

and La Picotte reaches far. But be easy, m'sieur. He is not."

"Oh!" answered Elliot, the indignation all gone out of him; a gray shadow seemed to have drawn across the radiant world. The valley became but a setting for the cabin, full of all possibilities of tragedy.

They crowded into its single room all together, and stared round the tiny place in silence. A very rough table stood before the fireplace, in which was a half-burned log almost buried in willow leaves. There was a single stool near, and on the table a tiny cup and plate. Rags of blanket fluttered from the bunk, also filled with willow leaves; and little wild creatures seemed to have nested there.

Maxime moved about softly, lifting things and replacing them. "The cabin has been thus a long time," he said, "and it is strange. The cup, the plate, the knife upon the plate, and the pot upon the hearth." He stirred the drifted leaves with his foot. "He must have left in a hurry, this one."

"And never returned?" asked Elliot.

"And never returned," said Maxime. His voice sounded hollow in the empty room—empty for all their presence.

"Well," said Elliot, "this has rather spoiled my valley for me. But the cabin will make a stunning picture. I'll get out my sketching things and we'll stay here a week. I haven't touched a canvas since we left Lac de Paradis." He shook his head; for it was a pleasant fiction with him that he paid for his long summer wanderings by the pictures he painted during the time. "I'll do all my work on the spot," he was wont to say. Lucien, in whose care the canvases travelled, rolled his fine eyes heavenward.

Elliot set to work at his picture that afternoon; and more and more, as he worked upon it, the desolate spirit of the log-cabin took possession of him. The blank of the doorway, the arched willow about it, the mystery and sorrow that hangs upon all forsaken homes, began to grow upon his little canvas; and depression grew upon his spirits accordingly.

Maxime and Lucien were also depressed. For there was a haunting something about the valley—shadow seen in the mists at dawn, a ghost that lingered and sniffed by the blank doorway at night, a presence and a rustle among the giant ferns. Elliot never saw this haunting thing; but the woodsmen did.

"It must be a wolf," said Maxime in an unconvinced voice. "I found tracks near the pond."

"It behaves as no wolf ever behaved before, then," replied Lucien, drawing in his breath. "This thing and this empty cabin; I do not like them, I." They took to whispering together by the fire at night, and Lucien slept with his gun in his hand. "Though it would be little use against this," he explained gloomily. Elliot did not believe.

But he awoke one misty morning to see the gray shape of Lucien's imagination showing clear against the trees. Lucien knelt beside him, his gun at his shoulder, his finger upon the trigger. But instantly Maxime reached across and jerked the barrel down. The bullet buried itself in the earth a few yards away. Like a blot of mist the gaunt gray shape melted into the thickets.

"Don't you see?" cried Lucien furiously. "It was the thing—the wolf."

"I saw," returned Maxime. "I saw. It was not a wolf. It was a dog." He looked from one to the other. "It was Antoine Sarrasin's dog," he finished quietly.

Lucien's mouth came open slowly.

"Yes," went on Maxime in response to their unspoken questions; "there could not be two dogs like that. His tail was ringed with gray and white, ringed like a coon's. I saw it quite plainly. It was Antoine's dog."

"Then—" began Elliot excitedly.

"Yes," said Maxime, nodding his head slowly; "that cabin was also Antoine's. And the dog, having no master to be faithful to, was faithful—Mon Dieu! for how long?—to the place where his master had lived. Le pauvre chien!"

"And Antoine?" whispered Lucien.

"The good God knows," answered Maxime, "and perhaps the dog. Which means that we never shall."

"I am going to look at the cabin again," said Elliot.

They found nothing new. Only, on the bottom of the tin plate a faint "A. S.," scratched with the point of a knife. "We shall learn nothing more," said Maxime. "When do we leave this place, m'sieur?"

"But the dog?" said Elliot. "We can't leave the dog, poor beast. I hope you have not scared him off, Lucien."

"He will come back," said Maxime, "and when we go, we will take him with us."

Elliot doubted. But one day, which he had spent fishing with Lucien at a lake a few miles distant, he returned to the valley to find Maxime sitting with his arm round the neck of a gaunt gray collie. The dog bristled at the sight of Elliot, but in silence; and shrank—but nearer to Maxime.

"How on earth have you worked this miracle?" demanded Elliot, wide-eyed, halting at a discreet distance. There was something very wolf-like in the furtive, savage gray face so near Maxime's. "Why, the poor beast must be little better than wild, now!"

"That is right, m'sieur," said Maxime through a cloud of rank tobacco smoke; "do not test him yet too far. Eh? There was no miracle. He is shy, but he has not forgotten. He is very lonely. Perhaps the smell was familiar." He puffed again at his impossible tobacco. "He will not leave us again," continued Maxime, patting the gaunt back, "but do not take any notice of him."

For three days the collie drifted about their camp, a silent, restless shadow. The third night he came near the fire to sleep. Maxime was triumphant. "You see," he said.

In the morning Elliot tripped over him; and in a second the dog had swerved like a snake and gripped him by the ankle. But in another second the grip of the long jaws relaxed, and he proffered abject apology with uplifted paw, and pleading eyes from which the fierceness had gone.

"You see," said Maxime, "he is remembering. Eh! I wish he could remember a little more." But the dog, now that his dumb craving for human companionship was fulfilled, ignored the empty cabin that had been his master's home, wherein his master had lived. And he could not tell, even if he knew, where or how his master had ceased to live.

When the day came for them to leave that valley, of loveliness, the dog followed closely at Maxime's heels. They halted on the rise of the ground, where the young birch broke like a silvery surf against the black barrier of pine. Behind and below them lay the valley, the willows whitening in a soft breeze that ran in waves across the grass. Brown and crimson dragon-flies flashed like jewels across the open, and in the thickets was a happy noise of birds. But the black square of the cabin seemed to dominate even this beauty.

"There it will stand," said Maxime suddenly, "for years, maybe. The snow and the leaves will drift into it. And the grass and the briars will lift out their hands to it and claim it. It will withstand them—a little while. Then the roof will fall, and the walls will fall. And then there will be nothing but a few logs for the green things to cover. Yet that, and this," he touched the dog's gray head, "are all that is left to us of a man's life."

"Ugh!" said Lucien. "It is all very triste. I do not like such things, I."

For a little time they went on in silence. Then:

"What shall you tell Gabrielle?" asked Lucien, as if the thought had just struck him.

Maxime's face hardened. "I shall give her the dog," he said curtly, "but there is nothing to tell her. Nothing at all. It is a lost trail."

"But Antoine may come back," urged Lucien.

Maxime shrugged his shoulders. "He will come back," he said; "he will come back, I think, when the woods, like the sea, give up their dead. But I do not know. We know nothing. It is a lost trail."

British Diplomacy

LEAVING Germany apart, there seems to be a circle of friendly relations of which England is the centre and great impulse that includes all Europe. Surely in this work of recent years and months is to be seen diplomatic accomplishment on a great scale. It gives point to the fact that there are no greater diplomats in the world than the English. Because of the John Bull idea we are accustomed to associate force and bluster and blundering with Great Britain. There is all that, but all the time, and under all circumstances, there is no people on earth more deft in diplomacy and quicker at making the right combination at the right time than the English. In all this America is conspicuous by her absence. Our traditionary suspicion of foreign alliances or formal understandings, which seem to our sense to spell entanglement, has kept us out.—Indianapolis News.