

grasped the small trunk and pulled myself up to the rotten stub of a branch just as the squealing herd surrounded me.

"Probably no wild animal can equal in obstinate malevolence the South American peccary when once thoroughly aroused. The angry little brutes, their stiff hair bristling along their narrow spines, surrounded the tree in a dense mass, gritting their teeth at me until flecks of foam spotted their muzzles.

"The push of their determined little bodies as they leaped up against the trunk was enough in itself to render my position in the tree was extremely insecure. But when several of them began to attack the wood with their keen tusks, I felt that I had jumped from the frying-pan into the fire.

"The tree was dead and punky, and riddled with the holes of a large boring worm common in that vicinity. Doubtless the peccaries would not have kept up their attacks upon it if this had not been so; but as the decayed wood fell away in broad splinters they were encouraged to renewed activity.

"I felt that the feeble little tree, already strained by my weight, might fall at any moment, and drop me like a ripe fruit into the midst of my besiegers.

"In my desperation I searched my pockets frantically for some weapon of defence. I had not even a pen-knife about me. A paper of pins, some bits of string, a handkerchief and a metal box of matches were all that rewarded my efforts.

"As I fingered this last article an inspiration came to me. I opened the box and drew out one of the matches. They were thick wax sticks, especially fitted for an expedition into the wilds, since they were almost proof against dampness, and would stay lighted in a fairly strong wind.

"I scratched the blue head of it against the box, and nursed the flame until the wax began to run. Then I tossed it as skilfully as I could into the long, dry grass just outside of the little denuded area.

"I waited a few seconds, but the match had evidently gone out. I tried another with the same result. Then I lighted four or five at once and when they had got well going, threw them into the grass.

"You can't imagine with what hopes I waited the results. When I saw a thin little spiral of smoke curl up I watched it with my heart in my mouth. It grew among the stems blacker and larger. The grass crackled, and a tongue of flame gleamed red.

"The moment the fire had got a foothold it was astonishing with what lust it seized upon the dry, thick growth. From that tiny flame it expanded into a broad wave that shot up with a hissing roar.

"The consternation and surprise of the peccaries was great. For a moment they seemed reluctant to leave me, but at the next, the wild creatures' instinctive fear of fire seized them, and with one accord they turned and ran swiftly for the forest.

"I lost no time myself in following their example, but it was hard work for me in my crippled and exhausted state to reach camp. My leg was stiff and swollen, and altogether I was in very bad shape. I got there, however, at last, only to be taken down two days after with a spell of fever induced probably by the injuries I had received.

Johnnie: "Pa, won't you please to buy me a microbe to help me with my arithmetic."

Papa: "What good will a microbe do you?"

Johnnie: "I just read in this paper that they multiply rapidly."—Judge

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