

The Consumption of Tea

Tea as a beverage is used in nearly every country in the world. It is estimated over 200 billion cups are consumed annually. Australia leads in tea drinking with an annual per capita consumption of about nine pounds, which means that every Australian consumes from six to eight cups of tea every day. The consumption per capita in England is 8½ lbs., and in Canada nearly 5 lbs. In the United States, it is less than 1 lb., but this is largely because Americans have not been able to get fine teas until comparatively recently. "SALADA" is considered one of the choicest blends on the market, and is the largest selling-tea in either United States or Canada.

"SALADA"

BAREE, SON OF KAZAN

James Oliver Curwood

A LOVE EPIC OF THE FAR NORTH

SYNOPSIS.

Pierrot, the trapper, and Nepeese, his daughter, made the rounds of their traps to see what animals had been caught. Pierrot never left the girl alone for he was fearful of McTaggart, the unscrupulous factor, who was determined to marry her. But the wolf-dog, always accompanied them. Nepeese made a pet of the dog, but Pierrot occasionally struck the dog. "If I make him hate me, he will hate all men," he explained. The father was looking into the future—for Nepeese.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Cont'd.)

Now the tonic-filled days and cold, frosty nights of the Red Moon brought about the big change in Baree. It was inevitable. Pierrot knew that it would come, and the first night that Baree settled back on his haunches and howled up at the Red Moon, Pierrot prepared Nepeese for it.

"He is a wild dog, ma Nepeese," he said to her. "He is half wolf, and the Call will come to him strong. He will go into the forests. He will disappear at times. But we must not fasten him. He will come back. Ka, he will come back!" And he rubbed his hands in the moon-glow until his knuckles cracked.

The Call came to Baree like a thief entering slowly and cautiously into a forbidden place. He did not understand at first. It made him nervous and uneasy, so restless that Nepeese frequently heard him whine softly in his sleep. He was waiting for something. What was it? Pierrot knew, and smiled in his inscrutable way.

And then it came. It was a night, a glorious night filled with moon and stars, under which the snow was whitening with a film of frost, when they heard the first hunt-call of the wolves. Now and then during the summer there had come the lone wolf-howl, but this was the tongueing of the pack, and as it floated through the vast silence and mystery of the night, a song of savagery that had come with each Red Moon down through unending ages, Pierrot knew that at last had come that for which Baree had been waiting.

In an instant Baree had sensed it. His muscles grew taut; as pieces of stretched rope as he stood up in the moonlight, facing the direction from which floated the mystery and thrill of the sound. They could hear him whining softly; and Pierrot, bending down so that he caught the light of the night properly, could see him trembling.

"It is Mee-Koo!" he said in a whisper to Nepeese. That was the call of the blood that was running swift in Baree's veins—not alone the call of his species, but the call of Kazan and Gray Wolf and of his forebears for generations unnumbered. It was the voice of his people. So Pierrot had whispered, and he was right. In the owl.

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den night the Willow was waiting, for it was she who had gambled most, and it was she who must lose or win. She uttered no sound, replied not to the low voice of Pierrot, but held her breath and watched Baree as he slowly faded away, step by step, in the shadows. In a few moments more he was gone. It was then that she stood straight, and flung back her head, with eyes that glowed in rivalry with the stars.

"Baree!" she called. "Baree! Baree! Baree!" He must have been near the edge of the forest, for she had drawn a slow, waiting breath or two before he was back at her side. But he had come, straight as an arrow, and he whined up into her face. Nepeese put her hands to his head.

"You are right, mon pere," she said. "He will go to the wolves, but he will come back. He will never leave me for long." With one hand still on Baree's head, she pointed with the other into the pit-like blackness of the forest. "Go to them, Baree!" she whispered. "But you must come back. You must. Cheema!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

No longer, as in the days of old, did the darkness of the forests hold a fear for Baree. This night his hunt-cries had risen to the stars and the moon, and in that cry he had, for the first time, sent forth his defiance of night and space, his warning to all the wild, and his acceptance of the Brotherhood.

He ran straight into the darkness to the north and west, sinking low under the bushes, his tail drooping, his ears alert—the wolf as the wolf runs on the night trail. The pack had swung due north, and was travelling faster than he, so that at the end of half an hour he could no longer hear it. But the lone wolf-howl to the west was nearer, and three times Baree gave answer to it.

At the end of an hour he heard the pack again, swinging southward. Pierrot would easily have understood. Their quarry had found safety beyond water, or in a lake, and the muhekuns were on a fresh trail. By this time not more than a quarter of a mile of the forest separated Baree from the lone wolf, but the lone wolf was also an old wolf, and with the directness and precision of long experience, he swerved in the direction of the hunters, compassing his trail so that he was heading for a point half or three-quarters of a mile in advance of the pack.

This was a trick of the Brotherhood which Baree had yet to learn; and the result of his ignorance, and lack of skill, was that twice within the next half-hour he found himself near to the pack without being able to join it. Then came a long and final silence. The pack had pulled down its kill, and in their feasting they made no sound.

Baree had not forgotten Nepeese. A dozen times he turned his head back and whined, and always he picked out accurately the direction in which the cabin lay. But he did not turn back. As the night lengthened, his search for that mysterious something which he had not found continued. His hunger, even with the fading-out of the moon and the coming of the gray dawn, was not sufficiently keen to make him hunt for food.

It was cold, and it seemed colder when the glow of the moon and stars died out. Under his padded feet, especially in the open spaces, was a thick white frost in which he left clearly at times the imprint of his toes and claws. He had traveled steadily for hours, a great many miles in all, and he was tired when the first light of the day came.

At last it had come—the meeting with that for which he had been seeking. It was in an open, lighted by the cold dawn—a tiny amphitheatre that lay on the side of a ridge, facing the east. With her head toward him, and waiting for him as he came out of the shadows, his scent strong in her keen nose, stood Mahegun, the young wolf.

There was not a fortnight's difference in their age and yet Mahegun was much the smaller of the two; her body was as long, but she was slimmer; she stood on slender legs that

were almost like the legs of a fox, and the curve of her back was that of a slightly bent bow, a sign of swiftness almost equal to the wind. When the sun rose, half an hour later, it found them still in the small open on the side of the ridge, with a deep fringe of forest under them, and beyond that a wide, timbered plain which looked like a ghostly shroud in its mantle of frost.

Mahegun, too, had sought the hunt-pack, and like Baree had failed to catch it. They were tired, a little discouraged for the time, and hungry—but still alive with the fine thrill of anticipation, and restlessly sensitive to the new and mysterious consciousness of companionship.

To the flesh-eating wild things of the forests, clawed and winged, the Big Snow was the beginning of the winter carnival of slaughter and feasting, of wild adventure in the long nights, of merciless warfare on the frozen trails. The days of breeding, of nomadism—the peace of spring and summer—were over; out of the sky came the wakening of the North-land, the call of all flesh-eating creatures to the long hunt, and in the first thrill of it living things were moving like lithe, dark, and that waiting fully and with suspicion. Youth made it all new to Baree and Mahegun; their blood ran swiftly; their feet fell softly; their ears were attuned to catch the slightest sounds.

In this first of the Big Snow they felt the exciting pulse of a new life. It lured them on. It invited them to adventure into the white mystery of the silent storm; and inspired by that restlessness of youth and its desires, they went on.

The snow grew deeper under their feet. In the open spaces they waded through it to their knees, and it continued to fall in a vast white cloud that descended steadily out of the sky. It was near midnight when it stopped. The clouds drifted away from under the stars and the moon, and for a long time Baree and Mahegun stood without moving, looking upon a wonderful world.

An hour after they entered the plain there came suddenly out of the west the tongueing of the wolf-pack. It was not far distant, probably not more than a mile along the foot of the ridge, and the sharp, quick yapping that followed the first outburst was evidence that the long-fanged hunters had put up sudden game, a caribou or young moose, and were close at its heels.

At the voice of her own people Mahegun laid her ears close to her head, and was off like an arrow from a bow, and the swiftness of her flight put Baree well behind her in the race to the plain. She was running blindly, favored by luck. For a moment of perhaps five minutes the pack were so near to their game that they made no sound, and the chase swung full into the face of Mahegun and Baree. The latter was not half a dozen lengths behind the young wolf when a crashing in the brush directly ahead stopped them so sharply that they tore up the snow with their braced forefeet and squat haunches.

Ten seconds later a caribou burst through the brush, leaping an open space not more than twenty yards where they stood. They could hear its swift panting as it disappeared. And then came the pack.

At sight of these swiftly moving gray bodies Baree leaped forward an instant into his throat. He forgot Mahegun, and that she had run away from him. The moon and the stars went out of existence for him. He no longer sensed the chill of the snow under his feet. He was a wolf, a wolf, with the warm scent of the caribou in his nostrils, and the passion to kill sweeping through him like fire, he darted after the pack.

It was as if Baree had belonged to the pack always, and he joined it naturally, as other stray wolves had joined it from out of the bush; there had been no ostentation, no welcome such as Mahegun had given him in the open, and no hostility. He belonged with these slim, swift-footed outlaws of the old forests, and his own jaws snapped and his blood ran hot as the smell of the caribou grew heavier, and the sound of its crashing body nearer.

It seemed to him they were almost at its heels when they swept into an open plain, a stretch of barren without a tree or a shrub, brilliant in the light of the stars and moon. Across its unbroken carpet of snow sped the caribou a spare hundred yards ahead of the pack. Now the two leading hunters no longer followed directly in the trail, but shot out at an angle, one to the right and the other to the left of the pursued, and like well-trained soldiers the pack split in halves and spread out fan-shape in the final chase.

The two ends of the fan forged ahead and closed in, until the leaders were running almost abreast of the caribou, with fifty or sixty feet separating them from the pursued. Thus, adroitly and swiftly, with deadly precision, the pack had formed a horse-shoe cordon of fangs from which there was but one course of flight—straight ahead.

Baree had found his place in the lower rim of the horse-shoe, so that he was fairly well in the rear when the climax came. The plain made a sudden dip. Straight ahead was the gleam of a water—water shimmering softly in the starlight, and the night of it sent a final great spurt of blood through the caribou's bursting heart. Forty seconds would tell the story—forty seconds of a last spurt for life, of final tremor, and then to ease to death. Baree felt the sudden thrill of these moments, and he forged ahead with the others in that lower rim of the horse-shoe as one of the leading wolves made a lunge for the young bull's ham-string. It was a clean miss.

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A second wolf darted in. And this one also missed. There was no time for others to take their place. From the broken end of the horse-shoe Baree heard the caribou's hooves plunge into water. When Baree joined the pack, a maddened, mouth-frothing, snarling horde, Na-pamoo, the young bull, was well out in the river and swimming steadily for the opposite shore.

The restless movements of the waters ceased now. A new and wondering interest held them rigid. Fanges closed sharply. A little in the open Baree saw Mahegun, with a big gray wolf standing near her. He went to her again, and this time she remained with flattened ears until he was sniffing her neck. And then, with a vicious snarl, she snapped at him. Her teeth sank deep in the soft flesh of his shoulder, and at the unexpectedness and pain of her attack, he let out a yelp. The next instant the big gray wolf was at him.

Again caught unexpectedly, Baree went down with the wolf's fangs at his throat. But in him was the blood of Kazan, the flesh and bone and sinew of Kazan, and for the first time in his life he fought as Kazan fought on that terrible day at the top of the Sun Rock.

That fight, if it had been fair, would have been a victory for Baree, even in his youth and inexperience. In fairness the pack should have waited; it was a law of the pack to wait until one was done for. But Baree was black; he was a stranger, an interloper, a creature whom they noticed now in a moment when their blood was hot with the rage and disappointment of killers who had missed their prey. A second wolf sprang in, striking Baree treacherously from the flank; and while he was in the snow, his jaws crushing the foreleg of his first foe, the pack was on him en masse.

Such an attack on the young caribou bull would have meant death in less than a minute. Every fang would have found its mark. Baree, by the fortunate circumstance that he was under his first two assailants and protected by their bodies, was saved from being torn instantly into pieces. He knew that he was fighting for his life. Over him the hordes of beasts rolled and twisted and snarled; he felt the burning pain of teeth sinking into his flesh; he was smothered; a hundred knives seemed cutting him into pieces; yet no sound—not a whimper or a cry—came from him now in the horror and hopelessness of it all.

It would have ended in another half-minute had the struggle not been at the very edge of the bank. Undermined by the erosion of the spring floods a section of this bank suddenly gave way, and with it went Baree and half the pack. In a flash Baree thought of the water and the escaping caribou. For a bare instant the cave-mind set him free of the pack, and in that space he gave a single leap over the gray backs of his enemies into the deep water of the stream. Close behind him half a dozen jaws snapped shut on empty air. As it had saved the caribou, so this strip of water shimmering in the glow of the moon and stars had saved Baree.

The stream was not more than a hundred feet in width, but it cost Baree close to a losing struggle to get across it. Until he dragged himself out on the opposite shore, the extent of his injuries was not impressed upon him fully. One hind leg, for the time, was laid open to the bone; his head and body were torn and cut; and he dragged himself slowly away from the stream, the trail he left in the snow was a red path of blood. It trickled from his panting jaws, between which his tongue was bleeding; it ran down his legs and flanks and belly, and it dripped from his ears, one of which was slit clean for two inches as though cut with a knife. His instincts were dazed, his perception of things clouded as if by a veil drawn close over his eyes.

(To be continued.)



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The Hardest-Worked Words.

It is stated after a long series of observations and tests that one-fourth of our daily task of talking is accomplished by the use of nine words, the longest of which has but four letters. These nine are: and, be, have, it, of, the, to, will, and you. It need hardly be said that these simple words are all pure English.

It is also asserted that these nine, together with 34 additional words, form a full half of the words we use in conversation every day. The 34 additional Anglo-Saxon words alluded to are: about, all, as, at, but, can, come, day, dear, for, get, go, hear, her, if, in, me, much, not, on, one, say, she, so, that, these, they, this, though, time, we, with, write and your.

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