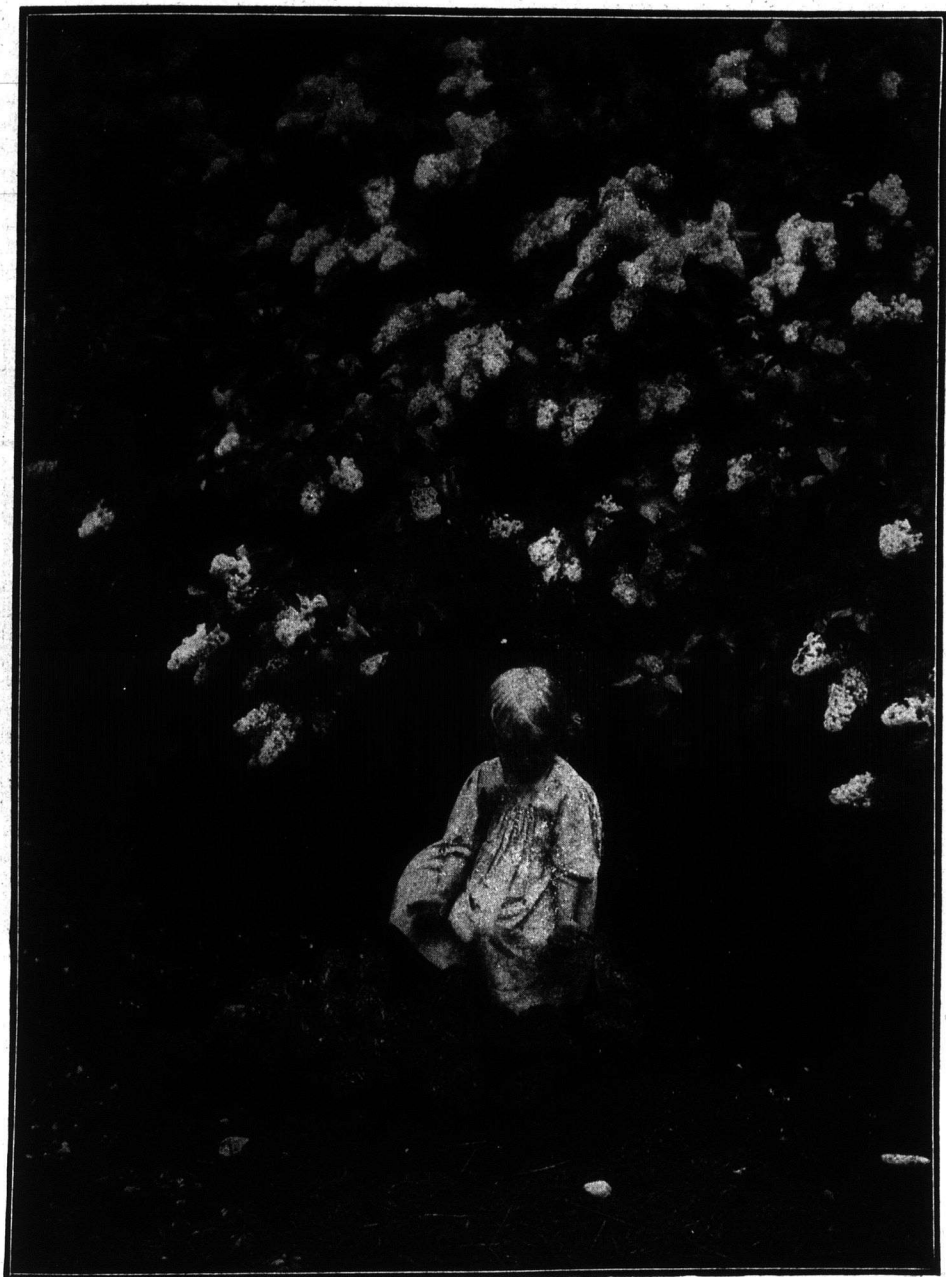


reach up and stroke your face with its baby fingers—when they look up into your eyes so innocently, so trustingly—why it stirs something big inside you, and your whole heart goes out to the helpless little mites. And when you think of one of them suffering for lack of food—and so near to us great big people who have plenty—” A great sob, which the lad made no effort to conceal, shook the broad, rain-soaked shoulders. “I—I love little babies,” he murmured. “I know you would if you’d had a chance to know them like I have.” And he reached out impulsively for Sewall’s hand. “I didn’t mean those hard things,” said he, “I’ve been standing in this ice water all the afternoon, and I guess I was just naturally feeling sort of mean, anyway.”

Sewall’s own voice was husky with emotion when he replied. “What you said was true, Pete. I guess I had it coming to me, and that’s why it hurt,” he owned up, manfully, as he grasped his companion’s cold, wet hand in a heat-warming grip.

feet, and any attempt at the oars, was, for the moment, out of the question. And each failure carried them nearer the falls. “Now then! Once more,” shouted Pete, “all together!” No warning was needed. Both knew the price of failure. Sewall responded as he never had done on the football gridiron, and behind him, he could hear Pete echoing his frantic efforts. Slowly, but ever so surely, they were gaining. Yes—there could be no doubt of it. Sewall’s heart leaped within him. An oar outstretched would have touched the fringe of brush that overhung the bank.

Every nerve and muscle tense the boys ground their caulks into the log deck and wrought at the oars with renewed vigor. One more such gain would place them within reach of the low-hanging branches, and the raft might go to destruction alone. Already Sewall had mentally selected a stout hemlock limb as their goal. Then with sickening suddenness there came a sharp crack from behind him. The raft lurched perilously, throwing him to his



Feeding time

“Now I want you to make another oar. I am going with you. I can’t remember ever having lifted my hand to do one solitary thing for a little baby in my whole life. You must let me go.”

And so it was that while something of daylight still lingered in the little gorge, the two boys climbed aboard the rude raft. Together, they stuck their oars into the submerged bank, and with a sturdy heave sent the raft far out into the raging swirl of angry waters.

With resource born of the frontier, Pete had divided the precious cans of condensed milk into two packs. One look at the turbulent flood offered sufficient explanation for this precaution, nor had he over-estimated the hazard.

From the moment the full force of the flood caught the raft in its mighty grasp, they realized that they had entered upon the fight of their lives. At their respective posts the boys tugged desperately at their crude oars. To force the raft shoreward seemed an impossible task. Time and again they would gain a few yards only to have the raft lifted bodily by the wild waters, and tossed back to the foaming crest of the mid stream. In each such crisis it required the quickest sort of work even with their caulked boots, to keep their

hands and feet, and nearly breaking his hold on his oar. He staggered to his feet and cast a frightened glance over his shoulder. There stood Pete, a picture of defiant courage. Feet wide-spread, bare head erect, he grasped the stump of his broken oar. As he met Sewall’s agonized gaze, a brave smile lighted his pale face, and he tossed the useless bit of wood over side.

Then above the rushing wash of the waters tearing at the confining banks there sounded a deep-toned roar—the falls. Sewall felt himself grow dizzy. His knees weakened. He wondered if he could muster the courage to face the issue on his feet, and not cry out.

At that moment he caught a glimpse of a bearded, wild-eyed face staring at them through the brush. The squatter! Their forgotten mission came back to him, and quick as thought he drew out his knife and with a backward jerk slit open his pack-sack. His fingers closed upon two of the precious cans. With a great sob of satisfaction he sent them, one after the other, hurtling high above the brush, far into the squatter’s rude clearing.

He heard Pete’s voice, but it seemed a long way off. The roar of the falls filled his ears. Already there arose before him

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