

He was silent. He did not like to tell his beloved wife his fears, for he felt certain the sound they heard was that of wolves.

Lashing the horses until they seemed to fly over the frozen ground, he tried with all his speed to outstrip the fast approaching pack.

"On, on, good horses! for your lives, on!"

Away they dashed, with a rapidity that threatened to overturn the sleigh.

"Casper, Casper, why this fearful haste?" asked Isabel in trembling accents.

He bent down and whispered, "The wolves!"

She uttered a cry of of terror, and fainted away.

Casper grasped his knife in one hand and his pistol with the other, and resolved to protect her with his life.

The wolves had by this time come to within twenty yards of the sleigh. Casper fired in among the pack, and two wolves fell. They were quickly devoured by their companions.

The wolves now completely surrounded the sleigh, and Casper grasped his knife, and killed two more.

Isabel, when she recovered from the shock, bravely snatched up the pistols her husband had dropped, and quickly loading them, fired on the surrounding pack, Casper still hewing them down on all sides.

Some of the pack had now reached the horses, and one fastened his teeth into one poor creature's throat. Still the sleigh dashed on. The house could now be seen in the distance, and in another ten minutes they would have reached it, and so have been safe, when one poor horse fell from the effects of the bite of the wolf. The other still kept bravely on, although it was quite certain that he must soon drop, from the weight of the dead horse, and the many wolves which surrounded them.

Casper was stabbing away at the beasts, when a hasty exclamation made him turn his head. A great brute had caught Isabel by the arm and was dragging her out of the sleigh. He quickly went to the assistance of his beloved wife, and not a moment too soon, as the brute had hold of her, and was pulling her out with all his force. The knife of Casper soon found a place in his heart.

They were now about fifty yards from home, and in a few moments would be safe. They dashed up to the house, and quickly shut the door. They were safe, but a dismal howl outside showed that the faithful animal which had drawn them so well had become a prey to the wolves.

THE DIME OTIS DID NOT EARN.

There were so many queer things in Cousin Jack's trunk that it took Otis some time to learn the names of them all. That first forenoon he kept the older boy busy answering questions. But Jack was good-natured, and rather enjoyed explaining matters to his wide-eyed little cousin.

Jack's fishing-tackle was brought out and admired. The appearance of his tennis racket was the signal for a swarm of eager questions. His baseball outfit, with the catcher's gloves and mask, came near planting a pang of envy in Otis' heart. Then

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from the bottom of his trunk, Jack fished out something that made Otis open his eyes more widely still.

"I say," he cried, "what's that?" "It's my butterfly net," Jack explained. "Didn't you ever see one before?" He handed the deep gauze bag over to Otis and let him examine it. "I use it to catch butterflies in," he went on. "I'm a collector, you know."

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"A collector? What's that?" It had been a long time since Otis had learned so many new things in a single morning.

"Why, I catch different kinds of butterflies and mount them. I've got my collection with me, and I'll show it to you some day."

Otis did not understand what Jack meant by "mounting" butterflies, and he was opening his mouth to enquire when he caught sight of something new, and asked another question instead. It was not till they were leaving the room that his mind went back to the subject of butterflies.

"Oh, Jack!" he exclaimed, "May I take your net some day? Maybe I could catch some butterflies for you."

"Why, of course you can. Take it whenever you like. This is the way you use it," explained Jack, picking up the net.

"You just scoop 'em right in you see." Then he added generously, "If you happen to catch any nice ones that I haven't got already, I'll pay you for them."

The offer did not mean a great deal to Jack, who had rather too much pocket money for a boy, but pennies were scarce with Otis, and his cheeks glowed at his cousin's words.

That very afternoon he took the butterfly net and began his hunt. But though he raced about till the big drops of sweat were rolling down his flushed face, he did not capture a single butterfly. The pretty, graceful things sailed away without an extra flutter of their dainty wings. Otis almost thought they were laughing at him. "Oh, never mind," said Jack good-naturedly, when Otis came home looking rather discouraged. "You'll learn how to use it after while and then you'll have better luck."

But it was almost a week before Otis' "luck" came. It was a sunshiny afternoon, and Jack had some of the older boys upstairs in his room, exhibiting his possessions. Otis knew that, even though Jack did not consider him too young for a companion, the others did, and he took the butterfly net and went off into the fields by himself.

It was not ten minutes later that a big green moth fluttered from a clump of bushes near by, and flew past Jack's head. He was rather clumsy in comparison with the dancing butterflies, and it was not a very difficult matter to scoop him up with the net. He clung to the gauze, fanning his wings slowly back and forth, and seeming not at all afraid.

Otis was very proud of his first capture. He covered the top of the net over so that the prisoner should not escape, and marched straight home to show his prize to Jack.

He had forgotten all about the big boys upstairs in Jack's room, and when he burst into the midst of the chattering group, he stopped short, and the color came up into his face. Then he saw something on the bed which drove all other thoughts from his mind. Several large, low boxes with glass covers were spread about, and in them were rows and rows of butterflies. Their wings were extended so as to show their beautiful markings, and they were fastened to corks by long pins running through their bodies.

"Well, Otis," said Jack's pleasant voice "what have you got there?"

Otis held up the net for him to see, but without speaking a word. Jack came forward, and he gave a long whistle as he caught sight of his small cousin's capture.

"Good for you, Otis," he cried. "I've wanted one of those fellows for a long time, and haven't run across one. I guess I'll have to pay you a dime for that."

"Are you going to stick a pin through him?" Otis asked, and his face was sober.

"Not till he's dead," Jack explained,

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quickly.—"I'll drop something on his head out of a bottle that will kill him. And then I'll stretch out his wings and pin him to a cork."

Otis looked down at the green wings which he could see quivering through the gauze, and then he looked at his cousin. "I guess I'd rather not sell him," he said. "I guess I'll let him go."

"Let him go?" repeated Jack in astonishment.

"I'd rather he'd be alive," Otis explained firmly. "He's so pretty, and I guess he likes to be out of doors. I don't want him to be in a box with a pin stuck through him."

One of the boys who had come to see Jack, laughed unpleasantly.

"I tell you what you can do," he said. "Just stand round when Otis lets him go, and then catch him again."

Jack's chin was up in the air.

"I s'pose I could do it," he said, "if I liked to play that sort of tricks. But you see, I don't. The moth belongs to Otis, and if he wants to let him go, it's all right."

Ten minutes later Otis was back in the fields again, the grass and bushes about him, and the sunshine streaming down from the blue sky. He put his hand into the butterfly net and the green moth climbed upon his finger. The beautiful wings stirred a little, but the moth seemed in no haste to be gone.

"I guess he knows I wouldn't hurt him," thought Otis, his heart swelling. Then he bent his head and spoke softly, "You'd better fly away now. Somebody else might come and catch you again."

He shook his hand gently, and the green moth fluttered away. Otis watched him till he grew a faint speck and vanished in the distance. And it seemed to the boy that this happy little life, saved to the sunshine and out-of-door world, was worth very much more than the dime he had failed to earn.

HATTIE LUMMIS.



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