

Young People

Nimrod and Buffalo Bill

By G. W. Bartlett

It was an ideal spot, the camp at The Gap. Cheyne and I congratulated ourselves over and over again, on our rare fortune in getting in a week before the summer rush of campers, and pre-empting this idyllic summer home. We lost no time in staking our claim, but before our last tent-peg was driven, Charlie looked up with a laugh and said, "Geordie, I'm afraid we're trespassing. Here comes the owner to put us off."

I glanced up to see the market-gardener whose cabin clings to the hillside at the north end of the Island; but following Cheyne's gaze I looked into a spruce tree,

an ugly scar on the jaw. It plowed diagonally across the throat under the jaws, left a deep mark on the shoulder and a long line down the flank. It was an obvious bullet mark, yet what a strange attitude the squirrel must have been in, and what an extraordinary escape. No wonder the squirrel was suspicious of man-creatures.

We soon made friends with the larger squirrel, by tossing him a few crumbs from our hasty luncheon. Next meal he was back again, and the next, bolder on each return. When we spread our supper next evening on the flat rock before the tent, the big squirrel plucked up courage to come to the feast, after two or three nervous runs and balks, he snatched a small crust and made for the tree, with



A Fine Type of the Prairie Baby

to meet instead the inquiring gaze of a big red squirrel. The squirrel was choking with bottled up excitement, which found vent in a series of short half suppressed "chucks," but as he caught my eye he broke into a torrent of abuse. "Chirrit-twit - twit - ku - kechuk - kechuk kut-kechuk!" What eloquence! It was real talk; you could not mistake its meaning. Indignation battling with curiosity, and a tinge of suspicion and fear, were in the tone.

"How dare you come here! Who are you anyhow? What do you want? What are you doing with all this stuff? You are a crazy pair! Well get to work and show us what it is all about."

As we got to work, at his bidding, he hovered around, now peering down from a branch above and dropping a bit of bark to draw our attention, then peeping at us around the trunk of a birch; occasionally making frantic dashes from tree to tree, passing within a few yards, with no other apparent purpose than to make us move and exhibit new phases of our mysterious nature. I soon spotted another squirrel rather smaller than the first, which exhibited close interest in our movements, but took great care to keep a tree between us and herself. We soon discovered the cause of this reticence, in

the bashful one on his track. Soon he was back. He made two or three races over the spread, gathering crumbs as he ran; then when he thought we were not noticing, he seized a huge slice of bread and began dragging it toward the tree. The sight of this huge harvest was too much for the caution of the mate, who came running to assist.

It was very amusing to see the two squirrels trying to haul their burden up a small tree. They would get it a foot or more up, when one would miss his footing, and hanging like grim death to the prize would drag it and the companion to the ground. Nothing discouraged, they would set at it again, chirping and scolding each other after each mishap in a manner which indicated that the honeymoon was over. At last, one of these tumbles parted the slice into two nearly equal pieces, whereupon each made off with his portion to a different tree.

We called the pair Nimrod and Buffalo Bill, in spite of chronology and gender; for Buffalo Bill was evidently Nimrod's wife. They were truly the mighty hunters of the east and the west. Nothing happened in the wood that they did not investigate. Then they came and told us all about it. What lore of the woods

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