

A Man's Job

By Samuel Dike Hooper

"How is it, dad," he queried, "that there aren't any porcupines where we live, at Porcupine Creek?"

The old man filled his pipe and rammed down the tobacco with his thumb. Then he lay back luxuriously, and stared upwards at the stars. "There doubtless were at one time, sonny," he explained, "but each year, you see, hundreds and thousands of porcupines are killed by the forest fires. They can't get away like the hares and deer, and haven't sense enough to try."

"That is why we find porkies in some forests and not in others. They can't travel fast, and it takes them years to find their way back into a country that has been scourged by fire."

"You told me once," said the boy thoughtfully, "that no living man or beast in the world is without its enemies, and can afford to make mistakes. What about the porcupines?"

The old man rubbed his stubbly chin, and jerked his hat over his eyes. "Even the porkies make mistakes sometimes," he said presently. "And I suppose they have their enemies too. I remember once watching a bear cub frisking round one of them. The cub hadn't learnt what you learnt this afternoon, and I guess he thought the porky looked fool enough for anything."

"Well, the cub got all that he asked for, and more. I shall never forget the way the little fellow ran up and down the valley, whimpering and sobbing. Presently his mother came out and cuffed him, but when she smelt the blood she too began to whimper and sob."

"A day or two later when I passed that place I found the cub lying dead among the leaves where his mother had tried to bury him. Some of the quills had entered his neck, and had worked in, as they always do, till they entered the jugular."

"A little further on I found the porcupine lying dead at the foot of a poplar tree. All round the tree, about four feet from the ground, a number of quills were sticking into the bark."

"It was the mother bear that had done it. She had dashed the porky against the tree, time after time, till the life was gone out of him."

"Gee!" said the boy. "That porky made a mistake."

"And as for enemies," the old man pursued, "the porkies have only one enemy that I know of—the fisher. The fisher is the only animal that kills and eats porcupines as a regular thing. The wolf or lynx or bear that gets porcupine quills into its face, is likely to die a terrible and lingering death. The quills work inwards till they reach a vital part, and once I saw an old bear staggering blindly through the forest, the deadly quills having worked into his eyes."

"But nature has so made the fisher that the quills do not harm him. They penetrate his hide, all right, but they do not work into his vitals. They just lie flat under the skin, without even causing irritation, and trappers often catch old fishers that are chock full of quills, yet are as lively and healthy as spruce bugs."

The old man shifted his position, then sat up. The moon was shining over a distant ridge, illuminating the vast chaos of woods and waters that lay below.

"Sonny," said the man thoughtfully, "when nature made these woods he didn't forget much. He may have made the porcupine a fool, but I once heard a saying about angels stepping in where fools—"

He paused, and looked at the boy for new inspiration. But the boy was solemnly contemplating his injured foot. "Dad," he said presently, "if that porky hadn't seemed such a blamed fool he wouldn't have caught me napping."

Good Reason

Father. "I wonder why it is so difficult for artists to paint the skies?"

Son (aged four). "They can't, papa, because the paint would drop all over the people."

SEWALL Pope, his breath coming fast from healthful exertion, paused and listened intently. Not an animate sound broke the monotonous stillness of the great Oregon forest. The incessant drip-drip-drip of water from every brush and twig was only varied by the pat of larger drops falling upon his already saturated hat from the firs that towered above him. Then as he listened there came to him distinctly the deep-toned, menacing roar of the swollen river.

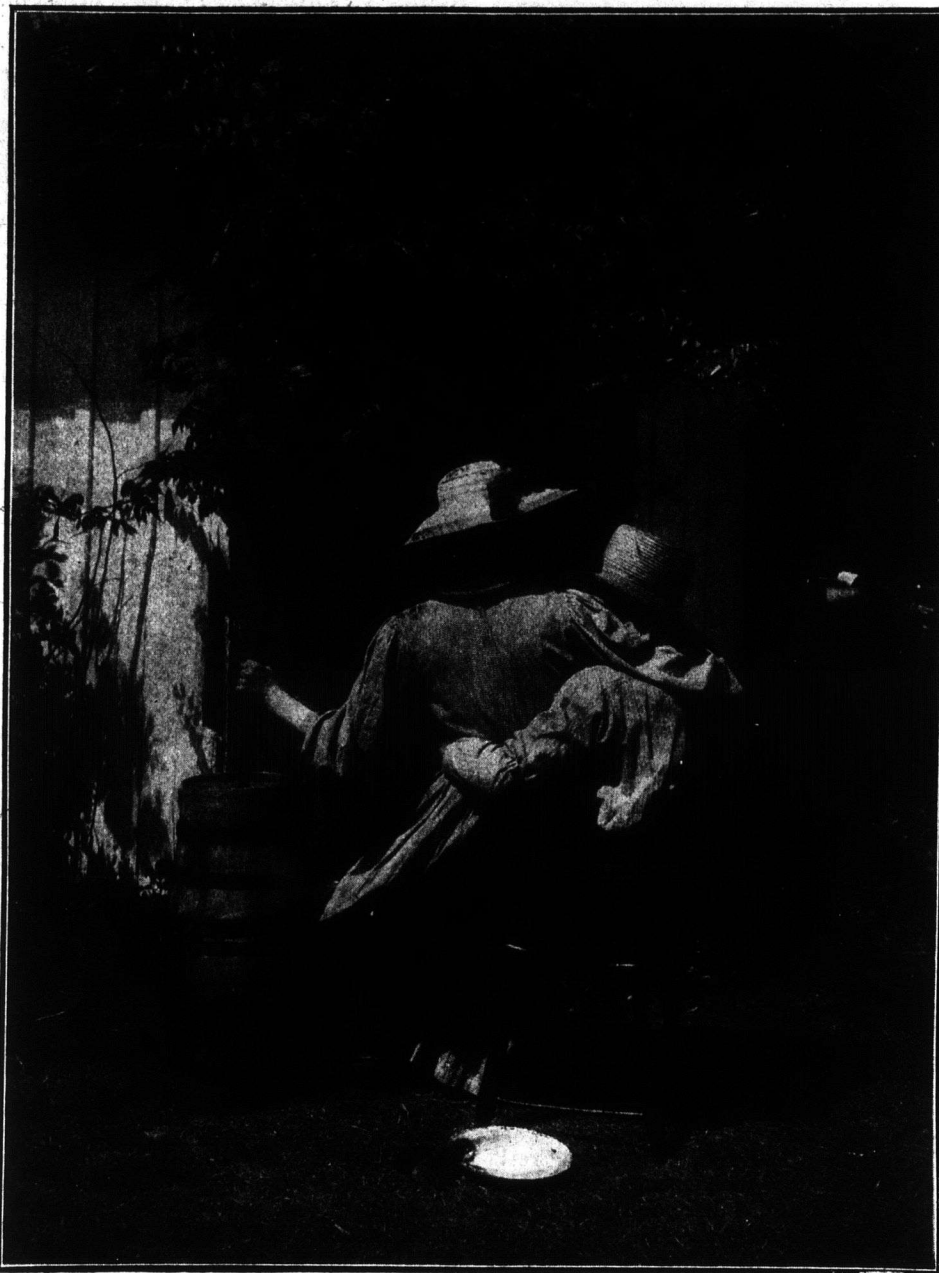
It was a "Chinook" in the mountains. The deep, winter snows, harried by the warm breath of the strange, tropical wind, filled every draw and ravine with frothing snow-water, and ever more loudly protesting, the streams took up the fugitive burden.

what he had believed to be a clever bit of scouting.

"The dog saw you, and wagged his tail. I knew all the men were busy down below, felling foot-logs. What do you think of my raft?"

Sewall pushed his way through the drenching fronds of the ferns to the water's edge, and looked the craft over with the critical eye of a sailor.

"It's a dandy!" he exclaimed, in genuine admiration. "But what are you going to do with it? You surely can't use it till the force of this freshet is spent." And he glanced apprehensively at the angry racing water littered with forest drift which showed that the stream was still rising at its source. "Why," he added, "the men can't even make a foot-



None to tell but puppy

With a trace of impatience the lad pushed on, scanning the trail searchingly for the peculiar hob-nailed pattern in the soft earth which he had been following. The roar of the river grew louder as he progressed. The very atmosphere of the forest was oppressive. Presently he broke from the forest's cover at the river bank, and a smile of satisfaction lighted his face.

Knee-deep in the back-water of the murky flood stood a lad who might have been his own age. The icy water filled the young woodsman's boots, and surged about his knees unheeded. Floating beside him was a good sized cedar raft to which he had evidently just applied the finishing touches. With his keen, double-bitted axe he was deftly shaping something very like an oar from a tough, dead fir sapling. These things Sewall noted in his first, swift, comprehending glance.

"Hello, Pete. Going for a sail?" he called, cheerily.

"You bet! Want to come along?" And without even glancing up the young ship-builder continued to shave the blade of his oar.

"How did you know I was here?" queried Sewall, with a trace of disappointment at his failure to effect a surprise by

log stick. They must have felled a dozen immense firs to-day, and the river snaps them right out. When they know they can't make a tree hold I should think they'd give it up until the water recedes. I told Ned so, too."

"And what did your brother say?" asked Pete, interestedly.

"He said it wasn't that the squatter's family on the other side needed food so badly, but that they were all out of milk for the baby, and as long as there was the faintest hope of felling a tree that would hold, they ought to keep on trying."

"He is right," Pete spoke quietly, earnestly. "That baby must have milk to-day. That's why I built this raft."

Sewall gasped in utter amazement. "Why Pete Sims, you must be crazy! Surely you aren't seriously thinking of trying to ride that raft in this river while it is on the rampage? Why—" and here Sewall hesitated for sheer lack of words to express his opinion of the foolhardiness of such an undertaking. "—it's nothing short of suicide!" he concluded.

Pete stood unmoved at his friend's outburst. "I have figured it out," said he, quietly, "and I think there's a chance—just a chance." And he compressed his lips in determination.

"And if you fail to make the other side?"

"The falls— I've considered that, too."

"But," persisted Sewall impatiently, "it would be different if a man were in danger."

"How different?" flashed Pete, lowering his upraised axe.

"Why—why, I don't know, exactly," stammered Sewall, somewhat confused at the manner of the question. "But of course, a fellow wouldn't take quite the same chances for a little baby that he would for a man who could think and feel. That is, feel with his mind—"

"Stop! Stop right where you are!" cried the young woodsman, driving his axe savagely into the raft, and plunging toward the bank. "You've said just about enough. Yes, too much." And with a splashing rush he gained the bank, and confronted Sewall, his blue eyes blazing. "So that's how you feel about it, is it?" he demanded, his face working passionately. "Why you—you cowardly tenderfoot—you aren't fit to touch a little baby."

"Don't call me a coward," cut in Sewall, his temper rising.

"You're pretty husky," continued Pete, disregarding the interruption, and "you're a good shot, and we've heard a lot about your football games, but ever since you came here to visit you have made it plain that you felt above washing dishes and clothes, cooking, or taking care of a baby. They think these things are girls' work back where you came from, I suppose."

"Well, they are girls' work, aren't they?" Sewall retorted, flushing angrily.

"Indians think so."

There flashed across Sewall's mind a picture he had seen through the car window crossing the plains that had thrown him into a fury of indignation at the time. Framed in rusty green sage brush and jagged, yellow mesas, it came back to him in all its detail. Again he saw the pompous Indian astride his scrawny Cayuse pony, his head proudly erect, bead-embroidered chest thrown out. Behind him, on foot, toiled his squaw, a cruelly heavy pack lashed to her poor, mis-shapen shoulders, from the back of which was slung a copper-faced papoose. Was it then to such a beast of a man that Pete was perhaps truly likening him? His flush of anger deepened to one of shame.

Pete, also, was thinking of something afar off. "Maybe I shouldn't have said that," he relented. There was nothing but kindness in his eyes now. "You don't mean to be unfeeling. It's just that you don't understand. You never had a chance. Ever since I could walk I have taken some care of a baby. When you feel one of the sweet, helpless little things lean its head against your shoulder, and

FEED CHILDREN

On Properly Selected Food. It Pays Big Dividends

If parents will just give a little intelligent thought to the feeding of their children the difference in the health of the little folks will pay, many times over, for the small trouble.

A mother writes: "Our children are all so much better and stronger than they ever were before we made a change in the character of the food. We have quit using potatoes three times a day with coffee and so much meat."

"Now we give the little folks some fruit, either fresh, stewed, or canned, some Grape-Nuts with cream, occasionally some soft boiled eggs, and some Postum for breakfast and supper. Then for dinner they have some meat and vegetables."

"It would be hard to fully describe the change in the children, they have grown so sturdy and strong, and we attribute this change to the food elements that I understand, exist in Grape-Nuts and Postum."

"A short time ago my baby was teething and had a great deal of stomach and bowel trouble. Nothing seemed to agree with him until I tried Grape-Nuts softened and mixed with rich milk and he improved rapidly and got sturdy and well."

"There's a Reason."

Name given by Canadian Postum Co., Windsor, Ont.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.