

we turned the matter off by declaring that we were unable to make a choice among so many lovely creatures and proceeded to distribute presents liberally. To most of the girls we gave gay-colored handkerchiefs with a brass button in each. To Lucena we offered a looking glass, and the young woman danced for our amusement, while we ate our dinner, and sang a song, which they composed as they went along, describing the whole scene and complimenting us upon our generosity. Towards evening they bade us good-bye and started for their homes."

Caught in a Bear Trap.

It was after dinner. We were cracking nuts and eating sweets, and, while so doing, one and another of the guests entertained the friends with anecdotes and incidents—chiefly reminiscent, and all with the merit of truth for the basis.

Bear hunting became the theme, and many narratives of adventure were given by members of the party. When a pause that threatened to be tedious marked the close of the last history, our host remarked that he had a bear story to tell, and, if his friends would excuse him while he went to get a relic connected with the tale, he would add his quota to the stories of the others. We expected him to bring back a bear's foot, scalp or bear-skin cap; instead, he returned with no more promising an object than a worn and aged note book. Reseating himself, he said:

"Doubtless you recall that along in the fifties I trapped in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. Well, one spring—I think it was the spring of '52—I was up on the headwaters of the Malheur River, in southern Idaho, near the peaks called the Three Tetons. One morning in early April, I went off—alone, as usual—meaning to go farther into the mountains than I had ever done previously. I was equipped for a ride of five or six days, or even more. Away up in the very shadow of the Three Tetons I began to have lots of luck in getting pelts of mountain lion, bear and a few smaller animals.

"To the south I saw, from a high point, a deep and very long canon, and its appearance decided me to get into it by the nearest route possible. In a little while after entering it, I struck the trail of about as large a bear as I had ever followed. The snow was just deep enough to make good, easy trailing—say an inch—and as it had fallen that morning, I hoped to sight my game every minute. My pony was well trained and gave me all my time to follow the tracks. The stillness was profound, only the rustling of the pines in the light breeze and the footfalls of my horse preventing the silence from being absolute. Ahead of me I heard a twig snap, as if trod in two by some animal. My horse also seemed nervously alert. I quickly raised my eyes, but saw no living thing. On each side were the rocky walls of the canon, the tops of the ridges far above sharply defined against the clear blue sky, or fringed with giant pines, so small in seeming, so huge in fact. Nearer, the steep declivities were dotted with the same stately trees, mingled with lesser conifers and exogenous growths of great variety, but not

relieving the chill, wintry aspect of things. Far up the gap of the vast gorge stood out in bold relief the pure white peaks of the Teton, the loftiest and largest being directly in the central background. But nearer than these lofty summits was something which interested me far more. It was an evidence of the previous presence of a white man in a solitude where man seldom trod—not often disturbed by the aborigine, who leaves no trace of his presence like that I then saw before me. What was it? Did I disappoint you when I say it was a bear trap? Not a hundred feet ahead it stood, the pine logs of which it was built seeming to have been cut some time, to judge from their cracked and weather-beaten ends. I rode up and looked at the heavy hewn-timber door, which was tightly shut. The beam which had once suspended it was sprung straight and pointed to the sky at an angle of forty-five degrees. Dismounting, I peered into the great cage through one of the chinks between the logs."

At this point the narrator paused, and then, in a far-away tone, resumed:

"I shall never forget the sight that met my gaze. Seated against the back of the trap was a man, or what had been a man once! His knees were drawn up, and around them were clasped hands on which the flesh was all shriveled. His face was almost wholly exposed to my view, and on it was the same frozen, shriveled flesh. The eyes were gone, and the hollow sockets seemed to me to be fixed on my face in a sort of awful despair. In the clasp of the poor hands, as they rested on his knees, I saw a book."

Here the speaker picked up the note book I have previously spoken of, and which had been laid on the table beside him.

"This book, gentlemen, is the same one that those dead fingers held. After considering a little, I got a lever and pried open the door—a door that would have resisted the efforts at escape of all the grizzlies that could have crowded into the trap. The first thing I did was to take the book out of his clasp and see what he might have left as a message to his finders. It is self-explanatory, so I will read it—a message from the dead.

"*To those who find me:* My name is George Groon, native of Illinois, and to-day—November 3, 1842—I am twenty-nine years old. What a natal day! My profession has been that of hunting and trapping. I say has been, for I am convinced I will never leave this place alive. No one in the world will miss me, for I have no parents—no relatives that have ever been truly such to me, and she is dead. The name of her whose death drove me, a college man and minister of the Gospel, to these Western wilds, no one need know, save that she was my wife. In life we were together; in death we shall not be divided. Had she lived, God knows I had never been here. But all is well, since it will reunite us in the presence of our Saviour. I have been here four days. My axe is outside; my sheath knife, which might have served in effecting my escape, has by mischance slipped out of my hand, and it, too, is outside, beyond my reach. It has been snowing hard for three hours or more. How came I shut in? I had just finished this trap for

grizzly, and, in arranging the bait, I slipped and fell on the trigger. That tells the tale. I am hungry, I guess—or was, ere I got so cold. The numbness with which the freezing blast fills me tells me I shall not starve. To freeze is not very hard; to starve is—but God is good! My hand is too numb to—"

Our friend held up the book to show that the message had been interrupted by the ice king, and that the seal of death had been set upon the poor victim of the trap. He laid down the message, sipped his wine, and then broke the silence with the remark—

"So I found him. Friends, that was my sister's son! 'No relatives.' Oa, my poor lad, you hid from them, from me, and I could not find you. Caught in that cruel cage, you froze to death, and under the vast white mantle of winter you stayed as you died—stayed till I found you, lad!"

Mr. Pray seemed to speak only to his own consciousness, and as he spoke there were tears in the white-haired old man's kindly eyes. Presently he shook off the sad mien, and continued:—

"I was very careful not to knock that door down, you may readily believe! Outside in the snowy ground I chopped a grave with my nephew's axe, the only tool I had. In the hollow, under the guard of the Three Tetons, in that dark and silent gorge, beside the stream running with perpetual music, I laid all that was mortal of the poor victim of a cruel fate. Over his resting-place the great pines sing a solemn requiem as the winds sweep through them."—Will Harrold in *The Great Divide*!

Didn't Wait Long Enough.

From the New York Sun.

We were sitting on the veranda of a hotel at Niagara Falls when I noticed the man on my right looking sharply at the man on my left, and presently he got up in an excited way and walked about. After a bit he halted before the other man and asked:

"Isn't your name Graham?"

"Yes sir," was the prompt reply.

"Didn't you used to teach school in Elmira?"

"Yes, sir."

"In 1863?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you remember a boy named God-kin?"

"Very distinctly, sir."

"Do you remember that he put a package of fire crackers under his desk and touched them off?"

"As if it happened only yesterday."

"And you basted him for it?"

"I did. I licked him for it until he could hardly stand, and I have always been glad of it."

"You have, eh?" said the other, breathing fast and hard. "Do you know that that boy swore a terrible oath?"

"I presume he did, as he was a thorough young villain."

"He swore an oath that he would grow up and hunt for you, and pound you within an inch of your life."

"But I haven't heard from him yet."

"You hear from him now! He stands before you! I am that boy!"