was the fool thinking of, anyway, tearing along there with his tree of a body thrust forward between his bent, jerky legs, like a giant frog twitching over a galvanic battery?

Pat, pat, pat. Nearer and nearer it came. The trees were whirling past in a mad dance and cheering frantically in pantomime. The ice was pouring under him in a headlong black torrent and rising in front of him breast-high. From its flying surface leered a white, distorted face that he scarcely recognized as his own. He knew that he was swaying like a drunken man. Something was burning at the pit of his stomach like red-hot coals, and he tasted blood—hot, brackish blood. Above the zip, zip of his skates he could hear the brute's nails scratching louder and louder upon the ice. Would it take three or four more bounds before it sprang? He felt the flesh along his spine creep icily in anticipation.

He couldn't endure the strain another moment; he must see just where his pursuer was. Swish! In turning his head he had involuntarily swerved from his course, and a pair of powerful jaws clicked ominously near his ear, as a shaggy mass of dirty gray-and-black went hurling past him shoulder high.

"Faulkner! swing round quick!" Heavens! the clown couldn't turn on those skees inside of two rods, and the wolf was crouching to spring upon his back. Chop! A leap of which he had never thought himself capable had landed him between the wolf and Faulkner, just as the brute was leaving the ice, and saw-like teeth had shorn away the shoulder of his coat, instead of sinking into his rival's neck.

There was Salmon Rapids at last! Could they make it before their pursuer came up with them again? To go straight down over the half-mile of jagged ice was a perilous undertaking, but there was no alternative. Pat, pat, pat. Once more the rapid panting and the rasping of nails upon the ice. Confound Faulkner's snail-pace! In a few seconds it would be too late to cut across behind him and draw off the wolf again. Good! there he scooted over the brink at last, his feet wide apart, and his knees doubled until his long flapping arms nearly touched the ice. Those old sled-runners were just the thing—now.

Click, clack! Click, clack! His own skates were far too short for this rough ice; they let him down between the hubs with vicious jolts that threatened to lift a spring. Ping! His left skate was clattering along ahead of him, and he was performing a wild jig upon the remaining one. Thud! He was down just in time to see a pair of gaping jaws flecked with bloody foam stretched impotently towards him as their owner flew past.

Bump, bump, bump! The sharp points of ice were cutting like knives. Ah! he had planted his foot against a hummock, and the lost skate lay in a hollow a couple of rods beyond. The wolf! Not ten feet away burned the two slanting green eyes that had been pursuing him forever, it seemed. In its blind leap the brute had crashed through the thin shell of ice which concealed one of the many air-holes that were scattered about like death-traps, and was now hanging to the edge of the opening by its fore legs, the body, from the massive shoulders down, being held well under the ice in the grip of the current.

Look out!—the brute was almost out of the water. No, the current was too strong and was dragging it back to its old position. Another such a lunge and it might succeed in hooking a hind foot over the edge of the ice. If only he had a stick he'd shove it off—he didn't care to have a foot amputated in the venture. Why not let the jaws close upon his thick woolen cap? Chop! The great teeth sheared through the tough cloth as easily as though it had been paper, but missed by a fraction of a second the boot that landed upon the thick neck. A frantic clutching of white fangs at the edge of the ice, a dull bump against the surface beneath, and the gray nightmare was gone.

Well, it would do him no good to sit there and stare stupidly into the hole

through which the wolf had disappeared. Lord, how tired he was! Could he ever drag himself over to that skate? What was the use, anyway? He was too fagged to take another stroke. His head weighed a hundred pounds if it weighed one, and he couldn't hold it up another minute. He had never been so sleepy before in all his life; he would go to sleep right there upon the ice.

Garcyde sat up with a jerk. Faulkner!—he had almost forgotten him. The cur would go on to Maple Ridge and propose to Eve Lovejoy, while he snored slothfully on Salmon Rapids. Not if he could get one foot ahead of the other! There was no wolf now to spoil a fair race.

Then some new thing woke in Garcyde. Something of the elemental savage seized him and transformed Garcyde, the finished product of civilization, into a primeval cave-man, hot upon the trail of an enemy. Heretofore his movements had been the embodiment of grace; now he leapt forward with the fierce directness of the wolf that had been pursuing him, crunching the flinty ice under his skates at every bound.

Rounding Tamarack Point, he saw Faulkner ahead of him, looking more than ever like a great jumping frog. The big lumberman looked over his shoulder, then broke into a blind plunging run—the last resort of a skater being driven off his legs. At the sight Garcyde laughed a hard, choppy laugh—the exultant bark of a brute about to run its quarry to earth.

With swift and steady strokes he closed the last ten yards between them with a tingling desire to leap upon the broad, swaying back; but at the last moment Garcyde, the product of civilization, mechanically turned aside.

As he shot past the rocking, gasping lumberman he got a glimpse of the big, unfinished face, and at sight of it his strange frenzy slipped from him like a garment. The look upon it wasn't only that of a strong man suffering the humiliation of defeat at the hands of a hated rival; it was also that of a primitive, unimaginative soul whose long-trusted world was suddenly ending in chaos.

Garcyde paused for a moment, his face seamed with thought; then an odd smile played about the corners of the large mouth, and he sped on towards the landing that led to Eve Lovejoy's house, the uncertain clack, clack of Faulkner's skates sounding more and more remote.

"I can stay only a few minutes—off for town as soon as I pack my traps," Garcyde rattled on, avoiding the eyes of the astonished girl who had received him into the cozy sitting room where a Yule-log blazed in the great stone fireplace in anticipation of his coming. "I couldn't possibly go away without dropping in to break the good news. Miss —" (here he stammered, having forgotten to invent a name) "Belmont has made me the happiest man alive. An old flame, you know, I knew you would want to congratulate me."

Then Garcyde underwent his ordeal by fire. He felt, rather than saw, the pain in the startled brown eyes change to contempt. The palpitating girl who had met him at the door had suddenly flowered into an imperious woman, who was now passing judgment upon him in the light of his own testimony. He could read her decision upon her mobile face. He knew what her estimate of him was now.

To her he was no longer a man—he was only a "thing," and a pitiable one at that. No, it was more than flesh and blood could bear; he must undo the lie and right himself in her eyes. But the face of Jake Faulkner as he has last seen it upon the ice rose between them and silenced him.

"Poor devil, he has little enough in his three-by-four world, without my robbing him of the best thing in it," he mused, as he stopped for a moment.

Then, with head down, he stumbled down the moonblanched slope towards the river.

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