

this was a happy time for the two boys. Mrs. Attwood was glad to leave them alone, well knowing that Cyril would be looking bright and cheerful when she came back.

What pleasant talks they had! How interested they were to listen to stories of the home folk, to read over old letters, and recount incidents of their early childhood.

Sitting chatting by the firelight in those winter evenings, with a sympathetic listener, left a lasting impression on both the boys, and they felt that much had been gained, even though it was at the expense of being prisoners.

It was just a fortnight before Cyril could put his foot to the ground, and then he had to walk very slowly, leaning all his weight on Grace.

'I say, you fellows!' said one of the boys as the two friends were walking round the playground, 'have you noticed how chummy Harry Grace has been with Cyril Mason since he has been laid up?'

But the other fellows never knew the reason of this, though it was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

### A Dog's Woodcraft.

(By L. O. Bates, in 'Youth's Companion'.)

'I believe that boy has climbed every tree in the township, leastwise the worst ones,' said Mrs. Cornwiler.

'Deary me! I should be afraid he'd break his neck,' said Mrs. Millwaite.

'I don't see where he got it,' said Mrs. Cornwiler.

'He got it from you, that's plain,' said Mr. Cornwiler, boldly.

'From me! Why, just climbing a fence makes me almost dizzy!'

'Your father was a sailor,' said Mr. Cornwiler, 'and his father was a topman in the navy under old Commodore Preble. Tom's inherited their climb from you.'

'I suppose a sixteen-year-old boy is more trouble than a fourteen-year girl,' said Mrs. Millwaite. 'My Clara's a comfort.'

'Wherever Tom's wanted—' began Mrs. Cornwiler.

'A good strong boy's wanted pretty often in a new country,' interrupted her husband. 'Sometimes it gets tiresome to him.'

'Whenever Tom's wanted,' persisted Mrs. Cornwiler, 'he generally has to be found in a tree-top. It wears out his clothes dreadfully.'

'That is a bother,' said Mrs. Millwaite. 'Now Clara wears her dresses longer than any other school-girl of her age.'

While this discussion was going on indoors, Tom was going off outdoors. Mrs. Millwaite's visit gave him a chance to go fishing. He put a hook and line in his pocket, intending to cut a pole on the way, and trusting to find fat, white bait grubs in old logs. He owned a sharp one-hand hatchet, which he thrust into his buckskin belt.

A quarter of a mile from the river he came to a familiar tree-stub, it had been a forest giant, but some storm had broken off its top, leaving its great trunk thirty feet high. Forest fires had consumed the fallen top and deeply charred the huge trunk. Tom struck it with his hatchet-head. To his surprise it sounded hollow—a mere shell. He was immediately curious to know if it was hollow all the way up, and the only way to ascertain was to climb it.

A more uninviting stub to climb could not be found. It was very grimy, and too smooth and large to be clasped by either arms or legs; but Tom sought a thicket and cut the longest tough withe he could find. He wrapped this about the stub, and fastened its two ends securely to his belt with

strips of strong bark, making a hoop somewhat larger than the tree. Leaning well back, he walked his moccasined toes right up, raising the hoop by quick jerks.

The tree was hollow. Tom sat on the edge, with his feet dangling outside, as steady of nerve as if upon the ground. When his curiosity was satisfied he slipped off the hoop to retie it more to suit him. An incautious movement broke a bit of the edge and disturbed his balance. He made a violent move to recover himself. More edge crumbled inward, and down he went inside, head and heels together, like a shut jack-knife. One hand held to the hoop, pulling it after him. Head, back, hips and legs, scraped down the long tube, carrying fragments of rotten wood and a dusty cloud.

Tom struck on a deep, soft pile of debris, into which his doubled-up body plunged breast and knee-deep. The concussion shocked him breathless, and set his nose bleeding copiously, and the dust and blood hindered the recovery of his breath. Although he was not quite unconscious, it was long before he stirred. The back of his head had been severely raked, and rotten wood was ground into all his lacerations.

When at last he began to move he found himself wedged in. Vainly he wriggled; he could hardly stir, and could neither lift himself nor get his legs down. His hips, back, and all the muscles of his legs ached and pricked intolerably from strain and checked circulation.

He could not resist crying; but being a lad of good courage, endurance and resource, he soon began a systematic effort for release, packing the loose debris down as firmly as he could with his hands, at the same time pressing it away all around with his body. This exertion caused greater ache, but he persisted resolutely. By and by he got his hatchet out of his belt, and struck it, after a dozen efforts, so firmly into the wooden wall that he could hang his weight to it with one hand, while he worked the debris under him with the other. He gradually enlarged his space sufficiently to allow the bending of his knees. After that he was not long in getting his body up and feet down, so as to sit cramped on one hip, with both feet nearly level.

Exertion, pain, and the pressure of returning circulation made his pulses throb and his head swim, and he lapsed into semi-consciousness. How long this lasted he knew not, but when he began to struggle again he was in black darkness. A few stars shone calmly down his wooden well, but he could work only by feeling about with his hands. He felt exhausted, hungry and weak, but he kept on working until he managed to stand erect. Then, after feebly kicking and pushing debris to fill up the hole where he had been, he curled himself as comfortably as he could, and slept a blessed though troubled sleep.

He dreamed that he heard a rifle shot, and that Ban was barking excitedly and his father hallooing. But his sleep was so profound that a dream could not rouse him.

After a long time he stretched out. His sore heels hit one wall his sore head the other. This time the pain roused him to a renewed sense of his situation. He sat up, stiff, lame all over, weak, gnawed by hunger and thirst, but still undismayed and resourceful. A little thought and trial convinced him that weak and sore as he was, it would be a vain waste of strength to try to climb up the difficult inside of his prison.

'There's always more than one way to skin a cat,' he reflected. 'I've got to get out of this somehow; that's all there is to it.' He ran a thumb over the edge of his hatchet. 'Pretty sharp yet. Too light to chop easy,

and no room to swing it, but it'll cut a hole, give it time.'

Scraping away the rotten wood, he selected a place where the wall seemed thin, and began hacking. Progress was slow. At first his stiff muscles and sore body hurt acutely, but this pain wore away as he went on. The wood, charred outside and very dry, was tough. Although it was a sunny day, and his eyes had adjusted their vision to the dimness of his pit, he could hardly see where to strike. He dared not pry out large slivers, for if edge or handle of his hatchet should break, he might never get out. His awkward position and the one-hand work tired him rapidly, and he suffered occasional cramps.

During one of his frequent rests he heard Ban barking loudly outside.

'Good dog! I'm coming!' he shouted.

The dog bayed frantically, leaped against the tree, scratched, whined, tore the wood with his teeth, and finally began digging furiously between two great roots, evidently intending to tunnel under to his young master.

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When Tom did not appear for supper, Mrs. Cornwiler began to fret, but not much, for he was often late. After supper, with no Tom to do the chores, Mr. Cornwiler grumbled, but did them himself, saying:

'Come, now, wife, the boy probably has a good excuse. He's pretty regular considering.'

By bedtime Mrs. Cornwiler was anxious. 'I'm sure he's lying hurt somewhere in the woods, fallen from a tree; or maybe he's got lost.'

'Pshaw, now, Edith! Tom couldn't lose himself anywhere in this county the darkest night that ever was; and he doesn't know how to fall from a tree. He'll be home all right pretty soon. Likely he's hindered by something he thinks important.'

At ten o'clock Mrs. Cornwiler was insistent, and Cornwiler, less confident. He proposed to take the dog and search.

'Maybe he's at one of the neighbors. He'd stay, of course, if he could be of any use. Anyhow, Ban'll track him. Blow the horn if he comes home while I'm gone.'

Ban, being told to 'Go find Tom!' set off joyfully, wagging his tail. He led Cornwiler straight to the charred stub, and barked, leaping against it. Cornwiler looked the stub all over. There were no signs of Tom. He called and fired his rifle. There was no reply. He supposed the stub solid, but thumped it. Unfortunately the blow struck where the stub was thick, and where Tom had packed the debris hardest inside. It sounded solid. Mr. Cornwiler thought that Ban had foolishly tracked a squirrel up it, or perhaps a coon had been there and gone. He dragged the dog away, ordering him again to 'Find Tom!' Ban instantly ran back to the stub, and whined and scratched, but Mr. Cornwiler pulled him away.

Ban then led into a thicket, and here were signs—a slender pole cut and trimmed, a bitternut sapling peeled of two strips of bark. Tom had been there. The sapling was slender for a fish-pole, but Mr. Cornwiler thought that must be it. The strips of bark meant strings, but what Tom wanted of strings he could not conjecture. Having concluded it meant fishing, he hurried to the river, his anxiety considerably increased. Tom was a strong, cool swimmer, and knew every foot of the river. There were few deep pools, and no real dangerous places.

Mr. Cornwiler searched a long time, but found no trace of Tom, and Ban seemed puzzled and not much interested. After midnight Cornwiler began a terribly anxious enquiry, rousing neighbor after neighbor.