

caught already, irresolute as to whether he should fight or flee, and again he was knocked headlong, a yard or two further down the slope. His was not the dauntless spirit that most of his kindred would have shown in such a case, and he would willingly have made his escape at once if he had seen his way quite clear to do so. But at this moment, while he hesitated, he heard a man's voice, shouting loudly, and saw the tall backwoodsman running toward him up the hill. This sight turned his alarm into a blind panic. His feet seemed to acquire wings as he tore madly away among the thickets. When he was hidden by the leafage, his path could still be followed by the crashing of dry branches and the clattering of loosened stones.

The woodsman had seen the whole incident, and was wild with enthusiasm over the prowess of the prize. Bears had been the most dreaded scourge of the settlement sheep-farmers, but now, as he proudly said to himself, he had a ram that could "lick a b'ar silly!" He bore no grudge on account of his discomfiture that morning beside the spring, but rather thought of it with appreciation as a further token of his favorite's cunning and prowess; and he foresaw, with a chuckle, that there were painful surprises in store for the bears of the Ringwaak range. He had made a wise purchase, indeed, when he saved that splendid beast from the butcher.

Hearing the man's voice, the ram had halted in dismay just when he was about to charge the bear the third time. He had no mind to go again into captivity. But, on the other hand, for all his lordliness of spirit, he felt that a man was his master. At first he lowered his head threateningly, as if about to attack; but when the backwoodsman shouted at him there was an authority in those tones which he could not withstand, and he sullenly drew aside. With a good-natured laugh the man picked the lamb up in his arms whereupon the mother stepped timidly to his side, evidently having no fear. The man rubbed her nose kindly, and stroked her ears, and gave her something from his pocket which she ate greedily; and, as the ram looked on, the anger gradually faded out of his yellow eyes. At length the man turned and walked slowly down the hill, carrying the lamb. The ewe followed, crowding as close to him as she could, and stumbling as she went because her eyes were fixed upon her little one.

The ram hesitated. He looked at the hillside, the woods, and the sky beginning to grow chill with the onrush of twilight. Then he looked at the retreating figures. Suddenly he saw his world growing empty and desolate. With an anxious bleat he trotted after the ewe, and took his docile place a few feet behind the man's heels. The man looked over his shoulders and a smile of pleasure softened his rugged face. In a few moments the little procession disappeared in the woods, moving toward the settlement and Ringwaak Hill was left solitary in the dusk, with the lonely notes of the night-hawks twanging over it.

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"Forward! Our fortune's made!

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Bargains to left of them—

Front of them—back of them—

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What they bought none knew well.

Weak ones grew faint and fell;

Yet into the crush pell-mell

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