

A TERRIBLE RECONNOISSANCE.

[A STORY FOR BOYS IN THE YOUTH'S COMPANION.]

While the surveys for the Great Northern Railway were being made in Montana, the chief engineer ordered two sturdy young Scotch Canadians, Alexander Stuart and Donald Mac Tavish, to leave camp on the Two Medicine River and make a reconnaissance, or preliminary examination, between Marjos River and the Flat-head River. The distance was forty miles, through a dense fir forest.

Their instructions stated that they would be met on the main fork of the Flathead by a party of engineers under Aleck Stuart's brother, well furnished with supplies. Hence the young men carried nothing except their blankets, small axes and knives, with matches, pork, hardtack and tea for four days' journey. They expected to get through in three days.

But the forest soon proved to be of extraordinary density, and though they put themselves on half rations on the second day, they had not a morsel to eat on the evening of the sixth night, when they reached a stream which they supposed to be the Flathead.

They now lost a whole day, first in attempts to catch fish without bait, then in searching for bait. Knowing that fish bite well at the white grubs often found in decaying trees, they split seven fallen trunks without finding one grub. With their caps they caught two large spotted butterflies and a dragon fly, all of which the fish took off the hooks.

Frantic with hunger and disappointment, MacTavish proposed to cut a strip out of the skin of his breast and put it on for bait, but Stuart persuaded him to refrain from submitting himself to the loss of blood.

On the eighth day they tried to make their way down-stream, but found the thickets and windfalls of the shore almost impassable to men in their weakened condition. About noon they began to build a raft, and embarked on it next morning, the ninth day, when they had been sixty hours without any food, after six previous days on half rations.

The mountain stream to which they committed themselves was very swift and cold; their raft was quite uncontrollable by the poles they had cut; they could do nothing but hold on to the withes with which they had bound their logs together. Time and again they were nearly scraped off the raft by overhanging trees, and frequently they bumped against boulders in rapids.

About noon, on smoothly turning a bend in the river, they saw a cloud of mist about a quarter of a mile down-stream and heard the low roar of a great fall. Now they gave themselves up as lost.

Above the fall the river broke into a rapid. This carried the men down almost to the brink, when their raft shot into an eddy so violently that it went under and they went off among tree-trunks, bark, branches and all the rubbish the eddy carried round and round.

Fortunately they were in shallow water. Without much difficulty they waded ashore, and sank down exhausted. When Aleck Stuart lifted his head to look round, his eyes fell on a little triangular white patch above the top of the low bluff on the opposite side of the stream.

unmistakable, for they pointed to their mouths and stomachs; they picked twigs and flected to chew them; they sank to the ground and lay as if dead to show their exhaustion.

Soon half a dozen hardtack flew barely across the stream, and as many more fell into the eddy. Then four small pieces of bacon landed safely. On these provisions Aleck and Donald broke their long fast, while his brother was devising a way of getting quickly across the stream.

He tied a stone to a fish-line and flung it with all his strength, but the line so rebounded that it fell into the eddy. Three times this occurred. Then Aleck said: "Donald, we just exactly have to wade out and try to catch the stone."

"Aye, just that," said Donald. "But what if the eddy takes the feet from under us and carries us into the current?" "Then we'll go over the fall."

"Aye, will we? But what else can we do?" "With that they put their hands on each other's shoulders and entered the water, beckoning with their free hands to signify that Jack Stuart should try another throw."

"Go back! Go back!" he yelled to them. "Wait a bit. We're making a bow and arrow." They could clearly hear his words on the breeze. Back they went and lay down side by side, watching. Both were aware that a strong bow could quickly knock a small fir tree in the course of the next half-hour a rude arrow flew across and carried with it the heavy fishing-line.

On this they hauled till it brought them a light rope, which was, in its turn, attached to one that seemed heavy enough to carry a man traveling hand over hand. They tied this rope firmly to the trunk of a tree. Then the men on the other side pulled it as taut as they thought safe for its strength, and secured it firmly on the bluff.

"Can you come across now?" shouted Jack Stuart. Aleck and Donald shook their heads. Not only were they much weakened by hunger, but the rope slanted slowly upward from their side to the other. It would be easier for some one to cross on the down slant to them.

Soon Jack Stuart undertook the adventure. Over one shoulder and under the other he carried a tump-line, or long leather carrying strap. It consisted of a tin pail with dry tea inside, a package of hot beans from the recent dinner, a loaf of "salt-rising" bread and a piece of boiled pork—the best rations the camp afforded.

As the athletic young engineer seized the rope and came on hand over hand, Aleck and Donald observed its sagging with anxiety. By the time Jack had come half-way across the stream his toes were in the water. Ten yards farther and his knees were in. The rapid raced around his legs and flew up in white crests, but still he came on.

He was constantly tempted farther by seeing that the rope appeared to rise toward the shore he was trying to attain. And still as he pursued his course the sagging rope let him deeper into the stream. It was tearing at his waist soon. All who looked on decided to see him turn from his bold and carried over the falls. But no man said a word. No man could come to his rescue.

falls, while still they gazed at the rapid to see where their young chief would come up. He astonished them all by coming up in the middle of the eddy, and coolly wading ashore through the driftwood.

"Why, Jack, man, how on earth?" cried Aleck, tottering to his brother. "How on earth what? How did I get into the eddy? Why, I hung on to this end of the rope, and of course the current swung me in. But I had a close shave. Well, you are a pair of egotists. And I'm afraid the bread is spoiled."

He took the bag from his shoulders and opened it. The bread was wet, but there was a large, dry piece in its centre. The tin pail had not lost its cover, and the tea was perfectly dry. The boiled pork was none the worse for the water.

Jack took his power match-box from his pocket, started a fire, and soon gave the wanderers a comforting cup of tea with toasted bread. "But how are you going to get back, Jack? And what are we to do?" "Do, man! Why, you're going across the river with me. Where? Why, below the falls. I've got a raft down there on smooth water."

"Why didn't you come across down there?" "Because I was in a hurry to reach you, seeing you starving. And who'd have imagined the rope would sag like that?"

Before night fell they were all safe in camp, and Jack was laying out another reconnaissance for his brother and Donald as calmly as though their experience was nothing extraordinary.

Churches and Votes. To the Editor of The Globe: Sir,—The Catholic vote, the hierarchy and clerical intimidation are very much in evidence since the election. The other day The Globe saw a private letter saying that 75 per cent. of the Catholic vote in a western constituency had changed over to the Conservative party within 18 hours before the election, and one item or another figures in the columns of that paper daily for our particular education.

There is another side to the story, and another portion of the community to whom a special edition might be dedicated. The Conservative candidate in South Victoria belongs to the Methodist Church, and used it without any scruple. His speakers on the platform did not hesitate to urge the voter to mark his ballot against George McHugh because he was a Roman Catholic, and this was used most assiduously in private canvases. Two ministers of the Methodist Church in Montreal used their pulpits on the Sunday before the election to the same end, and on the day before polling-day Dr. Vrooman, in an address at Little Britain, reminded the people that not alone had he "healed their sick, but he had taught their little ones in the Sunday School." He "belonged to their church"; he "wanted them to vote for him, and against a Roman Catholic, who could go to confession to his priest, and get rid of all his obligations and promises to them as a man and citizen." And how did they answer him? The Reform Protestant Township of Mariposa, which was good for an average majority of 250 for the Reform candidate, wheeled about in response to this appeal, and gave George McHugh the paltry majority of 88. I am not quarrelling with their right to do this; but suppose the Roman Catholics of Quebec or in many an Ontario constituency had behaved in a similar way. Why, we would have been doing the same thing to them as a man and citizen. And how did they answer him? The Reform Protestant Township of Mariposa, which was good for an average majority of 250 for the Reform candidate, wheeled about in response to this appeal, and gave George McHugh the paltry majority of 88.

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It can easily be established that in the majority of the constituencies they stood firm. Why is a private letter to be made the subject of an editorial note to prove the reverse of this fact? Let the other religious bodies also have their freedom from improper influences or receive their share of attention from The Globe.

HUNT O'LEARY. Lindsay, July 8. When we have a true love for God we never question His intentions, for we are convinced that He wills only what is for our good. An Irish Catholic Applicant. Ottawa Free Press:—Mr. J. L. Dowlin's many strong and influential friends are pressing his claims to the office of County Crown Attorney, rendered vacant by the resignation of Mr. N. A. Delcourt. M.P. Of Mr. Dowlin it may be said that he enjoys in a marked degree the confidence of the community, as well as the respect and esteem of the members of the legal profession, and his undoubted ability and experience at the bar eminently qualify him for the position. Mr. Dowlin has always been an ardent advocate of the Reform cause, and his efforts on behalf of that cause entitles him to the consideration of his party. It may be safely said that Mr. Dowlin's appointment to the office will be a most popular one.

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