Fighting Fierce Forest Fires in the Northwest

Washington, July 28.—What are the forest rangers doing to protect the national forests from destruction by fire? Western men know who have travelled through the timbered regions what losses by fires annually are heavy. Immense areas are devastated each twelve-month. Millions of feet of lumber thus are destroyed.

One of the functions of the forest service is to prevent these losses, and the ranger is presumed to be one of the forestry fire department and to do for his wide scope of country what the fire department does for his district in the city.

Until very recently forest fires in the western United States have been rightly reckoned among the most destructive of natural agencies. Recent extended observation and study show that fires are likely to be started in many ways. In some parts of the west lightning probably starts more fires than any other cause. Electric storms, passing over the mountainous regions, accompanied by but very little precipitation, almost invariably leave a number of fires in their wake. Among other natural causes may be mentioned the sparks struck by boulders rolling down the steep mountain sides. Indians claim to have seen fires started by the friction of lodged trees constantly rubbing against each other in the wind. Forest regions through which railroads pass are subject to numerous fires originating from locomotive sparks. Prospectors and settlers, in burning brush and debris to clear the ground for prospecting or cultivation, sometimes permit the fire to escape control. Camp fires are sometimes left burning by careless campers. Cigar stubs and unextinguished matches, carelessly dropped in the woods, have resulted in destructive forest fires. In some localities Indians have been known to fire the woods in order to drive game from cover. The number of fires maliciously set has become so small as to be almost nil.

The Firemen of the Forests.

The forest regions in the western part of the country which are under direct control of the government are patrolled by a body of trained forest rangers whose most important duties during the dry season of the year are the discovery and extinguishing of forest fires. These men are generally mounted, although in some localities there are so few trails and the forest growth is so dense that the use of horses is impracticable. When patrolling for fires, the ranger usually selects the ridge trails and higher ground generally. From time to time he makes the ascent of neighboring peaks, which gives a wide view of the surrounding country. In order to be able to proceed to a fire as soon as it is discovered without the necessity of first returning to his headquarters, the ranger usually has with him a pack horse carrying provisions and supplies sufficient to last a week. In some forests railroad lines are patrolled by rangers on railway speeders. While fires are liable to start anywhere along a railroad, the greatest danger is along the steeper grades, where the locomotives work under forced draft and where the mountain sides rise abruptly from the track. Under such conditions, of course, the locomotives emit a great quantity of sparks which may find lodgment in the inflammable debris of the forest floor before they are extinguished. The systems of patrol adopted for particular forests depend very largely upon local conditions. In general each ranger is assigned to a particular district for which he is directly responsible. From his lookout points he is able to view a considerable part of the neighboring districts and his general instructions require him to go to any fire within reach, whether within his own district or not. The patrol must be especially vigilant after an electric storm and must not be relaxed for some time even though no fires appear at first to have been started. Very frequently fires started in this manner smolder in the humus and decayed logs for a week or more before they gain headway. Under such conditions the smoke is dissipated before it rises above the tree tops, and can not be seen from a distance.

How the Fires Start.

Fires started from natural causes are likely to occur anywhere in the forest. They may be started on rolling or level ground, in canyons or gulches, on steep mountain sides and even at the tops of mountains. Each situation presents its own problems which must be solved quickly. The first step, of course, is to reach and reconnoiter the fire. In many cases before the fire can be reached a ranger must work his way through almost impenetrable windfalls, ford swift streams, clamber up steep mountain sides and fight his way through miles of dense undergrowth.

Forest fires vary greatly in severity according to weather conditions and the amount of inflammable material in the course of the fire. Roughly speaking, fires may be divided into two classes, ground fires and top fires. Two types of ground fires occur. The easiest to control are those confined to the humus and grass. The other type occurs in windfalls and frequently proves very difficult to control. Top fires may also be divided into two types. In the first, the fire is carried into the tops of individual trees through the moss and low-hanging branches coming in contact with a ground fire. In the other type the fire is driven by the wind through the tree tops generally as well as through the windfalls and undergrowth. Such fires are exceedingly difficult to control and the efforts of the rangers on fire patrol are directed chiefly toward the discovery and extinguishing of forest fires before they reach this stage.

The work of fighting forest fires involves two phases—control and execution. A fire is under control as soon as the work has progressed to the extent that the fire fighters are able to prevent its further spread. Fighting a forest fire is a matter of experienced judgment coupled with skill and endurance. Inexperienced persons can be trusted to do only certain kinds of work in connection with forest fires, and in some cases they may do more harm than good.

The Ranger Must Act Quickly.

Immediately upon arriving at a fire the ranger's judgment is put to a test. Obviously, he must do one of two things—begin work alone or ride for assistance. If telephone lines have been built he may phone for aid. If the fire is small he probably extinguishes it without difficulty. If it has gained headway, however, the character of the forest, the topography of the locality, the probable weather conditions for some days to come, the likelihood of other rangers sighting the fire, etc. Contrary to the popular belief, one experienced man can do a great deal of effective work entirely alone even against a severe fire. For work on the larger fires, however, help is generally secured either from other rangers or through the hiring of special assistance.

Before the work of fighting a forest fire can be intelligently directed, it is necessary to note the direction in which the fire is advancing as determined by the wind and the topography of the locality. A complete circuit of the fire must be made in order to determine the points of greatest danger and to locate the places where work is most likely to be effective. The camp of the fire fighters must be located as near as possible to their work. This is frequently a difficult matter. The fire may be near the top of a steep mountain with the nearest water a thousand feet below.

Fighting the Fire.

The fire seldom advances in an even line. In most cases the line is very irregular with some points far in advance of the main fire. Work should always first be begun on these advanced points with the object of getting the other portions of the line under control as fast as they come abreast.

If the fire is not traveling rapidly, it is sometimes advisable to work close to the line. The fire fighters are equipped with axes, shovels, mattocks, brush hooks, saws and any other tools that may be available for use on the particular fire. Sand and dirt are thrown on the burning logs and debris along the fire line in order to smother the flames and smoke. Water is seldom available, although in one instance a ranger cleverly diverted a mountain stream across the front of the forest fire, thus saving a great deal of backbreaking labor.

With the heat and smoke greatly abated by these means, it is possible to work quite close to the fire. Smoldering logs are pushed back into the burning. Fallen trees afire at one end are sawed in two. Spruce and fir trees with low-hanging limbs are stripped of their lower branches in order that the fire may not get into the tops and throw sparks about the forest. In the meanwhile a trench is dug in front of the line of fire.

The trench must be dug down to the mineral soil and every root and decayed log must be cut clean. The soil and rubbish removed from the trench is thrown back into the fire for the purpose of smothering the flames and for the additional reason that there may be smouldering sparks in the rubbish which might undo all the work if thrown on the outer side of the trench. In digging the trench it is absolutely essential that no fire be smouldering in the humus on the outer side. It is impossible to tell by sight.

The only safe way to detect the presence or absence of fire in the decaying vegetable matter is by feeling with the bare hand. Meanwhile, other points of the fire line are advancing through the woods. The same work is undertaken in front of these and gradually the different parts of the trench are connected until the fire is brought to a standstill along the entire front.

By Aid of the Firebreak.

If a forest fire is spreading rapidly however, the work assumes a different character. It is impossible to work close to the fire, for as fast as a portion of the firebreak is completed the fire sweeps around the ends and the work is lost. In such cases it is necessary to begin far enough in advance of the fire to insure sufficient time to complete the firebreak before the fire drives the fighters from their work.

The firebreak is laid out so as to take advantage of every natural check that can be brought against the fire. Parts of roads, trails, creeks, glades, knolls and ridges, thinly timbered parts of the forest, etc., are connected into a continuous firebreak. The seedlings, saplings and brush are cut and thrown toward the approaching fire. A trench is dug to stop the ground fire.

Trees whose tops or trunks are likely to be burned are felled with the tops towards the fire. One of the objects in throwing the debris on this side is to furnish a large amount of combustible material for starting a backfire.

Another reason is to avoid the danger of a spark setting a fire on the other side of the firebreak. Sparks alighting on the forest floor on the outside can be readily extinguished. Should all this debris, however, be littered about on the outer side, a spark might set a fire on the wrong side of the firebreak that would require a great deal of work to extinguish and which might possibly undo all the work accomplished.

Backfiring Next Begun.

As soon as the firebreak is completed, backfiring is begun. A row of fires is started on the inside of the firebreak, with the object of burning the inflammable material between the firebreak and the line of the advancing fire. It is one of the perversities of nature that back fires are sometimes very hard to set. The fierce heat of the forest fire parches everything in front of it for many rods, and when the fire approaches the spot trees and logs burst into flame without apparent contact. Along the firebreak away from this intense heat, however, it is often difficult to get backfires under way as rapidly as desired. The contrary direction of the wind increases the difficulty. It is usually necessary to start several rows of fires in the space between the firebreak and the forest fire. At night is the best time for backfiring, as there is usually much less wind and it is consequently much easier to place and handle the fires. When the forst fire reaches the strip burned by the backfires it necessarily dies out.

Work Best at Night.

In addition to the work in front of the forest fire, close watch must be kept on the flanks and in the rear. Ordinarily it is comparatively easy to keep a fire from spreading laterally, but unless a close watch is kept it sometimes breaks from the side and sweeps around the end of the firebreak in front. On steep mountain slopes exceptional care must be taken of the sides and rear. As the supports are burned from beneath the logs and snags, they go tumbling down the mountain setting fresh fires on the mountain side and down in the timbered canyons. It is often necessary to trench completely around such fires. In such cases the trench in the rear must be deep and wide enough to catch the burning embers released from above.

Much of the work of the fire fighting can be done best at night. This is especially true of work which has to be done close to the fire. The wind usually dies down in the evening, and in the cool dampness of the night the fire burns much less fiercely. A patrol of the firebreak for fires set on the outside by sparks from the burning should be kept up at night for the reason that the sparks and the tiny fires started by them can then be more readily detected and extinguished. Night work in the mountains, however, is very difficult owing to the roughness of the ground. Clambering about the steep slopes in the darkness or in the uncertain light of the forest fire is often a dangerous matter.

Even after a fire is under control, the danger is not past. Every smouldering stick within the burned area is capable of being fanned by the wind into a blazing brand which may throw sparks across the firebreak. Each spark is a potential forest fire and those which do not die out at once must be patiently hunted down and extinguished. As soon as the ground and ashes have cooled, the fire fighters enter the burned area and throw sand dirt over the smouldering logs and stumps. Burning trees not yet fallen are felled in order that they may not throw sparks into the neighboring forest. This work continues until no further danger appears to exist. Even after a fire appears to be entirely extinguished it sometimes bursts again into life. To guard against such a contingency, however, the rangers include the scene of the fire in their patrol for several days after the regular work of fighting and extinguishing the fire has ceased.

Faith—An Address Delivered by W. J. Bryan at Various Colleges

The following is the substance of the address delivered by Mr. Bryan during the last three months at the graduating exercises at several United States universities.

Faith exerts a controlling influence over our lives. If it is argued that works are more important than faith, I reply that faith comes first, works afterwards. Until one believes, he does not act, and in accordance with his faith, so will be his deeds.

Abraham, called of God, went forth in faith to establish a race and a religion. As a result of this faith a race has been produced not surpassed in its achievements by any other race in history, and as a result of his faith nearly four hundred millions of human beings are adherents of a monotheistic religion. It was faith that led Columbus to discover America, and faith again that conducted the early settlers to Jamestown, the Dutch to New York and the Pilgrims to Plymouth Rock. Faith has led the pioneer across deserts and through trackless forests, and faith has brought others in his footsteps to lay in our land the foundations of a civilization the highest that the world has known.

I might draw an illustration from the life of each one of you. You have faith in education, and that faith is behind your study; you have faith in this institution, and that faith brought you here; your parents and friends have had faith in you and have helped you to your present position. Without faith we are told it is impossible to please God, and I may add that without faith it is impossible to meet the expectations of those who are most interested in you. Let me present this subject under four heads:

Faith in Yourselves.

First—You must have faith in yourselves. Not that you should carry confidence in yourselves to the point of egotism, and yet egotism is not the worst possible fault. My father was wont to say that if a man had the big head, you could whittle it down, but that if he had the little head there was no hope for him. If you have the big head, others will help you reduce it, but if you have the little head, they can not help you. You must believe that you can do things or you will not undertake them. Those who lack faith attempt nothing and therefore can not possibly succeed; those with great faith attempt the seemingly impossible and by attempting prove what man can do.

But you can not have faith in yourselves unless you are conscious that you are prepared for your work. If one is feeble in body, he can not have the confidence in his physical strength that the athlete has, and as physical strength is necessary one is justified in devoting to exercise and to the strengthening of the body such time as may be necessary.

Intellectual training is also necessary, and more necessary than it used to be. When but few had the advantages of a college education, the lack of such advantages was not so apparent. Now when so many of the lawyers, physicians, journalists and even business men, are college graduates, one can not afford to enter any field without the best possible intellectual preparation. When one comes into competition with his fellows, he soon recognizes his own intellectual superiority or inferiority as compared with others. In China they have a very interesting bird contest. The singing lark is a very popular bird there, and as you go along the streets of a Chinese city you see Chinamen are airing their birds. These singing birds are entered in contests, and the contests are decided by the birds themselves. If, for instance a dozen are entered, they all begin to sing at once, but as they sing, one after another recognizes that it is outclassed and gets down off its perch, puts its head under its wing and will not sing any more. At last there is just one bird left singing, and it sings with an enthusiasm that shows that it recognizes its victory. So it is with all intellectual contests. Put twenty men in a room and let them discuss any important question. At first all will take part in the discussion, but as the discussion proceeds, one after another drops out until finally two are left in debate, one on one side and one on the other. The rest are content to have their ideas presented by those who can present them best. If you are going to have faith, therefore, in yourselves, you must be prepared to meet your competitors upon an equal plane, and if you are prepared, they will be conscious of it as well as you.

A high purpose is a necessary part of your preparations. You can not afford to put a low purpose in competition with a high one. If you go out to work from a purely selfish standpoint, you will be ashamed to stand in the presence of those who have higher aims and nobler ambitions. Have faith in yourselves, but to have faith you must be prepared for your work, and this preparation must be moral and intellectual as well as physical.

Faith in Mankind.

Second—Have faith in mankind. The great fault of our scholarship is that it is not sufficiently sympathetic. It holds itself aloof from the struggling masses. It is too often cold and cynical. It is better to trust your fellowmen and be occasionally deceived than to be distrustful and live alone. Mankind deserves to be trusted. There is something good in everyone and that good responds to sympathy. If you speak to the multitude and they do not respond, do not despise them, but rather examine what you have said. If you speak from your heart, you will speak to their hearts, and they can tell very quickly whether you are interested in them or simply in yourself. The heart of mankind is sound; the sense of justice is universal. Trust it appeal to it, do not violate it. People differ in race characteristics, in national traditions, in language, in ideas of government, and in forms of religion, but at heart they are very much alike. I fear the plutocracy of wealth; I respect the plutocracy of learning; I thank God for the democracy of the heart. You must love if you would be loved. "They loved Him because He first loved them"—this is the verdict pronounced where men have unselfishly labored for the welfare of the whole people. Link yourselves in sympathy with your fellowmen; mingle with them; know them and you will trust them and they will trust you. If you are stronger than others, bear heavier loads; if you are more capable than others, show it by your willingness to perform a larger service.

Third—If you are going to accomplish anything in this country, you must have faith in our form of government, and there is every reason why you should have faith in it. It is the best form of government ever conceived by the mind of man, and it is spreading throughout the world. It is best, not because it is perfect, but because it can be made as perfect as the people deserve to have. It is a people's government, and it reflects the virtue and intelligence of the people. As the people make progress in virtue and in intelligence, the government ought to approach more and more nearly to perfection. Not that it will ever be free from faults, because it must be administered by human beings, and imperfection is to be expected in the work of human beings.

Jefferson said a century ago that there was naturally two parties in every country, one which drew to itself those who trusted the people, the other those who distrusted the people. That was true when Jefferson said it, and it is true today. In every country there is a party which is endeavoring to obstruct each step toward popular government, and it is the dying party. In this country the tendency is constantly toward more popular government, and every effort which has for its object the bringing of the government into closer touch with the people is sure of ultimate triumph.

We know that a grain of wheat planted in the ground will, under the influence of sunshine and rain, send forth a blade and then a stalk, and then the full head, and we know that there is behind the grain of wheat a force irresistible and constantly at work. There is behind moral economy and political truth a force equally irresistible and always operating, and just as we may expect the harvest in due season, we may be sure of the triumph of these eternal forces that make for man's uplifting. Have faith in your form of government, for it rests upon a growing idea, and if you will but attach yourself to that idea, you will grow with it.

But the subject presents itself in another aspect. You must not only have faith in yourselves, in humanity and in the form of government under which we live, but if you would do a great work, you must have faith in God. Do not call me a preacher, for I am but a layman; yet I am not willing that the minister shall monopolize the blessings of Christianity, and I do not know of any moral precept binding upon the preacher behind the pulpit that is not binding upon those who occupy the pews. And I do not know of any moral truth binding upon the Christian whose acceptance would not be helpful to everyone. I am not speaking from the minister's standpoint but from the observation of every day life when I say that there is a wide difference between the desire to live so that men will applaud you and the desire to live so that God will be satisfied with you. Man needs the inner strength that comes from faith in God and belief in His constant presence. The man who is trying to be good so that men will see him is sure to come upon the time when he thinks that the world is not looking and that he can take a vacation. Then he falls. The man who believes that God's eye is ever upon him and endeavors to live as in the sight of God, is not looking for a vacation, and is not so apt to stumble. We are weak enough in the presence of temptation even when fortified by the faith of God. How helpless and hopeless we are if we do not admit responsibility to a personal God.

Man needs faith in God, therefore, to strengthen him in his hours of trial, and he needs it to give him courage to do the work of life. How can one fight for a principle unless he believes in the triumph of the right? How can he believe in the triumph of the right if he does not believe that God stands back of the truth and that God is able to bring victory to truth? The man of faith, believing that every word spoken for truth will have its influence and that no blow struck for righteousness is struck in vain, fights on without asking whether he is to fall in the beginning of the battle or to live to join in the shouts of triumph. He knows not whether he is to live for the truth or to die for it, and if he has the faith he ought to have, he is as ready to die for it as to live for it.

Faith will not only give you strength when you fight for righteousness, but your faith will bring dismay to your enemies. There is power in the presence of an honest man who does right because it is right and dares to do the right in the face of all opposition, and has been true through all history that "One with God shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight."

If your preparation is complete so that you feel conscious of your ability to do great things; if you have faith in your fellow men and become a co-laborer with them in the raising of the general level of society; if you have faith in our form of government an seek to purge it of its imperfections so as to make it more and more acceptable to our own people and to the oppressed of other nations; and if in addition you have faith in God and in the triumph of the right no one can set limits to your achievements. This is the greatest of all the ages in which to live. The railroads and the telegraph wires have brought the corners of the earth close together, and it is easier today for one to be helpful to the whole world than it was a few centuries ago to be helpful to the inhabitants of a single valley. This is the age of great opportunity and of great responsibility. Let your faith be large, and let this large faith inspire you to perform a large service.

When God Forgot—The Week-End Storyette

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The sun burned like a yellow flame before the bellows. It hung so low in the desolate sky that it seemed almost within reach. Its rays burned with the fury of a furnace, and all earth beneath was parched and withered. The alkali plain was white and motionless. The clouds were leaden. Rising on one side was a great barrier of rock, gray, creased and chiselled by the changeless centuries. Beyond, immeasurable stretches of plain, dust white and stifling, heat flaming and scorching.

In the distance the heat rose from plain to sky like a cloud of steam. No tree, no bush, not even a leaf—nothing but the white choking earth. One who has crossed the seas has seen the rolling waves change from day to day, from green to blue and blue to green, sometimes capped with white, again as placid as an inland lake; but this was changeless plain, drear and cursed. Far up the wall of rock there was a place which looked as if some dripping molten mass had burned and seared a crevice. Closer, and it was a tiny stream of water, but hot and steaming, falling to a pool that seethed and bubbled like a witch's caldron.

Night came and the glare and heat of the sun was gone. A swift wind rushed across the plain, driving the dust before it like a cloud. The moon came out, but its silver light seemed but to mock. Stars twinkled from the deadened sky, but the light was dim and all unmeaning. Day again, and, as if there had been no yesterday, the sun burned with a new fury. And with it all there was an awful silence, a quiet so dread that all life seemed to have ceased and gone away, leaving but a plain of driving dust and hellish heat.

And into this there came a man. Walking with a slow, uncertain step of near defeated nature, he crouched close to the rock to keep from the withering heat that burned the dust until he walked a path of fire. His face was worn and haggard—thirst and hunger stalked along as his companions—but still shining in his eyes was the light of hope.

"I am tired of the world," he said to himself. "I will seek one of the lonely places of earth where man does not disturb, where I may live in companionship with my soul."

He had believed that those who lived nearest Nature were nearest God, and he was in God's desert. He leaned against the rock and drew his hand across his parched lips. His temples throbbed and he could hear his heart beat like one hears an engine in a mighty storm at sea. He scanned the plain—dust, heat beyond man's measuring. He looked far up the rocky wall and the sun's rays glanced from it like the flames from blazing coals. He gazed into the sky; it was meaningless and pitiless. The silence closed about him like doors of iron. No other thing in all the world but him seemed alive. He closed his eyes and a great heart-deep sigh shook his body. Then looking, scanning, searching the chartless, mapless, unknowable plain before him, he exclaimed:

"It is the country God forgot," and as he spoke a moving, indefinable something came before him in the distance. He threw himself to the ground and watched this dot of black, intensified by the limitless white, grow to shape. It grew, it moved, and came close, and he lifted his face from the dust, and exclaimed, almost aloud:

"It is a man!"

Still prostrate in the scorching dust, he watched the figure which, solitary on the horizon, appeared as if a giant. A man, another man, and in this place of death! He felt his blood grow warm. Days had grown into weeks and he had not spoken to a soul. He knew not now the sound of his own voice. Still he watched and the man came nearer and every moment of the watching seemed a day to him. Nearer, nearer he came, and then like a figure thrown upon a white canvas the other man appeared to him who lay prostrate in the sand. He was tall and straight as the mountain pine. His face was hard and his features stood out like the carvings of a sculpture. The muscles on his arms were like cords. His eyes were like lantern lights, but the flesh was drawn and they were sunken deep into the sockets. His hair was like the wing of a raven. He was naked but for the breechcloth about his loins. He stopped for a moment and raised his hand to shield the blinding sun from his eyes. The man lying in the dust watched him. Suddenly his heart almost stopped and he trembled and grew cold, for before him and staring into his eyes, with eyes that had the fire of a panther, stood an Indian. He looked still closer and from the left wrist hung a chain, the broken shackle which had once held both arms together. The Indian stood motionless. The white man rose slowly and facing the other stared at him in silence. And in this quiet there came into the being of this white man a thought, not from the mind, for it seemed paralyzed, but from the soul, and as it rose and filled his being it grew into articulate speech, and if it be so that soul can prompt the mind this was the thought:

"O, Thou God, who didst create this meeting is for Thee. The soul of the wild and the soul that knows Thy will, and they are both of Thy making."

The Indian touched his lips.

"Water, water," he said.

The man touched his lips and exclaimed:

"Water, water."

In all the silence of the plain their voices sounded like the thunder and a thousand echoes smote the rock.

"Brother," spoke the white man.

"Me Apache—brother to you," repeated the Indian, and he laid his hand on the white man's shoulder.

The white man's eyes were turned toward the broken shackle on the Indian's wrist. He answered the look.

"Me once son of mighty, swift as wind! Me kill brother—no name—me outcast."

The white man answered with a look of terror. The Indian saw it, and, taking his hand, said:—

"Me friend."

Day passed into the twilight of the plains. For miles they had journeyed side by side. Athirst and hungered, they leaned on each other. The desert grew deeper. Once they had seen a bird that lives upon the dead fly from above the rocks, but it kept on in hurried flight as if aware of the lifelessness and deathlessness of all beneath. They had stopped in the journey, and with a rock the white man had beaten upon the iron handcuff to release the wrist of his companion. And now near night he broke from the wall a piece of rock and laying the arm against the barrier beat against the iron. Once he missed the stroke and the jagged edge of the stone cut into the flesh and warm red blood spurted out on the brown arm. The Indian never moved, but the white man tore a piece of linen from his shirt and bound up the wound, but the shackle still remained.

Then night came; not softly, as it does in the land of the living, but dropping its mantle all at once like one who suddenly falls into the black gloom of a pit. The white man and the Indian, weak and exhausted, lay side by side in the dust.

The silence of a sepulchre, but for their breathing, fell about them. They lay in the depths of the desert. The white man threw out his arm and his fingers touched something that lived. He turned and looked; it was the green leaf of a twig, parched and withered. He was about to pluck it from the earth when the Indian grasped his arm. The white man folded his arms and the Indian closed his eyes. Memories of other days came into the wakeful moments of the white man, and before him a vision passed of those who lived where God had smiled upon His earth. The fleeting dream almost crazed him. Then nature took up the struggle, and hunger and thirst attacked. His tongue seemed as if made of stone. He felt his body, and it was shrivelled and worn. The Indian slept. The white man by him lay with open eyes and watched the savage. A terrible thought came into his being. He felt weak and helpless. There seemed nothing before them but the dust and the heat. Was it death? There in the awful silence the white man lifted himself to his knees and, holding up his arms to heaven, prayed:—

"Father, I call to Thee from the country Thou hast forgot. Thou didst make green and beautiful all else. Out of the bounty of nature the sun has warmed and the dew has moistened. O God, in this place of death two souls of Thy making perish. God, God, can You forget?"

The man bowed his head and covered his face with his hands. Then, lifting his arms, he cried aloud:—

"Father, Father!"

Then, weak and shaking with fear, he fell prostrate on the earth.

The Indian moved. Then, rising, he stood erect, and with outstretched arms and face lifted to the lowering skies he cried with the voice of a trumpet:—

"Father of the white man, Thou my Father too"

Then he fell to the earth.

The echoes hurled their voices against the rock as if a thousand tongues had spoken. Still lying on the earth, the two men were quiet and motionless, and not another living thing breathed or uttered a sound. The moon hung cold and, steel like and seemed to send no gleam into this awful place. With his face pressed close into the burning sand the white man, all but unconscious, seemed to cling to one thought that burned into his soul like a coal of fire. And it was this:—

"Did He hear—can, oh, can He forget?"

Toward the east the clouds grew a darker blue and a lighter wave covered the face of the moon. Again the clouds changed to almost ashen hue, and as the veil passed from before the moon its silver was gone and it had a tinge of red. The breeze that had kept the sand blowing in a cloud of biting, cutting morsels now increased almost to a gale. The clouds grew darker and a deeper red came to the moon. Once the Indian lifted his face and, shielding his eyes, gazed at the solitary light in the heavens.

"It is the anger of the Great Father," he gasped, and with a sigh that shook his giant being he again threw himself to the earth.

Deep, rolling groans, as if thunder, sounded far away. The clouds grew blacker, but streaked with a dull, foreboding drab. The moon still reddened. Presently there was a fearful peal of thunder and all light was gone. The desert was in darkness, close and all enveloping like death itself. Then, as if some mighty leviathan standing upon the rugged hills had flashed a torch, a great wave of light passed over the plain, so white, so penetrating that each grain of sand and each bit of alkali stood out like a jewel.

Then darkness. From beyond the wall of rock came a rumbling louder and deeper until it seemed to come from the very bowels of the earth. And then into that awful place there came a strange light from the moon of red. Like the beacon of a lighthouse it sent forth a solid ray of light that seemed to rest fixed and steady upon the two immovable and almost lifeless bodies in the sand.

Then, as if a wave at sea had wandered from its portals and reached the desert, the plain moved gently, rocked softly. Another peal of thunder and the rolling of the earth grew more violent. One great shock seemed to send it rolling along like a tempestuous sea. It disappeared, and with the noise of a bursting of a shell there sprang from the earth a stream of water, hot and boiling, and with it clouds of steam. In a little while the steam was gone and the water fell cool and dripping upon the plain like a fountain. A few drops of crystal fluid fell upon the men and they stirred as if new blood had rushed into their hearts. The height of the geyser began to fail until it became only a spring, from which flowed a little stream of water which under the red beam of light seemed to cut its own and new made ccurse through the dust. Now the wind had increased to the fury of a typhoon. The color of the clouds came and went from the yellow to drab, to blue and then to almost black. Suddenly the earth shook with a new fury. It rocked to and fro and another great geyser sprang from beneath the rock. Then with the noise of a great explosion came a deep roar, the wall of the rock cleft as if but paper. Cracking and grinding it fell on either side, leaving an opening large and yawning.—By Wells Hawks.

Killed off the Wild Dogs

Farmers owning packs of trail hounds in Logan County, two or three miles south of Guthrie, Okla., have been enjoying novel and exciting sport in the last two or three weeks in running down and killing a pack of wild dogs. Four years ago a farmer who moved from the neighborhood left behind at his abandoned log cabin a female hound. The latter made no effore to find another home, and soon ran wild. In the two succeeding years she raised two litters of pups, in all fourteen. The mother and her offspring lived as one family, and as the pups grew bigger and bigger, farmers began losing pigs and poultry and young calves. There are many wolves in this portion of Oklahama, and it was suspected that some of these dogs had wolf fathers, which is not unusual. The pack, led by the mother, grew so bold that several times it attacked negroes returning home from the cotton fields, and was driven off with great difficulty. The negroes became so alarmed that many of them would not venture away from their homes at night. The dogs seemed to find much sport in pursuing domestic dogs, even packs of trail hounds, and were numerous enough to make the fights one-sided. The losses became so heavy that several general hunts were organized, and the pack was finally destroyed, but not until it had made it lively for the hounds put on its trail.—Kansas City Star.