

served Mack. "We'd best get now. No good trying to save the hut. This muskeg soil will burn like gun cotton. We'd be roasted out."

"Right," agreed Don. "Your best plan is to head up the creek for Long Feather Lake. Take the canoe. I'll follow soon."

"Where you going now?"

Don nodded in the direction of the Frenchman's shanty.

"O, I see."

Don set off towards the creek, while Mack dallied behind, doing nothing in particular with the shovel. Immediately Don had vanished into the brown haze, Mack, cursing and muttering, set off after him. He, too, would help Francoise—not as a friendly act, but because he was a true woodsman, and the woodsman's code says that in times of forest fire, neighbors must help each other.

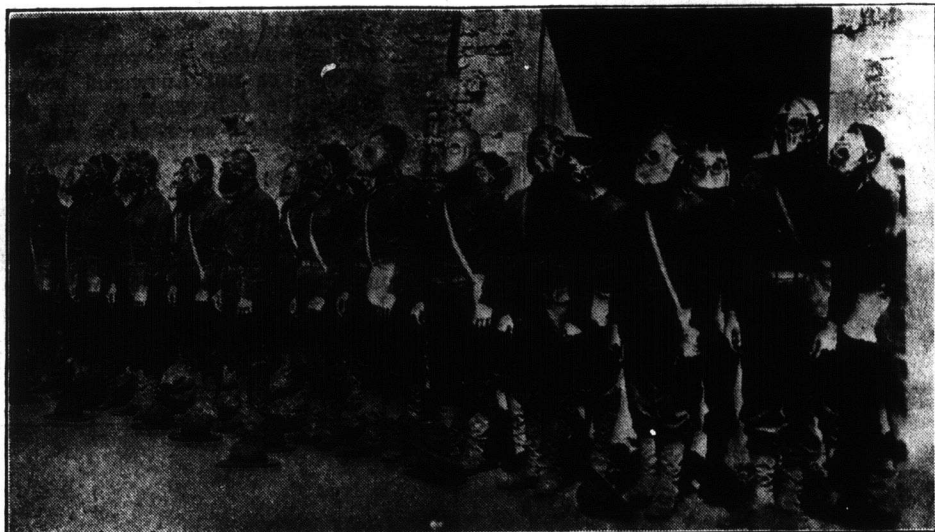
Don found Francoise and his whole family frenziedly dousing the clearing about the shanty with buckets of water. He fell in without a word, and presently was joined by Mack.

No one spoke, but was it by accident that Mack, in the act of heaving the contents of a bucket into the bush, accidentally lost his hold of the bucket, so that its full weight caught Francoise in the middle of the back? Was it by accident that Francoise, seeing Mack poised on the end of a windfall, placed his huge weight on the other end and thus shot Mack into the air? But it was becoming very dark now. At intervals hot blasts of air scorched their faces. Somewhere near at hand a deep rumbling, like underground thunder, came to their ears. Small birds flew into their faces,

grinned grimly as he heaved water over Francoise and himself. Then suddenly there was a roar overhead, and looking up the men saw a mountain of fire and seething sparks sweeping across the sky—seeming to consume the very clouds in its hungry maw. It was a terrible and terrifying spectacle, and the sight of it sobered the Frenchman. Muttering hoarsely he looked at Mack, but next moment the two men were groveling on their faces, gasping for life amidst the heat and fumes. The fire was upon them.

Words may suffice for describing the ordinary scenes of life, but how can one describe a nightmare? When, many times after, Mack was called upon to describe it, he would answer simply—"Yes, sure, me and the Frenchman had a pretty close call." Nor could he remember in after years the exact sequence of events. Certain incidents retained possession of his memory. He remembered that the Frenchman went mad, and rushed pell-mell into the very wall of fire. He remembered that he followed the Frenchman, that he flung himself upon him, hurling him to the ground, and that he hauled Francoise back into the safety zone.

But it was Mack who, by some marvellous sense, kept his bearings, and piloted the massive Frenchman to the creek. When finally they reached it, they had reached also the limits of human endurance. Speech, hearing, sight, even pain itself was beyond them. They tottered, they crawled, they pulled one limb after another—hideous, pitiful, spectacles of human suffering, and rolled into the icy flood, the Scot's strong



U.S. Marines in France lined up for the gas mask drill. They are shown in this photo wearing the mask which is of such a shape that it makes them look like the proverbial "Bug-a-boo." The Marines have the gas mask drill down to a science, and they can put on a mask properly, which is not so easy as it appears, in very little time. As they stand now they are ready to battle with the poisonous fumes sent over the lines by the Germans.

fluttered about their clothing. Madame clutched her infant, and looked with frightened eyes at her husband. Don shook Francoise by the arm.

"Time to get out," he observed briefly. "We done what we can to save the property. If she comes this way we'll be caught."

But Francoise shook himself free, and flung his arms into the air. "I must save my home," he cried. "It is mine—I have built it all! If the fire eat it my children starve. It is impossible—" and mad with excitement he continued to heave water—blind to all, heedless, deaf to the entreaties of common sense.

Both Don and Mack knew that when a man reaches this stage, not even the fear of death will stay him. A nod passed between them. "You get along and see the woman and kiddies out," said Mack. "I don't envy you your job. I'll look after this madman."

Don stared. "It's blame foolish to stay behind," he observed, a shade of admiration in his voice.

Mack nodded. "Get along out," he urged. "There ain't a moment to waste. She'll be on us any time. I'll look after Francoise—" and his voice softened again.

The woman and the children were becoming dazed by the smoke, so that they hardly knew who led them. That Don got them out alive and unscathed was a testimony to his marvellous woodsmanship.

Francoise, heedless that they were being left, scarcely knowing what was going on around him, proceeded to damp down the surrounding bush, while Mack, his stubborn fighting spirit roused,

fingers still entwined about the scarf of the man he had led and cursed.

Thus they found them when the holocaust was passed, and when the doctor was reached he nodded gravely. "Mack's right arm must go," he said simply.

There was not much of that arm left to amputate—the arm that had dragged Francoise through—and so Mack was just as well without it. They laid them side by side in the hospital at Nelson, and when, after many weary days of waiting, both took the turn at the self-same hour, each found at his bedside the partner of his private life.

The men said nothing, but they looked into each other's eyes and each saw the partnership of life written therein. The woman passed her hand over the Frenchman's forehead, and muttered soft words in her own crooning tongue. Then, for a whole month of convalescence, Mack and Francoise kept up a simmering fire of disagreement, till finally Mack, still weak and sick, rose from his bed against doctor's orders, staggered into his clothes, feebly shook his surviving fist at Francoise, then tottered towards the door.

But ere he reached it Francoise called to him. "Ah mon ami! Mon ami!" he cried, in the cadence of his departed childhood. "Do not leave me thus after all we have suffered together! We are fools, you and I, great fools—cabbages! Let us be one, one great friend. Let us embrace each other!"

And Mack, grinning and bristling at the same time, but ignoring the embrace, took the Frenchman's limp hand in a friendship as sincere as it promised to be quarrelsome.

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