

SPORTSMAN
JOE

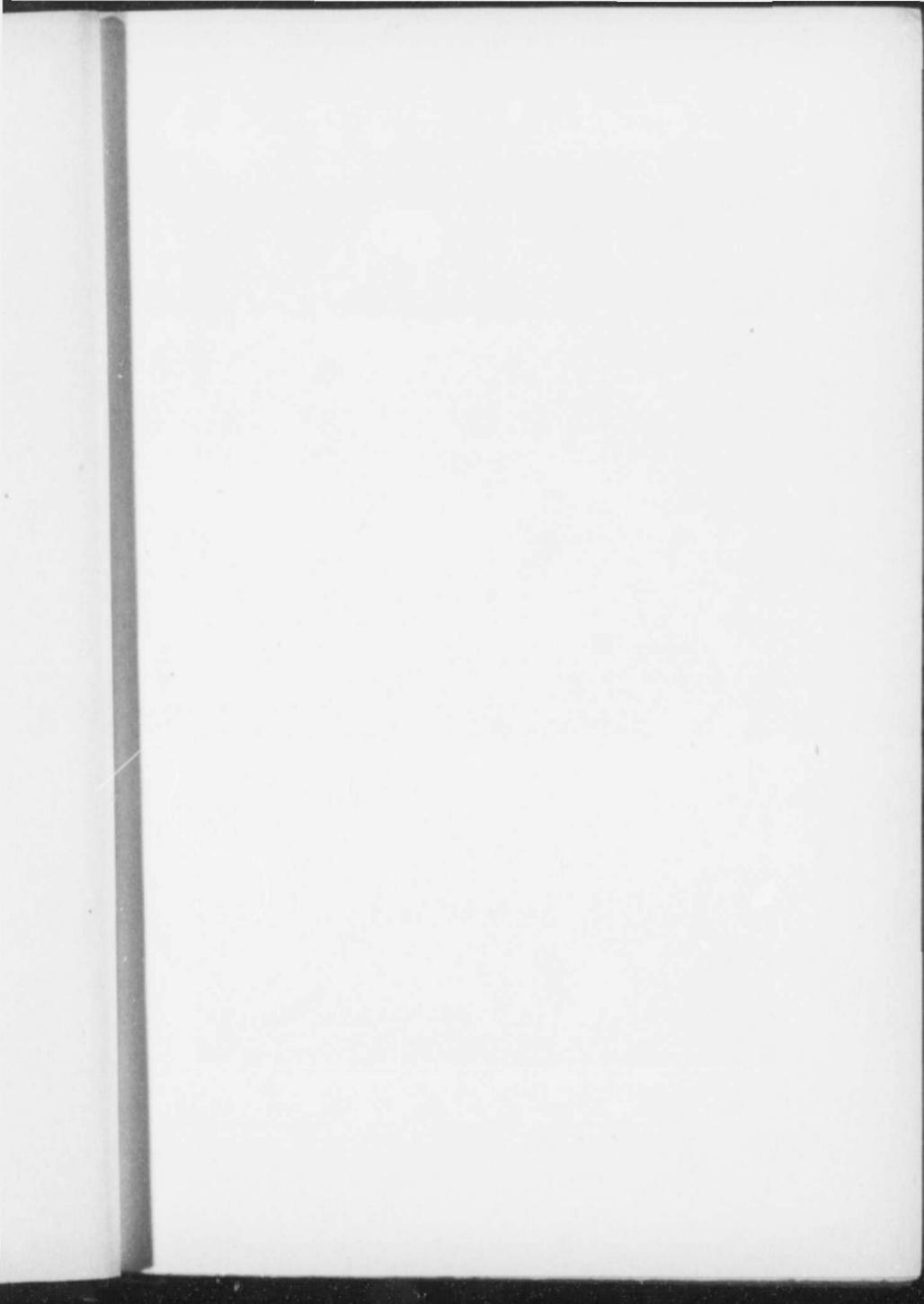


EDWYN SANDYS



SPORTSMAN "JOE"

•The M Co. •





"SPANGLED CHILDREN OF SPOTTY SHADOWS."

See page 57.

Philadelphia 52-4-73

SPORTSMAN "JOE"

BY

EDWYN SANDYS

AUTHOR OF "TRAPPER 'JIM,'" "UPLAND GAME BIRDS," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. M. GLEESON
AND C. W. PANCOAST

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SPORTSMAN "JOE"

FOR OLD SAKE'S SAKE—THE PATIENT,
THE DOCTOR, AND HIS PRESCRIP-
TION

IT had been a trying fortnight in the city. Great Gotham is strangely abrupt in many of her ways, notably her weather ways; yet, oddly enough, she also is astonishingly patient in the matter of her weather. Just why it should be so is not easily explained, but the fact remains that her millions of busy, oftentimes overdriven, people are content to exist at the mercy of a few mysterious fellows who hide somewhere on top of a sky-scraper down town, and from there dispense any sort of climate which may happen to suit their perverted tastes. One might imagine that some overtortured citizen would grasp the fact that, from the top of some other sky-scraper, a resolute man with a good rifle could, as it were, sort o' regulate the weather; yet so simple a remedy seems never to have been thought of. The people just proceed with their allotted panting, perspiring, and not infrequent passings-away, while wretched horses and dogs slow down, stagger, and fall, to form ghastly mounds upon steaming blocks and treacly asphalt.

The first hot spell usually is the most trying, because people never are quite prepared for it. After one good sizzling, those who are wise and can afford to be go away somewhere,—to the hills, the woods, or the beaches,—but there always are many quite well-to-do people who, for one reason and another, are compelled to bide and to endure. With all her facilities by rail and boat, New York is an extremely difficult place to really get away from. Many and many a man has dreamed of his well-earned holiday,—even cleaned up his desk and packed his trunks,—only to be completely thwarted by, perhaps, the momentary rattle of a ticker. New York men don't mind this—they are the most self-sacrificing, as they are the most indulgent, men on earth; so when things get too steamingly humid, they recuperate by sending their women and children to some delightful place. Left alone, the miserable money-makers manage to struggle along by the aid of roof-gardens, cafés, and clubs. A few, however, like cats, stick to their darkened homes and trust to the care of some time-softened domestic, and of these few was Mr. Emmons King, a middle-aged and prosperous broker.

There were reasons why Mr. King never once thought of seeking a summer resort. In the first place, he had large business interests to look after, and he had long before learned the purely financial value of attending to one's own affairs. By so doing he had made money, but, without being aware of it, he had so accustomed himself to the daily

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routine of his life that, outside of his own beautiful home, he was but little more than a valuable machine. It was an exceedingly good-looking machine, too; for Emmons King had not lost that art of natty dressing which in old Yale days had earned for him the nickname of "Miss Emmy." It is quite true that clothes do not make the man, but no sane person should deny that they help a heap, and this truth had been grasped by King at a very early age. From head to foot he was the typical New York man of finance; yet there was that in the prematurely whitened hair, the lines in the clean-cut features and about the pathetic eyes, which hinted of sadness. In every other respect he was exactly what he looked,—a smoothly rounded, successful mortal, who, having enjoyed that exceedingly valuable thing, a fair start, had made the most of his opportunities.

Thoroughly in earnest in everything he undertook, he also was kind and generous nearly to a fault; yet in spite of an almost womanish gentleness of manner, very few ever had actually overreached him. In the Street he was known as a shrewd and rather daring operator, a loyal friend to those whom he liked, and a fearless foe of everything which by his rigid code was classified as irregular. Naturally enough, he was an associate of many very influential people—financial and social leaders—who would gladly have welcomed him to their homes, but he seldom went anywhere save to a club and occasionally to a theatre. His few really intimate friends

thoroughly understood why he shunned everything akin to gayety. They knew of the happy marriage of some eighteen years before, of the hopes and fears of two years later, of the death of the beautiful girl-mother who never saw her infant son, and of the father's almost deadly grief and subsequent devotion to that dear-bought son, little Joe. In the opinion of society, King carried his sorrow entirely too far and was altogether too fine a fellow to forever remain wrapped up in a mantle of sadness and devoted solely to business and Joe. "The latter was all right," said they, a rather shy, long-legged, book-loving strippling, "who would be a deal better off, if his father only would brace up and ask some nice, sensible woman to preside over the big, luxurious, but lonely home." There were women, too, who wouldn't have shrieked for the police had Mr. King attempted to pay them any small attention. In fact, there had been a time when certain ladies had rather admired "that handsome widower," and certainly never had crossed the street in order to avoid him, but as the years passed the truth gradually sank home and the would-be willing workers turned to less stony soil.

Regular as Mr. King's life had been for years, there was an early chapter known to but two living people. The other was his dearest friend of college days, a rare good fellow, though a bit wild, who had been everywhere known as "Big Bart Monroe." Like King, he was an only son, but possessed of better prospects, inasmuch as some worthy relative had left him money, perhaps wisely, in the form of

an annuity of two thousand dollars. As so often is the case with chums, the young fellows were not at all alike in temperament. Monroe was a great, strapping, handsome chap, a master of most manly sports and pastimes, free with his money, and naturally one of the most popular men in college. Everything he did was marked with an almost boyish enthusiasm. There was no harmless mischief he did not get into, and for a while the sole serious thing in his life seemed to be his steadfast affection for King, which, by the way, was as seriously if more quietly returned. At last came the time, that awful time, when a couple of unusually fine young fellows make the unpleasant discovery that they are rivals. In this case it was a very pretty rivalry, fair and honorable throughout, and with nothing like a breach between the friends. For a while most people rather pitied King, for Monroe was the very last style of chap a sapient lover would select as his rival; yet, eventually, as so often happens, the quietly persistent triumphed. What Monroe thought doesn't matter. Game as ever, he took his medicine like a man, and at the wedding two years later he stood like a Spartan gentleman beside his friend, and of all the hand clasps there was none more sincere than the iron grip of that sturdy right which had so valiantly pushed at shot and boxing-glove in the brave days at New Haven.

After that their ways had parted, but they kept up an irregular correspondence. To King's great sorrow, he learned that his friend for a time had made things pretty warm along his erratic trail through the

West. There were rumors of the wildest of mad pranks and of reckless tampering with the cup that ruins. King nearly had made up his mind to risk a written appeal to his friend when his own awful bereavement came. The long letter he received from Monroe gave him more comfort than anything else possibly could have done; for, in addition to a brotherly sympathy, it contained a declaration of the writer's solemn renunciation of everything savoring of fast living, and King knew his man well enough to understand how sternly that pledge would be kept.

That Monroe was a finely qualified mining engineer, King well knew, and quite naturally he supposed his friend to be more or less busied at his profession. But he was destined to make rather a startling discovery. For some months he had been eagerly following a series of nature-stories in a magazine. These stories were of a peculiar style and interest, and so intelligent a reader as King could not fail to realize how close the gifted but unknown writer had got to the fascinating little things of the world beautiful. Many a busy New Yorker is interested in matters as far removed from his daily walk, and King soon became an enthusiastic follower of what to him seemed an almost magic pen. Naturally enough he read the sketches to Joe, and thereby delighted the lad beyond measure.

One evening the now eagerly looked-for magazine arrived, and father and son settled themselves for a

delightful experience. Mr. King, however, had not read more than a few paragraphs of his favorite's story, when he stopped as though shot, and for many seconds stared, round-eyed, at his thoroughly startled son, who for the moment imagined his parent had been stricken by some mysterious illness. Shock number two speedily came, for to Joe's dismay, his elder suddenly uttered a shout and sprang to his feet.

"Listen! Oh,—just listen!" he gasped, then read rapidly: "'As the charge exploded, the air was filled with flying rubbish, through which showed the revolving form of the tenderfoot as he was flung down the slope. The whole thing reminded me of an old-time college prank in which, with the aid of a loyal friend, a lasting scare was administered to a certain obnoxious personage.'"

"But I don't understand," ventured quiet Joe.

"Of course you don't; but I do!" ejaculated his father. "Only two people knew of that trick, and I am the friend referred to. What I ought to have guessed long ago, I now am certain of: dear old Monroe is the writer of the stories we have been enjoying, and I'll tell him so to-night. To think of that beloved ruffian having developed into a nature-worshipper. It's the most astounding thing that has transpired in a month, and there's been a lively time of late at that!"

The letter was written, a prompt answer was received, and it not only proved Mr. King to be correct, but it contained a perfectly charming descrip-

tion of the writer's wild, free life as a naturalist and word-painter of the fascinating things he studied. The closing paragraph gave its reader a thrill of deeper pleasure. It ran: "It now seems safe to mention a joy long promised me—a flying visit to your city. My publishers desire to consult about certain future plans, but that alone could not move me from my happy hunting-grounds. Coupled, however, with the certainty of seeing you, it is irresistible; so prepare, dear old pal, for a raider from the wild and woolly. I hope to show up about June 20th, and escape before the uproar of the big day, of which I have rather unattractive memories. So should you mark a tall, piratical craft bearing down upon your treasure-galley, don't be alarmed, for the formidable-looking ruffian will just speak you and beg a little water—nothing more. Should Western garb and manners jar your metropolitan culture a bit, don't worry; for no matter how great the outward change, the important thing inside beats just the same."

"My boy!" exclaimed Mr. King, in a voice which Joe seldom had heard, "the grandest fellow in the world is coming, and we'll have him with us. It seems almost too good to be true, but we'll do our level best to give him a pleasant time. He's the most lovable man I ever saw, and your poor dad will have to play second fiddle before Bart's been here a week. He's one of God's own noblemen, even though he may appear a bit roughened by Western life."

"What sort of looking man is he?" solemnly queried Joe, to whose retiring nature the prospect of a wild and woolly intruder was not exactly so inspiring as it seemed to the father.

"Let me see," replied Mr. King; "Bart is six feet two inches tall, very dark-skinned, smooth-faced, and has hair as black as an Indian's. He weighs two hundred and ten pounds to an ounce, is as straight as a chalk-line, and is the fastest runner for his size, and one of the strongest men I know. He is one of the most nonchalant, daredevil chaps that ever stood upon feet, but you'll soon get used to his manner. You've never seen a man at all like what he will prove to be, but never forget that inside of what may seem a rough exterior is a genuine man — the manliest man I know. And what he'll tell you about Indians, cowboys, bears, and so on will be strictly true, because Bart Monroe is unable to tell a lie except for a woman or a chum. You like that — eh?" he concluded, as he noticed Joe's sparkling eyes; and in truth the lad already had conjured up a wonderful mental picture of a mighty man — a delightfully careless, swaggering chap, who had hobbled with Indians, miners, and bears until he had absorbed not a few of the characteristics of each. To a youth of Joe's temperament the vision, while fascinating, was a wee bit overpowering, for he never had been fifty miles from the big city, and had pictured his Western man from divers stories and their illustrations, which seemed to portray a sort of desperado with but trifling variations, and these

mostly of details of dress, or the deaths of the hero's antagonists.

Nevertheless, as the days passed, Joe found himself more and more eager for the appearance of the stranger, and when the appointed evening arrived and Mr. King reached home alone, the lad was greatly disappointed. The father, too, was fidgety, and more than once expressed the hope that nothing had happened to the traveller. At about eight-thirty, however, the bell rang, and Mr. King's sudden spring from his easy-chair and hasty "By George! bet this is him now!" betrayed something like nervousness on the part of even a seasoned broker. In a moment he had opened the door, and the more deliberate servant and Joe heard a deep, musical voice asking, "Is this Mr. King's house?" and the master's courteous reply. There was a moment's silence, and then the voice continued: "Well, Emmy, if I've changed as much as you have, I s'pose there's a reasonable excuse both sides — eh, old pal?"

Another brief pause was broken by a perfect roar from Mr. King, and in a moment there was a small storm of jerky words, laughter, and scuffling feet, suddenly interrupted by an explosive: "Oh, Lord, close that infernal door! The neighbors'll think we're full! Glad to see you — you old rascal — but come in! Come in! Only my boy here, and, old pal, he'll be as glad to see you as I am!"

It probably was the fact that he was a New York boy that restrained Joe from a swift-footed retreat.

Never in his life had he heard such a row in that quiet mansion, and, oblivious of the fact that it was his father who was making all the noise, he nervously stood his ground and awaited the onslaught of the savage guest. The next moment Joe was the most astonished lad on all Manhattan's crowded isle; for he found himself facing a figure which seemed to tower above his father, and that figure was in immaculate evening dress. He vaguely heard his father say something about "My son," and presently felt the grasp of a hand which was slow to release his own. But upon venturing to look up, he at once recovered himself; for an exceedingly handsome face ornamented with a long, snow-white mustache, was bending toward him, while the softest of well-modulated voices was expressing its owner's pleasure at meeting the son of a dear old chum. In the mysterious manner of youth, Joe took it all in at first glance. The lean, powerful figure in its perfectly fitting garb; the darkly handsome face, darker by contrast with snowy hair, and lastly and forever, the magnetic brown eyes, which sent straight to his own gray ones a kindly message which no lad could fail to understand. In an instant his hand was gripping the stranger's, and thus was sealed a friendship that was to endure for many a moon.

To Joe that hour in the dining room was an unforgettable thing. For a while the two men made spasmodic attempts to remember him and give him a fair share of attention, in which, by the way, the guest succeeded much better than did the host, and

whenever not directly addressed, Joe sat and watched Monroe's expressive face and fairly hung upon the words of the wonderful voice as it painted alluring pictures of that mighty new land of plain and mountain of which the boy so often had read and dreamed. Monroe's crisp speech might have held young ears for hours, but Joe was too thoughtful to forget, so after a bit of a struggle, he forced himself from his chair and said good night. Monroe's laughing assertion that Joe hadn't done with him yet sounded like music, while Mr. King's hearty assurance that the baggage would be brought up next day completed the lad's satisfaction. In his room he realized that this half-dreaded invader coolly had made him a helpless captive without even a show of resistance, yet, strange to say, he was quite content. "I like him mighty well," he said to himself, "and the first good chance that offers, I'll get him to tell me more about those old prairies and things. Wish he'd only take me along when he goes back."

"I hate to have the boy miss any of it," said Mr. King, as they settled down for a long talk, "but his turn will come later. This is my night, and besides, Joe needs his sleep. He grows like a weed and he's a dear good fellow, but, do you know, Bart, sometimes I cannot help feeling a wee bit anxious about him. Not that there's anything particular the matter, yet he doesn't seem to have the beef on him nor the snap in him that we had at his age. I'm not worrying, but I wouldn't lose him for the whole round earth. He and you are the only people I

really care about in all the world. You could have half of all I've got for the asking, but as for the boy — I honestly believe I could shoot myself without a tremor if I knew it would insure him a long and happy life. The only real regret I'd have would be that the act would forever part us."

Monroe fixed a keen eye upon his host and for a moment was silent, then he slowly said: "In my opinion, old chum, you need looking after worse than the boy does. That confounded drive down town is getting on your nerves. Why not cut it all out for a few months and come West with me? I'll guarantee to brace you and Joe so you won't know yourselves. I haven't got a brownstone shack, but I have got the tidiest log-cabin in all Canada, plenty of books for off days, sport for the fair ones, a river at the door, mountains t'other side, and prairies stretching for hundreds of miles east. Better come and have a try at it. You can own the place, eat when you choose, and sleep as long as you have a mind to. There's plenty to see and do, and the grub is of the best. Just say the word, and we'll pull out of this magnificent crematory one week from to-night."

King smiled — it was a pitifully sad little smile — and slowly shook his head. "It is impossible at present; there is altogether too much depending upon my personal supervision. No other man possibly could take control of my business at such short notice and successfully carry out the things I have staked much upon; and even were there such a

man available, I'm afraid I'd find a deal more worry than benefit in my exile. Yet it is easy to see how much good the boy might derive from the experience, and, for his sake, I deeply regret that it cannot be."

"But it can be."

In an instant King was upon his feet.

"You—you mean," he excitedly exclaimed, "that Joe can go without me?" The other nodded, and King nervously paced to and fro. "By George!" he said at last, "you're right. I dread the bare idea of parting with him, for I'll be a lonely man o' nights without my laddie, but, old pal, you're right—you certainly are! I've been worried about him; for even an old fool from Wall Street can see that he's not so rugged as he should be, and I believe the change would do him a heap of good. He's pretty well advanced in his studies and, of course, I've been thinking of his going away to school; but, somehow, he seems such a child to me, and school would mean losing him, too."

"In my opinion," remarked Bart, "the school he most needs just now is the school of the all-outdoors. And let me tell you something. I've about completed an arrangement whereby I am to prowl through odd corners of the land and write up whatever may appear to be of interest. A car is now being fitted up in accordance with my plans, which will mean solid comfort; the car is to be hauled as I desire and side-tracked wherever I designate, which will mean all sorts of pleasant prowls afoot

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and nightly returns to a place much snuggler, safer, and cleaner than the average hotel. It's a long way across the continent, but some day about the close of the summer that car will be left near my shack. Your refusal of my invitation leaves me free for this jaunt. You let Joe come along with me. We can haul out of here in a week, outfit the car at Montreal, and then stage westward as we have a mind to. He shall write you at every stop, and meanwhile you can lick your old business into shape and join us at any time and place. I wouldn't take any boy but yours, and you know if I'll take proper care of him. He shall only learn things good for him to know, he will be worth as company a deal more than his keep, and all he requires is your permission and a small outfit which we can purchase in half a day down town. Think a minute and say the word."

Mr. King didn't think for half a minute. Wall Street doesn't train that way. He gave a queer little gasp, then his eyes began to shine, and his hand struck Bart's with a crack like a pistol-shot. "We'll leave it to the boy," he said, "and we'll buy that outfit to-morrow," which, considering that the party of the third part was sound asleep and hadn't even heard of his good fortune, was rather peculiar. Then they sat down and spun yarns of the old days till Bart happened to glance at the clock, the small hand of which stood about halfway between two and three. Mr. King laughed amusedly, then jerked his head knowingly in the direction of the sideboard, but the quick "Never touch it" vetoed the motion.

"Wonder what the boy'll think? Hold on a minute; he doesn't mind being waked," chuckled King as he turned toward the great stairway. Bart watched his measured ascent and nodded wisely as he watched. Presently a low "Come up here, Bart," sounded, and he followed his host. But such a difference! His hasty feet appeared scarcely to touch every second step, and big as he was, his movements were as swift and silent as a cat's. At the top stood Joe in his pajamas, and one look at his face told what his answer would be.

"Well, son, I'm sorry we've pulled you out," chuckled Bart, "but it's like this, you see. Somehow I've turned family doctor and have prescribed for your what's-the-matter. The prescription says that you've got to come along with me, and we'll prowl through the wilderness till your father can join us. We'll go in our own little car, we'll see all there is to be seen, and do whatever's right, especially to the fish and game, and we'll just have the time of our lives. If after a fair trial you don't like it, you can express yourself home at a day's notice, but I don't think there'll be any call to worry about that. How does that prescription taste? — and ain't I a bully doctor?" he concluded, laughing heartily, for Joe's unqualified approval was most amazingly manifest.

"Well! of all the ungrateful young cubs ever I saw!" spluttered Mr. King. "To think he'd forsake his poor old dad for a rascal he hardly knows. Why, Joseph — you — you're meaner than a rat after

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a pied piper! You're meaner'n Minnehaha after a buck Indian! You — you — oh! Go on back to bed!" he finally gasped through a laugh such as no man had heard from Emmons King for many a year. Then the two men went below, but while they awaited the response to a call for a cab, lo! from upstairs there floated a dull, measured thump-thumping, ending with a shrill, "Whee-e-e!"

"What the mischief's he at, do you think?" queried King.

"Dunno; war-dancing, I reckon!" chuckled Bart, and it was even so.

But after his guest had departed, Mr. King walked for many minutes to and fro, his face betraying the shifting war of deep emotions. At last he sought the library and his desk, unlocked a compartment, and drew forth a small leather case. As he opened this, his lips moved silently. A sweet, girlish face smiled back at his troubled one, and presently he muttered: "I do it for his good, as you would have wished—sweetheart; I believe 'tis for the best. I have kept him with me maybe too long, but I am lonely, lonely, lonely." Then he touched the portrait with his lips and softly laid it away.

THE MAKING OF A BRAVE — THE
WINNING TO THE WAR TRAIL —
THE ROLLING TEPEE

THREE days passed most pleasantly in spite of the thermometer. Monroe, for a wonder, had no difficulty with his publishers; for climatic, or other reasons, they literally were in a melting mood. When a New York publisher really means business, and the writer is willing to stand for what that implies, it is possible to reestablish slavery in seven minutes by a fast clock. This Monroe promptly discovered, but it didn't greatly matter, as the contract merely called for what he wished to supply, which was work in certain regular instalments. Hence, less than half a day sufficed for his business, and then he was free to refresh his memory concerning Gotham. Mr. King and Joe took him turn about, the father's attractions including clubs, gardens, and business places, while the son acted as pilot to the beach, museums, etc. To Joe's huge joy, his big friend displayed a marked preference for the Museum of Natural History, of which Mr. King knew next to nothing, and the lad was proud indeed when at an early hour he led the way into the stately tomb of the still things.

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This was Joe's pet place, and he rather fancied that he knew a bit more about it than most New Yorkers, — certainly ten times more than any outsider, — but there was a genuine surprise coming. At first, rather to his dismay, but soon to his keen delight, Monroe evinced an astounding knowledge of nearly everything in the magnificent collection, especially such things as wore fur and feathers. Of beautiful group after group and specimen after specimen, he spoke as one who not only thoroughly appreciated the scientific skill of the taxidermists, but who also had mastered the life-stories of the creatures themselves. Most of Joe's favorite books were more or less devoted to these subjects, yet this hawk-eyed, smooth-tongued giant kept seeing minute things and glibly running over other things of which the books made no mention whatever. Within an hour Joe was worshipping hard, nor was his joy decreased by Monroe's confident, "We'll see this fellow up North," or, "That beauty's common where we're bound for," or, "Here's a rare one, but you'll meet him on some bluff away West." And this sort of thing appeared to have no end. And there were little stories, too, of this and that and the other small matter. Why a feather was just so, a foot formed as it was, or a nest placed where shown, and to every word Joe hearkened with unflagging interest; for this indeed was the real thing, because the moment a point was explained, his own intelligence could grasp the simple yet often most important truth of it.

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When they finally left that castle of enchantment, Joe wasn't quite sure if it was the wee little cute things, or that wonderful array of big game and small, which had been most fascinating. That magnetic voice certainly had a tenderer tone while addressing some almost microscopic hummer or warbler, but there had been a deeper ring to it when such things as turkeys, grouse, waterfowl, and snipe were referred to, while the huge moose, caribou, bear, and lesser quadrupeds had, apparently, aroused the least enthusiasm of all. This was a mystery which Joe could not exactly fathom, for to his untutored sportsmanship it really did seem that a moose ought to be at least twice as charming as a bear, and the whole outfit range in interest from the biggest downward to a squizzy-whizzy hummer. He was just going to ask the why of the thing, when he recalled what Monroe had said about the wee hummer and what a terror a chicken-hawk surely would be if possessed of the ruby-throat's power in proportion to the hawk's size. Then he realized how the story of the hummer had taken hold, and that answered the contemplated question. Furthermore, he decided that were it not for the glorious outing in prospect, it would be no bad scheme just to stop in New York and be a limpet stuck on this rock, which could spout the waters of truth—provided the rock would go to the Museum every day.

But there were other fascinating things a-crowding the forward trail, as Joe soon discovered. "You'd

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best take him down to-day — I'll leave everything to you; and remember, only what's really good," said Mr. King, merrily, as he left them at the breakfast table, whereupon Monroe smiled sagely, then looked hard at his young friend.

"You said you had shot a little, didn't you?" he queried, and Joe nodded. "Well, we'll need to run down town in about an hour to look up some matters. I suppose you don't know where Blank's place is, do you? We might as well outfit you while we're at it." Joe knew just about where that shop was, but his wildest dreams had not pictured what was to come of a visit to it.

It was some two hours later when they entered the sporting-goods dealer's, and Monroe began to study a leaf in his note-book. Very soon Joe had it forced upon him that their proposed trip was no joking matter, for the clerk took his measure and began to lay out things in accordance with Monroe's orders. A complete shooting-suit, a pair of waders, another of knee-boots, a couple of rods, and a lot of tackle, were selected, and then came the great item — the gun. Monroe evidently knew exactly what he wanted, and presently he was closely examining a beautiful little twelve-gauge by a famous American firm. It was an arm which a king had no reason to feel ashamed of, and finally Monroe handed it to Joe and said, "Just toss that up a few times and see how it fits." Joe did as directed and declared it all right, adding rather

dubiously, "It's mighty costly, isn't it?" but the purchasing agent merely smiled meaningly.

"Perhaps," ventured the salesman, "one of our newest arms would be better; you know, sir, of course, that much smaller gauged guns are now all the go."

"Yes, I know all about that," chuckled Monroe, "but the 'go' that you refer to is what goes here. Where we propose to go the conditions are different. The 'twelves' outnumber all other gauges at least fifty to one, which means that ammunition for them may be purchased at any shop, while smaller shells must be sent for. The size that will save trouble is the thing for us, so we'll take this one. Send the outfit up to this address right away." And so saying he laid down a number of green persuaders of generous growth.

"Murder!" hoarsely whispered Joe; "that's an awful lot of money!"

"Never you mind, Joseph; I've got my orders, and we'll get an 'awful' lot of fun to square accounts," said Monroe, and he led the way to the L-road as unconcernedly as though such trifling deals were of everyday occurrence. Presently Joe exclaimed: "See that clock up there? I'll bet I can stop her with one yell!" Whereupon Monroe burst into such a hearty laugh that half a dozen people turned to stare at him.

"So you think one decent war-whoop would ease things a bit, eh? Well, it's excusable, for you're now the real Brave that you'll look to be when once you get on all that war-paint back yonder."

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To Joe the following forty-eight hours seemed one big buzz of bliss. There was packing to be done; but had this been left to the person most interested, it might have long remained unfinished business. Monroe, however, soon saw how things were not going, and the moment he took a hand, the matter was simplified. His first order was for all clothes to be laid out upon the bed, and this being accomplished, he rapidly sorted the useful from the miscellaneous, which was ordered back to its usual resting-place. The selected stuff included a lot of light woollen underwear, a suit of tweed, a couple of suits of pajamas, handkerchiefs, ties, etc., and three flannel shirts. These, with the shooting outfit, when neatly folded, just filled a small leather trunk, and then the bulk of the work was done. Mr. King's special contribution was a fine suit-case equipped with toilet articles, and when linen, slippers, and rain-coat had been added, Joe was about ready for anywhere, although to his eyes the whole thing seemed curiously small. But Munroe explained the advantages of travelling as light as possible, in this case enough being much better than a feast. And thus it happened that when Mr. King had got through his brief instructions and rather shaky farewells, Joe and his guide boarded the north-bound express in light marching order.

Beyond the fact of its being Joe's first experience in a "sleeper" the night run produced nothing of special interest. Monroe had him up in plenty of time, but not until the great river was reached did

the new-made Brave thoroughly arouse himself. The mighty, swift-rolling flood was something altogether new, and before the Canadian metropolis was entered, he realized that he was in a new country and almost started upon the wonderful war trail.

The working part of their short stay in Montreal was much simpler than Joe had expected. Their first important move was to drive with a railway official across the city to where stood their "tepee," — otherwise the car. This proved to be a small, well-built affair which had once done service as a pay-car, but had been remodelled inside in accordance with Monroe's plans, until to all intents and purposes it was a camp-house upon wheels. Absolutely plain in finish, it was the perfection of cleanliness and comfort, for both designer and workmen thoroughly understood every phase of the problem of *multum in parvo*. At one end was a cute little lavatory and altogether the smallest bath Joe ever had seen. The large middle section was library, dining room, and bedroom in one, the big berth either side being designed to form a most comfortable lounge during the day. In the centre was a large table which could be folded away when desired, while raised floor-sections revealed what may best be described as gigantic ice-boxes. There were racks, shelves, and small, hammock nets, from which books, dishes, and things could not possibly tumble; there were special racks for firearms and fishing-tackle and a big tank marked "Ice-water." The chief seats were two, thick-cushioned easy-chairs, but in corners

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there were other fixed affairs the tops of which lifted from handy receptacles for odds and ends of wearing-apparel, and so on. Beyond the general living room was a snug kitchen with small cook-stove, big fuel-box, many lockers for stores and utensils, and all arranged so as to be instantly got at without awkward reaching. Opposite, and securely fastened by straps, were an axe, a hatchet, and a saw, and to these Monroe directed Joe's attention. "These things may not greatly interest you just at present," he chuckled, "but there'll come a time some day." Then he stared fixedly at the yawning wood-box, and a something in his expression caused Joe to snicker and hastily exclaim: "All right! You just wait and see; I'll be game for it."

The railroad man meanwhile had not been idle. His trained eyes had gone over every foot of the car inside and out, and when the two presently joined him outside, he voiced a cheery: "She seems to be all right — eh? But if you want anything more done, just say the word. The wise time for kicking is before she leaves the yard; once you pass her, it's your business, and not mine." But Monroe was perfectly satisfied and didn't hesitate to say so, adding: "Now, I'll rustle for supplies and get everything aboard to-morrow. My own traps will reach North Bay in a few days. You send her there first chance, and we'll pull out to-morrow night."

"It's a lot of tackle, clothes, and stuff I left with a friend at Port Arthur," explained Monroe, as they drove back. "We'll pick it up at the Bay; mean-

while we're going to the top of Mount Royal for a bit of a look around; there's a mighty fine view on such a day as this."

In due time they reached the lookout, and Joe was delighted. Below spread the city, much larger than he had imagined, and beyond it the huge waterway by which the entire overflow of the Great Lakes sweeps downward to the distant Gulf. Upon one side, and almost directly below, were the stately homes and beautiful grounds of the principal residential section; while a huge dome, slim spires, and more distant twin towers indicated the chief places of worship. Beyond the river spread the broad plain dotted with the hamlets of Indians and French-Canadians, the whole scene possessing a peculiar, quiet beauty which is by no means easy to duplicate. Monroe pointed out its most interesting features, but at last Joe exclaimed, "My! but we seem to be far away from everywhere. Where'bouts is New York?"

"Look away off here. Can you make out cloudy-looking hills? If so, away beyond them lies your little lost village of Manhattan." And to Joe it did seem there were some hazy forms on the horizon, which might have been either rolling country or low-lying clouds.

"It's a beautiful city," finally said Monroe, "but to see it at its best one should be here at midwinter. Then is its real season of jollity. Thousands of our people crowd here for the summer, while these people take their solid comfort by the big Lachine Rapids

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just above, or away down-river in the Saguenay River country. I'm an American, although most people think me at least half Canadian, but I will say this: Canada is destined to be one of the greatest as she is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and our really big men have long understood her wonderful possibilities. You be a true American, but never make the too common error of poking fun or sneering at this country. Before we get back, you'll probably have learned why. These people are not at all slow. They are just as shrewd and in their way as enterprising as we are, while in the matter of wholesome recreations and the living of well-regulated, happy lives, we might learn from them—if indeed we are not learning from them,” he added thoughtfully.

At the hotel Joe noticed a marked difference among the many people moving about. Half of them appeared to be chasing something here, there, and everywhere, questioning the clerks, clustering about the intelligence office, and always restless; while the others took things extremely easy, as though worry was the very last thing which concerned them. They also were less noticeable in the matter of clothes, although as a lot, they were fine-looking fellows.

“Those are natives. They never fuss,” explained Monroe, “while these others are our folks. Very few of them New Yorkers, as you might guess, for the typical New Yorker is as smooth and cool as iced wine. Up here you generally can tell an

American by the way he asks questions, and a Canadian by the way he doesn't. The typical Montrealer is a city man, and he and a few from Boston, Philadelphia, Toronto, Detroit, and the Twin Cities approach nearer to the best New York type than do any other classes of men in the States. All are quiet and extremely self-possessed and free from those small peculiarities which almost invariably betray the men from other important cities."

That night Joe dreamed of a beautifully brilliant bear with a mannerism which at once betrayed its nationality. It danced on top of a private car and in one paw it waved a breech-loader and in the other a trout-rod, the while most learnedly discoursing on Canadians and their ways.

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AT NORTH BAY—THE TESTING OF THE TACKLE—THE FOREST FOLK

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A MIST like a silver veil flung afar over drowsy wood and waveless water told Joe that 'twas very, very early for a New York boy to be leaning against a veranda post and watching the preliminary scrapings of an anxious and apparently seriously overchicked hen. But one solid sleep after the rather erratic napping in the sleeper had left him as fit as a fiddle and unable to remain longer in his comfortable bed. Monroe, with hair like wind-tossed grain and mustache pressed all one way, had stolen in from the adjoining room just in time to see a pair of youthful eyes snap open, whereupon he had grunted good-naturedly, "All right, son; dress if you feel like it, and I'll follow suit within half an hour. Then we'll have a bite and get busy."

So Joe was waiting in the novel silence for he scarce knew what. Clearly the L-road was tied up and the milk-wagons unusually late. Then he remembered where he was and devoted himself to the study of the hen and her brood. That self-sacrificing lady sturdily kicked the dirt this way and that, occasionally pickaxing her bill into the exposed surface, while the expectant chicks ringed the performance, and every few seconds rammed their heads

together in a massed play for some unroofed bug or worm. There were eleven chicks, hump-backed, half-feathered, and about as big as quail, and Joe wondered what their signal system might be, or if they merely took chances and grabbed for the prizes. One youngster was smaller and seemed weaker than the others, and he got kicked over a couple of times, but he always hustled back for another try. Joe was just beginning to feel sorry for him, when suddenly he emerged from the general tangle-up, and in his bill was a something which he seemed to consider mighty good. Instantly two of his brothers made a dash for him, but he cleverly dodged and ran a few yards, swallowing voraciously the while. "Good boy!" exclaimed Joe. "You're my pick of the —"

There was a humming rush of a swift, dark thing through the air, a sounding "spat," an agonized shriek from the hen, a magical disappearance of the brood, and lo! two broad pinions defiantly waved in the face of the maniacal mother, as with roughened feathers and beating wings she dashed for the murderous intruder. There was a quick grab by a yellow foot, and a mop of feathers trundled about in a blur of dust. With a yell, Joe sprang to the rescue and delivered a powerful kick at where the fuss seemed the thickest. His boot encountered a rather firm body, and the next instant a medium-sized and very limp hawk lay upon the ground, its foot still grasping the chicken. The old hen took one look, then fell upon the foe with beak and feet, and the way that irate old lady hammered him and kicked

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and bit loose his feathers was a caution. Meanwhile an extremely tottery chick blundered its way from the firing-line.

Summoned by the unusual disturbance, came the proprietor, his wife, the maid of all work, and lastly Monroe, and great were their astonishment and satisfaction when they learned of the adventure and saw the result. "'Pon my word, young fellow," chuckled Monroe, "you're making quite a start. Kicking hawks to death is a game a bit beyond even the old stagers hereabouts. But, son, you've done our hostess and her excellent hen a rare good turn, for that feathered thug surely would have murdered every chick before seeking new ground. You should receive a double allowance of eggs with that bacon which I distinctly and approvingly smell this minute."

Joe was well pleased with himself, but of more importance was the evidence of the wildness of the place and its remoteness from Gotham. Naturally enough, his previous training had not taught him how common a thing is a dash by falcon or hawk upon the poultry of even a large town. Hence, to him the incident meant the actual getting in touch with the wilderness, and also a first-rate adventure for a letter home. Some forty minutes later he pushed back from the breakfast-table and remarked, "If that poor, fussy old hen is any relation of that last egg, I'm glad I saved her. I'd take a fall out of our own noble bird for a feed like this when I get hungry again."

Monroe laughed, and said: "Nothing like gratitude, my son; and now we'd better ship up one of those rods and find out if the fish are biting as they used to down alongside the pier yonder. Go get a steel rod and the tackle-box, and we can practise a bit. You scarce can break a steel rod, while those other dainty switches are poor tools in unskilled hands." Joe hustled away for the tackle, and in a few minutes they were at the end of the long pier, the supporting piles of which extended for some sixty-odd yards into the quiet bay. The water was beautifully clear, and Joe saw more than one dim shape speed from the shadow of the structure as they moved outward.

"There are black and rock bass and a few pick-erel about here, and it's a fine place for your practice. Just watch a moment, then you can sail in," said Monroe, as he tested the trembling steel switch now fitted with an aluminum reel holding sixty yards of silk, to which he had fixed a tiny silver spoon. "This is what is called skittering," he continued, as a deft motion sent the spoon a dozen yards away, where it smoothly and silently entered the water, "and the important things are, first to make as little fuss and splash as possible, and second to bring the spoon through the water at a rate which will cause it to spin at top speed. Tackle manipulated too slowly seldom will tempt a good fish, yet there is no advantage in rushing a lure through the water. One must understand something of the habits of the desired fish. The pikes, from the big

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muscallonge down to the little pickerel, will strike at a faster-moving lure than would be most attractive to the various basses and the perch. All things considered, just sufficient speed for perfect spinning is most to be depended upon, while nothing but a long and varied experience can teach one how, when, and where to introduce those little artistic touches and variations of speed with which an old hand so often tempts a hesitating fish."

Joe, needless to say, narrowly watched every movement, yet cast after cast failed to draw the expected strike. Finally the fisher let out more line, then, slowly walking, drew the troll the entire length of the pier. But this, too, failed; whereupon Monroe sought the tackle-box and exchanged the spinner for a plain hook mounted on fine gut. He was no believer in the oft-quoted "fisherman's luck." He knew there were plenty of fine fish lying within a radius of a few yards, and that a failure by one bait did not necessarily mean that the offering of another would be useless. Being an all-round angler, he had long before learned that, even in the best of wild waters, fish are apt to be curiously capricious in their diet. It was a three-sided proposition, *i.e.* proved skill, known quarry, and problematical bait, the real "twister" being the deciding of the latter. To all well-regulated fish, the spinner suggested fat minnow, hence even a live minnow was unlikely to prove attractive. The casting slightly savored of fly-fishing; therefore there was but scant encouragement in that direction,

especially at that season. It was a bit early for small green frogs, which limited the immediate possibilities to angleworms, fat pork, and crayfish.

At certain seasons, the little cousin to the lobster is irresistibly attractive to the various basses and a few other fish, and always is well worth a trial. A tinkle of falling water told of a wee stream near by, and at its outlet was a large hollow, the bottom littered with odds and ends of broken roots and waterlogged chips.

"We'll find bait here," said Monroe, as he began cautiously to turn over the sunken trash, "and



CRAYFISH BAIT.

these little nippers usually will do the trick. Hi!" he exclaimed, as a large, dark-looking crayfish darted from under his hand and flickered backward toward deeper water. It was not the loss of the intended bait, but a quick swirl above where it had vanished that caused the exclamation. The trained observer knew that only a big black bass makes that particular sort of swirl, while it was easy to guess the fate of the adventurous nipper. In a moment his fingers were gently pressing upon the back of a second crayfish, which presently was transferred to a coat pocket. When a couple more had met the same fate, Monroe was ready for business.

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His method of placing the bait upon the hook was a little wrinkle of his own. Because one never is sure of an unlimited supply of crayfish, the more fish one bait can be made to take, the better; yet of an average lot of anglers, perhaps not one in twenty knows the best way of placing the nipper on the hook. The commonest method is to hook the bait crosswise through the body, which means that the first strike will forever destroy the usefulness of the brittle morsel. Monroe knew a trick worth two of that. When at speed, the crayfish travels backward in an erratic dart caused by the strong tail rapidly playing below the body — a motion which might be roughly imitated by the rapid closing and opening of the hand held under water. Because fish know all about the nipper's mode of progressing, the closer that is imitated, the better the chance of success; and it may be done to perfection, as Joe presently learned.

The point of the hook was first inserted into what represented the mouth of the bait, then carefully passed inside the body and out through the tail. Thus the bend of the hook curved the dead body into the exact shape assumed by a swimming crayfish, the fact of the bait being dead making no material difference, because a proper manipulation of the rod would impart a temptingly lifelike motion, while fish have a habit of grabbing a crayfish first and leaving all polite inquiries concerning its health and actual liveliness to the subsequent moments. With a bait thus rigged, a gentle cast,

followed by a crafty shaking of the rod, will send it zigzagging backward to deep water, and if there be a hungry bass about, he surely will assert himself. A bait not jerked too much may be cast again and again, and even a savage strike does not necessarily injure it; for, in that case, the hooking of the fish is almost certain to force the bait up the gut or gimp, where it is comparatively safe from damage and ready to be slid back upon the hook. The worst things for the bait are the useless jerkings and violent recovery to which most novices subject it. When a fresh cast must be made, the hook should be raised very slowly, otherwise the bait surely will suffer.

These things and a few others were learned by Joe within a very few minutes, for Monroe's second cast provoked that dashing, headlong attack so characteristic of the black bass. Instantly the ready hand struck, and there was action of the most thrilling sort. To Joe it seemed that something surely would smash, for the angler went right at his fish from the start. The fish's first mad rush made the reel buzz like a bee, but soon that stopped, and as Joe quickly glanced from the pattern the taut silk was cutting, to the angler, he almost yelled, for the dainty steel switch was bending to a circle from which he was sure it never could straighten. But it was a good little rod, and the hand gripping it had been through many a similar though seldom a fiercer bout.

The as yet invisible fish darted this way and that and at times seemed to swing through wonderful

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loops and circles, but ever the straining steel maintained its even spring, save once when a quick hum and brief slackening told how closely the danger point had been dared. Before the fight was half through, Joe was fairly dancing with excitement, for now and then he caught the flash of bronze through a swirl and a glimpse of a something which appeared monstrous. And he could see, too, that the veteran's fighting blood was up, for the white mustache was a-bristle and the eager eyes ablaze with a something which Joe never had seen. Clearly the Red Gods were calling, and in no uncertain tones. Then came a quick-hissed "Hi! watch him jump!" and at once a shape like a great bronze spear-head flashed an instant in the sunlight, then vanished like a plummet with a sounding splash. Joe's amazed whoop scarce had died away before the bronzed fighter was up again; but that was the beginning of the end. Most black bass leap actually clear of the water once; a particularly game fish is apt to repeat that frequently successful attempt to dislodge the hook, but seldom indeed is a third leap tried. The fact is, the bass, as a rule, forces the fighting with a strenuousness which either means escape, or speedy exhaustion; so the typical fishing is a short burst and a merry one.

Joe's excitement, if not lessened, was diverted by a most unexpected thing, for to his amazement a strangely quiet voice said, "Here, take hold and don't be afraid; just keep the line taut, and you'll be all right," and before he could object, the rod was

in his hand. Very few lovers of the gentle art would have had either the generosity or the nerve to have trusted a four-pounder to a novice, but Monroe had most shrewdly measured his pupil. A moment later the twinkle in his eye denoted amused satisfaction, for Joe squared himself to his task and began to play the half-beaten fish with a comical imitation of a past-master at the business. Suddenly Monroe burst into a laugh of keen delight, for to his intense astonishment, the supposed-to-be-thoroughly-tractable bass began a most outrageous second edition of the first set-to. But Joe was game, and he scarcely needed what little counsel he received. If anything, he was over cautious, but for this there was every excuse; for who among veteran anglers has forgotten his first attempt with light tackle, and that awful attendant fear that the apparently flimsy outfit most assuredly would go to everlasting smash? So it happened that in the space of about two minutes, the bronze bravo gave up in earnest, and, turning upon his back, wigwagged with a fin his unconditional surrender. As they had no net at hand, Monroe stretched far down and hooked a finger into a royal gill, and the fat four-pounder was secured.

Partly because a couple of such fish would be most welcome at the hotel, but mainly to complete the lesson, Joe was directed to cast aside the little-injured crayfish, put on another, and try undisturbed water. And these three things he did so well that within five minutes he had got into an argument

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with a smaller but faster fish, which gave him one of those hurricane fights at which a medium-sized bass is superior to the heavier specimens. Two or three times before that dashing encounter ended Joe made trifling mistakes; the jumping in particular was trying, but the hook, as usually happens, was firmly planted, and finally the bass was secured. Monroe's hearty "Well done!" fell upon delighted ears, for Joe knew enough to understand what that first passing over of the rod had meant, and he was determined to prove worthy of his opportunities.

"Now," said Monroe, "we'll drop the bait question and go back to the infant class for a little while. Bait-fishing is one thing and fly-fishing another. This is a first-rate place for practising at casting, and while you cannot expect to master at once the finer points of the art, you can get a grip on the rudiments. This outfit is considerably heavier than an expert would think of using, but 'twill serve present purposes well enough. While you are taking those bass to the house, I'll just remove the hook to avoid unpleasant possibilities, and then we'll go ahead as though leader and flies were in actual service."

A small chip was floating some twenty yards away, and after a few preliminaries, it was selected as a mark. To an expert, the casting, purposely kept within reasonable bounds, was extremely easy, although to the novice it savored of the marvellous. To and fro hissed the silk in rhythmical sweep, touching the surface with amazing lightness, while the knot at the end caused a succession of small circles

which steadily crept closer and closer to the mark, till one ringed the chip. At the next cast there was a faint tick, and the chip at once rocked; then again and again the knot struck it.

"You see, it's easy enough when you know how," said Monroe, as he reeled in about half the line. "In actual fishing one of the important things is to fix your eyes upon a certain spot and then drop the flies as close as possible and without any splashing, or loops of slack line falling about. You soon learn to closely estimate distance, and how to place the flies within a few inches of the desired spot; but that is not all, nor one-half of casting. For instance, where we stand there is unlimited space behind, so there is no need to worry about that very important thing, the back-cast; but were we on a trout stream with the usual forested banks, that same back-cast would be the most important feature of the fishing. Of course, fishing up or down stream usually will insure sufficient room for long-range work, but many a time one wants to fish across the water at a point where the brush is too close to one's back to allow anything akin to free movement. Then one must mainly depend upon the current to carry the lures where wanted, or perhaps flick them this fashion."

With the words, he seized the line near the end, and firmly holding the reel with the right hand, with the left drew upon the line till the rod was considerably bent. When he released the line, it sped almost straight out from the mere spring of the rod. The wrinkle frequently is useful, especially

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when one wants to cast a few feet beneath low, overhanging brush which so often hampers the bank of a promising pool.

"Remember these things," he concluded as he handed over the rod; "be sure there's plenty of room behind, for it's maddening to get fouled on a lofty twig, even should it not break the rod, which it's mighty apt to do. Second, never snap with tackle as though you were trying to crack a whip; if you do, you'll surely lose the flies; and third, never jerk at anything, not even a fish. The slightest of turns of the wrist will plant the hook, — in the great majority of cases the fish may be said to hook itself, — and once you have him hooked, go right at him, keep a taut line, and give him no idle moments which can possibly be avoided. Too timid handling has lost many a beauty, and the chap who never allows a fish one foot of unfought-for line is the one who will lose the fewest by fouling roots, rocks, and the like. Now go ahead."

In a few trials Joe had fairly caught the hang of the thing, and the line went out and came back with commendable smoothness; but still it had a nasty habit of touching the water in rather unexpected places, and finally something went amiss. A wet coil around his neck gave him quite a shock, and Monroe's laughing "A couple of hooks that time might have made music," warned him to be more cautious. Like most novices, he was a bit excited and didn't know it, and presently a sharp "zip" from behind told he had been guilty of the fatal

whip-snapping. But the thing had a peculiar fascination, so after a few moments' rest he again went to work, this time in less eager mood.

"That's it; now you've caught the knack of it!" exclaimed Monroe, after a few more trials, and instantly Joe realized that for the first time he had caught the proper swing. It is so in many minor matters. We plunge, as it were, into a thing and appear to make astounding progress, only to discover later that the lesson had been but half learned, and that we, perhaps, had made ourselves ridiculous while fondly imagining that a favorable impression was being created. There is a deal of truth in the old saying, "Them fears nothing that knows nothing." It may be homely, but it applies many more times than some people imagine. In point of fact, any keen, intelligent lad like Joe might easily master the rudiments of fly-casting in a couple of hours. The real trouble with most beginners is that they first imagine the thing to be too hard and then too easy. In this, as elsewhere, a little knowledge is dangerous. It begets false confidence and attendant carelessness, the best specifics for which are the "snick" of a parting tip, or the "clush" of a bunch of fouled leaves at the end of a tough switch twenty feet from the ground.

Such engrossing occupation caused Joe to forget the flight of time, and it was not till a big bell jangled that he gave a thought to such a trifle as the midday meal. Then he recalled the fat bass, and somehow he thought he'd like another look at them. They

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proved as good as none but fish sent almost straight from water to pan can be, and the way in which they disappeared caused the hostess to beam with satisfaction; for, country-like, she had been worrying just a wee bit concerning how best to feed "them there fellers from York." And were it not that the "fellers" seemed quite ready to provide a fair portion of their own food, she might have worried with more reason, for there's no great profit in hotel rates in such seldom visited places.

"How about Trout Lake—it's a four-mile trail through those woods?" asked Monroe, as he filled his pipe after dinner. Joe laughed at the idea of his being tired by an easy spell of fishing, so in a few minutes they were leisurely ascending the long slope near the crest of which the clearing ended and unbroken forest began. Beyond, the land gradually fell away to a broad valley, then rose again like a huge wave, only to again slope to the big lake they were seeking. The trail, an old tote-road, was dry and comparatively smooth, thus insuring easy tramping. Monroe knew that about halfway in it was crossed by a small stream, near which was a clearing and a deserted log-shanty; otherwise the unbroken woods extended to within rifle-shot of Trout Lake.

"Now we're in the real woods," he said, "and the less we talk and stumble, the more things we'll see. Woods-folk love these old trails, but wild things hereabouts are silent. The way to see them is to slip quietly along, and if we happen to run across a bear, *this* will entertain him." In explana-

tion, he half drew from his coat pocket a big six-shooter, the sight of which did much to convince Joe that they really were in the wilds of which he had so often dreamed. Somewhat to his astonishment the forest seemed perfectly quiet. He had imagined there would be a continual jingle of bird music, for surely where they were entirely unmolested, the songsters would be heard at their best. He had not learned how closely associated are song and border thickets and sunlit opens. The great curving corridor they traversed was walled with mighty trunks and roofed with interlacing greenery through which the sunshine merely filtered and fell upon the ground in what looked like splashes of molten gold. Before half a mile had been traversed, somehow he felt like an intruder in some holy place wherein any sound, even a bird voice, would be a jarring discord. The mystic power of big woods had enveloped him, and he stepped lighter and lighter, till, half unconsciously, he imitated both his tall leader and that vanished Redskin who first had taught the lesson of the silent foot. But not until an unnoticed dry twig snapped under his boot did he realize how so trifling a thing could jar like a rifle-shot.

It merely was a coincidence, but at the moment Monroe stopped. His right hand, turned palm-backward, plainly meant, "Be careful," and as Joe halted, the hand slowly swung forward till it pointed at a ferny spot some few yards along the opposite side of the trail. For some seconds Joe could see nothing unusual, but suddenly, as if his eyes had

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become properly focussed, he made out the motionless form of a slate-colored bird standing erect upon the ground and about the size of an ordinary bantam fowl. It looked so like a mossy stone that it might easily have been passed, but the liquid gleam of a wild dark eye betrayed it. A moment later Joe gave a little gasp of delight; for lo! grouped about the mother were eight or nine beautiful little mottled balls of down. Presently Monroe's head turned and his questioning expression plainly meant, "See 'em?" Joe nodded, whereupon Monroe's tense pose at once relaxed, and he said, "That's Mrs. Canada Grouse, commonly called 'spruce partridge,' and her babies. Now watch 'em."

He moved forward, and at once the situation changed. The old bird uttered a low cry which sent the youngsters scattering to the cover; but not so the mother. In a moment she was tumbling about within a yard of Monroe's feet, and it seemed his quick hand might have caught her. Finally she puffed herself up like a wee turkey, threatening an actual charge against the big boots. Her tormentor shook a finger at her, which only increased her wrath; then he drew himself up, lifted his cap, made her a most courtly bow, and said, "Pardon the unintentional intrusion, madam; with your gracious permission we will resume our way." His majestic courtesy, and the absurd contrast between the two, started Joe giggling; but he, too, raised his cap, bowed, and passed on for a dozen yards. Then he turned, to see the only half-mollified mother retreat-

ing in a succession of wheeling evolutions which were comically suggestive of a certain class of irate lady having the last word. That was too much; so, resting his hand against a tree, he laughed aloud. Instantly Monroe faced about, and hissed: "Shut up, you young duffer; you'll spoil everything. You wouldn't have seen that if we hadn't kept quiet!" The voice was threatening, and for a second or so Joe was so startled that he forgot his mirth. But something in the quiver of Monroe's mustache and the twinkle in his eyes was worse than the bird's actions had been, so with a shrill cackle of joy Joe executed a series of arm and leg movements which were such a burlesque of the bird's performance that Monroe made a very poor attempt at keeping quiet.

"This sort of thing's got to stop right here," he grunted as he pulled himself together. "This is family time, which means the most quietly watchful time of all the year. The forest-folk love an old trail like this, but our tomfoolery probably has ruined the chances of the next half mile of it. You really must bottle up that laugh of yours so that an old fool hen can't—aw, come on! You're incorrigible!" he spluttered, for Joe was threatening another outbreak, and Joe's type of joy was most amazingly contagious. "The hawk-eye and the cat-foot are the things for this sort of work, and a slow gait and long looks ahead should be the rule," he continued as they rounded a bend in the trail. "For instance, here you see—quick!—straight ahead!"

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Joe's heart gave a mighty bound ; for, standing on the trail not forty yards away, were two beautiful twin fawns, the spots distinctly showing on their glossy forms as they waited for big ears and eyes and delicately pointed noses to correctly solve the threatened danger. Joe could scarce believe his senses, but there the beauties stood in such bold relief that he could mark every curve of bodies and necks and lines of the apparently fragile limbs. Suddenly they whirled about as with one motion and for an instant they showed like two white bouncing balls ; then the white vanished, and two reddish streaks seemed to dive headlong into the cover. Half bewildered by the vision which he felt was abundant reward for the trip, Joe turned and stammered out, "Wer—were—those—*young—deers?*" The awe-struck tones were almost too much for Monroe, but he managed to say, "Yes, fawns ; and the old doe's not far away. She's probably watching us from the brush yonder. If we hadn't made such a row, we might have seen a prettier picture. Sure enough, here's her track." Looking down, Joe saw a couple of good-sized tracks which appeared larger by contrast with a number of tiny prints, one of which was in the centre of the doe's slot. That fairylike print seemed entirely out of proportion with the creatures which had sped away, but a fawn's lower leg and foot are dainty structures, almost as fine as the wonderful running-gear of certain antelopes and the bantam deer of Japan and India.

"I suppose those youngsters are a mile away by now; I should think their mother would have a jolly time finding them again," he remarked as the route was resumed. Monroe explained that few wild things, especially when young, ever ran very far in cover, and that the fawns might not be more than one hundred yards away. "Those young beggars," said he, "go off with a fine dash, but they soon stop if not pursued. Of course, a yelping dog would scare 'em no end, for to the deer the dog suggests that deadly foe, the timber-wolf, the dread of which has been transmitted through countless generations of deer. But I think the all-round timidity of deer has been greatly exaggerated. In the settlements it's no uncommon thing to see deer feeding among young cattle, while many a deer has made nightly raids on turnip-patches lying so close to houses that the deer must have winded if not heard the rightful owners of the crop. I have several times, when still-hunting, overrun a snow trail and harked back to find the deer in some dense cover which I had circled, and this in spite of the fact that I had passed in plain view and perhaps not twenty-five yards away. A wise old buck would think little of back tracking a hundred yards, then making a grand leap to one side into good cover, and there hiding till his tracker had passed."

"But how will this doe find her fawns? She couldn't have seen where they went, so how will she know where to look for them?" queried puzzled Joe, to whom the woods were so large and the fawns

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so small that anything like a random quest savored of something like the proverbial search for a needle in a haystack.

"They know by their noses," chuckled Monroe ; and then he explained what a wonderful power belonged to those daintily tapered muzzles. "She can call them, and they her," he went on ; "but if all three were mute, one easily could find the others by the sense of smell." He had long before learned that a deer's first reliance is in its nose, the second in its big ears, the third, the beautiful but apparently not greatly trusted eyes. He had worked up-wind on deer too often to believe those eyes possessed even one-half of the sharpness commonly accredited to them ; in fact, his experience had convinced him that the eyes of the white-tailed deer were inferior to his own, which by repeated tests had been proved less keen than those of Indians and Breeds. He had a theory that no four-footed forest-dweller was possessed of half so sharp sight as was common to animals of the open. He reasoned that eyes forever accustomed to the shade and necessarily rather short-range vision of the forest, naturally were lacking in that peculiar development which seems to be characteristic of the eyes of animals whose habitat is the plains or mountains.

To him it seemed that extraordinarily sharp sight and keen nose seldom belonged to the same creature ; that the one sense in a measure was sacrificed in the unusual development of the other. He believed that the kings of the mountain thrones, the bighorn

sheep and the white goat, had the keenest eyes and the poorest noses of the larger four-footed game; that the pronghorn antelope ranked third, the elk and the barren-ground caribou fourth, the black-tail deer fifth, the white-tail deer and woodland caribou sixth, while the big moose had one of the most sensitive smellers and the least-trusted eyes of the lot. He had seen sheep, goat, antelope, elk, caribou, and black-tail deer take the alarm at great distances, when, owing to the wind, only their eyes could have detected the danger; and he had more than once observed moose and white-tail deer while they stood staring in an undecided way, and then marked their cautious manœuvring till they had caught the wind and given the nose a chance to verify what the eyes had been unable to more than half discover.

"Listen!" said Monroe, as they neared the lowest dip of the trail; "that's the one singer hereabouts that never stops day or night from spring till winter." Through the windless shadows stole the wraith of a liquid melody, a whisper that seemed to drift down the long corridors of giant trunks as floats the last breath from some noble organ o'er the bowed heads of worshippers. For a minute Joe stood irresolute, charmed by that mystical music which apparently came from everywhere and nowhere; then his ear caught what sounded like mirthful undertones,—the babyish crowings and chucklings of that child of the dusk ravine, the small trout-stream, playing with his treasures of spangled gravel and moss-softened stones.

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"You may not think so," said Monroe, as they paused on the half-rotted log bridge and gazed down upon the amber-tinted, bubble-spangled current, "but in that puny-looking stream are trout such as some city chaps would esteem worth the taking. Insignificant as this brook might appear, it has many a hole under the roots and a few pools which are amply large for quarter-pound fish, and there are fishers who know all about those secret places."

"What sort of fishers?" asked Joe, to whom, after the recent experience on the pier, a stream which in most places he could easily leap across, appeared ridiculously small for a fishing water.

"Rather long, slim, hairy fishers, but masters of the craft," retorted Monroe. "See those two little tracks and that dried fish tail? They were left by a mink, which is one of the brook trout's deadliest foes. A rambling otter, too, would not despise that pool yonder. He'd just slide down the bank, slip in as though he were oiled, and nab a fat trout before you could count fifty. He is a terror under water, swift and strong, and he knows no mercy. The fact that his fur is so highly prized is one of the greatest benefits ever conferred upon all trout from here to the North Shore. But you might as well play otter for a minute—though you needn't slide down the bank and in," he added laughingly, as he drew something from his coat pocket. "Just a length of thread, a wee hook, and a fragment of pork fat, and intended for this very place," he explained. "Now get a switch, and you can catch

your first brook trout within five minutes; then we must get on, or we'll have a black trail home."

In brief time the toy tackle was ready and a morsel of fat on the hook, and while Joe sought the pool, Monroe tossed together a few handfuls of twigs and touched a match to the pile. As the pungent smoke arose there sounded a quick splash and a yell from Joe; but all Monroe said was, "Put him in your pocket and snake out one more and be quick about it."

"Say! that hole's cram full of fish. I got two, and my, they're pretty fellows!" gabbled Joe, as he passed over the kicking prizes, which were about six inches long. Beautiful indeed they were, the dark, mottled backs, spotted sides, and pearl-bordered, glowing fins showing in striking contrast; but Monroe with a pass of his knife and a swish through the water reduced them to things to eat. Soon they were impaled upon switches, and a trifle of holding over the coals made them ready. "Merely to say you've caught, cooked, and eaten your first trout. Good stuff for your next letter," murmured Monroe, as he made two bites of his. "Now come on." And with the word he started for the trail. Joe smacked his lips and declared that even without seasoning trout was quite good enough to warrant the deprivation of all the foes from slim, hairy fishers who left tracks and scraps, to big fishers who didn't leave anything worth mentioning except the scene of the experiment.

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if he wouldn't grow any bigger," remarked Joe, as they topped the last rise and caught the first glimpse of the big blue lake, yet some distance away.

"Let me see," said Monroe; "hereabouts the white-tail fawns, the deer of the region, are born during the last few days of May or early in June. The time varies a bit." Then he went on and told something of the habits of the white-tail,—how there are many more of this deer at present in the Adirondacks, New England, Ontario, and parts of Quebec, than there were thirty years ago, and how this has been brought about by better protection, aided in some parts by the destruction of those terrible deer-slayers, the timber-wolves.

In the Ontario and Adirondack country, the mother does lead the fawns to the vicinity of some water, preferring the smaller woodland lakes and ponds and sluggish streams. During the heated term, the animals seldom wander far from water, their chief food at that season being water-lilies and other aquatic growths. After these the deer wade through the shallows, often venturing far from the brushy shores; indeed, it is no uncommon sight to see deer feeding in water well up their sides. This method of browsing has the additional advantage of enabling the foragers to escape the troublesome insects which then swarm about the favorite covers. In undisturbed regions, deer may be seen feeding in the water as late as mid-morning, or long before the sun has sunk below the forest-line; but the advent of the hunter soon teaches caution, and

the creatures wait for darkness to conceal their movements. In deep water, the deer is as much at home as a spaniel dog, and will cross a lake as readily as a bit of open ground.

The appearance of a deer does not suggest remarkable swimming powers, but rather the reverse. The sticklike legs and small feet seem incapable of getting sufficient hold on the water to drive the comparatively bulky body at any speed; indeed, to an inexperienced eye, the entire model might well appear about the worst for clever swimming. But those who know the deer's powers are not deceived by the seeming unfitness of things; for they have learned that those slim, but steely strong limbs can drive the body ahead at an astonishing rate. Many a half-skilled paddler in a good canoe has found the overhauling of a swimming deer to be no trifling task. About the end of August, the exhaustion of juicy water growths and, possibly, the less active attacks of insects, send the deer back to the woods, where they eat berries, foliage, and young shoots of deciduous trees, and, wherever obtainable, sweet grass. Then follows the breeding season, or *rut*, after which the late wildly excited animals quiet down and proceed to fatten up to meet the hardships of what may be a long and trying winter. An abundance of food — acorns and other nuts, buds, twigs, and wild hay — soon renders them fat and strong. As the cold increases and the snow deepens, a single deer, a small party, or a large band is apt to select a good growth of hardwood, the selection

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depending upon the size of the band and the food supply, and in that prepare to pass the winter. These wintering places are termed "yards," and before the passing of the snow they present a maze of firmly tramped paths made by the animals' oft repeated trips to the feeding-places.

The deer knows the value of these beaten trails, for along them alone can it freely move when the snow is lying several feet deep on the general level. Once driven from the yard and into the deep surrounding snow, a deer soon flounders helplessly and falls exhausted. Unfortunately this fact is too well known by a certain class of settler and meat-hunter, who, when the snow is deepest, don the snowshoes, drive the deer from the yard, chase it till it falls exhausted and bleating in helpless terror, and then savagely do it to death. This outrage is perpetrated under the name of "crusting," for a crust upon deep snow adds to the deer's misery while aiding its murderous pursuer. The man guilty of it should be sentenced to a long life of honest, manly labor, which assuredly would be the direst punishment such a ruffian could be compelled to endure.

Another abominable method is the fire-hunting, or "jacking," in which the eyes of a deer are "shined" at night by some form of lantern. The details are unworthy of mention. Suffice it to say that the alleged sportsman takes position in the bow of a boat, which is silently paddled by the guide-accomplice along some darkened water. The slight splashing of a feeding deer guides the paddler, and

presently two great eyes glow from the darkness right ahead, whereupon the party with the gun either commits a crime against sportsmanship, or misses a disgracefully easy chance, according to his miserable temperament. The only way in which jacking ever should be tolerated is when no firearms are taken into the boat. Then the harmless pursuit becomes a really fascinating night prowling; for there is that in the soundless stealing, the black mystery of the shore, and the uncertainty as to what may be shined, which will thrill the true student of the wilds. Monroe had shined many a deer and other creature in this way, but his sportsmanship was not of the sort which would allow the murder of a dazed and helplessly staring quarry.

He further told Joe how the wee, tottery fawns would squat amid the short, new growths, stretch their dainty heads and necks flat to the earth and trust to their coats and spots being unobserved amid the speckly pattern of sunshine filtering through the leaves above. "And," he concluded, "I've heard the lumbermen say that if you chance upon a very young fawn and place your hand over its slim little muzzle for a few moments, that it will get up and try to toddle at your heels wherever you go. I've never tried it, you understand, because there'd be no sense in having a fawn tagging after one; but that is what some people say."

The idea greatly tickled Joe, and time and time again he thought how he would like to get his hand over a moist, snuffly little nose and then see the

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graceful, wonder-eyed, spangled child of the spotty shadows dogging close at his masterful heel. The more he thought of it, the stronger the idea appealed, till finally and unintentionally audibly he said, "I'd take him home and have a heap of fun with him in the back yard."

Monroe pulled up and chuckled, "Still seeing those wee fellows, eh? Now, Joe, you said 'him,' but you'd have been wiser to have chosen a 'her.' A young buck is all right so long as he will remain a fawn, but he grows amazing fast. You might seize one of those back yonder, providing he would stand for it, and take him home and keep him in the back yard. But no matter how kind you were, nor how gentle he might appear, he would have to grow big, and some fine day he'd realize that he was a buck and no toy, and he'd get upon his hind legs and cut somebody with his innocent-looking forefeet. He'd have spike-horns then, and while he might not attempt to use them, they would be sufficient sign that he was nearing an age when he was no longer to be implicitly trusted. A young buck is as clever as a sparrer with those dainty feet, and if ever he turned ugly, as he'd be very apt to do, he'd speedily make your clothes fit for the rag bag, if indeed he did not severely cut you at the same time." This was such a revelation that Joe pondered over it till they turned into a path near the rippling, blue water.

From that point, *i.e.* near the upper end of the lake, the view is very pleasing. The broad water mirrors lofty, densely forested shores, the hills upon

the farther side bluing softly away behind a few picturesque small islands. Far down the lake seemed to float the mass of Big Camp Island, beyond which lay the outlet, Turtle Lake and Lost River. Hereabouts the ground flattens to marshy expanses and beaver meadows which still remain the favorite haunts of a few moose and white-tail deer. The other game includes black bear, an occasional woodland caribou, and migrating wild fowl. There used to be many beaver, and there yet are fair numbers of the smaller fur-bearers, but too many campers have spoiled the place for those who love the trail undented by the French heel and unlitteed by the empty can. There are small trout in the tributary brooks and black bass here and there, notably in Lost River, while in Trout Lake itself are big lake trout, to be taken only by those who have mastered the art of lake trolling.

To Joe it seemed the most beautiful water he had ever beheld, and certainly it is a fine lake; but it is now long since the noisy and game-terrifying camping-parties first raided that gem of the erstwhile almost tenantless hills. A short distance away stood a neat-looking log-house, and on a point farther down was a second, and these and a couple of boats and canoes below a small, stumpy clearing, were about the only noticeable evidences of permanent residents. But as they descended the trail, a man met them, and after learning that the lake was free of tourists, Monroe suddenly proposed that they stop for the night, explore a bit, and try for a big

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fish. The man was only too willing to put them up; so when Monroe said, "We can go out in a skiff and spy into the meadows to-night and go back in the morning," Joe at once replied, "I'm game," and that settled it.



YOUNG MOOSE.

A DUPE OF THE DEEP—SHORE SIGN—
A KING IN VELVET

“**B**EST take the deep tackle, if you’re going past Camp Island; you might catch a ‘laker’ or two,” said the host, after they had inspected their tidy room and turned toward the boats. The fishing-gear he referred to in no wise resembled anything Joe had seen. It consisted of a very long and strong line wound upon a great wooden reel. At the end was a ball of lead as large as an orange, in which was fixed a staple of strong wire through which the line was knotted. Some forty feet above the heavy sinker a few yards of lighter line had been made fast, and to the end of this was bent a plain trolling-spoon heavier than the ordinary type. Monroe explained that the lake was very deep, and that early in the season, while the upper water was yet cold, the fish remained near the surface, where they might be taken with ordinary tackle. As the sun gradually warmed the upper water, the fish swam lower and lower, which necessitated the sending of the troll far down after them. Hence the arrangement of the tackle, which, in use, allowed the lead to trundle along the bottom of the lake, while the lure was caused to spin at any

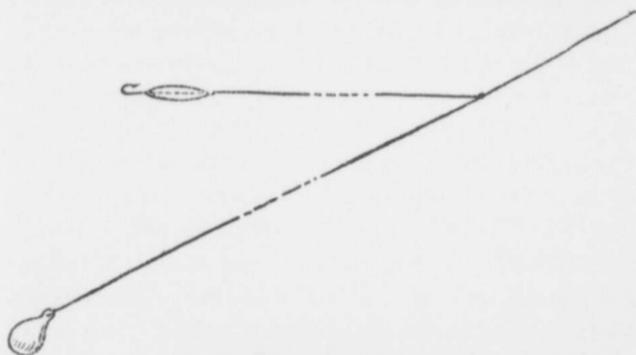
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desired depth by shifting the line to the preferred distance above the sinker.

"There's not much sport in it," said he, "but we might as well try it, if merely for the experience. Besides, our host possibly will have only pork for us, and fish is a heap better this weather. I'd rather go in a canoe, but the drag of the deep tackle is best met by a strong, even pull on oars, and these



DEEP TACKLE.

seem pretty fair. Tumble in, and we'll try to find out something."

The boat was an excellent lapstreak skiff, and Monroe's trained stroke sent her steadily ahead. When they entered water of apparently unfathomable blue, Joe suffered his line to run out, and presently he could distinctly feel the lead tumbling along the bottom. "Pass the reel around the seat and hang to your string till you feel a pull," said Monroe, as he puffed smoke like a regular wood-

burner; then the craft headed straight down the lake. For a long time Joe was nervously alert for the expected strike. More than once an extra drag caused by the sinker fouling a rock made him gasp and clutch firmer at the cord; but each time before he could decide what was the matter, the forward trundling of the weight explained the situation. Meanwhile, the ride was thoroughly enjoyable, and they chatted at will, for Monroe was too wise to bother over such notions as not talking while trolling. Big Camp Island steadily grew more and more distinct, and Monroe was just saying, "This is our last half-mile of good water; it shoals near the point yonder," when the line suddenly tautened in an alarming way.

"There's something on! No, I guess the sinker's fast!" hastily yelled Joe, and at once the oars began a vigorous backing. Warned in time, Joe hung on, and as soon as possible drew in slack, for a while doubtfully. But of a sudden he gave a whoop of joy and hauled away like a sailor. "I've got something, sure! I felt it jerk!" he spluttered, and only Monroe's cool "Steady, son, steady!" saved him from missing the cord with frantic grabs. Foot by foot the now very heavy tackle came in, and to Joe it seemed he never would get to the junction of the two lines.

"Take your time and pull steadily in; it's all over," said Monroe. "By George! He's a good one!" he presently added, as a great, sluggish fish rolled idly on the surface. "Pass me that line," he

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concluded, and in a few seconds his fingers gripped under the spreading gills. To Joe the captive seemed an enormous thing, and indeed it was a fine one; but as Monroe raised it, a last despairing sweep of the broad tail sent about a pint of cold water squarely into Joe's beaming face. This rather dampened his ardor, and even the prompt rap of the stretcher on the fish's head and the following insertion of a knife-blade at the juncture of head and spine, which forever checked further tail action, did not cause him to feel exactly square with the unfortunate "laker."

"Roll up the confounded well tackle. This sort of thing isn't sport, though that fellow will be useful at the house," muttered Monroe. "You've seen how it works, which is all I wanted. Now we'll run in here, ship oars, and you'll get in the bow. I want you to keep still as death after we get started again, for I'll paddle a couple of miles down to the beaver meadow, and maybe we'll see something. Remember, not a sound nor a move, no matter what happens. You just keep still and leave everything to me."

Even Monroe's skill at the paddle could not prevent breeze-stirred ripples from purring under the forward section of a lapstreak skiff, and as he heard what, to Joe, was a mere whisper of sound, he grunted disgustedly. He could have sent a smooth-skinned canoe gliding on her way as silently as he chose, but the boat was like a drum, and the ceaseless lap-lap-lap forward was anything but satis-

factory. However, they were in for it, and when they neared the last of the rocky shore, the water was as smooth as oil, owing to the set of the breeze. Almost one hundred yards below, shore rock and firm soil flattened down to a marshy, baylike opening, ringed far inland by unbroken woods. This marshy bit was a beaver meadow, and through the centre of it wound a narrow channel of motionless, black-looking water, spangled along either side with lily-pads. The grass bordering the channel rose as high as their heads as they knelt, and between the grassy belt and the standing timber was a tangle of alders and other shrubby growths. As they slowly drifted past this, Joe noticed a peculiarity of the growth which Monroe had seen many seconds before. What looked like an old path ran into the brush, and so far as Joe could see the growths upon either side appeared to have been broken off some four or five feet from the ground. Many of the broken ends were about as thick as a finger, and they seemed to have been crushed. In any event, they were all very dark and old-looking, as though the damage had been wrought at least the previous winter. Joe turned his head, stared inquiringly at Monroe, then nodded in the direction of the brush, at the same time making a movement with his hands as though snapping a small stick. Monroe smiled, nodded, and, raising a hand to his mouth, moved jaws and head as if he were biting and jerking at some exceedingly tough fare. Joe at once turned to the brush with keener interest, for he rightly

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guessed that the other's signs meant some animal had browsed there, and that animal could have been none other than a moose or a deer.

To Monroe the sign read as plain as so much print. From the height at which the brush was broken he drew the correct inference. A moose had beaten a trail through deep snow for the sake of that particular browse, and, most likely, had passed to and fro many times. The packed snow had made a footpath considerably above the true ground level, which had caused the feeding moose to nip off stuff a bit higher than he would have selected had his feet been upon the bare ground. As a result, when the snow went, the marks indicated that the moose had reached upward for his fodder a good deal more than actually was the case. Not that he could not reach much loftier food were he so inclined. Huge and ungainly though he may appear, even a great bull is most amazingly nimble when occasion demands. He would think nothing of standing erect upon his hind feet, nor of walking several yards in that position. He can rear up beside a great fallen trunk bearing perhaps a couple of feet of snow, and clear the obstruction without leaving upon the snow the slightest trace of his big leap, and occasionally his trail shows where he has cleverly passed under a leaning or lodged trunk, through a space which to his human foe might appear entirely too small. The fact is, that while a full-grown moose may seem a stupid-looking, awkwardly built animal, in reality it is the craftiest

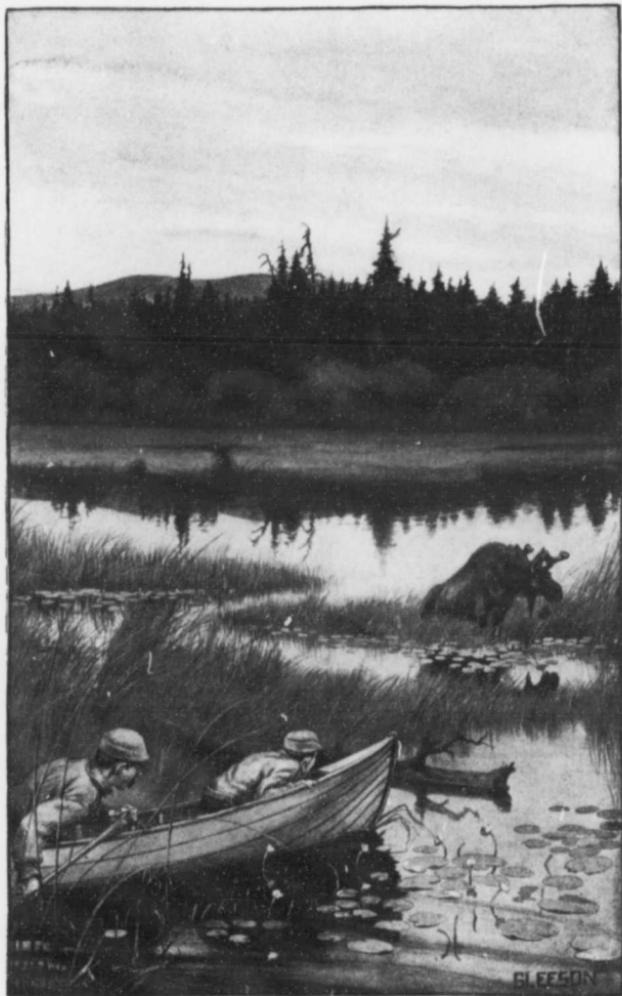
and most enduring quarry the American sportsman attempts to outwit. The experienced moose-hunter may appear to be absurdly over careful, but when he commands absolute silence in the woods and even refuses to allow the man he is guiding to so much as carry pipe and tobacco on the trail, it is because he has learned by bitter experience not to underestimate the almost marvellous powers of the moose's nose and ears. Monroe might have told of many a blunder he had made in his salad days, and of more than one lordly old bull which had fairly outwitted and outmanœuvred him after long, anxious hours of the hardest kind of work.

So now, well knowing the crafty customer at the other end of the deal, Monroe bent all his skill to what was no trifling task, — the stealing in the skiff up the waterway on the odd chance of a moose being in the pond above. Had the breeze not chanced to be exactly right, the attempt would have been worse than useless, and even with that important point in his favor, the handicap of an inexperienced youth and an unsuitable boat was almost overwhelming. As the boat crept toward the mouth of the channel, Joe thrilled with expectancy. Green as he was, he had begun to know his guide, and there was a something in the soundless advance and the feel of the cautiously applied paddle-power which plainly told how wary and earnest was the man controlling it. Monroe had no idea of raising the paddle above water. That would have entailed more or less falling drops and possibly slight splashing as the stroke



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was begun and ended. Instead, he turned the blade edgewise for the slow forward movement, and this prevented all sound. The skiff behaved nobly. Foot by foot, silent as the shadow of a drifting cloud, she seemed to smell her way along the narrow ribbon of perfectly clear water. To Joe, she seemed to be a live thing creeping catlike upon a prey, and as she advanced farther and farther, the full spirit of the enterprise took possession of him, and he could feel the quickened thumping of a heart wholly in the game.

As the curving water path was slowly revealed, he noticed that it had the form of a gigantic letter S, and he had learned enough to guess that an apparently large open space should be its upper end. On and on they stole, till he could plainly see many yards of what later proved a big ring of lily-pads enclosing a broad pond. Only the wavering of the many shadows told that the surface was not absolutely at rest, and there was not a whisper of sound. From his position, the view of three-fourths of the pond was cut off by the last tall growth at the right of the channel, and as he vainly strove to peer through this, he noticed a single long, slim stem of something sticking stiffly out over the water and some four inches above the surface. He felt sure the boat would touch this projecting wand, but he had got his orders, and, besides, Monroe probably had seen the thing as well as himself. Before he could make up his mind what to do, the bow of the boat pushed the weed stem forward, and instantly there arose a

jarring tumult, for that weed was bone-dry and springy and set with most exasperating accuracy for its deadly mission. Joe heard the long wail — bur-r-ee-eeep! of the abominable thing as it scraped aft, also the quick catch of Monroe's breath, as he smothered an exclamation of his amazed chagrin; but there was no time for pondering over bad luck.

A mighty explosion of splashes, a loud grunting ending in a snort, as though half the animated kingdom was clearing its nose, and a sudden rolling disturbance of the water caused Joe's heart to flutter wildly; then he rocked far backward as the skiff sprang forward under a swift, powerful stroke. Some forty yards away, and belly-deep in the rolling water, stood a monstrous, dripping, black-looking form, with its great nose pointed straight at him and two little ears cocked shrewdly forward. Joe gasped in horrified wonder, for the brute seemed so huge and its aspect so threatening that he thought surely his time had come. For what seemed a long period, in reality only a few seconds, he stared at the awful thing and it at him; then he almost fell out of the skiff, for it suddenly shot backward in unmistakable haste and at the instant an ear-jarring yell sounded at his back. Before his bewildered senses could take hold of matters, the monster whirled about and went floundering and apparently raving toward the shore. White water flew in every direction, then a slithering of mud, a crash of branches, a heavy thump-thump-thump on firmer ground, and — dead silence!

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looks, and he's right back of those bushes!" stammered Joe, as he twisted an awe-whitened face over his shoulder. Monroe's answer was almost as startling as the monster had been, for he flung his paddle across the wales with a clatter worthy of a long-shoreman and laughed till the ghost-folk hidden in woodsy corridors and circling hills sent back gruff haw-haws of protest.

"'Pon my honor, son," he finally managed to gasp, "I wasn't trying to let you in for a scare. But that old fool!—if it hadn't been for that confounded stick!—we'd—have—we'd—we'd—wow!" and off he went again. "Did you mark the air of him—the by-whose-right-and-what-the-deuce-do-ye-want-of his royalties—disturbed in his bath if you please? 'Twas the funniest thing I've seen for many a day! Now, let's get out; for there will be no more moose coming here to be spied upon by a couple of impudent prowlers who—" The remainder was lost in a series of most soulful chucklings.

"Won't he sneak around through the brush and get us at the narrow place—he's back of that thick stuff yet," ventured Joe, as the skiff slid blithely toward the lake.

"Not he! He's not anywhere near that brush where you think he is. I'll bet he's a mile away by this time," said Monroe, and then he went on to explain that marked peculiarity of the moose—how, when startled, he will go crashing through the cover, making as much noise as a clumsy old cow

might, only to suddenly remember his matchless woodcraft and change to a soundless though rapid retreat which even the ear of an Indian cannot follow. It is but one of the many mysteries of the moose—that wonderful noiseless retreat without even the swish of a released twig or the click of a cloven foot to betray its progress. Often rapidly and as silently as a shadow, the great, clumsy-looking body glides between close-ranked trees and through brush which would appear absolutely impossible if anything like silence were the object. Those who have been so fortunate as to enjoy "calling" under the guidance of one of the few experts of Maine and eastern Canada, will remember the long agony of hope deferred; the ghastly love music of the birchen cone; the half-lit open before the place of ambush; the black wall of surrounding cover; and the thrilling response to the birch-bark blandishments when finally they did prove effective. Then the thrilling wait, the small trickeries of the guide as the antlered monarch draws near, and after an anxious period, perhaps a faint click or two, such as a chipmunk might make. No misjudging the sound; it came from directly in front of the watchers. Then another long wait, and at last another trifling sound, or a sudden crash of brush—this time from the rear!

One hears the merest whispers of sound during such night vigils, and yet a great animal, roughly speaking as large as a horse, has stolen up within say fifty yards of two tensely alert men, then slipped

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around to their rear to give the nose a chance to locate any possible peril, and finally made off without causing any greater disturbance than a few uncertain clicks. And all this through more or less dense growths in which a man could scarcely move without betraying his presence. A novice at "calling" never can understand how such things possibly can be, yet a careful following of the suspicious animal's trail oftentimes will reveal some truly startling facts.

As they leisurely rowed homeward, Joe asked many questions about moose, for in truth his meeting with the king had left lasting impressions. His previous notions of the hunting of such big game had been somewhat along the Natty Bumpo line; *i.e.* a lot of sensational and mainly impossible woodcraft, followed by a masterly manipulation of a pea-shooting gas-pipe, and a gory climax with the trusty steel. The real live monarch seemed a many times more formidable proposition than the stories had suggested. The huge animal had appeared quite capable, as he really is, of making things exceedingly interesting for a careless man, and this Monroe's talk confirmed. Joe learned that not a few men had paid a heavy price for taking liberties with an angry bull, and that a sapient timber-cruiser, trapper, or other woods-prowler seldom attempted to stand and argue when a rutting moose evinced any curiosity concerning how fast the simian trace lingering in human blood could send a man up a sizable tree. He learned that the moose, at full speed, trots instead of gal-

lops; that the feet, while small for the size of the creature, were capable of spreading considerably and thus adding to their supporting power in deep snow and soft mud; that a moose, fancying the foliage at the top of a slim sapling, will "ride down" that sapling by pressing his chest against it and walking forward as the sapling bends earthward; and that there are two known species, and possibly a third, on the American continent. These are known to science as the *Alces americanus* of Maine and Lower Canada and *Alces gigas* of Alaska.

"Moose are curious cattle," said Monroe. "The calves are born in May, a young cow usually having but one, while older cows are apt to produce twin calves, and occasionally, it is claimed, triplets. A newly born calf is a comical-looking infant, light red with a dark stripe on his back. In comparison with his mighty parents he seems entirely too small, but he grows with astonishing rapidity. A calf that weighed forty pounds the day of its birth might weigh five hundred pounds when six months old. A full-grown bull in good condition probably would weigh about the same as an average coach-horse. You remember the fine group in the Museum? In real life, the mother might have her year-old and month-old babies with her; for a year-old moose, as occasionally happens nearer home, doesn't like being supplanted in his mother's affections by a bothersome younger brother, or sister, or twins, nor yet triplets. The old moose never seems to hammer him, or even attempt to drive him away; she is

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far too loving for that! Instead, she says to herself, 'Oo's a dood ickle moosey—oo surely is, but Mummy's expecting remittances and oo's detting too biggy-big. So come, dear, wif Mummy for a nice ickle walk in this jolly thick brush.' And sooner or later she loses him, and makes it her particular business to see that the 'cat don't come back.' So long as he is with her, she is a good mother, but when nature prompts, the law has to be enforced."

Monroe's way of saying this greatly tickled Joe, for the words conjured up a mental picture of the anxious and crafty mother and the stupidly persistent offspring playing at hide-and-seek in the bushes, and the probable carryings-on of the late pampered baby when he found himself, for the first time in his life, alone. "Poor little beggar," he said to himself; then he asked if a young moose would not make an interesting pet.

"Yes," replied Monroe, "provided one had a proper place for it, a young moose would be an interesting subject for study. I remember a couple of cases"—here he laughed—"where the owners certainly appeared to get at least some small diversion out of their pets. One of these animals was a young cow, as tame as a pet Jersey. Her owner exhibited her at a number of country fairs, where she would leap over a high bar and perform a few minor tricks. While watching her, I picked up a few useful wrinkles concerning the moose's way of moving on its hind legs and leaping. That particu-

lar specimen, I believe, finally met an accidental death.

"The other was a bull of about two years, and the owner broke it to harness, drove it on the roads and also at fairs. Some other man owned a fast-trotting dog, and the animals were matched to trot half-mile heats to sulky at a big fair. The two certainly presented a remarkable contrast as they lined up for the start. The dog proved to be an amazingly speedy stepper, trotting as squarely as a horse, but the moose had the speed. It was a close and exceedingly interesting race almost to the finish, the moose having a couple of lengths the best of it, with the dog working like a Trojan, and trying not to break from the trot. Unfortunately, as they neared the bandstand, the duffer in charge of the big drum and cymbals let go both hands—boom! zim! The wild child of the forest couldn't stand that. It had no ear for white man's music, and it dropped as though shot, lay flat to the track, and refused to rise or move a muscle. The driver, of course, swept over it in a superb parabola, and struck the ground the full length of the reins ahead, and quite hard enough to satisfy 'most anybody. The dog won, and after a deal of trouble people lifted the moose by its slack hide and half carried, half dragged it to the stable. I heard later that the driver continued to exercise his roadster till one November evening when he chanced to drive past some dense thickets in which a chap was looking for ruffed grouse. Neither man dreamed of the

other's proximity till a bird buzzed across the road a few yards ahead of the moose. The sportsman fired both barrels, and the moose promptly fired everything,—driver, rig, and harness,—for the amazed man fell out backward at the unexpected leap of his thoroughly scared steed. The cart hung on to the edge of the thicket where the saplings stood close and stiff, and the harness fell here and there over a couple of miles of rough woodland. The moose probably guessed that the man might feel harshly toward it, so it neglected the small formality of a return to captivity. I hope he grew to be a mighty bull—he deserved it.”

Joe laughed, and by the time they had reached the landing he had decided that an automobile would serve all his future needs upon the road. After supper they sat for a while listening to the night noises, and the last thing Joe heard before they turned in was the mocking laugh of a loon far out upon the shadowed surface. In the morning they tramped in, meeting with no adventures; but from the crest of the last hill Joe saw a something on the distant side-track which caused him to shout: “The tepee's come! I see her!” And this was true.

THE NORTH SHORE—NEPIGON—THE
VENGEANCE OF THE KING—A FEW
COLD FACTS

“**A** FREIGHT will be along in an hour! It's breakfast—then to the tepee!” sang out Monroe at sunrise next morning, and Joe lost no time. The car was in apple-pie order, and while final arrangements of properties were being completed, the long train clattered in, picked up the tepee, and they were off. The small car rolled smoothly along, and Joe soon learned that there would be none of the bumping he had expected. For a time he kept watch on the woods which seemed to shoot past so close at hand, while Monroe busied himself arranging books, writing and drawing materials, and sundry other small matters. Joe learned that they would get meals with the train men at their regular places and that there would be no particular excitement or remarkable scenery until they caught their first glimpse of Lake Superior water.

“It's a longish run,” remarked Monroe, as they settled down at the table; “we've everything we need for solid comfort, so we may as well clean up our correspondence.” So they busied themselves at that. For many miles the tepee sped between twin walls of forest, occasionally broken to reveal some placid

lake or more or less lively stream. Joe read, dozed, and looked out as the notion seized him, and now and again he thought he surely was getting a terrible distance from old Gotham. But he never actually wearied; for there always was the hope of seeing some new thing, while Monroe often had something to tell about the various insignificant places they passed. At Sudbury he saw a thriving backwoods town and learned how it was supported by its mines and that within driving distance was fairly good country for moose, caribou, deer, and black bear, and the ruffed and Canada grouse. At Missanabie, a village on the Height of Land, they touched the old canoe route from Lake Superior to James Bay — a route famous in the annals of the fur trade. As he heard of these things, Joe conjured up visions of the swart Voyageurs singing at the paddles of big birch-bark canoes laden with valuable peltries; of the portages of the long water-trail from the far north; of the tea-making, the running of roaring rapids; of the camp-fires winking red eyes through the darkness, and about them the wonderful, wiry figures of an almost lost tribe, — men who made merry with Nature by the long, wholesome day, then rolled themselves in their blankets and lay in her big, motherly lap by night. But the first inkling of important coming events was when one of the train crew cheerily shouted to Monroe: "You're in luck! We'll reach Heron Bay just about sunrise!"

From one thing and another he had heard, Joe had figured out that this bay must be something at

least a little out of the ordinary, so he heartily agreed with Monroe's proposition that they both should tumble out at dawn. And such a revelation as it was! When first he peered out he saw a chill-looking gray world of low, rounded hills and massed woodland shifting past. Then flat and far he saw a mighty stretch of blue which seemed to spread like that old Atlantic that he had watched pounding the sands at Coney and Manhattan. It seemed truly marvellous that any lake could be of such a size, but he got a clearer idea as they swept upon the huge curve of Heron Bay and obtained the first fair view. He was too astonished to say much, and even Monroe's eyes, which had scanned the marvel many times, glittered with pleasure as they took in every detail of that matchless picture. And it was no peep-show, for there were miles and miles of magnificence before the great cliffs again dwindled down to rounding heaps of sand. Perhaps not in the entire world-beautiful can that picture at sunrise be surpassed.

Then the oft-times savagely stern rock ramparts flash and glow in a riot of indescribable colors. Here some gloomy-browed giant scowls down in awful majesty, as though threatening to fall upon and crush to dust the impudent invaders of his realm, and the next moment his stately head is absurdly draped by a tricky mist, light and lace-fine as for some dainty queen to wear. And between the close-ranked Titans lie half-lit ravines, caves of vast mysteries, dens into which Night seems to creep for rest. Yet ever before the mighty

ones is the smiling blue of the great fresh-water sea dancing in tireless measure as though mocking the moods of her stern-featured guards ; and at their feet the mimic foam-white wrath of reckless trout-streams that tumble and leap and growl like lusty bear cubs playing between the armored paws of their grizzly sires.

The rather slow train afforded abundant opportunity for close study of the long succession of impressive pictures, but at last the end came and Joe threw himself upon a lounge, for the time fairly satiated with scenery. But Monroe's first words roused him to keen attention, for they were : " Now you've seen a trout-region that is unrivalled in the whole round world, and the reason is this : Every one of these streams—the Current, McKenzie, Wolfe, Trout Creek, Jack Pine, Prairie, Cypress, Gravel, Maggot, Black, Mink, White, Little Pic, Steel, and the big Nepigon, where we will stop—is a trout-water, and most of them rather short outlets of lakes, which, with the exception of Lake Nepigon, are rather small. This means a series of streams carrying the surplus waters of forest lakes down to Superior ; in other words, furnishing the best of natural fishways between the great and the lesser waters. All of the suitable small upper lakes have their full share of the true speckled trout, and if you cast from the shore rocks of Heron Bay, you will find that noble reservoir abundantly stocked with the same beautiful fish, the *Fontinalis* of sporting lore. The fact is the fish are free to pass up and

down most of these waters as they have a mind to, and I am convinced they do so. Hence, with anything like proper protection, there can be no such thing as fishing out these waters, unless all the trout of the Bay should also be destroyed. That is well-nigh impossible, owing to the natural conditions in favor of the fish, aided by wise protective laws, the inestimable value of which the Canadians thoroughly understand."

"I suppose the trout up here are a heap bigger than those little beauties we took near Trout Lake?" queried Joe.

Monroe laughed, and said: "They're a trifle larger, I should think. In fact, son, you haven't seen a fair sample of trout. The wee speckled rascals we caught would just about be nice bait for the sort of fish they grow around here. I have seen one, two, three, four, five, and one eight-pounder up here, but the Hudson Bay people have repeatedly told me of much larger specimens. These, however, were speared by Indians and not taken on tackle. I don't care so much for unusually large fish if sport be the object, because I fancy the three and four pounders make the liveliest battle. The largest I have taken seemed to be as strong as one would expect, yet their movements lacked the speed and dash which a smaller fish usually displays."

"How big is a pound trout, or must you weigh him?" asked Joe.

"There is an old rule, and it is about correct when applied to trout in fair condition, which says

a trout fourteen inches long will weigh one pound. That, however, does not mean that a trout twenty-eight inches long would weigh just twice as much, because above the pound size much depends upon the shape of the fish, which varies considerably. Some are slim and long, others deep from back to belly but flattish in form, while others again are deep while broad across the back. These, of course, are the heavier, and only a great big specimen of this build ever could attain the extreme weight. I once saw a pine board upon which had been truly traced in pencil the outline of what must have been a wonderful trout. That fish was speared in the Nepigon. The board that carried his outline was the top piece from the case of a cottage organ, and the outline of the fish just comfortably filled the space, which would mean a truly royal fellow. Unfortunately, the record of the weight had not been kept, owing to the fact that the man who got the fish from an Indian was a newcomer to the country and had no idea of the size of the trout in these waters. Yet he knew Scotch trout, and the size of this giant so impressed him that he traced the outline on the one available thing—the clean pine board. And he himself told me that he was sure he had seen a few rather larger fish in the old fur-trade days, long before a railroad through these wilds was even dreamed of. I am convinced of the accuracy of the tracing, too, because the man was not at all the sort of person to make a false record, especially when, so far as he knew, the matter was of interest solely to himself.”

When at last they reached the Nepigon, Joe was amazed at the size of the stream, which in no way suggested a trout-water. Where the railroad bridge spanned it, the river was about one hundred yards broad, but both above and below it seemed to spread away to a vague extent. Looking down below the bridge, Joe saw an unmistakably powerful flood dashing with what seemed irresistible force and forming huge, swaying hollows and foam-crested waves rather suggestive of the salt beaches. The visible banks were high, but free from such rocks as the North Shore boasted; in fact, they appeared to be of a light soil plentifully sprinkled with rounded stones. In a few minutes the train stopped at Nepigon station, and among the few buildings Joe noticed a shop and a very snug-looking small hotel. Monroe explained that they would let the tepee roll on to Fort William, where it could be put in a safe place, while they would retain handbags and tackle at the hotel and give the big river a trial at sunrise next morning.

There always are Indian canoemen hanging about the old Hudson Bay post of Red Rock, which is situated a short distance below Nepigon station proper. The only summer business of these men is the taking of fishing tourists up-river to Lake Nepigon, which is reached *via* Flat Rock Portage some thirty odd miles above the starting-point. The Nepigon is perhaps the most famous of all Canadian trout-waters, and this for reasons good. Not only do its trout attain gigantic proportions,

but the river itself is peculiar. It has been not unaptly termed "the continuation of the St. Lawrence beyond the Great Lakes." Leaving its parent lake at Flat Rock Portage, during its short course to the level of Lake Superior it falls some three hundred and thirteen feet, yet it is by no means the continuous rapid stream which the bare figures would indicate. It much more resembles a chain of lakes linked together by stretches of river-like, rapid water. Going up, which of necessity is the way the visitor first sees it, the Indians pole the bark canoe against fast water as far as the first enlargement of the stream. This is called Lake Helen, and is about one mile above Red Rock. The lake extends due north and is about eight miles long and one mile broad. The river course leaves this lake on the west side, and for six miles above the stream is wide and deep, with a moderate current, till the bend at Camp Alexandria is reached. A quarter of a mile above are the Long Rapids, a two-mile section of swift water. This the canoemen avoid by paddling up a brook on the west side for three-quarters of a mile, and thence portaging a mile and a half to the second lake, called "Jessie." This is three miles long and very pretty, being dotted with many small islands.

A stretch of lively water, "The Narrows," affords access to the third lake, "Maria," which is two and one-half miles long, and from it to Cedar Portage, or Split Rock, is about two miles. The portage is two hundred and fifty yards. A mile and a quarter above is another portage over an island in the centre

of the stream. This is called "Island Portage," and is about fifty yards long. Three miles above it is the One Mile Portage, then a foamy chute, and Lake Emma, which is some four miles long. A narrow arm of the river extends beyond the White Chute, and this the canoes follow for about one mile and then portage to Lake Emma, a distance of two hundred and thirty yards. The distance between Lakes Emma and Nepigon is only a few miles, but the connecting river is broken by four tumultuous rapids, impracticable for canoes. Voyageurs, therefore, turn aside at the northwest corner of Lake Emma by way of a small stream flowing from Lake Hannah, for a quarter of a mile, thence to the head of Lake Hannah, four miles, from which point the mile-long Flat Rock Portage extends to the shore of Lake Nepigon.

The island marvels of the St. Lawrence are duplicated in this lake, which is surpassed only by the many thousand gems of the unrivalled Georgian Bay. One troubled with an appetite for scenery might incur an indigestion of islands in this northern sanctuary. Lake Nepigon is seventy miles long and fifty broad, and spangled with picturesque fragments of every conceivable size and shape from masses miles broad down to mere rock points only large enough to cast a shadow or support the flat feet of some weary waterfowl. So irregular is the coast-line of Nepigon that it measures something near five hundred and eighty miles. Many streams, some trout-brooks, others navigable by canoe, contribute to the volume

of the lake and offer tempting routes for exploration. The chief tributary is the Kayosh, or Gull River, at the southwest curve of the lake, and at its mouth is the Hudson Bay post of Poplar Lodge.

This much concerning the region Joe had been told, and while he knew the early jaunt would mean merely a short test of the lowest reach of fast water, he was as keen for the gray-dawn start as if it meant the entire trip. Monroe hurried him through the makeshift breakfast, because he well knew that just when the first sun-ray flashed over the high bank was the best time for the rather uncertain big fish of the lower river.

"They use all sorts of flies up here," he said, "but the most reliable include the 'professor,' 'queen,' 'grizzly king,' 'Montreal,' 'Seth Green,' 'fairy,' 'shoemaker,' 'coachman,' 'silver doctor,' 'gray drake,' 'green drake,' the yellow, brown, and grizzled hackles, and gnats. I suspect, too, that artificial minnows and other imitations take a large percentage of the heavier fish, but I have a notion my old reliable 'silver doctor' will do the trick at least once, and one of these big trout should suffice for the present. At least, it will give you some idea of what first-class trout-fishing means. And now," his voice was very earnest, "I want to warn you. We are going in a big bark and an Indian is unnecessary for so short a trip. I'll do the poling and paddling, and all you'll have to do is to sit flat down, and no matter what may appear to threaten, make no abrupt movements. If you'll do that and

trust to me, we'll need no Indian; otherwise the Dusky One had better go along."

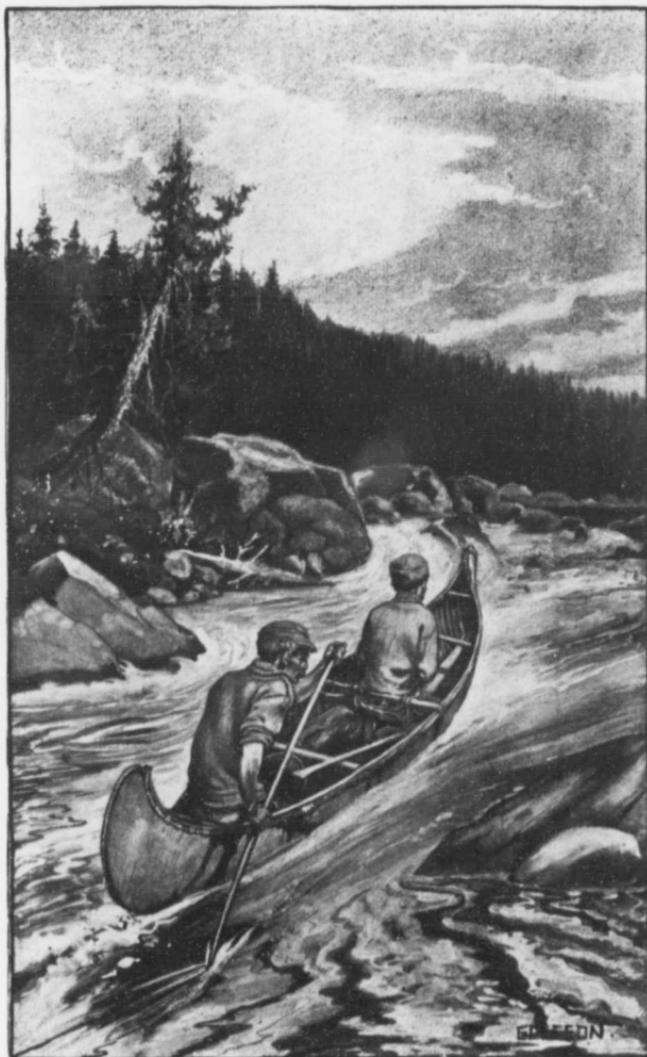
Joe didn't want any silent Smoky Savage. To him the notion of doing it all by themselves strongly appealed, and the bare idea of his not trusting to Monroe and doing what was right himself, seemed ridiculous. So they hastened to the landing and launched a roomy birch, to the forward brace of which was bent a stout line, its other end fast to a two-foot length of steel rail. This was the anchor by which the craft would be held at the chosen point near the head of the fast water and quite close to the bank. To Joe the canoe looked immense, but Monroe coolly turned it over, lifted it bodily and placed it in the water, where it floated not so much like a yellow leaf in autumn as a big birch-bark bath-tub. Joe got in while Monroe steadied the affair, and no sooner was the novice seated flat than he realized that big as the canoe looked, she was of an extremely sensitive disposition. He could feel the stern lift in response to his comparatively light weight; but not till Monroe had settled himself astern did the birch begin to act anything like a boat. She had appeared to fidget and quiver like a nervous steed, till Joe harbored more than a suspicion that she would throw him presently; but now, as she sank to something like her proper bearings, she steadied wonderfully, although even then she seemed by no means house-like in her general hold upon things.

"Sit still; keep your hands off those wales. She's

all right, — like her sex ; the more you impose upon 'em the better they behave," chuckled Monroe, as he dipped his paddle. The water was deep, still, and crystal-clear, and the canoe sped away like a live thing. That is the peculiarity of the bark canoe. Originally planned by a savage from the bark rived from a living tree, it never seems to lose its life and wildness. Compared with it, a boat is a spiritless civilized utensil, with no more of real life than a packing-box. White men can build canoes of basswood and cedar — beautiful, graceful things, far fleet, and, for civilized regions, much better than any bark. Because they are canoes, they somewhere have, as it were, a spark of the wild, and in this they vaguely differ from any mere boat ; but never are they the real thing. They suggest the civilization of a savage maiden. Taken from trail and tepee to those deep city cañons, smoothed, refined, laced, and polished, given high heels in lieu of moccasins, she finally reaches that stage where she is neither one thing nor the other — possibly good enough for a white man to play with, but, by reason of the acquired daintiness and varnish, a toy-like absurdity should ever she venture back to the good old wild tribe. An Indian looking at a fancy canoe may say nothing, or just "Huh!" according to his loquacity ; but unless he has had a great deal to do with whites, he will start upon no long trip, nor attempt even an average rapid in the canoe of civilization. He knows that his beloved bark will either yield or resist just enough for ordinary emer-

gency, as he knows that when maimed or ill she can speedily be made well, because the big green pharmacy, with the snowy, badly freckled bark on it, has a branch establishment beside every navigable stream. He knows that all he has to do is to up-end the patient, carry her to the handiest operating-table, thoroughly dry her, and then reduce the fracture. He may be absolutely ignorant of the virtues of calisaya bark, cinchona bark, or any other brand except birch, red willow, and ordinary, everyday, 'most-all-the-time dog's bark, but he knows what's best for a sick canoe. Certain tough little roots, a birch-bark porous plaster, a dab of gum from a tree, and there you are!

Joe, sitting close as wax, was just beginning to feel that canoeing was something akin to day-dreaming, when they entered the first of the active water. The inpouring of all Nepigon does not greatly disturb the Bay, yet soon great soapy-looking masses of foam swept past, and presently, as he looked upstream, he noticed the slant of the water. To his inexperienced eyes it suggested a palatial stairway suffering from alcoholism, and he wondered how the mischief they were going to pass up. But the canoe apparently knew what she was about, for she began to nose her way first to one side, then the other, finding water which seemed to be running the way they sought. This he did not understand, but he did grasp the fact that they were getting exceedingly close to the bank. At last a big roll of water squarely struck the craft, and in an



"IT HAD DEVELOPED INTO A REGULAR FIGHT."

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instant the struggle was on. Monroe had exchanged the paddle for the pole, and now he was putting every pound of his trained strength into the fierce effort to drive her up. Wisely, he had taken advantage of every easy bit, but there was no longer any dodging. He had to win to a small point fifty yards ahead, and part of the way against almost the full current. The canoe hung and quivered like a wounded thing; now and then she wavered and even retreated a few inches. Then Joe heard soulful grunts from behind and the thud of the pole as it found a surer notch in the rocks only a couple of feet below. He could feel that the poler was having about all he could attend to, and he longed to assist, but had sense enough to know it was a game at which he had not learned to play. At last he felt that it had developed into a regular fight, and his heart beat faster as he realized how doubtful was the issue. But stagger and hesitate as she would, the craft obeyed her master and foot by foot crawled up the seemingly impossible. One last desperate struggle drove her into the lee of the small point, and here she ceased trembling, although the tireless water still tugged at her. And during the struggle Joe had grasped what Monroe meant in his repeated references to the life which is in a canoe, for he had felt the quiver and strain of it, as though it, too, were fighting to defeat the water.

"Whew!" gasped Monroe. "It's no fun poling one of these big craft up here. It's a joke on me, for I'd forgotten that my other trips were in barks

which could be tumbled about inside this old battleship. But never mind, son; a minute to recover wind, then we'll get busy. If you can manage that anchor, place it across the bow so you can push it over when I give the word, but be careful, because an end of that iron easily could smash a hole through this bark. After you get it over, grab the line and help ease us down—our mud-hook will take hold rather sharply, I suspect."

Joe was only too happy to do even so small a thing to assist, and when the word was given as they shot from behind their shelter, the iron went over smartly, and he tailed on to the tackle. By this time they were about fifteen yards from the bank, and Monroe was straining at his pole. One length, two lengths, they staggered backward, the pole darting for a new hold as the first was lost, the iron clinking against the big rocks below. Joe clung valiantly to his tackle, struggling for every inch as the anchor held, and so, with pole and hands they eased down the bark till she rode at the length of her tether. "All right, but just sit still," said Monroe, who had been casting anxious glances at the crest of the bank. "Sun'll show in a minute," he growled, as he knelt, hastily shipping up the rod. "And here he comes and I'm ready for him!" he exclaimed, as he made a preparatory cast.

At the words, over the high bank streamed the first ray of golden light, and the late sullen water sparkled as though braided with countless gems. As the gauzy mists lifted from the blue-green torrent and

revealed its full wrath, Joe gasped, for while the picture certainly was beautiful, there was a touch of reckless savageness about the great flood which was most impressive. Eager to begin as the angler was, he suddenly remembered something which caused him to chuckle, then lay the rod across the craft and once more brace with the pole. Then he warned Joe to be very careful and to face about unless he wanted to miss any sport which might follow. The movement was executed so cleverly that Monroe forgot it was the novice's first attempt. A small surprise followed, for as the rod was picked up a fish struck the trailing fly and came within an ace of carrying off the gear. "You never can tell in these waters. Hi! He—he's a smart wee fishie too!" sang out the rather astonished Monroe as he settled to the playing of an extremely agile shape which had shown for a second as the strain was put on. Because every moment was precious, the trout received the firmest of aggressive treatment, and in very few moments was boated, killed, and passed over to Joe. It was a beauty of about a pound, but not quite so richly colored as the fry previously seen. Joe thought it a remarkably fine one, but before he could express any opinion, there was an abrupt purring of the reel and a joyous shout of "Now we have got him!" from the fisherman.

Evidently somebody had something, or *vice versa*; for the line was flying out, and Monroe plainly was a thoroughly aroused man. As he gradually got better control, the real fight began, and for many minutes

the issue appeared anything but a certainty. Aided by the current, the fish pulled like a wild colt on a halter, and time and time again Joe caught his breath in an agony of dread lest the dainty tackle should part. Never had he dreamed that a rod could stand such usage. It hooped almost to a circle under the strain; it quivered till it seemed to writhe in torture; the silk looked like a taut wire leading straight to a hidden something which swept from side to side but never came nearer. A dim suspicion that the hook had fouled some hidden, violently swaying branch haunted Joe, but he kept silent and watched every move. "O for the old Bethabara—she'd fix him! He's a whale!" growled Monroe, but he never took his eyes from the silk nor in the slightest relaxed his cautiously aggressive tactics. "Go it!" he shouted as the fish entered upon some new manœuvres which further taxed the already well-tested tackle; and so it went on for what to Joe felt like an hour.

It truly was a noble fray. Bred in the cold, fast water which had made him lithe and stout; aided by his native current, which in every swirl and twist and pull seemed to be battling loyally in his behalf, the king-fish fought for his pride of place and his bold, free life as only his royal kind know how to do. And right well did old Nepigon stand by him in his time of need; for, as Monroe said later, if there were any swirls, cross-currents, and troublesome bits of water which he hadn't tested in that thrilling set-to, he'd feel like going back for the sake of being

properly introduced to them. And minute after minute thrilled and passed into the was, and still the royal captive fought as one who had not learned how to lose though every crafty and daring move was blocked by a skill beyond his comprehension. Joe forgot everything except the struggle. He had soon realized that this sort of thing was entirely different from his preconceived notions of fishing. He had fancied it rather tame work, in no way worthy of comparison with hunting and shooting, which, from his reading, teemed with manly action, skill, and bold adventure. Yet here was action of peculiar charm and thrill — bold and cautious, swift and measured, aggressive and defensive and deadly to one, like the master-play of a trained fencer. Every move of the expert, every visible line of face and form, the set of his square jaw and the war-spark in his keen eye, told that for the time, at least, he was as much in earnest as he would have been if the encounter were with some savage animal. Joe well knew his friend was a resolute veteran who had more than once faced long odds in both human and brute form and had greatly reduced the odds before he got through with them. He was a cool-tempered, nervy man also, and yet here he was fighting a fish he never had seen, and to all appearances finding one of the times of his life in the task. It was wonderful; it was inexplicable — yes — and it was — bully! And lo! to his amazement, Joe suddenly discovered that he was all worked up and almost willing to sacrifice the rest of the glorious trip for the priceless

privilege of knowing how and being that man whose white-knuckled brown hand seemed to be made of something tireless.

"Hi! He's coming! we'll have him yet! Steady, you beauty!" exclaimed Monroe, as he cautiously recovered a little line. "Whoa, you villain!" he shouted through a laugh as the kingfish began to "rar back"; but the end was near. Foot by foot the remorseless silk drew in the prize until at last the line pointed straight down, and a moment later a huge trout, which to Joe seemed as long as his arm, rose to the surface, turned upon its broadside, and wavered to and fro in the friendly current which could no longer aid its conquered king.

"Suffering snakes! Just look at that for a bruiser! I must be mighty care— What the—!"

The friendly Nepigon caught the last of those intended crisp remarks. In his excitement, forgetful of everything except the monstrous trout, Joe placed his hand upon the wale and half raised himself, of course on the side to which Monroe leaned because of the fish. Afterward Joe half recalled a quick shift of the canoe, like the spring of a shying horse; then the ice-cold river rose up and smote him in the face, cold dead hands clutched him, and in an instant he was whirled away— down, down to an awful, black, frozen place where masses of ice butted him this way and that, end over end, any old way, so long as they got one good crack at him. Once he strove to scream, then he bumped

something, fell lower, felt some monster grab his hair — then the dancing lights went out.

“By the Lord Harry, son, you’ve got the quickest and I may say the rottenest method of boating a big fish ever I saw!” said a familiar voice, which quickly added in a greatly changed tone: “Thank God, you’re all right. You ’most scared me to death, and never could I have faced poor old King.” Then Joe wearily opened his eyes and discovered that he was in bed, rolled in many blankets, and weakly, drowsily warm. Then he saw something else, the sight of which roused him to full consciousness. The face bending over him was very white and deeply lined, and from hair to jaw extended a hideous scar as though the flesh had been savagely smitten by some jagged weapon that tore as it was dragged away.

“Why — why — Bart!” he feebly stammered, in his nervousness for the first time using that name, “whatever’s hit you? Did you get that when we fell out?”

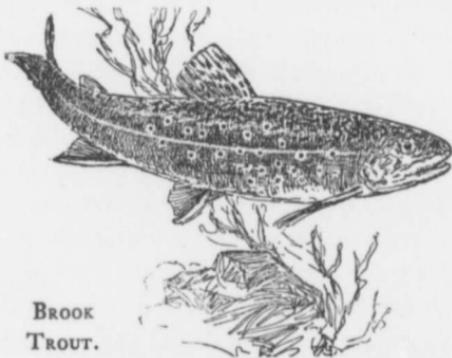
“Never mind, son; it’s not nearly so bad as it looks. It was a bit of a scrape from a rock, that’s all. You really shouldn’t select such scenic retreats. It’s the price I paid for you, and — you — you — you’re — cheap — at — the — money — you darn — little — fool!” The voice completely broke, and in a moment Joe felt a mighty arm round his neck and the touch of hair against his lips, and heard the broken words — “Thanks, merciful Father — her boy — better dead!” Because the needful

stimulant had made him exceedingly sleepy, Joe did not attempt the solution of the mysterious language, and when he recalled it later on, he shook his head with what he didn't know was the wisdom of all the Solomons who ever solved and decided to ask no doubtful questions.

When he finally awoke he was all right and so was the clock, which resolutely pointed at 10.30 of the following morning. Twenty seconds after his first movement Monroe slipped into the room, and Joe saw one dull crimson eye and one clear eye, the last sparkling with satisfaction at a certain vastly improved appearance. Monroe was a bit of an artist in his own original way; but while the work which he evidently had been doing on his face surely would have won a hanging permit at the Salon, the actual hanging probably would have been to a tree in the back yard. The women about the house had contributed from mystical stores, and Monroe had done his prettiest, but overanxiety to hide the size of the scar had defeated its object. He originally had possessed a noble black eye and a rather severely scraped face. Those were pretty bad, but the very worst they suggested was that he had been wounded. But the subsequent treatment was so much broader that it not only conclusively proved that he had been instantly killed, but, in addition, that the accident had happened during the worst of the hot summer.

Joe shuddered at the first glance, but Monroe seemed so perfectly well and happy that the lad

finally believed his jesting assurances that the damage really was trifling. In response to his questions, he learned as much of accident and rescue as the other deemed good for him, and he agreed to keep it out of his next letter, as such news surely would vastly worry his father. "I don't fancy deception except there's a mighty good reason for it," said Monroe, "but in this case the thing seems not only permissible, but kind and wise. You can tell him all about it when you get home." The rod had been recovered, but the big fish had broken away. During their long talk Joe mentioned the astonishing coldness of the water, whereupon the other grinned knowingly. Then he explained how cold was Superior itself, and how seldom, if ever, a body of a drowned person washed ashore. Many sailors and others annually fall victims to the fresh-water sea, but, as Monroe said, they go down to stay down in the unexplored depths where the same unvarying cold forbids the search of divers.



BROOK
TROUT.

SOME CAMPS AND SOME CAMP-FIRES —A BIT ABOUT BEAVER

“I CAN take you to Big Rock Crossing. It’s a good mile t’other side, but there’s an old blaze right to the brook, if you can pick it out. Then, down stream, mind,” said a gruff voice under Joe’s window, the second morning after the rescue. Joe felt so thoroughly recovered that he sprang from his bed and peeped out. Even had he cared to again tackle Nepigon, the best hour of the twenty-four had slipped away, for the sun was well above the tallest timber. Monroe and a deeply tanned, much bewhiskered man were standing together, and upon the ground near them lay a very grimy-looking pack, evidently the property of the stranger. Joe hurried through his dressing, and felt ready for anything, notably breakfast. At the table he learned that the day’s programme included a ten-mile jog by an expected east-bound freight, then a couple of miles of pretty rough trail through the woods, a visit to a beaver colony, and a return about 9 P.M., by another freight. Needless to say, the prospect was far from displeasing.

“You see,” said Monroe, as he buckled a stout belt from which depended knife and revolver, “this

man knows every yard of the country for miles around, and he has put me on to a small secret. There's a beaver family, about the last survivors of a once powerful tribe, where we are going, and if we are very canny, and a wee bit lucky, we may have the pleasure of meeting one or two of those brown gentlemen at home. It's worth trying, anyhow, but don't you forget the lesson of the moose pond. This time it will have to be the cat foot and the still tongue, once we have reached the stream; for beaver hereabouts are few and those few highly educated in the hard school of adversity. I'll take the camp hatchet too, because there'll be a long wait in the woods which we may as well utilize by learning something. And these little things also will be highly appreciated," he added with a knowing smile, as he drew a couple of packages from his bag. "These little things" proved to be two big squares of Swiss mull and a small bottle conspicuously labelled "Fly Dope." The veteran long before had learned all he cared to know about those pests of the North Shore waters, the black fly, the minute but exasperating rascal termed by the Indians "No-see-um," the less troublesome deerfly, and that ever inquisitive and shockingly prevalent prospector the mosquito. Believing in the virtue of good sauce with choice meat, he always carried the following appetizer: three ounces of pine-tar, one ounce of oil of pennyroyal, and two ounces of castor oil. After these ingredients had been simmered together over a slow fire, the blend was put for convenience into

ounce vials, one of which would last a person for a few days. He knew of other patented and special preparations, but experience had taught the merits of this easily prepared mixture, which, while by no means an absolute protection, is about as good as any. To Joe, it seemed like taking absurd precautions against a few little bugs and things, but he had much to learn concerning the ability of mere "bugs" in the matter of marring a woodland holiday. "It looks like you intended getting 'em good and sick with the 'dope' and then going for 'em with the axe and revolver," he chuckled; but Monroe merely grinned and retorted: "Wait and see; you might change that tune before we get back. Now, here's our freight — look alive!"

The ride in the caboose was pleasant enough. Monroe and the stranger had much to say to each other concerning beaver, trout, and other creatures, and when they left the train at the almost desolate stopping-place, Joe had got far toward liking their blunt-speaking and evidently self-reliant guide. The trail proved quite rough and too rocky for silent work by so many. Three-fourths of it wound over low hills which some years previously had been swept by a bush fire, the hideous scars of which were as yet only too distinct. What seemed an endless succession of "rampikes," the half-charred remains of conifers, stood stiffly, or leaned and lodged at every imaginable slant, as though needing but a trifling push to send them crashing down into the snarl of low briers, bushes, and fireweed which so

quickly covers a burned district. Joe soon noticed that the new growths were entirely different from both the rampikes and the original timber thickly standing either side of the burned area, and he asked why this was. Monroe explained that it was one of the mysteries of woodlands which not seldom had puzzled him, adding that after an extensive fire it was no uncommon thing to find the new growth different, in spite of the fact that little or none of it had been visible before the fire.

"Here's Big Rock," said the stranger, finally, as they approached a moss-grown mass as large as an ordinary log-cabin. "My trail leads this here way, and there's the old blaze," he continued, as he pointed at a faint scar on a near-by trunk. "You can pick her up all right, so now good day, an' good luck to ye, pardners; glad to hev met yer. I've quite a piece to go yit." And after a handshake, he turned to the right and soon disappeared in the woods.

"Town folks never think what these people have to face sometimes," said Morroe, as he closely examined the rather indistinct mark on the tree. "That fellow has a mighty rough trail to travel, and that pack weighs near fifty pounds, yet he'll trail in and out as unconcernedly as though he were walking a city street. He scarcely seems to notice where he puts his feet, yet one stumble, or a slip into a big crack, might bring him down with a broken or sprained ankle, and about as helpless as a man could be. And he might shout for a month and nobody

would hear him. What do you suppose he'd do then?"

"Leave the pack and crawl for it, I imagine," ventured Joe; but he was told that while the man remained master of himself the food contents of the pack would be clung to, because in that would lie the main chance of escape. "So long as a rugged man, even though handicapped by a broken bone or a bad sprain, can get food and plenty of water, he can stand amazing hardships, and, in fair weather, crawl or limp over astounding distances. The true story of the North Shore would be apt to contain some thrilling yarns of that sort of thing. But when the cold is on, such a situation would indeed be desperate, and the stoutest man would soon tire, get benumbed, and, according to his dimmed lights, fall asleep — in reality freeze as solid and flinty-hard as northern ice." In Joe's mind was a sorrowful vision of the same man ill or wounded in his lonely cabin; the exhausted stores, the dying fire, and that white wolf of the north, the blizzard, ramping against the barred door and howling impatiently under drifted eaves and down a cooling flue. The grim idea made him shiver, and yet he knew enough to guess how that awful story must have been writ again and again in the dead, white silence of a winter world of which he had read. Monroe's drawing attention to a second and third blaze conjured up other and more absorbing thoughts. The period of depression at once ended, but more often than ever he mentioned he saw night visions of an agonized

form crawling through a blur of biting white, or growing dim below tireless flakes which gradually smoothed and hid the erstwhile mounded length.

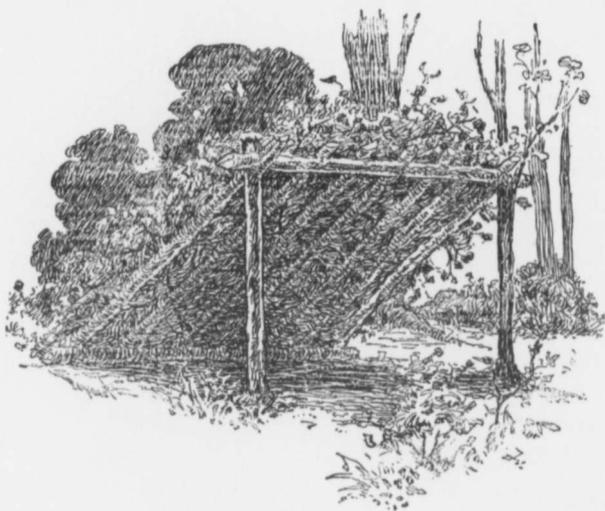
“ Now, before we get where we'd be apt to alarm our beaver friends, I'll show you why I brought



BRUSH SHELTER.

the hatchet. We have time to fill up, so we'll just pretend we are going to stop here all night, in which case we certainly should need both fire and some sort of shelter. Here goes for an Indian camp— not bad for one night in summer weather.” In a few moments he had felled, trimmed, and pointed both ends of a sapling, which furnished a pole such as might be used for supporting a clothes-

line. Stepping over to a good-sized tree, he forced one end of the pole into the soil and the other into a crevice in the bark some five feet above the ground. The slanting pole, thus firmly fixed, was intended to play the part of ridge-pole for a brush camp.

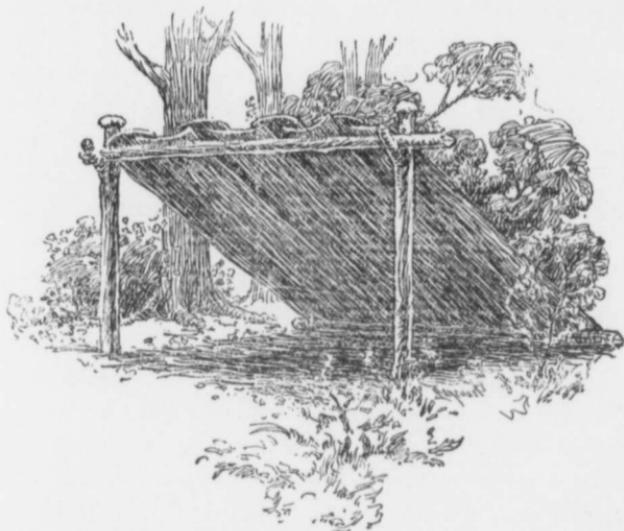


BRUSH LEAN-TO.

Fir or other branches, disposed at the proper angle either side the pole, will form a rough-looking green tent, which, when plenty of branches are used, will afford an excellent sleeping-place during ordinary weather, and also preserve a dry spot for hours of moderate rain. It is really an emergency camp, intended for but one night's occupancy, but it has the merit of easy construction in almost any sort

of growth and will amply repay the trifling labor involved.

“Here’s another style of shelter, and a better one for a rainy spell, or when you want to spend more than one night in a place,” went on Monroe, as he



BARK LEAN-TO.

rested the pole in the forks of a couple of handy saplings, and some four feet above the ground. “In actual camping, you would cut a few more saplings, divide them into about ten-foot lengths, and arrange them lean-to fashion with one end on the ground and the other on this crosspiece. In place, they are like the rafters of a shed and will support enough browse to form a pretty dry roof.

The sides, if desired, may be closed with brush, the front remaining open to the camp-fire. Should you care to make a better job, all that is necessary is to secure plenty of bark, which may be got almost anywhere from fallen trees. Lay the bark shingle-fashion on the slanting poles, and you have a camp shelter that will keep you dry even during a day's downpour. If sufficient pains and skill were exercised, such a roof would keep the space below bone-dry during as long a siege as you would have to endure, but care should be taken that the open front be not exposed to a sudden gust of wind. That not only would drive in the rain, but it would be mighty apt to lift the roof off your house as well. In choosing the spot for a brush or bark camp, keep away from big or unsound trees. A sudden squall at night is apt to knock down stuff too heavy for one's health, while tall timber in addition may attract lightning, which is a bit too abrupt an awakener for a weary wayfarer. It is a capital rule, when caught in the woods by a thunderstorm, to get to a safe distance from big trees. Inexperienced people will make for the biggest tree in sight, but the smaller stuff is much the safer. I'd sooner stand right out in the open and take my ducking than seek shelter either under or within striking distance of what might prove a falling big tree. Now we can illustrate camp and cooking fires."

He well knew how few people understand the outdoor fire, be it for cooking or comfort. The

ordinary camp-fire of the novice is a great pile of blazing stuff which scorches one's face but seldom throws any heat into tent or other shelter. All night it is a menace to canvas and the surrounding forest, for winds change at all hours and a sudden



THE BEST CAMP-FIRE

shift may mean trouble when a blaze is flaring bonfire fashion. Such a fire is cheery and all very well on the shore of some large water, but it is worse than useless in the woods. The principle of a fire before a tent or shelter should be the same as the old-fashioned fireplace, which is to throw forward the heat to where it is wanted. Joe soon learned

how the fireplace could be imitated, for Monroe cut and sharpened two four-foot lengths of sapling, which he drove into the ground three feet apart and slightly slanting in the same direction. Across their bases was laid a four-foot length to represent a big backlog, and at right angles to the backlog were placed two short lengths to serve as fire-dogs.



COOKING-FIRE.

Upon these and the backlog were placed half a dozen other imitation logs, some twigs and leaves were shoved under the front, and the structure was ready for the imaginary match to be applied.

The great advantage of this fire is its power to throw heat forward and into a tent or shelter placed at a safe distance. Any fire is a rather dangerous neighbor for a tent, but this one is safe enough so long as the backlogs do not burn through and

tumble down. That, of course, would reduce the structure to a mere bonfire with its attendant dangers, but many tests have proved that a back of green logs seldom will burn through. So long as the back stands, there is little chance of a change of wind carrying sparks to the tent. To illustrate



EASTERN STYLE.

his cooking-fire, Monroe cut two six-foot lengths which were laid upon the ground side by side, but inclined toward each other. When placed they were supposed to be freshly felled green wood, eight or ten inches thick, with two ends seven inches apart, the others four inches. A few handfuls of rubbish placed between the poles represented the materials for the fire. Logs thus placed will properly sup-

port fry-pan, pot, and teapot, the narrowing space suiting the different diameters. If desired, a forked stick may be driven at either end of the logs and a pole rested in the forks, but such additional support for utensils seldom is needed except for a large party. At a glance Joe saw the best feature of the arrangement—how coals for extra



THE BEST COOKING-FIRE.

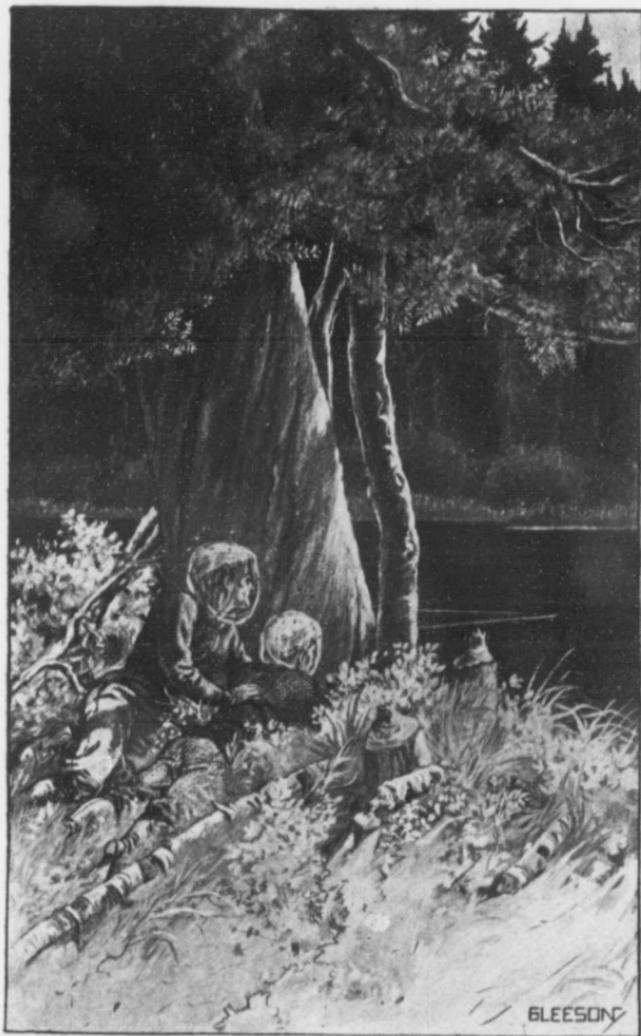
heat might be raked to a pile at one spot, or the heat decreased by judicious raking away. Any rolling of the logs can easily be prevented by driving stout pegs at their ends. Stones properly placed will serve the same purpose, as will banked sand or earth. On a beach, where logs may be scarce and stones abundant, two rows of stones will serve in their stead, and, failing these, sand or sod may be made to answer the purpose. When a longer

stay is contemplated, the best of all cooking-fires may be made in a tapering trench about a foot deep, and having green poles firmly pegged along its edges. Such a trench, partly filled with coals and chunks from a camp-fire, is as good a cooker as can be used outdoors, unless one goes in for a regular camp cook-stove with its complete outfit, which would mean no trifling amount of extra weight.

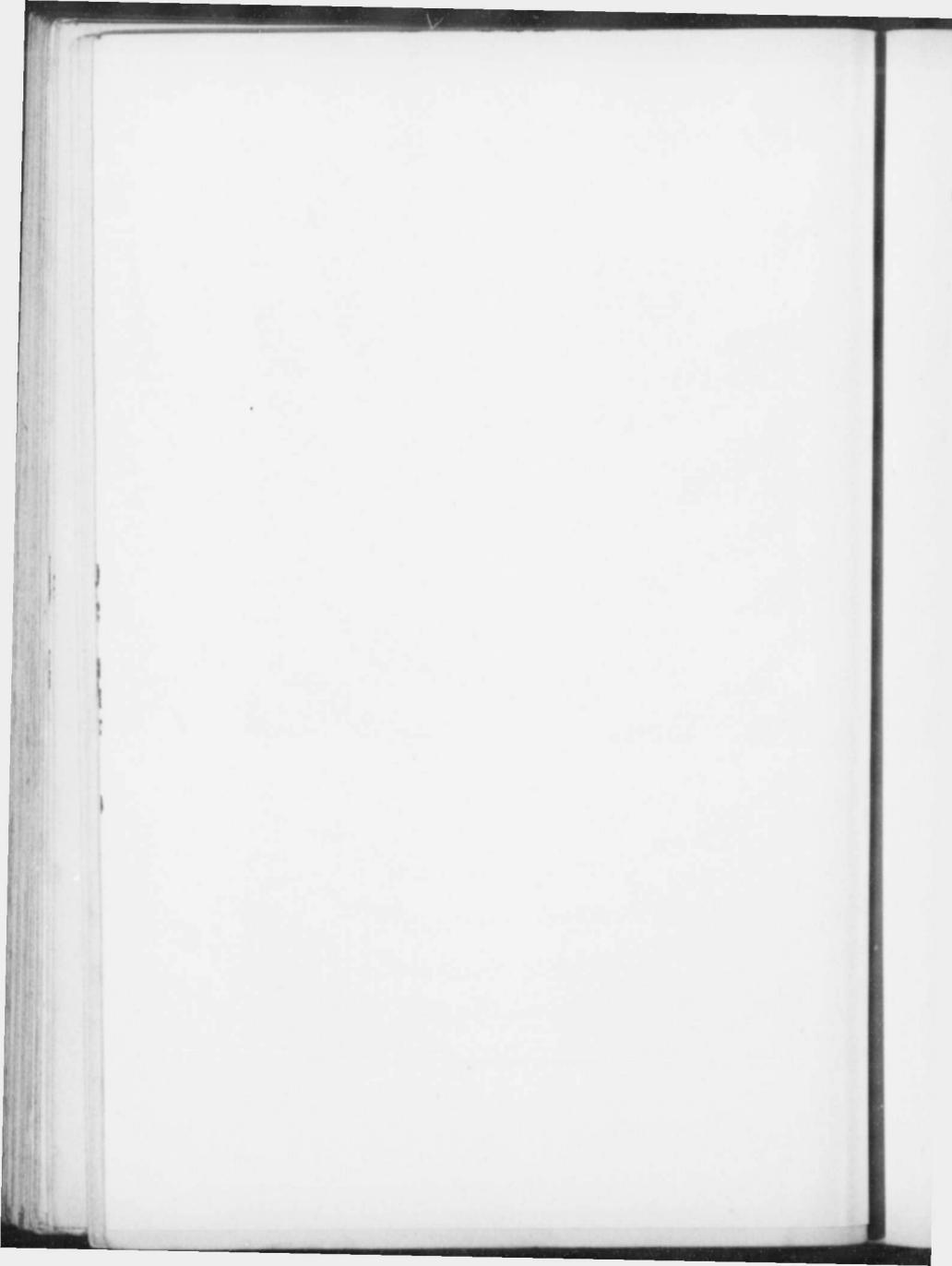
Monroe did not begrudge either the labor or the couple of hours devoted to these object-lessons, for he was aware of the value of such instruction. As for Joe, he was more than satisfied, because he understood exactly what everything meant, and having once seen how things were done, he knew he could repeat each and every task at any time. The things were so simple and practical that an actual test was unnecessary, but he knew that before this trifling experience he most assuredly would have made an extremely poor attempt at what he had esteemed a mere child's task, — the building of a fire. "And never forget this," said Monroe, as they prepared to move on: "No matter what sort of a fire you may start, on your life don't leave one spark of it alive when you break camp. Carry water in your hat, if need be; cover the embers with earth or wet sand, but put out the last spark. Awful disasters, to say nothing of the destruction of timber and the disfigurement of the face of nature, have resulted from the neglect of campers. The man who leaves his fire smouldering is a criminal.

"This is an old blaze; pity we can't freshen it up a bit," he muttered, as he led the way past tree after tree. Joe thought it would be a fine idea, as they had plenty of time and a keen hatchet, to blaze the trees afresh; but it was explained how such a well-intended improvement might play the mischief by puzzling some partially or wholly lost follower who, being ignorant of their philanthropic efforts, might not correctly translate the fresh guides. He would be searching for an old, faint blaze, and while the fresh one surely would bring him out, he might be afraid to follow it lest it should lead far from his objective point. He might imagine he had not yet reached the line of old marks, and by seeking farther get himself completely lost. "Never fool with a hatchet and a tree in a country like this; marks idly made may prove serious to some poor chap later on. Now for 'dope' and nets — then it's cat-footing, for our stream's below yonder," concluded Monroe, as he produced the necessaries. The mixture had an odor a heap worse than violets, and it felt a bit disagreeable when first applied to face, neck, and hands, but that soon passed. Then the nets were placed over headgear and tucked inside sweaters, and the insect fighters were ready for the low ground near the stream, the stronghold of the tiny foes.

The wary skirmishing that followed was full of interest. Knowing what was expected of him, Joe drifted like a shadow at the heels of his leader, and imitated every action as Monroe crouched lower and



"'WE'RE ALL SERENE SO FAR,' HE WHISPERED."



lower, and finally went down upon all-fours. Not so much as the click of a twig betrayed their advance till they had won to a mound which buttressed a big tree where the insignificant stream broadened to a great pool. Behind the rough tree roots Monroe lay flat and motioned with his hand for Joe to crawl alongside him. "We're all serene so far," he whispered; "look below, and you'll see their pond and a couple of lodges. I've come to the wrong place—the dam's below there, and we'll have to sneak back and around if— B-E-A-V-E-R!" The long-drawn word was just breathed into Joe's ear, and at the moment he noticed a long, soundless ripple on the oily surface some fifty yards below. At the advancing end of the ripple was a grayish object which he at first mistook for some small waterfowl, but he presently made out the chunky head of a big beaver which evidently was bound for one of the lodges. As the head neared what looked very like an old brush pile, there was a rapid circling of water, then a surface like a mirror. The beaver had dived. For long minutes Monroe lay perfectly motionless. The unexpected sight of the one animal had convinced him of how seldom the pond was visited, and he knew that, where undisturbed, beavers might be busy throughout the day instead of waiting for evening. Hence his keen eyes examined every visible foot of the margin of the pond before he dared to move, but no rounded back nor motion rewarded his scrutiny. It was almost a certainty that all the other beavers were at the moment within the lodges.

The appearance of these famous dwellings greatly disappointed Joe. From things he had seen and read he had drawn mental pictures of wonderfully trim, dome-topped structures, covered with mud which had been beaten by flat tails till it was about as smooth as the wall of a rough-cast house. More than once he had imagined the furry toilers busy at the portrayed scientific architecture, and had longed to witness some of that amazing work, but the scrappy-looking affairs in the pond might have been piled by some current for all he could tell to the contrary. Up to the North Bay experience, his favorite books had constituted a sort of outdoor gospel, but lo! the more he saw with his own reliable eyes, the sadder was his realization that writers and artists occasionally either made grievous blunders or else drew upon something a heap more uncertain than plain white paper. Here was a beaver's private estate with the storied lodges in full view, and behold! a dog-kennel would have been a palace among them, while even a plain, ordinary manure pile would not necessarily have been disgraced so far as shapeliness of outline was concerned. It certainly was a bit of a shock, but, after all, facts are facts.

Every move of Monroe's retreat was silent proof that he held the intelligence, shyness, or some other protective trait of the quarry in no light estimation. To Joe it seemed they were matching wits with animals possessed of almost human reasoning powers, and the idea lent a rare zest to the task. Monroe,

however, knew better. His experience in the wilderness had taught him that nine-tenths of the printed descriptions of the beaver and its ways were absurdly overdrawn, and that when the shrewdest of old-man beavers undertook to play the game of life and death against even an average trapper, a section of the needful for somebody's beautiful beaver coat ere long would be stretched and nicely drying in some shady place. To his notion a beaver was just about as much smarter as it was bigger than its distant kin, the plebeian muskrat, which also builds houses, but draws the line at anything in the way of a dam. In the building of a dam intended to regulate the depth of water at a certain spot, the beaver not only rises high above the rat, but stands alone as the four-footed engineer of the American forest. Yet, even at his specialty, fat Ahmeek not seldom makes such blunders as surely would forever ruin the reputation of a C.E. Monroe had carefully examined more than one extensive dam which had been laboriously constructed on the very worst site for its intended purpose which could have been selected within a distance of two miles. Other partially completed works had shown where the short-sighted engineers had gone to an amazing amount of trouble, only to realize their error when half through, and abandon the site for a much better one close by, which half the wisdom attributed to them would have selected in the first place. In many wild sections the remaining beavers appear to have renounced the dam-building habit, for they dwell, *à la* muskrat, in

burrows dug in some suitable bank. So well known is this change of habit, that trappers have coined the name "bank beaver" to describe such animals as build neither dam nor lodge.

Fairly judged, the beaver is a rather shrewd and extremely cautious animal, shy and retiring in its nature, a past-master of swimming and diving, and by no means a fool regarding matters riparian. Its cutting, hauling, and storing under water of certain growths for winter food are, in proportion to its size and strength, no more remarkable than the tireless carrying and storing of nuts by that busy rogue, the red squirrel. The fact that one creature stores under water is not more extraordinary than the other's work in the hollow tree. To our non-aquatic minds, almost anything done under water is apt to appear more wonderful than a feat performed in the air, but that is because we judge from the view-point of a land animal; in other words, feats which we cannot perform appear to us more interesting and difficult than are the thousand and one acts of our everyday lives. For all we know to the contrary, the sight of a man moving at will upon his hind legs while carrying a burden in his fore paws may be the most astounding thing a beaver ever beheld; yet to the man, especially the nature-writing man, it would seem a most ordinary thing, totally unworthy of mention beside the instinctive acts of a big, hump-backed, flat-tailed "mushrat," that builds dams in impossible places, and seems to have lost the original plans for its malarious shack. Here,

again, a good deal may depend upon the point of view, for to the human eye the most comfortable thing connected with a beaver is its glossy hide. Ask the beaver to store nuts, skip among lofty twigs, or hang head-downward on a tree bole and swear at the passer-by, and most likely he would curtly name his engineering feat and disgustedly go below. Ask the red squirrel to store his nuts at the bottom of a cold, deep, and, perhaps, rather damp pond, and he probably would flee shrieking to the tall timber. Get them together and ask each to perform the other's specialties, or even to vary from his instinct-guided routine, and they'd throw up their paws and quit. It has been proved profitable and it may be clever to compel erstwhile irreproachable paper to present the as yet unknown details of the thoughts of animals which don't think, and their motives which don't "mote," and so on *ad lib.*, but the interesting fact remains that none but a monkey can cut any figure in the best monkey society, and only a skunk can stand or understand the true inwardness of mephitic manœuvrings. It is quite true that the grand school of nature now has many bright pupils, who are most earnestly working at their allotted tasks. They have learned much, in some cases their accomplishments even including a realization of how little they know; but with all their striving they must ever remain pupils— not develop into masters. The school door will remain wide open to every new student, no matter how many little self-certified graduates may strap their

books, don their small caps, and rush forth to proclaim they have learned it all. And some day an aged ex-pupil may totter back to dully wonder at the advancement of the new style of kid and most likely acquire a suspicion that he is the butt of that kid's scientific skull. And he will pass to the last sweet pastures of climbing goats, and the kid will follow his worn trail and criticise his tracks, his fruit cans, scrap-iron, display posters—and other joys among which he had revelled, and eventually the kid, too, will wander back with long white whiskers, and a longer and mebbe less white experience, and learn that the Head-master alone has full control of the school and exact knowledge of the minutest detail of its proper management.

But while Monroe had no false notions concerning the beaver's reasoning powers, he had a proper respect for its wariness. He knew that the portly woodcutter had deadly foes other than men, which would be only too happy to ambush Ahmeek when he crept ashore to his work, and that Ahmeek was well aware of this. To beaver ears, the swish of a branch or the low click of a trodden twig were solemn warnings of impending peril, and the counter-moves were a scuttle to the pond, a sounding plunge, and a long dive to the submerged entrance to the unassailable lodge. Knowing these things, Monroe took no chances, but circled far through the woods till the position of two chosen trees gave him a true line on the dam. Then again was the stealing advance completed and the crawlers lay side by

side directly above the dam. The pond looked like so much very clear coffee, and Joe could see all sorts of brushy trash littering the bottom. Then he glanced at the dam, and again was disappointed. It was not at all like what he had expected, being exceedingly rough, as though a lot of sticks and masses of earth had been carelessly piled together. The sticks, many of which were quite heavy, bristled aimlessly in every direction, and so far as he could see, about one-fourth of them in no way added to the symmetry or strength of the dam, which, though complete, had a half-finished appearance, not at all pleasing, nor yet creditable to the engineers — that is, from our point of view.

After waiting a long while, during which Joe grasped the value of insect guards, — for a haze of winged things strove against the net, — Monroe whispered a warning to remain motionless while he attempted to force the hidden beavers to action. About the centre of the dam, and a little below the water surface, protruded a stout stick, and toward this Monroe cautiously crept. The distance to be covered was about twenty feet, and watchful Joe was certain he never had seen a man take so long in stealing that distance. But Monroe knew what he was about, and also that the slightest jar of foot or movement would surely defeat his object. The remains of an old sunken tree just below the dam offered a sure foothold, and presently his hand closed on the stick. Then for seconds he crouched, his eyes watching the pool. Finally, and as gingerly

as though it were dynamite, he moved the stick an inch or so to one side. The feel of it assured him it could be silently withdrawn, and so soon as this was accomplished, water poured freely through the gap. Monroe watched it for a moment, then removed a couple of smaller sticks, and retreated as craftily as he had advanced. "Lie low, now, and watch the pond," he whispered. "The water will cut a bigger gap presently, and so soon as the outflow makes itself felt farther up, down will come the Old Man to learn what's the matter. An Indian taught me the trick; and while it wouldn't serve where beavers are molested, there is a chance in a spot like this."

Joe thought that catlike watch the most fascinating experience of his life. He forgot the passage of time and everything except the glassy brown water and the odds and ends of visible things below. A white grub that had lost its grip of a leaf overhead, fell in with a sharp "pink" which seemed to jar the entire surroundings. He could see it slowly sinking through what suddenly proved much deeper water than he had imagined, and when it reached the bottom, its convulsive strugglings were still visible against a dark, half-rotted leaf. And as he watched, the few spindled water-growths slowly bent and pointed down stream, which told that the break in the dam was doing its work and the movement of the water making itself felt. Monroe's trained eyes had noted every one of these small matters, and he whispered: "Careful now; if the old chap's coming

at all, he'll not be long. The water will tell him there's something wrong with the dam, and he's smart enough to know that swift repairs sometimes save a heap of work." A sodden mass fell from the dam, and the outflow increased. Joe smothered a giggle, for the thought struck him — suppose the whole business should go with a rush and leave the beavers walloping about in the mud! Then he twitched all over and gasped, for lo! a big, vague-looking form was slowly drifting forth from the shadow of the nearest lodge. He guessed it was Old Man Beaver, but such a size! Some way or other he had got the notion that a beaver was no bigger than a small cat; but here was a thing which, seen through the deceptive water, appeared larger than an ordinary spaniel. It seemed to slide along the bottom as though the current were pulling at it; then it began slowly to rise, and this without perceptible motion or effort. Inch by inch it stole upward, till Joe could see every detail of the funny outspread paws, and the many silvery bubbles which seemed to stick like shiny burs among the long hair.

Joe thrilled as he watched the bullet head, as it were, first shake the surface and then emerge. He saw what looked like the sudden opening of two black nostrils which sent forth a tiny bubble, the gleam of two small, beady eyes, the yellow of big, savage-looking teeth, and then all of flat Ahmeek as he floated motionless on the surface in a way rather suggestive of a nicely mounted skin reposing upon a brown, highly polished floor. Lastly, he noticed

the tail, the wrongfully famous trowel, which seemed to curve slightly against the water like a hand not fully straightened. It was a queer-looking contrivance, rather like an oval of old rubber or wet leather, and it wasn't more than one-third as big as the pictures had suggested. At first he could not see any ears, but presently the fur near the back of the head appeared to split apart and revealed two very small, fuzzy-looking bunches which might be ears or 'most anything with hair on it. And thus the watchers stared at Ahmeek, while he seemed to stare at everything except his dreaded foes. It was a wonderfully interesting picture, but at last a big, webbed hind foot gave a swift kick suggestive of amazing power, and at once the furry bulk noiselessly moved forward. A second kick, and the craft gathered speed, which, however, died away, and another long float followed. The creature seemed to be strung to the tensest alertness, and while the head presented a heavy, stupid appearance, yet there was a something in the ensemble which hinted of abundant craft and power ready for instant action. Once again the forward, gaining speed, till the blunt nose was almost in the gap of the dam. Then another suspicious pause, ending by the beaver hauling himself out. For perhaps a minute he crouched, looking like a rounded end of a rotten log, then his head moved as though he was examining the damage. His fore paws apparently pushed at something, then he sat up like an over-fat rabbit. As he sat, his back was to the pond, and Joe could see a curved

fore paw quivering. Suddenly the big body shot backward from the dam, there was a mighty splash, a swirl of white suds, and a passing glimpse of an amazingly swift something deep down and darting for the lodge.

"Well, that settles it!" grunted Monroe. "We may as well get out of here, for he won't show again till after dark, and the folks who would ambush him a second time will have to do some rare clever work. My! how he did everlastingly fling himself off there. He must have winded us direct, or caught a sudden sniff of something I had touched. I'd mend that dam for him, were it not that any further meddling surely would scare him worse; that is, if such a thing were possible. Eh, son?"

By way of answer Joe gurgled and gasped, then burst into a laugh which must have struck terror to the hearts of the outraged beavers. It is no light task for a novice to remain motionless during so long a vigil, and without his realizing it the absurd ending had been a great relief, a general easing of the unusual strain. More than once during the lazy prowling trackward he laughed, until Monroe had to join him. "I just can't help it, Bart," he said; "that old fat fellow's back handspring was the scarest, and funniest, and suddenest thing ever I saw!"

Presently he recalled the vision of the teeth, and asked if a beaver would bite. "Bite? Well, I should say so," exclaimed Monroe. "Why, if that Old Man ever got a grab at your hand, he'd send his long teeth through it as easily as you'd drive a

knife-blade through an apple. What do you think he cuts and trims his trees with? Those teeth can cut a groove like you'd make with a half-inch gouge-chisel. And he can use them for things other than wood-cutting. If he got caught in a steel trap that was not rigged so as to hold him under water and eventually drown him, he probably would cut off the prisoned paw, and so escape. I've seen more than one dead beaver which carried merely the stump of a fore paw." In reply to a question about the tree cutting, he explained that much of it was done to secure materials for dams and winter food. "I question, however, the beaver's ability to make a tree fall about where he wants it," he continued, "as I question his actual study of that subject. I know many writers have dwelt upon the beaver's mastery of all-round lumbering, but I suspect that harmless enthusiasm has inspired error. How do we know that a beaver figures out the weight, shape, and general balance of a tree before venturing upon his first bite at the bark? A good axeman can stand back and size up a tree, and, from its shape, the location of the heavier limbs, and the relative positions of other adjacent trees, draw a shrewd inference regarding its probable fall. Then he has another strong card to play; *i.e.* his own manipulation of the axe. His training has taught how the fall of a tree may, to a certain extent, be controlled by the manner in which the felling is done. So the axe is aimed at whichever spot seems likely to further the object in view. In his estimate the man takes in the entire

tree, its neighbors, and the lay of the ground. But there is nothing to prove that the small chap in the fur sweater attempts to figure upon all these points. The truth of the matter probably is that he merely selects a tree which his instinct says is of the right sort and size, and easily assailable, and proceeds to gnaw through its trunk without bothering himself concerning its top; meanwhile just taking chances in the matter of its fall. A full list of the accidents to lumbermen surely would furnish grim proof of how often even expert men miscalculate the fall of trees; and my private impression is that a problem too difficult for a trained specialist of the axe might temporarily puzzle even the wonderful beaver of the books."

"But hasn't he any idea of the way things will turn out? It seems to me he'd be apt to waste a lot of time and labor if he cut many trees which fell where he didn't want them, or lodged and never came down."

"That's not easily answered, because we don't know the workings of his brain. But we do know that numbers of his trees lodge, because we see them in that condition, as we see others lying in awkward places. Many old and, apparently, half-completed cuttings also suggest where some worker wearied of his job; but we can only surmise that such was the case. One of several possibilities may have frightened away the worker, or he may have been keeping his teeth in order. The teeth of animals which gnaw much grow rapidly to provide against continu-

ous wear, and have a chisel-like cutting edge which, of course, must be sharp to do good work. The inner portion of the teeth, being softer than the wonderful outer enamel, which does the cutting, wears away more rapidly, and thus preserves the chisel shape, a good deal like the way the steel tool is ground to sharpness, the chief difference being that use sharpens the tooth while dulling the tool. Probably more than half the noisy work of rats and mice is merely tooth-sharpening instead of hole-cutting, or, as some people term it, 'cussed mischief.' Beavers, porcupines, squirrels, and other gnawers appear to have to do an amazing amount of this tooth-sharpening; indeed, the very existence of some creatures seems to depend upon their cutting-teeth being kept in proper condition. If one of the chisels be accidentally broken, the other will grow and grow, from lack of wear, until its unfortunate owner is rendered incapable of taking food. He can obtain no relief, for nature's law reads, 'Every gnawer must be his own dentist.' You saw plenty of small cut stubs back yonder, and one much larger tree with a notch cut in it. The smaller stuff was cut for food and dam building; the other, presumably, by a beaver whose teeth didn't feel just right. He may have sharpened up a trifle, as a carpenter might give a chisel a few rubs on an oilstone."

Joe readily grasped the facts about the teeth, but still the tree-felling bothered him, for he had long believed that the beaver could drop a tree almost exactly where he chose. So divers questions fol-

lowed, which Monroe answered to the best of his ability, the tree-felling being explained in this way: The beaver, being a comparatively poor traveller upon land, seldom extends his rambles to any great distance from water which is bordered by his favorite trees, the willow, poplar, birch, aspen, and alder. He also eats large quantities of the roots of aquatic plants. In timber lands, water means more or less of an open space, greater light, and usually direct sunshine. Almost invariably a forest tree develops its greatest growth upon its best-lighted, which is apt to mean its least-crowded, side, and not seldom the entire trunk has a cant in that direction. In addition, the banks, as a general thing, slope toward the water, all natural conditions thus combining to throw a cut tree in the one direction and into or near the water. In many places, the only possible clear fall for a tree is waterward, while the removal of the outermost support leaves something of a clear space, a line of least resistance for other trees to follow. Should a beaver, however, drop a tree, as it were, uphill, the arduous labor of the felling is not necessarily lost. A slim trunk and desirable branches can be cut into manageable sections and dragged away a bit at a time, and these things the beavers do. A very natural question was, Did the beaver ever bring a tree down upon himself? a thing two-legged lumbermen have been known to do. Monroe never had heard of such a mishap and he had asked the best-informed trappers and traders of his many acquaintances. He assured Joe that while such an

accident was possible, in his belief it very rarely if ever occurred. "You see, Joe," he explained, "the cutting is a rather slow process, and ordinarily a tree gives plenty of warning before actually starting to fall. It is true that when working on a large tree the beaver cuts all the way round, which finally leaves two roughly grooved tapering ends. It might happen that an almost severed tree might suddenly yield and the butt slide back on the stump and so hit the cutter a crack, but it is more than likely by that time he would have retreated well out of the way. If you were chewing at a tree and had one or both your hands resting on it, you'd be mighty apt to feel the faintest quiver and have an excellent idea of when and where that tree would fall. And even if you managed to get into the wrong place, unless you were exceedingly careless, you would notice the way the danger was coming and perhaps have time to leap aside. Now, as you have observed, a beaver can leave a spot in a startlingly abrupt manner, and —"

But the memory of the fat fellow's method of leaving the dam was too much for Joe, and he laughed till he scarce could breathe. When he recovered he was quiet for some time, for in his mental view was a fascinating picture of a waveless, black-shadowed pond ringed with motionless trees; of the powerful, blocky form of a brown lumberman reared against a five-inch trunk, and busy at a growing notch. He seemed to hear the gride-gride-gride of keen, self-sharpening chisel-teeth and the muffled

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tearing loose of large fragments of the soft wood. He could see the play of the strong jaws, the eager thrusting of the round head as the cut deepened, and the clutch of the straining fore paws as the toiler exerted his full power. He could note the shifting as the cut went round the tree, the quick sniff from clearing nostrils, the passes of the paws as they cleansed and straightened the fur, and every now and then the abrupt halts, the higher rearing for observation, and the tense pose while ears, eyes, and nose searched for trace of some stealing foe. Then the renewed attack, the final retreat as the live wood thrilled its warning, the taking up of a secure position, and the shrewd contemplation of the prize as it trembled, tottered, and came swishing down. Then the careful, crawling examination, the trimming off of branches, the subdividing of the trunk, the grip of teeth that took hold like ice-tongs, and the sturdy heaving and hauling as the more awkward of the burdens were dragged to their new element. And then the rafting, the clever seizing of an end, that the towing should be easiest, and the final dragging-under to the cool, sap-preserving wet storage, where the food might safely await the pleasure of a pot-bellied low-comedian who thinks nothing of playing in turn the rôles of the carpenter, mason, engineer, navvy, timber-cruiser, axeman, scaler, or, for that matter, — the sawmill!

Nothing of particular interest occurred till the way-station was reached, but there something hap-

pened. That it happened in the form of two huge bowls of bread and milk doesn't greatly matter here, yet it mattered a whole lot there, and that with a rapidity which certainly allowed scant time for cream to rise on it. Then they loafed in the sweet twilight, Joe asking questions, and Monroe lazily answering between his smoke puffs. Among other things Joe learned that beavers breed in early spring; that the young are very playful and make interesting pets; that they number from two to five and are called by the trappers "kittens"; that they often appear to play at dam-building if allowed access to materials and such water as a flowing ditch or trough; that the skins become good, or "prime," as it is termed, with cold weather, and that the value of the skins has encouraged a rapid and much to be regretted destruction of most interesting animals. An idea of their original numbers may be gained from old records of the Hudson Bay Company, which show the handling of from thirty to fifty thousand skins annually during the early part of the last century.

At about nine o'clock Joe shook himself, chuckled, then rose and indulged in a noble stretching. "I was just going to wake you," said a drowsy voice; whereat Joe laughed softly and said, "I've had the best day yet, but here comes something with a light, and I guess it's our train back to Nepigon." And he was right.

THE RIVAL "TRADING-POSTS"—THE
BAY OF BIG SEA-WATER — THE
NEW TRAIL—THE PRAIRIE CITY

JOE never had more than a hazy idea of the ride back to Nepigon, the late supper, and the turning in, but he distinctly remembered watching a huge beaver which, after nearly severing one of the bedposts, seized him and dragged him to the floor. For a minute he knew he was a juicy sapling that had lodged and wouldn't come, but when he felt the brutal beaver first examine him all over and then cut him into handy lengths, he realized that some way or other he must have tumbled to the ground. That was rather interesting, but when the beaver's big teeth sank into an end of one of his pieces and the dragging away began, Joe grunted, "This is too butch for be!" and kicked wildly. Then the beaver coolly remarked: "Wake up, you young duffer! It's 'most nine o'clock, and we've got to pull out presently!" And so at last the drowsy eyes opened and their owner understood that his thoughtful guide had let him snooze till the last minute. Within an hour they were off in another caboose, and while the region traversed was by no means so picturesque as the Grand Gallery of the North Shore, its wildness was sufficient charm.

Monroe pointed out certain sections as being excellent for grouse, and others for big game, but he betrayed no real enthusiasm until they reached the edge of a very pretty sheet of water. "This is Loon Lake," he said; "look sharp, and you'll see a small, weather-beaten stump at the edge of the water." The track ran so close to the lake that Joe had to look almost straight down, and presently a single stump appeared and vanished. "That was it," said Monroe, "and it's a sort of natural tombstone which ought to be inscribed, 'Sacred to the memory of a blessed evening's fishing and an almost unique capture.' Although you might not suspect it, there are many speckled trout and big black bass in that water, and the best spot of the entire shore is right beside that little stump. Years ago, one of the trackmen told me he had often seen fish rising near there, and one afternoon I dropped off a freight to prove if he knew about more things than fish-plates. It's a first-class spot for casting, and it happened that the flies were a silver doctor and a red hackle and the rod a steel affair which was good for any amount of rough usage. Within fifteen minutes I rose and hooked a nice little trout of about a pound weight, and because I wanted fun rather than fish, he was handled very gently. As a result he got quite close to that stump and in a moment, as I imagined, had fouled the line on some sunken snag. To my amazement, the snag presently got exceedingly busy, and I had my hands full. Never had I played such a fish. I was sure

there were no 'lunge, or big pike, in the water, no loon had been thereabouts, yet some sort of queer fellow surely was working at the end of my silk. For a moment I half suspected that a trout had grabbed a fly and a young otter had grabbed the trout, and the prospect waxed thrilling, for to land such a bunch of fur and speckles truly would have been a marvel. But the mystery presently solved itself, for two wildly struggling forms rose to the surface, and to my astonishment I beheld a pound trout and a black bass of about twice the weight, each fast to its own fly. They were very funny, and their actions were comically suggestive of a bull team that had turned the yoke. Each seemed to hold the other responsible for the trouble, and so they backed and tugged obstinately, entirely oblivious of the fact that they were exhausting instead of aiding each other. Had they possessed sufficient sense to have pulled together and straight away, both probably would have escaped; but that would have meant the burying of race prejudice, which even more enlightened ones find rather difficult. Instead, they faced each other and jerked and whirled about till, realizing the situation, I laid down the rod, put my foot on it, and let them fight it out, which they most vigorously did, till finally both gave up and were drawn in. Two years later I read a thrilling description of that set-to, but while the locality was the same, it was another man and the fish were near three times as big."

"But," asked Joe, doubtfully, "could the same

thing happen twice at that very stump, with great big fish, too?" There was a peculiar gleam in Monroe's eye as he answered: "Anything is liable to happen on paper, and if you rub a little ink on a fish, that fish'll grow like a gourd. I'm afraid we writers are a very bad lot. Do you savvy?"

Joe laughed, for he had learned how to interpret that spark in Monroe's eye; then he resumed his study of the landscape. After a while he said, "Say, Bart, did you ever have any other queer mix-ups on the same hook?" Monroe seemed to study for a moment; then he replied airily: "Oh, yes. Let me see, what have I had on the same tackle? There was a colt and a fool—a duck and a hen—a perch and a 'lunge—a trout and a bass—a frog and a bass—a trout and a mouse—a bat and a fly—a—a—oh! bother, I can't remember 'em all. But what's the matter with you?" he abruptly asked, for Joe's eyes were as round as a fish's. "Most of those things were inside the others—in their cold, damp, miasmatic cupboards—bait, you goose; don't you understand? In the case of the duck and the hen,—she was a most irascible yellow hen,—the tackle had a grain of corn at either end and the grub was impartially divided by myself. The way flat-feet pulled for the water and the manner in which split-feet bucked and protested were truly gorgeous. In the case of the colt and the fool—I'm no horse and I forget what was the colt's name. So far as the bat and the fly are concerned—it was a 'black gnat' and—" here

he made an imaginary cast, and Joe snickered, for there are hosts of bats in New York, and he knew how they would dart at any small object tossed across their line of flight. "Now, don't you ever try that bat trick; it's cruel and consequently wrong," rumbled Monroe, solemnly, but in fancy he could hear a reedy squeaking and the flutter-flatter of leathery wings, as a specimen of the Gotham bat was pulled down by a certain slim youth standing in the backyard of the premises of a broker named Emmons King.

At last Port Arthur, and, safely side-tracked, the Rolling Tepee. Curiously enough, to Joe it seemed something like getting home, to enter again the cosey car. Everything was in order, and after Monroe had explained that they would sleep at the big hotel and get away sometime next day, they started on a tour of the town.

"This is a pet view of mine," exclaimed Monroe, as they stood for a few minutes upon the broad piazza. "I know the Great Lakes well, but this, the North Shore, the 'Soo,' and the Detroit River, I never could weary of. Where would you look for anything finer than this noble bay and that grand blue hulk anchored away out yonder?" Joe readily agreed, for the scene was at its best. A gentle breeze just wrinkled the surface of the broad Thunder Bay, which flashed wonders of greens and blues and purples, like the play of colors above molten metal in some mighty crucible. And outside, the winking flashes where Superior's sweet-sea

rollers swept through "great spaces washed with sun." Small wonder that prophetic eyes have seen visions of future greatness, akin to that of those other twins, St. Paul and Minneapolis, for these sisters of the unsalted seas — Port and Fort — whose peaceful, motherly mission shall win fair renown in spite of royal and warlike masculine names.

"This is the turning-point of traffic and travel on the Great Lakes," explained Monroe, "which signifies a tremendous future importance. Fort William is only four miles over there, which means that ere long and so soon as a few opposing local interests have sufficiently simmered down, the whole will be combined into one beautiful city, which they might, perhaps, call Port William if they cared to preserve something of each of the present names. But I should not do that. 'Port' is so commonplace, and to me it always suggests a small place, while the everlasting naming after people very often is worse, because the name is chosen when that particular person is temporarily popular and possibly only accidentally great and liable to subsequent proceedings of questionable interest. Some well-rounded descriptive or otherwise appropriate name might be borrowed from the language of the original owner of the place. Many Indian names are exceedingly musical, and as they usually mean something typical of the place designated, they have an additional value, the chief trouble with them being that they exactly describe what the Indian saw and not at all what the place may grow to be. For instance, the citizens

of that beautiful place Toronto are not given to gloating over the original meaning of the name. They vastly prefer 'Queen City.' Port Arthur long ago was called Prince Arthur's Landing, and that long promontory of basaltic rock yonder is the 'Sleeping Giant' which terminates in Thunder Cape. Behind it lies Silver Islet, from the heart of which have been taken vast amounts of treasure. Pie Island lies in the entrance to the bay, and beyond Thunder Cape and far out is beautiful Isle Royale. The height above Fort William is Mackay Mountain. Fort William, for about a century, was a Hudson Bay Company's post, but those tremendous grain elevators indicate what important changes have taken place. Those elevators rank among the largest in the world, and there is need for them because the wheat of Manitoba and her sister provinces comes out this way to be carried hence by the great fleet of lake craft. The other more important things handled here are coal and lumber. Where do you think grain for Montreal would go from here?"

Joe thought for a moment, and then said: "Out of this bay, past those islands, then down Lake Superior to the canals at Sault Ste. Marie. Through them to Lake Huron, down the river past Port Huron to Lake St. Clair, through the canal at the 'Flats,' and on across little St. Clair to the Detroit River. Through that to Lake Erie, along that to another canal to Lake Ontario; the length of that lake to the St. Lawrence, thence by river and canal to Montreal. Am I right?"

"My! what a brain it's got, to be sure," grunted Monroe. "And now suppose you and I wanted to go from New York *via* Montreal to Winnipeg in a canoe, how'd we manage it?"

"Well, we'd buy a flying machine for some parts of it, for I'm blessed if the water would hold out all the way," said Joe, decisively. "That is, I mean without using canals, for they may have been added to without my knowledge."

"How many canals had been built when the first furs were brought out?" asked Monroe, with a chuckle. "The fact is, Joe, if we paddled up the Hudson and on by way of Lakes George and Champlain, we could work through to the St. Lawrence and be in water which might have washed that long pier below us before starting on its grand journey. Once we had reached the St. Lawrence, if we knew the routes, we might find more than one way of reaching Winnipeg. What the old voyageurs regularly did every year can be and is likely to be repeated by the amateurs who, for pure love of the thing, prowl through the lonely places of the world. They are wonderful folk, these new explorers, and many a time their discoveries extend to things which do not exist. The funniest fellow of them all is the inky-fingered explorer who expresses himself from some city and plunges into unknown wilds. If his nerve and other supplies hold out, he finally returns to civilization and writes about his wonderful discoveries and the hideous perils which beset his path. He sees many things which do not exist, but never

appears to notice the faint blazes along his route, or the well-worn trails under the new moss — the trails of Indian, Breed, and White who passed that way and knew all about it some hundred odd years before the modern explorer was born.

"We presently shall see something in the way of rather new country," he continued as he waved his hand in answer to a signal from a brakeman standing below. "Our friend yonder means that our train is about to pull out, and we had better get aboard the Tepee." Within five minutes, no poor imitation of a bump jarred the car, which presently rolled forward upon the new trail which extends *via* Fort Francis and Mine Centre, — the embryo cities of the Rainy River region — to Winnipeg and the Far West.

"This beautiful chain of waters," said Monroe, after they had got settled down, "forms the boundary between the Canadian province of Ontario and our own Minnesota; and in due time we shall reach a point where, as at the Detroit River and other connecting waters of the Great Lakes, you may stand under the British flag and see the Stars and Stripes gayly fluttering upon the opposite side of a noble waterway. When our respected forebears picked out their international boundary they were guided to a certain extent by the important waters which, strangely enough, seemed to have run just a trifle beyond everything that seemed any good of the things then in sight. The other parties to the deal didn't bother themselves over

much about the lines. What mattered a few arpents of snow more or less, especially to folks who already had their eyes upon about half the known earth? Joseph, all of those sapient fathers were unmitigated asses—ours, for not grabbing more when the chance was good, and theirs for carelessly letting go what they might have retained. A few arpents of snow, indeed! Wow! wouldn't I like to have the fixing of that boundary to-day! I'd want india-rubber conscience and arms, and if I didn't stretch plumb to the Arctic Ocean, it would be because I was modern 'American rubber' and not the original, unadulterated, stretch-as-far-as-you-have-a-mind-to article. Just think of it! Thousands of miles of choice timber and mineral lands, of prairies all ready to be turned into the finest wheat-lands in the world; grazing lands, mixed farming lands, every old kind of lands; sporting fields unrivalled; enough country to make a dozen glorious states, as it has made one noble Dominion,—and we let it all get away!"

"But we'll get it all back some day, so father says," ventured Joe.

"I hope so; I trust so. Sometimes I feel almost like praying for it, but I fear 'twill never be. These people are more independent than we really are, no matter what we may say we are. We gloriously won and honorably have maintained our national independence, and our progress and record have alike been fair to see. We are predestined to be the greatest people in the world, as some of us

imagine we now are, but I suspect there yet remain some few unpleasant possibilities. When we actually were free, we didn't have sense enough to remain that way. We freed ourselves and shouted 'Freedom!' We freed the slave and bade him holler too, and he made music like the black keys on a grand piano. We bawled across the Atlantic and the Pacific to the downtrodden and the oppressed of many agonized lands, and they all heard, and a whole lot of 'em answered. Nowadays, when the Guinea, and the Turkey, and the Lion, and the Pig, and the Bear, and the Dragon, and the Ulmerhund, and the Ox, and the Ass, and everything that is ours get to carrying on and singing about freedom to the accompaniment of harps, bagpipes, timbals, guitars, mandolins, hand-organs, pipes, tootle-sacs, and the Lord knoweth what else, old Baldhead has got to get right up on his toe-nails and scream like blazes to make himself heard in his own nest! It's true, but it all will come right some day," he added with a wink, for Joe was choking with poorly suppressed sympathy. "But we don't need to look northward for more territory. We may ultimately find we've a bit too much of our own. It's a mighty hard job to figure out, in Washington, what is fair and right for North, South, East, and West, and halfway and all the way across the Pacific; and if you don't give each beggar exactly what he wants, he'll set up a howl, and there'll be trouble. Imagine us, the champions of freedom, the big brother of the oppressed, ploughing half round

the globe in Harveyized steel abattoirs to pump the gospel of scrap-iron and lead into a bunch of black-and-tan unregenerates, who didn't happen to know enough to behave exactly our way! It sounds rank, Joseph, but stranger things have happened. No siree! These folks up north are all right. They're the best friends we have. They come to us and make good people, and we go to them and do likewise, and instead of looking too closely at their territory, we ought to ponder on the time when we set up housekeeping for ourselves, and give them every chance to do the same. That's my notion of the proper way to illustrate the principles of true freedom. Our self-forged shackles in the way of 'trusts,' 'corporations,' 'combines,' and so on, are beginning to chafe slightly the eagle-shanks of freedom, and lotions and poultices won't cure the trouble. Some fine day we'll do for ourselves what we did for the negro, and then we shall realize that slavery really is abolished on the American continent."

The Rainy River Region strongly appealed to Joe, as well it might, for it is an ideal country for a camping holiday. It is true it has no mountains, nor the painted battlements of the North Shore, nor the grandeur of the western ranges, but it has the softer beauties of superb wooded hills, and the wonderful shadow effects of broad, placid waters; the musical riot of long cascades, and the thunderous white wrath of roaring falls, and each and all of

these in delightful variety. As the Tepee rolled along the excellent although new road, Monroe explained the mineral and timber resources, the great value of much of the land for agricultural purposes, and its, to his mind, greater value as a field of sport and a future magnificent summer playground for city people. Among other things, Joe learned that there were no speckled trout, although the water at many points appeared admirably suited to that fish, but there were bass and minor species awaiting the angler. But it was as a game country that it most interested Monroe, who had no hesitation about pronouncing it one of the best he knew of for moose and black bear. "It is as a big game country that its future fame will be best known," he explained, "and it will not soon be depleted, for the laws are good and well enforced. The time will come when a New Yorker will attract no more attention at a station than a lumberman does now, for it really is a choice game country, and so soon as Gothamites and sportsmen of other cities grasp that fact, they'll be here — never fear."

Joe liked every bit of it, especially the great expanses, which as yet showed no marked traces of settlement. These, indeed, were beautiful, and only the promise of leagues of novelty further on reconciled him to the parting with the singing waters and rolling greenery of the international chain. And when at last it was left behind, he became a trifle uneasy, for a succeeding stage of the journey lay through a flat region thickly covered with small

timber and sadly lacking the picturesque. And it was not until the massed growth had thinned to scattered clumps, and these in turn had almost vanished, that he understood how, figuratively, they had swept through a leafy surf of poplar and tangly undergrowth, had left shore and the last shore rock behind, and were fairly afloat upon that wonderful grassy sea which rolls in long, sleepy undulations from eastern Manitoba westward for hundreds of miles to where another leafy surf breaks against the beautiful foot-hills of the Rockies.

Winnipeg was a bit of a puzzle to Joe. He agreed that it would be a good idea to walk from the depot to the hotel; but as they strolled along Main Street, the more he saw of the business portion of the city, the more he was convinced that the buildings were unusually squatty in structure. It was not until they had reached the handsome City Hall and halted before the Soldiers' Monument, that he learned what was the trouble. "The buildings are very low," he said, "and whatever is the matter with this street?" Monroe laughed as he replied, "Some of these buildings may not be so low as you think. Just count the stories in that big affair on the corner." As Joe looked closer at the very handsome structure indicated, it suddenly, as it were, seemed to grow in a most peculiar manner until it appeared not unworthy of a certain section of New York. "It seems bigger and taller now," he said, "but what the mischief's the matter that it should act so?"

"Do you see two car tracks in the middle of the street? How far is it from this walk to the nearest track?" asked Monroe. Then for the first time Joe noticed the unusual width of a street which was broad enough for about two of the sort he had been accustomed to.

Many a newcomer has been astonished by the proportions of that noble thoroughfare which one day, when the prosperous prairie city has approached her certain magnitude, is destined to be one of the grandest city thoroughfares in the world. The real wonders of Winnipeg are not yet. Marvellous as has been the advancement, it as yet is nothing more than a sure indication of the glorious things to be. No sane mind can question the coming greatness of the north, or doubt the future of the "Peg," as her sons affectionately term the young queen of the grass-lands. The same influences which made great those gigantic twins, St. Paul and Minneapolis, to the southward, cannot fail to do the same for the Manitoba capital. Situated at the juncture of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, Winnipeg commands the trade of a vast region to the north and west, and what her southern sisters have done for Minnesota, she is swiftly doing for the Canadian province. As happened to the others, she has advanced from a mere trading-post of the Fur Company to one of the most progressive trade centres of the entire country. In 1871 Winnipeg was Fort Garry, a sort of strong box of the Hudson Bay Company, and boasting a population of perhaps one hundred

souls. Then, her one important output, the rich furs of the north, far gathered at lone posts of vague location, was sent south by stream and portage in the care of those picturesque kings of birchen bark and flashing blade, who lived the hardy romance of the fur-trade. Next came the miracle-worker, the iron steed, and at his heels the invaders, and lo! what had been deemed a frozen land was proved a garden. Then the ebb and flow, the dreams and doubts and dire disasters, of mad speculation and then, war — that old brute argument ever resorted to when possessor and pioneer glare across the checkered board of fate. Then, peace and saner building upon proved foundations, and the steel bonds of peace creeping in from the south and on to west and north, and rendering possible that closer communion which means commerce, and its linking of erstwhile warring interests which means mutual benefits, the surest guarantees of peace and prosperity which man has yet evolved. Then, new life, new gold, new opportunities and their natural result, a new and lasting prosperity, the future of which no man dare measure. There are those — the old cynical, self-sufficient breed — whose privilege it ever has been to doubt and question and lay down limits to possible progress. There were those in old Fort Garry who, as they slammed the gate just in time to exclude a hissing storm of flint-headed aboriginal arrows, declared that the future was gloomy, and the uselessness of trying to make anything of such a land assured. Yet, if one of those

dear old doubters were to-day suddenly set down in Main Street, he would have difficulty in locating the remains of his beloved old Fort, even, supposing every street-car missed him on his way to the old landing.

Before evening, Joe saw a good deal more of Winnipeg; for as they were finishing lunch at the comfortable hotel a card was brought to Monroe, who smiled and said, "Tell him we'll be down in a minute. It's the 'Little 'Un,' and he's a royal good fellow," he explained to Joe; "he's seen my name in the register, and you'll find him the gamest bantam ever you met." In brief time they descended, and Joe had not glanced at half the small and medium-sized men standing about, before he acquired wisdom; for a huge fellow, inches taller and half a hundredweight heavier than Monroe, sprang forward with a big hand outstretched. Beyond question the two were genuinely glad to meet, and while they were exchanging pleasantries, Joe looked the stranger over. He was a mighty man, blond and rosy, and English all over, and every line of his mighty frame suggested hearty good living, coupled with abundant outdoor exercise. He seemed as full of fun as a boy, yet there was that about him which hinted of a steely firmness should occasion demand. In a few moments Joe was presented and the object of the trip explained. As had happened with Monroe, the stranger's greeting was peculiarly magnetic, and instantly Joe felt that this big fellow, who bore the name of John Thompson,

was one of the right sort. This feeling became a solid conviction when presently Thompson said, "Step over to the office for a few minutes; then we'll walk round to my house, and I'll take you for a drive."

The office proved a mine of interest, for it was attached to a huge warehouse in which was stored a bewildering array of teas and other goods. And there were other things which directly appealed to Joe. Grand heads of moose, elk, caribou, sheep, goat, deer, and bear crowded the walls, and there were many truly beautiful skins of wolf, wolverine, bear, beaver, fisher, fox, otter, and marten. And as Thompson directed attention to this or that, he let fall words which thrilled the boyish heart; for while some of the specimens had been brought from the far north, the majority had been secured within comparatively easy distances of the warehouse door. Hearing these things spoken of as though the happy hunting-grounds of the books merely were just outside somewhere, forcibly brought home to Joe the realization that he was a mighty long way from New York, and for the first time he truly grasped the fact that he actually was in that famous northland of the fur-traders. Up to this, Winnipeg had been a new type of city, but a city for all that; but now it was a sort of enchanted place from which one actually might look forth and behold the prairie homes of countless wild fowl, and the distant bluffs which yet held such things as had worn these heads and peltries. Not till they had visited

Thompson's house, where they beheld more treasures of the wilds, and driven through the city and the better residential quarter, did he begin to understand how closely are modern luxury and wildness associated in Manitoba. One broad street revealed beautiful homes in long succession with lawns as trim as the older East might show. Yet over the back fences of many grounds waved the tall, slim-stemmed growth, such as beavers cut, in the shadow of which the ruffed grouse drummed within earshot of ballrooms. The return to Main Street brought the most interesting thing of all, for Thompson pulled up his team beside a pretty little park and said, "There's all that's left of old Fort Garry; jump out and take a look at it."

All that Joe could see was a white-looking gateway and a fragment of a wall, but the carefully preserved ground yet showed the shape of the famous old post of which he had so often read. He felt and moved as one might when approaching some storied tomb, and in his mind he could see the gathering of white and brown adventurers, their gayly caparisoned dog-teams, the trading of skins for sticks, and the passing back of sticks for guns, powder, ball, tea, tobacco, and the showy fabrics which of old caught the black eyes of dusky belles, very much as the made-up furs, then traded, later caught blue, gray, brown, and occasionally green eyes of very-much-alike-inside sisters of the great commercial centres.

After the drive they strolled about and presently

found themselves once more opposite the monument. Joe read the names of those who had fallen in what they had firmly believed to be a righteous effort to improve their part of the world for the common good. Monroe explained the difficulties which had long existed between the "Breeds" and the Whites. How the one, true to the Indian cross, desired to forever keep the country as a wild field for their hunting and trapping, while the other, as true to their training, strove to further agriculture and compel the wild lands to that broader mission for which they were so peculiarly adapted.

"I think it was a shame!" said Joe, excitedly. "Why couldn't they have let the poor Breeds alone? The land belonged to them, and they had a right to use it as they saw fit. You say all they wanted was to hunt and trap in peace; then why couldn't the English let 'em alone, instead of fighting and killing them and stealing their land? But the English always are doing that!" he concluded savagely.

Monroe whistled, then laughed and said: "Steady, son! You really mustn't talk that way, especially up here. Suppose the country had been let alone — would we be enjoying ourselves up here? Would there be any railroads, or cities, or civilization with its myriad opportunities for our advancement? Would there be the plentiful wheat for our own bread?"

"I've heard you say," retorted Joe, doggedly,

"that the States can grow every necessity — that we even might build a wall around us and still live in comfort. We are free folk and we give freedom to all who will let us. We don't murder innocent wild folks, nor do we try to grab the whole earth, nor go poking into every hole and corner to fight poor ignorant savages who haven't hurt us and haven't the ghost of a show against a — a — a —" He stopped, his face very red.

"Against a blue or a black regiment, or one of those modern marvels an American battleship, for instance?" queried Monroe, dryly. "The fact is, Joe, it's about time we dropped a lot of our tommyrot about the outrages committed by our relatives and neighbors. If war is as wrong as some people maintain, we're in the hash with the others, and we're liable to be in deeper before many years have passed. Now, I've had a trifling experience, and while personally I abhor war and bloodshed, I cannot help thinking that there is a something in human nature which compels an occasional mix-up. Since history began there have been wars, often apparently inexcusable ones, and at the end of the more important struggles there always were certain people to say, 'Thank God, that's settled and there won't be any more wars!' Our own country has seen some of the tallest scrapping ever recorded, yet here we are to-day busy perfecting an army and a navy, of course merely for the fun of the thing and with no intention of ever playing the game for keeps as laddies play marbles. When we win another boy's

marbles, we'll just tease him a little while and then give back the marbles and a few more to comfort him—oh! my eye, yes! There used to be a few odd millions of little brown boys playing in what now are the States, and we showed them a few nice, new little games, all strictly for fun and with no idea of keeping our winnings. But somehow the little brown boys don't seem to come round and play any more; they act as though something had happened to 'em, and here we are in the shockingly awkward position of holding huge bags of 'taws' and 'commies' which rightfully belong to the little friends who used to come over and play with us. I fancy the less we criticise our neighbors, the more at ease we shall feel in the future. As a matter of fact, I have learned by observation that the Canadians treat their Indians and Breeds very fairly and that the wild and half-wild races have no great cause for complaint. We, of all people, should be cautious in criticism, for there used to be an old saying about folks who live in glass houses being wise in pulling down the blinds and not getting between the lamp and the street. Now, we'll get back for dinner, for Thompson will call soon after and show us his dogs."

The summer twilight lingers so long in Manitoba that Joe found it hard to believe the clock above the City Hall, when after an excellent dinner they strolled with Thompson to inspect his kennels. They were well worth a visit, for this owner was one of those comparatively few sportsmen who

thoroughly understand the breeding, management, training, field work, and exhibiting of the pointer and setter. The dozen animals there in the snug kennels were pointers of the bluest blood, and as one after another clean-cut, glossy-coated beauty advanced or retired at the command, Joe was greatly impressed. When he learned that perhaps half a dozen of the dogs, after the completion of their training, would be shipped hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles to compete in various field-trials, his astonishment was great, for as yet he knew very little about kennel matters. Thompson's voice sounded almost savage as he spoke to certain animals, but it became strangely low and tender as he opened a small side-door and said, "Come, boy!"

A big liver-and-white dog slowly rose to his feet and stiffly hobbled forward to greet his visitors. He was very old, and white hairs showed plentifully in the erstwhile dark markings. His eyes were glazed with age, but the nose still could read the old story, and it sniffed with pathetic earnestness. Somewhere within the slackened form lurked one spark of the dashing courage which had won full many a gallantly contested heat of bygone trials and piled Thompson's sideboard with dearly prized trophies.

"He was the greatest Roman of them all," said his owner, as he lovingly fingered a deaf ear, then gently pushed the head toward the kennel. "I suppose some morning I'll find him on his last long point among his straw, but he has the best of care

and shall enjoy his ease so long as he can stick it out. You wouldn't think he ever was the original of the painting in the library, nor of this," and he showed an enamelled match-box bearing a portrait of a grand dog superbly posed on such a point as one seldom sees. "This and the painting are not exaggerated one hair; both are from a photograph of him on 'chickens.' He was a wonder, and I fear I'll never see his like again. The old rascal yet would try to go a hundred yards or so if I'd let him. But I still have the breed, and, young man, when my old friend here brings you back from the West, I'll show you what the youngsters can do. By the way, the old dog's a namesake of yours, and if you turn out one-half as good in the field as he was — I — I'd like to break you!"

"Do you know, Bart," said Joe, after they had bidden good night to the big man, "I like him. He spoke pretty sharply to those dogs, but when it came to the old deaf fellow he was mighty careful how he touched him. He treats him as though dealing with an afflicted child. Now, what I want to know is this: Are you and Mr. Thompson extraordinary people, or is it just the being sportsmen that makes you different?"

Monroe smiled and hesitated. "Well, it's like this, Joe. We are like a great many other men, but we have been through a peculiar school. Neither of us ever could be turned into a mere business drudge, possibly for the reason that years of close contact with nature have taught us many things

which too busy people seldom learn. We are both very fair shots, but long ago we found out that the real joy of sport does not lie in the killing. Mind you, we will knock over our birds in reason and in season, but we believe in the elimination of as much of the cruelty as is possible, and in keeping the bags within reasonable bounds. We are as much naturalists as sportsmen, because we believe that sort of outdoor man gets the most good and does the least harm while following his taste. We have found health and happiness in the outdoor life, but neither of us would go afield merely for the sake of killing things. The judicious killing of certain birds actually makes for the preservation and increase of those species. Should it happen that any species became scarcer than we deemed good for its future abundance, we would kill none of that sort till it had again become abundant. The killing of a bird in a game cover is no worse than the killing of a fowl in a barnyard, or of pigs, or cattle, or any animal used as food. In nature's grand plan, a grouse is as useful and important as a hen-hawk, and a buzzard as a canvasback duck. It doesn't matter what we think, or write about it, because when the plan originated we were not as we now are. Then we had much in the way of hair and, possibly, tails, and mighty little of what we now term brains. The oldest remains show that we killed things and they killed us at each and every favorable opportunity, and the struggle has continued ever since. With our development came the knowledge that while

certain killing was to our advantage because it helped to preserve human life, other killing was undesirable because it removed foes of certain things obnoxious to us and thus added to our discomfort. The fact of Nature herself being the most savage of all killers, proves that the sporting taste is natural. Everything we do is deadly to hosts of minor forms of life. Trees, grass, flowers, fishes, birds, beasts, — all are Nature's products, and I cannot distinguish any material difference between the motive which impels one man to cut down and burn one beautiful thing for his bodily comfort, and another man to kill and skin another form of life for the same purpose. For all we positively know of Nature's plans, the tree may be of more importance than the creature crouched beneath it or the bird perched in its branches.

"The fact is we don't half understand the thing; and while you might hold one opinion and I the opposite on the subject of human destructiveness, the peculiar fact remains that man with all his cleverness can neither destroy nor create anything. The most he can do is to change what he finds into what to him appears to be a new thing. He can adapt, remodel, and mix up as much as he has a mind to, but that does not prove he has produced what he would call a new thing, although it be something which people never had seen. Take these pointers we were looking at, and for that matter all domesticated animals. Not one is like the original type, but they'd all gradually revert to it if it were not for

man's interference. You've seen poultry shows and horse and cattle shows, and you know that with time and proper selection a bird of one color with a certain number of feathers of another color, and growing in a certain place, can be produced by a skilled breeder. Now if all the pigeons — fantails, pouters, carriers, jacobins, nuns, and so on — were turned loose in a suitable place, what sort of bird would there be a thousand years hence? Just a wild pigeon, the same as the first of the pigeon family ever tamed by man. And if Thompson's pointers, and all other dogs big and little, were treated the same way, the result would be a wild beast of what we would call a wolfish or foxlike type. If all the horses — giants, racers, and ponies — went through that process, there would be left a mean-looking wild thing, more like a jackass than our idea of a horse, and perhaps quite unable to trot, although it might run, pace, and walk fairly well. And what is true of these is equally true of our cattle, sheep, hogs, and cats. The history of our many breeds, if it could be smoothly unrolled, like the tape of a ticker, might show many peculiar marks and changes, but it would finally reveal the original creature, possibly a type which we of to-day would scorn, but which must have been greatly fancied by some ancestor, or he never would have bothered over its taming. We are about as different from the oldest man of science as our animals are from their original stock; for presidents, emperors, kings — Indians, Negroes, Eskimos — black, white, and tan, all have

come from a stock which we'd shoot on sight, or certainly refuse to be introduced to if we happened to meet it to-day."

Joe's eyes twinkled; for when Monroe chose he could put his arguments into peculiar language which the lad found very easy to remember long after any laughter had been forgotten. The peculiar light still lingered, and they met young people who evidently were returning from tennis courts. This for a while bothered Joe; but within a week he had learned the mysteries of the north, and why the further you travelled poleward, the more daylight you got in twenty-four hours during the summer. He thought he'd like to go away up to where the wonderful lights were playing and see the midnight sun, but after Monroe had told of the long winter night, of the sleigh-dogs going mad in the biting blackness, he was sure he needed none of that sort of thing.

THE SEA OF GRASS — SOME UNEX-
PECTED FISHING — NETTING AND
KNOTS — THE LODGE IN THE WIL-
DERNESS

IT was high noon when the Tepee rolled out of Winnipeg, and in a very few minutes she was fairly afloat upon the grassy sea. To the southward, a curving line of trees marked the course of the Assiniboine River, but the open grass spaces of true prairie kept broadening as the miles were covered. At a little place called Raeburn, Joe caught a glimpse of a long water bordered with tall reeds. This, Monroe explained, was an excellent ground for duck, — mostly gadwall, — while snipe and plover haunted the muddy spots. A few years before, he had enjoyed capital shooting, but the fact of the lake being only thirty-five miles from Winnipeg had tended to lessen the present opportunities. Portage la Prairie, on the Assiniboine River, proved to be an attractive-looking town of several thousand people, but the next important place they reached fairly startled Joe. It was Brandon, one hundred and thirty-three miles west of Winnipeg, and the most important grain market in Manitoba, as was suggested by the huge elevators and mills.

"By the way," said Monroe, with a chuckle, "we don't really get here for an hour yet, and that watch of yours must be away out, for while I set mine at Port Arthur, I forgot to tell you about it. You see, we started with 'Eastern' time, which at the Port became 'Central' time, one hour slower, which here changes to 'Mountain' time, one hour slower than 'Central,' which holds good to Donald on the western side of the Rockies. There the 'Pacific' time is an hour slower to the coast. It's a case of 'Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,' and if the earth wasn't round, and we were going very far, we possibly might reach our destination some hours before we started. We'll have a bite after we pull out of here, and then I'll have to do some scribbling, while you might as well write the father."

It was nearly three hours later when, all work done, they again looked out upon a mystic, gray world. Then Joe fully understood what was meant by the "sea of grass," for it was hard to believe that solid earth spread away for leagues in every direction. The view forcibly recalled a windless night when, with his father, he had stretched upon warm sand and watched the gray wrinkling sea, and heard the muffled growling of the sleepy surf as it rolled and bit at the sand as though that were the cause of its discomfort. The measured tuck-tuck, tuck-tuck, from below blurred into the lapping of waves, and he paid no heed to the various stops, beyond idly wishing that they would not occur to interrupt

the rhythmical drifting over soundless billows. He recalled many things Monroe had said of the grassy sea: of dim, uncertain days when the old-time monsters, the bones of which we find, wallowed in open waves and hideous morasses of this very land; of the Badlands, which seemed to bear the marks of rushing floods that once had hurried southward; of the Earth's fierce agonies, which upthrust grim ranges, and seamed and scarred her skin with the marks we term magnificent scenery; of an ocean trapped by risings east and west; of immeasurable convulsions, perhaps caused by collision with some other tortured mass; of that prisoned ocean slowly failing, dying with its monsters, till only huge bones, myriad shells, the alkali in thousands of miles of soil, and that last concentrated drop we call "Salt Lake," and the foul holes sprinkled here and there, remain to tell of that ancient war of forces. Its occurrence suggests the possibility of history extending its curious repetitions, and forever proving that Word which foretells the end of the world. If a certain condition once allowed a disturbance of the universal balance, who are we to point at our instant's quiet, and say, "We know those things used to be, but they cannot occur again"?

"We appear to be shooting over the very edge of things, and it's hard to remember that gray, bilowy-looking stuff isn't salt water," said Monroe, as he refilled his pipe. "By this line, it's about eight hundred and forty miles from Winnipeg, on the eastern, to Calgary, on the western, side of the

plains, but we'll get there all right. There won't be any scenery but plains to-morrow, so I'll set you to work at a hammock just to keep you out of mischief. These plains are wonderful things. Just imagine that old sea, the subsequent slow drying process, and all the new animals and birds in place of the old. Not so long ago this was one huge range of bison and antelope, which were more or less closely attended by those rascals, the gray wolf and the coyote, both ever on the lookout for very young or infirm or wounded animals. There still are plenty of coyotes, but the dangerous grays have been destroyed or driven away. The grand herds of bison had been slaughtered before my day, but we will see plenty of their narrow trails and old-time wallows. If we travelled this way when the real grip of the winter was on, it would be hard to realize that once, far to the north, the climate was something like that of what we call 'The Tropics.'

"But surely that could not be — was it?" asked Joe, for the idea was, at least, rather startling.

"So they say. Science has proved it, and I have seen and heard things which convinced me. The so-called 'fossil ivory' of various parts of the Russian possessions and our own Alaska proves that at some remote period elephant-like creatures inhabited those regions. But we have more than mere tusks to guide us; for innumerable bones, some complete skeletons, and at least one entire animal have been found and preserved. The animal in question was encased in a huge mass of ice and was located

by a half-wild ivory hunter who was looking for tusks along a Russian stream. The huge dead thing was standing erect within the ice as you might stand and peer from a window. Just imagine the sensations of the native when he found himself *vis-à-vis* with His Awfulness, who, while ages crept away, had been quietly standing there, though not necessarily for the express purpose of almost scaring the hair off the native, which rumor says he did. Just think of that elephantine cold storage, the frapped foolishness of just standing there while the slow wheels of change ground out a new world; while nations rose and fell; while the sea stole away from slimy ooze which stiffened to mud and then to land; and all for the purpose of playing 'Boo!' with a stolid semi-savage who probably nearly broke his own neck trying to get out of the game!"

Joe laughed, for in his mind he could see pop-eyed superstition and the awful remnant of the remote facing each other through those straining seconds before the fortunate (?) discoverer's temporarily paralyzed voice and running-gear could again get into action. "But was that true?" he asked.

"Sure! For after the native had run himself to a standstill he remembered the huge tusks and their probable value. I believe that for the remainder of that short summer he sort o' flirted with his cold divinity and that during the following winter he worried about possible talking in his sleep, for Russia is a place where, if one has to talk too much, he'd best be mighty wide awake while the misfit is

on. But while the charmer of his dreams was a bit cold, it lost none of its attractiveness on that account; so the following summer the native ventured back, to find the ice-block upset and more or less melted, and the unknown's head and coveted tusks lying within reach. He chopped out the superb ivory and, forgetting it was green, or whatever describes ivory freshly taken from the animal, he offered it for sale. Therein he may have been one ass, for in the realm of the Czars they are apt to do things to such of the vulgar herd as betray any inclination toward keeping in touch with events. I have no idea what they'd do to a chap who plainly had been in touch with a monarch who had ruled some considerable time before Czars were invented, nor have I the slightest desire to find out. You can guess what might happen to a varlet who'd display a sign, 'New-laid ivory—direct from my private stock,' before the style of Russian petty official who then thumb-screwed the outposts. But whatever else they did to him, they first pried out all his information, one result of which was the securing of what was left of the long-preserved prize.

"That's a true story, and the contents of the animal's stomach was a kind of vegetation which apparently could not be matched anywhere in the world. And, apropos of the prehistoric, I'll tell you another curious thing. A few years ago I took a trip up to Alaska, where a friend told me of a couple of yarns the natives had about two peculiar things. One was a huge, raft-like structure of logs,

which lay upon the top of a mountain, or, rather, near to the top, for masses of stuff had accumulated above the logs. There was no such timber for miles around, and the explanation was that when the world was young there came an awful flood which drowned all four-footed creatures and all people, except one man, his family, and some of the lesser animals which he took upon a raft that he had built. It is, of course, the story of the Deluge, its great peculiarity being the alleged visible remains of the raft and the probability that the climate then was different. It has been claimed by some that the Garden of Eden lay near or at the North Pole, that the subsequent Ice Cap was the everlasting barrier against human return, and that the desire of certain individuals to solve the frozen mystery is a trace of an old instinct which yet prompts a return to the birthplace of the human race. True or false, it need not worry us. Many a fancied superstition has been proved true by advancing knowledge, and if Ararat is later found to be in Alaska, that would confirm rather than discredit the story of the Deluge.

“The second yarn is that in some vaguely located, but large cup-shaped valley there yet remains a single, very large, elephant-like brute with tremendous tusks. There is plenty of food and water in the valley, but owing to surrounding walls, the gigantic prisoner is unable to get out, but lives there all alone, roaming about, and now and then uttering peculiar, echoing cries, which have been heard by one or two

of the oldest native hunters. One man told me that his grandfather had seen the elephant creature once, and more than once had heard it, but that since that man's time there had been no fresh news of the mystery, which was supposed to have finally died of old age. My informant did not appear very anxious to discuss the matter, and either was, or pretended to be, unable to describe the animal. As an experiment, I sketched a mastodon, which the native no sooner saw than he shut up like a clam and at once moved away, nor was I ever able to again get near him. Now it's time to turn in."

When Joe awoke, the Tepee was steadily rolling westward, while the sun was near two hours high. Monroe was busy in the kitchen, from which came a most appetizing aroma. A warning "Hustle yourself!" made the lazy one speed through his ablutions, and in very few minutes he was facing some porridge and bacon and eggs which he more than half suspected would fill a long-felt want. "You'll have to work your passage from now on, and at noon you'll get your first lesson in cooking. Meanwhile you can dry dishes for me," remarked Monroe as they rose from the table. Joe, of course, was keen to do his share of everything, so presently the Tepee was in apple-pie order for the long day.

The miles of visible prairie, while interesting, were less attractive than the previous stage. The grass was shorter and had a grayish look, and it spread afar to meet a curving sky against which not one tree was outlined. Over the low mounds

lay peculiar, foot-broad paths, and in many places these were so evenly distributed as to suggest old marks of the plough. Joe learned that the furrow-like paths really were the old trails of countless bison, which not so many years before had fattened upon the seemingly withered but in fact highly nutritious grass. The appearance of the country gave a hint of the great numbers of shaggy-fronted wild cattle which had browsed the untilled fields, while at intervals a bleached skull told where some stately animal had fallen during that carnival of butchery which has so nearly exterminated one of the most useful and interesting of American wild creatures. At an unimportant station Joe saw a sight which filled him with wonder and regret. For more than one hundred yards extended a pile of weather-beaten skulls and large bones, which had been gathered from the surrounding prairie and piled cord-wood fashion for shipment to some point where they could be converted into fertilizer. This melancholy monument to the dead race gave him a faint idea of the prodigious numbers of the bison, for he learned that this huge pile represented merely the gleanings of a district after the first great shipments had been made, and that much larger piles had existed at other stations. As he looked at the bones, he could not help wishing his trip had been during that glorious period when the mighty herds roved the wilderness, when the earth trembled 'neath the shock of thousands of flying feet, and the air was filled with thunderous challenges

and counter-challenges of lusty bulls, love-mad to prove their prowess before the mocking or appreciative eyes of that everlasting old She, which, in fur or in feather, hair or hide, paint or petticoats, never has lost (and we devoutly hope she never will!) the power to set he-brutes a-scrapping for the priceless privilege of making everlasting fools of themselves.

His musings were interrupted by a brakeman who announced that they would wait about half an hour till number so-and-so should pass. This afforded a fine opportunity for an exercise walk and a closer inspection of the dismal-looking bones. From the pile Monroe took half a dozen horns which appeared no more desirable than so many weather-checked sticks. Long exposure and, perhaps, the hot touch of a small prairie fire had left the outside of these horns in a condition by no means attractive, but Monroe explained how a thorough rasping down and careful polishing would render them beautiful as jet. Before many days had passed, polisher Joe harbored a private wish that the interesting bone-pile had been shipped East at least one year prior to his arrival; but when he finally saw the true beauty of the finished specimens, he was more than satisfied.

As they were taking the horns to the car, a small creature, not unlike the Eastern chipmunk, scuttled through the short grass and dived into the ground, only to pop up again presently and sit stiffly erect above its hidden burrow. As he watched it, Joe noticed others here and there, every one erect

and as motionless as a stick, which it somewhat resembled. "They are gophers," said Monroe, "and don't you ever mention them to a Western man unless you want to hear some odds and ends of blank verse. The gophers are pretty enough and make rather interesting pets, but they dig tunnel-traps for horses' feet and do other mischief which makes the plainsmen detest them. By the way, we can have a little fishing to pass away time."



GOPHER.

About the very last place one would look for water was the bone-dry plain in view, and Joe hardly knew what to think when Monroe emerged from the car, for in his hand was part of a rod bearing reel and line. In a few moments he had formed a slip-knot which he placed over a burrow into which a gopher had just dived; then he backed away about ten yards, unreeling silk as he went. "Now kneel down here beside me," he instructed, "and we'll

presently have a strike." This was nuts to Joe, but as the anxious minutes slowly dragged away, the proposition began to look doubtful. At last a corpulent mother-gopher popped up not five yards from his nose, and she sat there like a wooden toy, only the gleam of her beady eye and the quiver of wee fore paws betraying that she was alive. Then it seemed as though the other gophers had resolved upon united action, for up came one, two, three, a dozen and more, each with the abruptness of a Jack-in-the-box and as wooden in appearance. Finally, and when Joe was satisfied that all the gophers in the country were seated round about, the desired one popped up! Swift and smooth as the stroke of a rattler, the ready hand went back, and the supple, clawing captive was swept yards from his bomb-proof. Joe half saw a twinkle of terrified tails as their owners dived, and heard the fisher's low chuckle as he proceeded to play his prisoner. The gopher twisted like an eel and seemed to claw at about all the grass there was, and more than once strove to get his teeth at the cord; but he was unceremoniously dragged in and seized by the scruff of his neck. "My! but he's mad—just hear him grit those little teeth," said Joe, and when the outraged gopher was suddenly thrust toward his hand, that particular hand went into a trousers-pocket with a speed which might have made a diving gopher envious. "Oh, well, if you really don't want him, you know," grunted Monroe, who first glanced sharply at the station, then tossed the

gopher into the grass. He well knew what an observer would think of the sparing of a pest.

"Oh! he went down the wrong hole," shouted Joe, as the hasty tail disappeared yards from where it belonged; but Monroe laughed and said that he supposed any port would serve in a storm, and if the burrows were not connected underground, the intruder presently would come out and seek his own front door. Then they walked to and fro till the expected train had passed and left the line clear.

"Is this antelope country?" was Joe's first question after they had settled down. "It used to be a famous range," was the answer, "but the track-building and subsequent disturbances drove the bands of pronghorns to the north and south. Once a number of the shy fellows got upon the track and foolishly ran into a long, snowy cutting ahead of a train. Quite a number were killed, for in those days trainmen thought little of running down or shooting anything that fell into their power. That particular outrage is a dark page of the antelope-history hereabouts. It was a crime, but we are wiser now, and few countries have better-enforced game laws than this entire Western region."

Naturally there was a discussion about antelope, and Joe learned many things concerning an animal of which he had read a little but carried an extremely hazy notion. The transcontinental railways doomed thousands of antelope by encouraging the spreading of cattle and sheep men over erstwhile inaccessible ranges and at the same time affording easy routes

for hosts of hunters. At present the Canadian haunts of the pronghorn are limited to most of the province of Assiniboia and portions of Alberta and Saskatchewan. In the United States, it is found more or less abundantly in the two Dakotas, Montana, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and throughout a broad area farther south. A few yet linger in Southern California.

In addition to being the one hollow-horned ruminant known to annually shed its horns, the antelope has other peculiarities. The horn is a sheath formed over a solid, permanent bone core, and as the old sheath loosens and falls away in the late autumn, the soft new horn, marked with many bristles, is more or less developed upon the supporting bone. The new horn is perfected so rapidly, that many experienced hunters have disputed the shedding. The hair of the antelope is coarse and brittle and the skin of no great value. One or two fawns are born in May or early June. They are easily tamed and make very playful if eccentric pets. A fawn but a few days old will lie flat with its head stretched out and make no attempt to escape, even though the finder pick it up bodily. The great enemies of these helpless young creatures are the wolf, the coyote, and the eagle. The mother-doe will fearlessly face even a wolf in behalf of her fawns, and no doubt she often pays a terrible price for her devotion. A peculiar mark of the pronghorn is the conspicuous white rump, and cap-

tive animals, when angry, or frightened, have been seen to make this white hair rise on end in a strange, bristling manner. The white-tail deer and the cotton-tail rabbit appear to do something of the same thing, and the explanation is not easily found. It has been claimed that the rabbit's snowy scut is a signal for the young to follow, but the argument appears weak when it is remembered how close to the ground are the eyes of young rabbits and how limited would be their range of vision in the densely tangled growths of their haunts at that season, also how many white blossoms might be drooping and swaying to confuse signals. It is more probable that in cover the rabbit depends upon its quick ear and its nose, rather than its eyes. In any event, if one watches a drowsy tame rabbit, the big ear may be seen to prick in response to any slight, unusual noise, while the half-closed eyes remain apparently indifferent. Not seldom the sunlight on the antelope's white rump makes a slight flash as from a heliograph, or the signal cast by an Indian with a pocket-mirror. This also has been claimed to be a signal purposely sent by one animal to warn its fellows. In this, again, the facts seem against the theory. In the first place, the antelope would have to know just where the sun was and where to stand in order to have the light right, and these trifles would vary every hour and possibly cause complications to a creature that does not carry a chronometer and is unable to get a comprehensive view of its own posterior. Antelope eyes are quite quick

enough in noticing any movement, dark or light, without bothering over any signal system. The fact of an antelope viewed from the front, side, and rear still presenting more or less of a white-patch effect would, perhaps, also tend to confuse matters except to those few wizards of the inky wand who know the purpose of every hair upon a brute, yet ignore the many sunless days of the antelope's most perilous season, and that an alarmed animal may be pointing in other directions than the one favorable to the signal. It seems more reasonable to suppose the white more of a protection to an animal lying down, for the light is deceptive on the plains and light markings are not readily distinguished among sunlit stones or patches of bleached clay. When thoroughly alarmed a pronghorn can travel at an amazing rate. He wastes no effort in bouncing up and down deer-fashion, but skims along in level speed with a bicycle-like steadiness which bids defiance to most pursuers.

The sight of many old wallows and trails brought back the bison to Joe's mind. He had seen a few in captivity near New York, the quaint-looking reddish brown calves, and also hybrids, the produce of bison and domestic cattle. The pure-blood bulls were savage-looking brutes, and with these in mind, he asked if "buffalo" hunting had not been pretty risky business. Monroe assured him that most likely nine-tenths of the printed yarns had been penned by men who never had seen a bison, to say nothing of having been attacked by one. "But,

mind you, Joe," he explained, "most wild animals of any size and strength are apt to prove ugly customers under certain conditions, and no doubt a bull bison has made it interesting for a man upon more than one occasion. One gave me a scare which I distinctly recall. Some years ago, when the hand camera was a novelty, a few bison were owned near Winnipeg, and one day I drove out with a friend to try for a few good pictures of the beasts on the prairie. A great ditch had been cut near where the bison grazed, and leaving the rig beside the broad, muddy-bottomed excavation, I picked my way across with the camera. A royal old bull was lying down some sixty yards away, and toward him I steadily advanced until almost within snapping range, then I halted. The bull had not moved one hair, but there was that in the sudden white ring around his wild eye which caused me to ponder a bit. There had been no idea of any danger, but somehow the expression of that eye was none too cheering. For about ten seconds the bull and I exchanged glances, then he seemed to draw a long breath and his eye showed more white. He was lying steer-fashion, with just his knees showing under his mane, and clearly he would have to rise one end at a time, as I had seen cattle do hundreds of times. I, however, had something to learn about bison bulls, for suddenly he gave an explosive snort and shot straight up in the air as though driven by powerful springs. He startled me so that I dropped the camera. The rest is a bit blurred. I remember

seeing him land on his feet, that his eye was at least six inches in diameter and mostly red and white, and that his funny little tail stuck straight up like a gun-swab. Then I whirled, and almost set the grass afire with delirious haste. I saw the rig, and not knowing that my friend had driven about forty yards, made straight for it to recross the ditch. I recall a glimpse of some greasy-looking mud, but Niagara Falls wouldn't have turned, let alone stopped, me. I landed in muck knee-deep, and the way I clawed up the other bank was truly a marvel. Then, and not till then, did I look round, to see the bison calmly standing in his tracks for some minutes before he majestically moved away as though disgusted by my lack of repose. And I waited till he was almost hull-down on the horizon before daring to venture back for the camera. It was a noble scare, but never shall I forget the way that huge thing flashed to its feet."

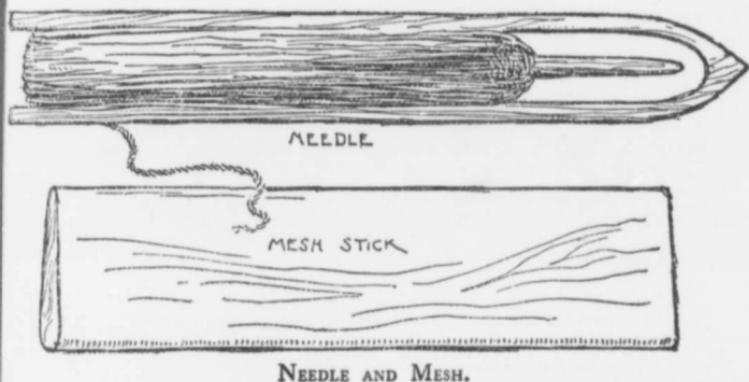
In time Joe wearied of the grassy outlook. At that season the great hosts of geese and duck are on the breeding-grounds farther north. Antelope are seldom seen, while the occasional slouchy-looking coyote hardly is sufficient reward for a long-sustained lookout. So it was rather a relief when Monroe laid down his pen, opened a locker, and produced a big ball of white seine twine, a netting-needle, and a mesh-stick. The needle was a foot-long, narrow affair, made from tough second-growth hickory, thin and springy, and glassy-smooth from sandpapering and scraping with a bit of glass. The

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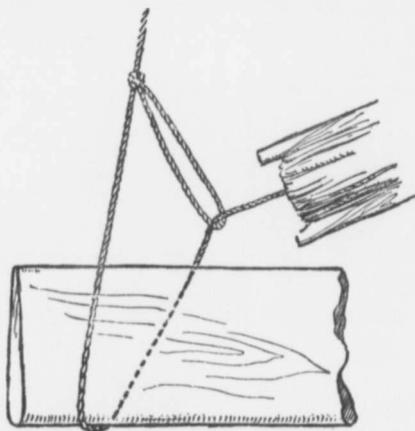
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mesh-stick was smooth and strong, tapering from back to blunt edge like a knife-blade, all angles being rounded off. Its proper width depends upon what size of mesh is desired, the length of the mesh being twice the circumference of the stick. Upon the needle is placed as much twine as will easily pass through the meshes, care being taken not to make the needle too bulky, as that would hamper



speed. A foot or so of twine is unwound from the needle, and the free end made fast to some convenient hook or nail in window-case or wall. Next, a loop the size of the mesh-stick is made in the twine, the loop hanging to the right ready for the needle to make the first mesh. The netter holds the needle in his right hand, the mesh-stick in his left, and just below the loop. The twine is brought down over the mesh-stick and the needle passed around under the stick and up through the loop,

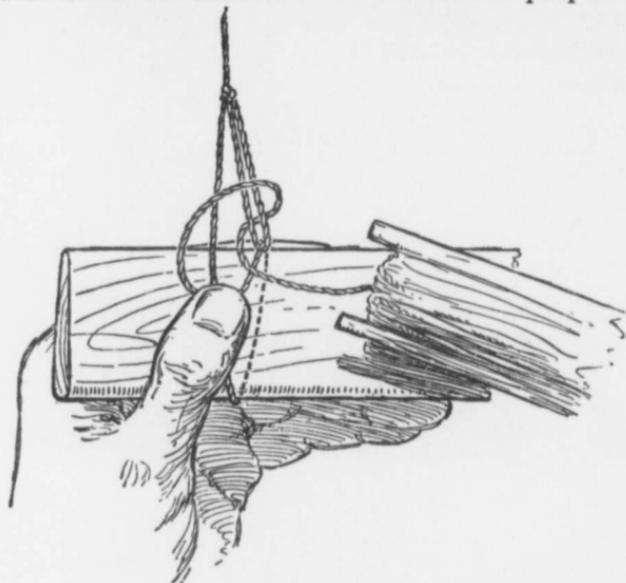
then drawn down till the bottom of the loop touches the upper edge of the mesh-stick. The left thumb then presses the twine against the stick to hold the loop as it is, until the first knot is made. For this the twine is thrown over the thumb and up across the loop, then the needle is passed down under the



THE FIRST LOOP.

loop, then up between the loop and the standing part, and drawn downward to the right, the knot closing just above the bottom of the loop. This is important, because a knot tied just below instead of just above the bottom of the loop, will slip like an ordinary slip-knot. The first knot being drawn snug as possible, the stick is withdrawn from the mesh, and the operation repeated, with the difference that the needle is this time passed through the first mesh

instead of the original loop, which is of no further consequence. Mesh after mesh is added, the needle always being passed through the last one made, until there are sufficient for the desired purpose.

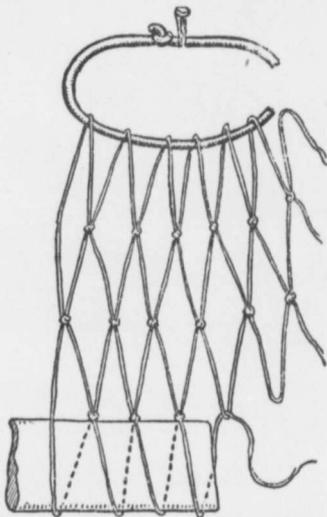


THE FIRST KNOT.

If this be a hammock, the first meshes will form the end row of the completed article, which demands a first row of meshes twice as long as the hammock is to be wide; *i.e.* an eight-foot row of single stretched meshes will mean a hammock four feet wide.

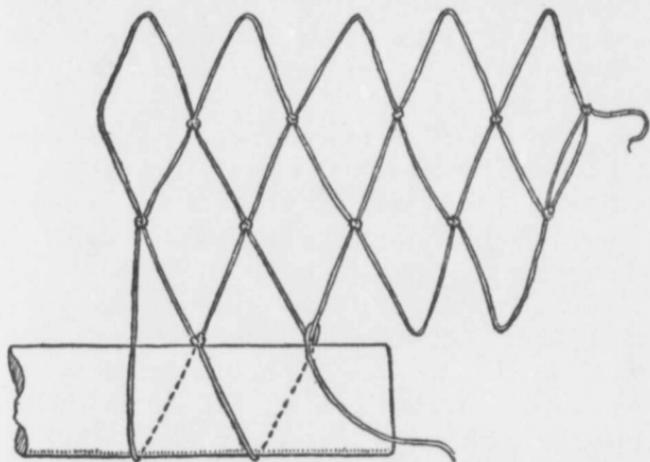
The row being completed, remove from the hook and untie the original loop, which will leave a row

of meshes of exactly even size. Lay this upon a table and spread the meshes evenly, and they will show two rows with the needle attached to the right-hand mesh of the lower row. Run a two-foot length of twine through each of the upper meshes and knot the ends; then hang the loop of



twine upon the hook, and the net is ready for the third row of meshes. A stair-rod passed through the meshes and hung by a cord made fast at each end is better than the loop of twine, and a still better device is a hoop of heavy wire with the ends bent, so they can be readily hooked together or separated. With the two rows of meshes hanging

so that the needle is at the left side, the work is resumed until a complete third row has been added. As the meshes accumulate on the stick, those at the left may be slipped off and out of the way, a few being retained to insure a firm, square pull upon the mesh-stick. When the row is completed, turn the work so as to bring the needle again



to the left, and repeat the netting and turning until the last row is done. This leaves the body of the hammock ready for the guys, which must be added to each end. The guys are very long meshes, the length being secured by winding the twine the same number of times around the mesh-stick before making the next knot. After the last knot, the twine is cut, and then made fast to the free end of the first mesh, and the guys added to that end

of the hammock. The proper knot for making fast ends of twine is the becket hitch, better known as the weaver's knot. The best way to finish a hammock for the end ropes by which it is hung is to bind or "serve" the guys, which is done as follows: Place all the guys of one end in the hook and arrange those of the other end evenly together. Pass a heavy cord through the loop of all the guys, and pull till all are evenly stretched to their full length. Wind the cord snugly around the guys for six inches each way from the centre turn. Then bring the wound parts together and bind them for a few inches, thus forming an "eye" through which the end rope is passed. The addition of a thimble, a metal ring with curved edges, materially adds to the appearance and wearing quality of the "eye." A canvas hammock is a much easier but less interesting task. The body should be a piece of strong duck six feet six inches long and as wide as can be purchased. A wide hem at each end should be strongly stitched, and have eyelet-holes worked in it about three inches apart. To make the guys, pass an end of the twine through the first eyelet and make fast the end to the body part by a bowline knot near the eyelet. Then pass the twine through the next eyelet, and draw till a four-foot loop of twine remains between the two eyelets. Make another bowline, then another loop of exactly the length of the first, and repeat to the last hole, where the twine is made fast, and the free end cut close. A little more trouble is well repaid by mak-

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ing the end hems wide, and running a second seam close to the eyelets. The space between the two seams forms a case for a length of smooth hickory or cane, which, if the ends of the cases are strongly sewed up after the stick is in place, will



SIMPLE KNOT.

serve to keep the hammock spread. If the ends of the case be not secured, the stick will protrude and fail to spread the hammock when desired.



SLIP KNOT.

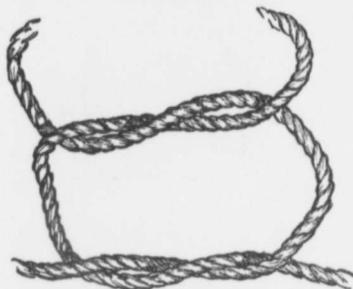
The netting greatly interested Joe, and while he at first was a bit awkward, he soon mastered the simple movements and presently completed his fifth row of properly made meshes. Monroe watched with evident appreciation, and at last said: "You're doing famously, and now



SINGLE-LOOP KNOT.

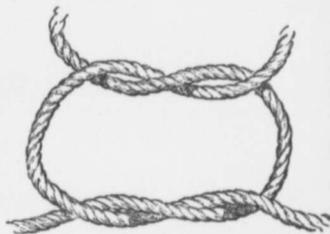
that you have mastered the netting, you might as well learn a few knots, for a little knowledge in that direction often proves most useful. See here," he continued, as he picked up a length of twine; "this is a 'simple knot,' as you know, and this, a 'slip

knot,' made by passing an end through the 'simple knot'; this other is a 'single-loop knot,' made like a 'single knot' except that the free end is not drawn entirely through the loop. What most people term a 'hard knot' is known to sailormen as a 'granny,' and they thoroughly despise it as the

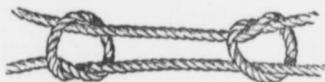


GRANNY KNOT.

work of a landlubber. Instead, they use the square or reef knot, which cannot slip like the 'granny.' The fisherman's knot is useful for tying lines and other things, and looks neat if the ends are cut off after the knots are drawn together. Now, pass me that broom, and I'll show you a few more."



SQUARE (REEF) KNOT.



FISHERMAN'S KNOT.

In turn he made the "timber hitch," a most useful knot when there is any towing or dragging to be done; the "bowline shank," the chief purpose of which is to shorten too long a line; the "clove hitch," an

easy and safe way of securing a boat; the "hammock hitch," the best for the purpose indicated by its name; the "magnus hitch"; the "Blackwall hitch," the simplest method of making fast the end of a rope to the hook of a tackle; the "running bowline," a bowline formed after the rope end has been



TIMBER HITCH.

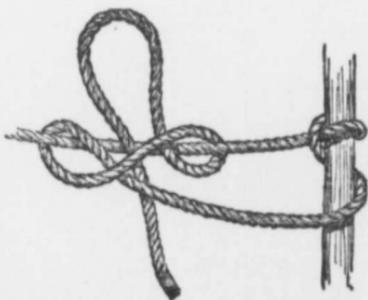


A SHANK.

passed round its standing part; the "bowline on a bight"; and the useful "two half hitches." Because he well knew Joe never would remember the knots unless he tied and tested each

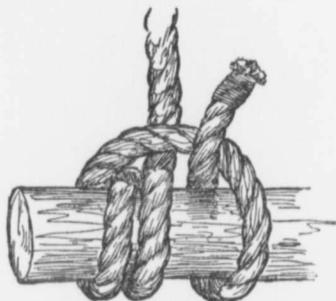


CLOVE HITCH.



HAMMOCK HITCH.

one over and over again, he passed him the broom and made him tie according to rapidly drawn dia-



MAGNUS HITCH.



BLACKWALL HITCH.

grams. The only difficulty about knots is the re-



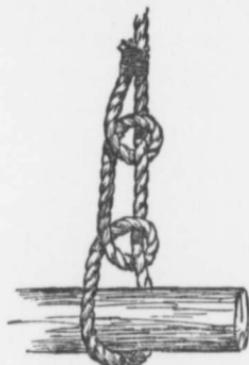
BOWLINE ON BIGHT.



BOWLINE.

membering how to make them, and Joe promptly understood the value of doing a thing one's self

instead of merely watching another's work. The only ones that bothered him were the "bowline knot" and the "bowline on a bight," and these Monroe illustrated by both drawing and tying according to these directions. To make the "bowline knot": Take the end of the rope in the right hand and the standing part in the left hand. Lay the end over the standing part, and turn the left wrist so that



TWO HALF HITCHES.



COMMON BEND.

the standing part forms a loop; pass the end through the loop, then behind the standing part above the loop, then down through the loop. For the "bowline on a bight": Double the rope and take the doubled end in the right hand, the standing part in the left hand. Lay the end over the standing part, and by turning the left wrist form a loop having the end inside. Next pull up enough of the end to dip under the bight, bringing the end toward the right and dipping it under the bight,

then passing it up to the left over the loop and hauling taut.

The promised lesson in cooking was more interesting than had been expected. Monroe was a great believer in the virtue of the too-often despised onion, and of that root of odorous evil and the huge Manitoba potatoes he had a goodly store. After peeling and washing the potatoes, he cut them into even-sized pieces to insure equally even boiling. Meanwhile the pot was boiling, and after a spoonful of salt had been added, in went the potatoes. Had they been of Eastern growth, he would have taken care they all were about of even size, because big and little potatoes mixed together are apt to mean some cooked to rags before the others are more than half done. He always insisted upon boiling water with salt added before the tubers were put in; and whatever the merit of the process, the result was most satisfactory. For the onions, he half filled the fry-pan with water to which, as it boiled, he added salt, pepper, and a good-sized lump of butter, then the peeled and washed onions, cut across into moderately thin slices. When they were nearly cooked, he added a heaping tablespoonful of flour, which was carefully shaken over the mess, which he closely watched, stirring now and then to guard against the slightest burning, which surely would have spoiled it. When done, the onions were put into a tin dish, and the fry-pan made ready for the small steak. This was slightly rubbed with salt, peppered, and placed in the hot pan. After a few quick turns,

the meat began to look something like the steaks Joe had previously seen, and to smell most enticing.

"Now the tea," said Monroe, as he poured sufficient boiling water from the kettle into the teapot. "My rule for good tea is, first boiling water, then one teaspoonful of dry tea for each man, and one extra for the pot, and four minutes to draw it right." Then the steak was removed to a tin plate, a little water was added to the fry-pan, and the resultant gravy poured over the steak. In the meantime the thoroughly boiled potatoes had been drained and left to further dry and become floury in the hot pot. Five minutes later Monroe grinned across the table, and said: "Joe, the secrets of good cooking are to have plenty of fire, good materials, and clean utensils, the last item being the one you'll have something to do with presently. Always thoroughly clean everything as soon as the meal is over. Have plenty of hot water and a noble scorn of injuring your health by overexertion in the rubbing line. You may think me a bit of a crank in regard to the little things about cooking, but it's exactly the little things which make or mar the result. I've seen women who thought they were housekeepers who never had learned how to boil a spud," he concluded as he speared a snowy chunk of what looked like glorified popcorn.

"More— little more of everything," grunted Joe. "You may be a crank, but if ever they elect any presidents hereabouts, you'll get my vote and influence; that is, if you'll let me get near the kitchen,

or wherever you'll be doing your private cooking — I mean what you intend to eat yourself, not the things the public will have to chew on." Monroe laughed, and said: "You remind me of a certain fellow who, in the old days, used to dine out more times than he did at his boarding-house. Until the dessert arrived he was as meek as a sheep, but so soon as he was well fed, he would begin to cut up and turn a joke at anybody's expense, not even excepting the host. He explained that he never took any chances till he had got the dinner; after that he could afford to be as saucy as seemed reasonable, because while one and all were welcome to get back at him, the lot combined couldn't get back the grub."

And at last came the long-expected Calgary and the end of the Rolling Tepee's grand trip of two thousand two hundred and odd miles from her starting-point. Here the car was to be side-tracked until further orders, and they decided to live in her for one day more before hitting the trail to the Lodge. The bustling town greatly interested Joe. It was large, well built, and beautifully situated above the Bow, while westward, like huge, soft-angled terraces, rose the lovely foothills, half wood, half prairie, and rivalling the famous Blue Grass Belt of Kentucky as pasturage for horses of blood, bone, and speed. To Joe it seemed that two-thirds of the men were sportsmen who had more or less to do with the horse. If Winnipeg had appeared British, this section well might have been a chunk of the Little Red Island itself. Never had he seen so many pairs

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of riding-breeches, boots, and spurs. Half the wearers at first glance appeared rough fellows, but after half a dozen of them had cheerily greeted and chatted with Monroe, their voices and the topics discussed proved them both highly educated and refined. As Joe scanned one after another he noticed two things which to his mind did not fit: the men were strong, hardy-looking chaps, with the easiest of nonchalant airs, yet nearly every mother's son of them wore his hair parted exactly in the centre. Joe had seen more or less of this fashion in Gotham, where somehow he had got the notion that it was effeminate, — a trifle too ladylike for Fifth Avenue, to say nothing of the Wild and Woolly West, — yet here were men a-plenty who, even to his inexperienced eyes, looked able to take mighty good care of themselves and a few others, wearing their hair girl-fashion. When, later, he mentioned this to Monroe, that worthy grunted: "Umph! I suppose it enables them to balance better on a horse! They're seldom off one for an hour of daylight. Now, see here, son," he continued, as he removed his hat, "don't you get too critical or you may hurt my sensitive feelings." Joe burst out laughing, for the silvery thatch was parted as squarely in the centre as any, and Joe wondered why he never had noticed it before. "It's a peculiar thing," remarked Monroe, "but I have yet to see a wild man who parts his hair at all who does not follow this fashion. Many of the more refined monkeys also do it," he added, with a grin, "and some of the greatest men

ever known have done the same. Remember, Joseph, you can't measure a man by the way he parts his hair any better than you can tell how a coon can fight by the rings round his tail. Now, for instance, here comes a chap who doesn't appear to be any great shakes, eh?"

Joe had about all he could do to smother his laughter, for he thought he never had beheld so comical a figure as the rather small man approaching. His slightly bowed, spidery legs were incased in skin-tight black trousers which vanished into knee-boots, to the heels of which were fastened gleaming spurs. The upper half of the figure seemed to have been melted and poured into a scarlet tunic, in comparison with which an ordinary corset would have seemed like a smoking-jacket. There was not a wrinkle nor a speck of dust upon the figure from boot-soles to collar, and it seemed that it would be utterly impossible for the man to bend much, to say nothing of sitting down. Only the face commanded respect—that was deeply tanned, and upon one cheek was a great scar. The stern expression contrasted absurdly with what Joe called "a little dinky mustache," the mousy ends of which were waxed stiffly upright. But the headgear was worst of all. It looked like an old-fashioned paper collar-box glued to one side of the head, and its pendant strap seemed to touch the face precisely where it couldn't aid in holding the collar-box in place. The man walked with a peculiar, rather defiant swing, which, with the waspish waist, apparently abnormal shoul-

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ders, and pouter-pigeon chest, formed a comical picture to foreign eyes. Something in the scarred face further puzzled Joe. With the exception of the tan and scar, it appeared almost girlish and, but for the eyes, perhaps weak. These, however, were unmistakably masculine, and they seemed to stare straight ahead with a far-away look which few worldly-wise men would care to divert from their seeming quest—if the intent were hostile.

“That’s the worst ever I saw! What do they use it for? It suggests a hand-organ!” spluttered Joe, after the figure had swaggered past. Monroe pulled up and faced about. “Just watch a moment, that’s his horse yonder,” he said, “and he’s going out to the barracks, where there are a lot more as like him as peas.” The way the small man swung himself upon the big horse was a marvel, and as the pair seemed to fly through the street, Joe instantly realized that never had he beheld more perfect riding. “Now, Joe, this is for your information and future guidance. That easy-looking chap really is one of the hardest propositions in all the Northwest. He carries the reputation of being able to outride, outshoot, outspar, outfight, and outdance any man in the country. He has ridden alone all over this country, and if there is a bit of desperate winter work, he is the man for the job. In the Breed troubles he was a host in himself, and no five Indians on the Reservation would dare to cross him, let alone provoke him to a serious mix-up. Yet he’s not only a gentleman, but an extremely

modest and quiet one, till a rumpus of some other's raising begins to concern him ; then he's the best man in the country to avoid. He doesn't seem to know what fear is : he has been wounded several times, lost, partly frozen, and endured about every hardship the country can offer, yet if there were trouble to-morrow, he'd quietly trot into the thick of it as coolly as you saw him mount that horse. These men, our own plainsmen and troopers who have been trained West, and the Australians, are the greatest and most resourceful fighters in the world. They are inured to every hardship, they have a wonderful knowledge of men, horses, and wild animals, and, best of all, they have brains, in most cases backed by education. As on our side, the rovers and wild ones of the best blood we boast drift into the service, and in that lies their superiority over the famous Cossacks, who unquestionably are good, but inferior in intelligence, which is the result of less favorable conditions. In my opinion, these men and our own could round up Cossacks as easily, if not more easily, than they round up Indians, while in a hand-to-hand fight the odds would be heavily against the Europeans."

Joe was considerably impressed, and the more he saw of the Northwest Mounted Police, the greater grew his respect for those hardy, fearless fellows, who, in spite of their dress, so ably guard the welfare of their land. Before the walk ended a spring-wagon had been ordered for the trip to the Lodge, and soon after lunch the Tepee was stripped, the rig loaded, and the long drive begun. To Joe this was

a delightful experience. The trail was smooth and soundless, and wound over low hills, across grassy opens, and through big growths of better-looking timber than had been seen near Winnipeg. Once they had to ford the hurrying Bow, at the spot, a broad, very shallow stream. Joe put his hand into the greenish looking, rapid water, and was startled by its coldness. As the team reëntered the brush, his quick eye noticed something which gave him no slight shock. Backed into the brush was a skew-bald pony, and upon its back an Indian who sat as motionless and seemingly as stiff as the gophers had sat above their burrows. Joe hardly knew what to make of the statuesque Buck, or, for that matter, of the wild-looking pony. Both were as motionless as though cast in bronze, and they recalled a vision of a day when he had been badly fooled by a British Life Guardsman who had sat like a statue upon a noble but apparently stuffed horse at the entrance to Madison Square Garden.

Wild steed and wild rider made a noble picture under their tent of leaves. Where the golden light splashed against gaudy color and gleaming bead, it seemed like jets of colored flame; but the brightest spark of all was in the wonderful Aboriginal eyes which glowed with falcon-like keenness from the lean, superbly chiselled face, which would have seemed of African blackness were it not for an indescribable warm, winey tinge, which gave it a suggestion of color. Either side the face hung two long ropes of jet-black, glossy hair, ornamented with odds

and ends of beads and bright color, and above, the war-eagle feather, poised as only a savage can do it. The classic beauty of the face was marred by a few touches of paint, as was the lean but strongly modelled neck, by loops of bear-claws and other trinkets. The grand chest and leanly powerful middle-piece bore marks which Joe did not understand, but the leggins and small moccasins were lavishly ornamented and very beautiful. Across the thighs rested a repeating rifle, the butt notched, also ornamented with what looked like lines of brass-headed tacks. As the wagon passed, the Buck's eyes gleamed brighter, and for an instant the slightly parted lips revealed a flash of snow-white teeth. "How!" he grunted, and the tall feather moved about an inch. "How!" replied Monroe and the driver, whereupon Joe, anxious to do the proper, made quite a bow and said "Howdy!" For many a moon after, he could see the beautiful sparkle which for an instant flickered in those falcon eyes and the ghosts of wrinkles which like magic showed and vanished at the eyelids. And when yards beyond the Buck he could feel Monroe's body quivering as though its owner was in deadly fear of a following bullet, or something.

"He's a 'Sarcee,' I think, an' a wild-lookin' thief, drat 'im!" remarked the taciturn driver, as he twisted round in his seat. "See the cuss! Yonder he goes like a peeler was after 'im! Them notches on his gun stand fur dead Stonies, I reckon, an' I wish his gang an' the Stonies ud massacre each other and be done with it, for a black-lookin',

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thievin' lot!" Monroe explained that the "Sarcees" were a branch of the famous Blackfeet nation, that they had a big reservation thereabouts, and an equally broad aversion to the Stonies, who lived in the mountains ahead. "All hands keep pretty quiet just at present," he added, "but I believe these fellows claim that the Stonies sneak down and steal ponies. I fancy the gates to the Happy Hunting-grounds would have to be swung pretty wide if two good-sized parties got together in a place where they thought the Police would not hear them. The Stonies are good enough hunters, but the chances are these fellows would round them up in anything like an important set-to. But both fear the Police, and if an odd bunch of hair is lifted now and then, we don't hear very much about it. No Indian hereabouts would touch a white unless under most extraordinary circumstances. The wild brethren are well treated, and they know it, and so long as their harmless fun is not interfered with, they are fairly content to hunt and fish and trap and follow their natural bent. It is better so, for an Indian war is a nasty thing, especially to outlying settlements, which could muster but few fighting men who are any good."

For a long time Joe sat quietly observant, but thrilling with keen delight, for was he not away in the wilderness, as it were cheek by jowl with gorgeous savages who had not yet lost their picturesque wild garb, nor even that noble art—the lifting of bunches of hair? "Here we are!" exclaimed

Monroe at last. "Will the gentleman from Gotham graciously condescend to make himself at home, for behold! 'tis the Lodge of my Brother, where we will make much good medicine, if things go well."

All Joe could see at the moment was a small opening among the trees, in the centre of which stood a medium-sized, very well-constructed log-cabin. But through the trees beyond he could see the glitter of swift water and hear the low thrumming of the Bow as it played its endless song. In an instant he knew that this was an ideal retreat, and the sparkle in his eye was good to see as he helped unload the wagon. The driver laughed at the idea of resting, the more because he well knew where he would spend an hour on the home trail. So in very brief time he was on the back track, leaving the squatters to attend to their own affairs.

"It's no bad shack," said Monroe, as he unlocked and flung open the door. In a moment a big window was unbarred and the shack flooded with light. "Yonder's the Bow and our trout-preserve, you see," he continued, but Joe merely glanced through the window, for the interior was the greatest surprise. The floor was clean and smooth enough for a town house. The big cook-stove and outfit hanging behind it would have suited any tidy kitchen. The two roomy bunks had first-class mattresses, pillows, and huge gray blankets. There was a work-table at the window, a much-scoured dining-table in the centre of the

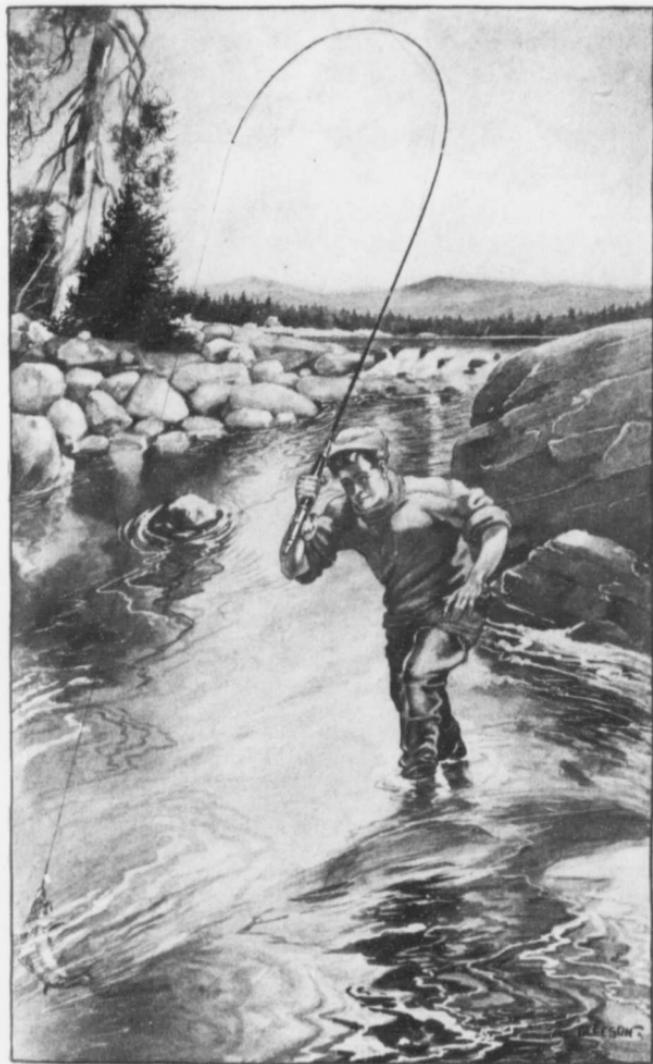
room, and about it four comfortable chairs. A big trunk was in a corner, while most of one end wall was cupboards and lockers, all strongly built, but unlocked. Two big shelves held many books, there were racks formed of antlers, and hanging all about the walls were beautiful drawings; and not a few specimens stuffed to represent the dead birds. In another corner were a few steel traps. In fine, turn where you would, there was something of sport.

"Now, let's have a look at the cellar. I sent back the key and told Blank to send out stuff a week ago," said Monroe, as he led the way to the back of the house where stood a small log-hut domed over with earth and stones. "Aha! he's been here!" he continued, as he lifted a stone and disclosed a key. "Now, this is a great place, but don't try to come in, for there's mighty little room, and the water's pretty deep if you happen to slip off a stone." Joe saw a greenish-looking cave with water rippling among stones at the bottom, and a couple of shelves laden with canned goods, also things hanging which suggested hams, bacon, and dried meat. He learned that the place was almost as cold but not any damper than an ordinary cellar, and when he was handed a cup of the water it proved ice-cold and explained the great value of the small spring-house. "Everything's all right; now we'll stow the stuff and make ourselves presentable. Nobody ever thinks of meddling in this blessed country. If anybody was lost or hungry, he'd just

break in, help himself, clean up, leave a note, and go on about his business. No Indian would meddle, for he knows there's no fire-water here when I'm away, and besides I'm solid with the chiefs."

Monroe's long experience had taught the value of having everything for the Lodge useful and not one article unworthy of the space it occupied. Every receptacle was opened and its purpose explained, and before long Joe felt he had a mental chart of this treasure-house. "Use anything you choose, but see that you put it back in proper condition. Eternal cleanliness is the price of board. Good air, good food, good water, good exercise, and good conduct are the physicians who practise hereabouts, and all are ready whenever you feel you need 'em. Now get on your waders, and we'll kill a couple of trout for supper."

Following instructions, Joe drew on an extra pair of heavy woollen socks and over them the waders. In less than a minute his feet felt uncomfortably warm, but he had yet to learn the chilling power of a stream like the Bow, the gray-green flood of which had known the touch of everlasting ice not many miles away. The last trace of civilization was at the end of the little path at the waterside where a sort of rustic chair hinted of long, dreamy vigils when the owner was alone. The opposite bank and all surroundings were wild; even the cabin could not be seen from the river unless one knew exactly where to look; and as they stepped into the shallow



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water, Joe thrilled with the joy of the grand, sinless wilderness. Soon they were slowly wading downstream, sending the flies to every promising spot ahead, and before long Joe realized that his hazy idea that trout almost would fight for flies in such water was erroneous. Not until about half a mile had been covered did the veteran get a strike. Then it seemed as though a school of one-pounders had been located, for soon Joe hooked a lively fighter which, aided by the current, gave minutes of exciting play. Two more good fish sufficed for immediate need, then Monroe laid his rod upon a rock, and proceeded to refill his pipe. Joe silently laid his rod beside the other, heedless of the fact that the flies and a few yards of silk were trailing in the current. Monroe peered comically over his hands which were shielding the lighted match: "Do you — puff — want to — puff, puff — lose — puff — that tackle? It's a — puff — poor — Zip!" The rod suddenly twitched violently and started for the water. Joe made a wild grab at it; his nervous fingers fumbled the task, but managed to close on the line; there was a savage jerk and a length of slack silk trailed disconsolately. Luckily the fish got away with only the fly. "He was a whale," sighed poor Joe, for the instant's feel of the lost prize had told much. Never again were his flies allowed to trail that way.

As they prepared to leave the water, Monroe's hawk-eyes noticed a trifling something above a dim path that led into the brush upon the opposite bank.

It was only two green switches bent and hooked together, but a few turned leaves showed the difference of color which had drawn his attention. "Might be a trap — never saw such sign," he muttered as he cautiously scanned the water near the bank and the few visible yards of the trail. "Well — I'll be blessed! Just look at this young Nabob, will you!" he exclaimed, and Joe saw a most interesting thing. Right above the trail, suspended from a springy branch, was the style of cradle in which the juvenile Blackfeet do their rocking. It looked something like an immense slipper or a highly ornamented mammoth match-pocket with a length of carved board for a back. In it and upright, snugly yet securely wrapped to his fat brown jowls, was a beady-eyed Brave whose wee pigeon-toes never had trod the war or any other trail. The wild gleam in his black, unwinking peepers was a curious mixture of fear and defiance; his little nostrils flared like two black funnels, his toothless mouth was partly open, but not the quiver of a muscle betrayed his doubtless terrified life. Thoughtlessly Joe attempted to poke his fat chin with a finger, whereat his eyes popped out farther and glared wilder; he made a queer little sound like the spit of a very young kitten, and his gums ground together in what looked suspiciously like an attempt to bite. He was quivering all over, but the blood of his grand old race was game and he made never a sound. "For your life don't touch him! Let's get out of here," whispered Monroe,

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and in a moment the small savage again was chief of his leafy realm.

"I never noticed that trail before; I suppose it's one of their secret crossings," said Monroe as they waded toward their side. "The squaw's either downstream or this side; for she wouldn't leave him for very long, and we'd have seen her had she moved upstream. The twigs prove she didn't go up the path, for with that to guide her she wouldn't need them, and an Indian never takes any unnecessary trouble about anything. I suspect she crossed to fetch a pack of some sort and left the wee chap at the handiest place. She would not wade a step more than was absolutely necessary, and most likely she'll have all she can stagger under without his Chieffets, to say nothing of the possibility of her slipping and ducking him and his elegant cradle, the style of which proclaims him no end of a young swell. Never meddle in any way with Indian goods, especially parcels like that. Indians, old or young, unless well acquainted with whites, don't understand our little ways, particularly with children. You almost scared the eyes out of that poor little wretch, and if he had happened to squeal and the squaw had heard him, we might have found it difficult to explain that we meant no harm. As it is, she probably will be able to tell he has been scared, and those wild eyes of hers will read every leaf and inch of moss till she gets a pretty shrewd idea of what happened. She of course is perfectly aware that I live in the Lodge and have returned, and most

likely she knows a deal more than you imagine about you, too. They are queer people, and in some mysterious way any important news travels among them with amazing speed. Besides, that Buck saw us come in, and I'd bet a dollar against a doughnut his people already have an amazingly accurate description of you and a private name for you as well."



MINK.

THE ART TO FILL AND THE ART TO KILL—A BIT ABOUT BANFF

THE long, wholesome days at the Lodge slipped away with amazing smoothness, for each had its fair proportion of work and play. Monroe, of course, had his writing to do, but he so thoroughly understood his subjects and wrote so cleanly and rapidly that the allotted daily task of one thousand words seldom occupied more than a couple of hours. He did not believe in rewriting, or in any way fussing with copy. He did his thinking in advance, made a few notes, and shortly after noon he would go to the writing-table, and within five minutes the pen would be flying. He cared nothing about early morning work, so often recommended by famous writers, because he knew he could do better hours later—best of all, near midnight. Had it not been for Joe, most of the work would have been done by artificial light, the lovely days being devoted to prowling, lounging, and thinking. As it was, there had to be some sort of routine, so they agreed upon early rising, breakfast, and fishing, or whatever in the way of fun most appealed. Then a bite, then work in earnest, dinner, and what Joe most loved,—long chats beside the Bow or in the Lodge. The only thing which

demanded quiet was the writing, and then Joe read, or worked at his netting, or whatever he fancied.

His first important lesson was the judicious use of the axe, and he promptly learned how to scout for small dead timber and reduce that game to reasonable lengths which were stored behind the stove. He learned the value of a steady fire and how to get the best results from the least wood; how to sweep and dust and how blithely the swift Bow would bear away scraps. At each succeeding meal he learned how to make a good job of some simple dish, for the few things Monroe did in this line were well done. After the first lesson of the boiled potatoes and the tea had been proved by his own results, he was taken a bit farther. Fried pork and bacon were simple matters, the most important thing about them being thorough cooking. Fried potatoes were done in this way: First boiled till nearly done, then drained and allowed to grow cold; then sliced moderately thick and fried in a little very hot lard. The slices came out a beautiful brown which made Joe's mouth water. He evinced a weakness for what Monroe did not greatly fancy, — fried onions. For these a little lard was melted in the fry-pan and sufficient thinly sliced onions dropped in and closely watched and stirred about with a fork till they separated into stringy lengths; then a little pepper and salt were added, and the onions turned again and again until well browned. Once, when the cold potatoes proved to be too well done for slicing, they were mashed smooth, pressed into flat cakes,

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and fried both sides, and were first-rate. Joe greatly fancied the fried trout, as well he might, considering they were taken direct from stream to pan. They were cleaned, washed, and dried in a cloth, then rolled lightly in flour. A bit of lard and a bit of butter were melted together in the pan, and when the grease was piping hot, the trout were put in and quickly fried to a light brown. Then they were taken from the pan and folded for a moment in a hot towel, which removed all grease. Then goodly portions of them, without any seasoning, swiftly were passed into Joe's department of the interior, where they did most satisfactory work. Any small fish can be done the same way.

The occasional bean soup was prepared as follows: A pint of beans was put to soak over night in warm water. Next morning more water was added along with a few ounces of salt pork. The closely covered pot was then allowed to boil slowly for about three hours, when a little celery salt and pepper were added, and the soup kept simmering for about half an hour, then poured through the strainer and served.

Monroe had a small book in which he had jotted down various camp recipes which he had proved good. One was for a rabbit stew, for which the rabbit was skinned, dressed, washed, quartered, and put to soak for an hour in cold salt water to draw the blood. Then it was put in a saucepan, covered with cold water, a pinch of salt added, and stewed till tender. Then half a dozen thinly sliced onions and

a little pepper were added, and the stewing continued till the onions were done. The breasts of wild ducks and the quartered breasts of young wild geese are as good if not better than rabbit. A first-rate venison soup is made, from a couple of pounds of venison and half a pound of salt pork cut up into small pieces. To these add three chopped onions and some celery salt, and cover the whole with water, cover the pot closely, and stew slowly for one hour. Add one quart of boiling water, pepper to suit, and boil two hours longer; salt and strain. Stir in about a tablespoonful of Worcestershire sauce. Rabbit makes as good soup as venison and duck, or goose breasts as good as either. If one wants the bother of clean picking wild fowl (they are much quicker skinned), the quartered body makes a richer soup. A good hoe-cake is made by mixing corn meal with enough warm water to make a stiff dough, which should be patted into round cakes about an inch thick. The best thing for baking them is an old-fashioned heavy fry-pan, which should be well greased, then placed on a bed of coals raked from the fire. Cover the pan with an old tin plate, over which draw more coals. Only practice can tell when the cakes are done, as fires are bound to vary. Even a famous king once got a sound jawing for making a trifling error along this line. To properly poach an egg, have the fry-pan half full of boiling water, to which add a dash of vinegar. Carefully break the egg into a saucer and as carefully slip the egg from the saucer into the water. When done to suit, which its

appearance will tell, lift with the saucer and place upon a slice of toast, and pepper and salt to taste. A very fair biscuit can be made as follows: To one quart of "prepared flour" in a pan add enough water to form a stiff dough; add the water slowly while stirring with a spoon, which will prevent mistakes. Sprinkle part of the camp-table, or whatever smooth board is available, with flour, and upon this turn out the dough. The flour is to prevent the dough sticking. A long, clean bottle, or tin can well rubbed with flour, makes a first-rate roller. Roll the dough to about half an inch thick, and with a cup dipped in flour cut the biscuits by working round the edge of the dough. Dip the cup in flour for every cut, or a biscuit will stick and cause trouble. Put enough lard in the fry-pan to just cover the bottom, and when hot add the biscuits, which must be turned till each side is well browned. When properly cooked, they are by no means bad.

Rightly or wrongly, Monroe believed that when a man was thoroughly tired by wading the stream or tramping after game, he was most liable to take cold, and that a good feed of onions was both a safeguard and an encourager of sound sleep. More than one physician had scoffed at his notion, but that did not necessarily disprove it. At one time and another he had been closely associated with the French-Canadian wild-fowlers and muskrat-trappers—marsh men who were exposed to all sorts of weather and who seldom were dry from the knees down. Two very common evils, colds

and corns, seldom trouble these hardy fellows, who delight in a stew of muskrat and onions, which, especially when the men are exhausted, is preferred above all other fare. An old-timer had told Monroe that the simplest way to remove a corn was to put on leaky boots and wade the marsh all day after duck or snipe and finish off with a hearty feed of onions stewed with muskrat, duck breasts, or any flesh preferred, the onions being the important item. Repeated trials had so convinced Monroe of the merit of the simple safeguard that he had devised his method of treating onions by which all unpleasant traces were eliminated. Thus prepared they are not only good, but may be freely partaken of even by those to whom a raw or fried onion is something akin to a poison. A trial will convince even the most sceptical of the great value of this easily prepared dish as a regular course for the fishing and shooting camp fare.

Joe was vastly interested in every one of his various lessons, but, naturally enough, the beautiful gun was the most fascinating thing of all. He had shot a little at various galleries at the beach resorts, and once during a sojourn in the country he and a farmer lad, who owned a cheap single-barrel arm, had attempted to slay some poor little chipmunks and birds. But these ill-advised ventures had produced extremely unsatisfactory results; in fact, they bore about the same resemblance to Monroe's style of shooting as the child's crude chalk-marks on a fence bear to the work of an accomplished artist.

"See here, Joe," said Monroe one day; "it's about time we tackled that costly death-dealer of yours. The shooting season will be here before long, and it's good business in time of peace to prepare for war, you know. Put that gun together and I'll give you a regular lesson."

Joe was delighted, the more so because for some time he had been vaguely wondering when he was to have the pleasure of doing more than looking at and tossing up his father's beautiful gift. Monroe, however, had been neither forgetful nor unwise. He had told Joe to practise at bringing the gun to shoulder and covering various marks both within and outside the Lodge, whenever he felt so inclined, and almost without realizing it, Joe had become accustomed to the feel of the gun and the triggers, although not a shell had been fired. Owing to these preliminaries, he really had mastered the rudiments of shooting up to the actual firing at some mark or creature, and simple though it all appeared, there was a deal more in those preparatory movements than he imagined. As he later learned, Monroe was a fine shot, which means a lot more than a consistent killer. In shooting, as in every other sport, there is such a thing as a good style, and, while not necessarily more deadly, it is much more pleasing than a bad one. Monroe knew all the famous trap-shots and many of the best field-shots of the country, and he further knew that three-fourths of them had little peculiarities of style which were merely habits, which in no way really aided the shooter,

despite that individual's belief to the contrary. Unless a man is malformed, or at least of peculiar build, there is no sound reason why he should not shoot as well in an easy, natural position as in any strained attitude which he can assume. No matter how he may choose to stand, the thing to be done remains the same, and as shooting is a matter of the eyes and hands swiftly working in perfect accord, the less of a strain in the firing position, the better. There is nothing to be gained by a wide straddling of the legs or a pronounced forward bending of the body.

It is true that some celebrated trapshoots, especially those guilty of that abomination, live-bird shooting, have made extraordinary scores while standing in what might be termed forced attitudes, but that does not prove the shooters might not have scored as well, or better, in a more pleasing and easier pose. Other things being equal, the man in the less strained position should win, especially in a long contest. It is no light task to undergo the ordeal of a closely contested match at one hundred or more targets. This is one reason why so many men who can perform exceedingly well up to twenty-five birds, fall off when the test is doubled or still further increased. From the purely sporting point of view, to score twenty out of twenty-five in pleasing, clean-cut style is a more satisfying performance than a straight score in which every bird is, as it were, strained for. And there is another point regarding firing position which is well worth bearing in mind. The man who shoots

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much at targets should stand in as near a good field position as possible, for this would mean more or less useful practice which would be lost to the man who had to set himself just so before the target was released. In the field, there is no certainty about the spot where a bird will flush, nor any time for the striking of fancy attitudes. As often as not the man is in the act of taking a step when the game rises, and naturally he who can shoot from almost any position and with the least loss of time has the better chance.

To a man like Monroe, big, strong, and — thanks to the outdoor life — as supple as a cat, the small gun was as easy to handle as a toy; yet with all his lithe swiftness of action, that sprite of the tangled cover, the ruffed grouse, had baffled him many a time. He had his own notions about shooting, one of which was the keeping of both eyes wide open as the aim was taken. He was well aware how many good shots closed, or partially closed, one eye when sighting their game, and he also knew how useless, if not foolish, was that practice, which practically reduced the shooters to the level of one-eyed men. A man with normal eyes can see much better with two than with one, and there is a deal more in wing-shooting than a sort of concentrated squinting along the rib of a gun. Such game as the various prairie-grouse and the bob-white usually rise in numbers until the scattering process has been completed, and the man who shoots with both eyes wide open not only can hold as truly upon his chosen bird, but keep a much

better watch upon others. In fine, he secures the more comprehensive view, and, instead of confining himself to a single bird, sees what others are doing, and which of them is the surest mark for the second barrel, which, with swift birds, is no unimportant matter. The skilful playing of billiards calls for finer work by both eyes and hands than does any form of field-shooting, yet who but the veriest tyro would think of shutting an eye or attempting to sight along a cue in order to make a shot?

"You see, Joe," said Monroe, as he took the gun, "the object of a sportsman is to instantly and painlessly kill his game after allowing it a reasonable chance to get safely away. Any duffer might fire at one, or a lot of birds, upon the ground and kill without the exercise of any skill worth mentioning. Under ordinary conditions, the birds would have no chance whatever, and shooting would be mere slaughter and anything but interesting. To add the required zest to the pursuit, to throw the odds in favor of the game by increasing the difficulty of the sportsman's task, the unwritten law decrees that the quarry must be allowed to take wing and get away if it can, which it does many more times than it does not. You may hear of the man who never misses, but such a sportsman never lived."

He knew if actual records could be kept, say for three seasons, they probably would show that day in and day out our best sportsmen average about half their game; that is, kill fifty per cent of all the game they shoot at. By this is not meant that some men

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cannot kill more than half their "chickens," snipe, bob-whites, and so on, because there are men who devote themselves to one or two species, and by constant shooting attain astonishing skill. But they could not switch to other game, say waterfowl, and maintain their averages. The fact is, a great many men who talk and write about shooting, remember only their good days, which, of course, do not represent their average work. He had made a practice of knowing exactly how many shells were taken out, and only twice during years of steady shooting had there been straight scores when the bag numbered more than twenty birds.

"You already hold a gun very nicely," he continued. "There is no advantage in having the left hand too far out, while too near the guard is worse, as the cramped hold gives poor control. Now just pitch up that tomato-can as high as you are able, and I'll show you that your gun will do the work if held aright. This is my idea of an easy position."

Joe took it all in at a glance. He noticed that Monroe's slightly separated feet gave him perfect balance, that his left hand clasped the fore end where the designer of the gun had intended, and that the entire figure was easily posed and ready for rapid action in any direction. With a "Here goes!" he heaved the can high in air. Out of the tail of an eye he saw the gun flash into position, then there was a quick crack, crack! and the can leaped yards higher, spun wildly, and again went upward as the ready second barrel did its part. Joe chased after

the can and found it almost shattered to bits, for both charges had caught it truly.

"Now, you see," said Monroe, "your gun is a close, hard shooter, so there'll be no excuse for misses other than our own mistakes. We'll target her presently, for there's nothing like knowing exactly what she can do. Now you take her and try the right barrel when I throw up another can. Here! Take those shells out again!" he added crisply. "Look through the barrels first, then put in the shells. Never reload a gun without first glancing through the barrels. It's no trouble, so acquire the habit. I never load without looking, for a trifle of clay or snow in the muzzle may play the mischief next shot. Very little of either might burst the gun, and in snowtime it's curiously easy to scoop up a little when one is working through cover. I never burst a gun, but more times than I can recall I have found the muzzle more or less obstructed, which meant a possibly serious accident if undetected. I have seen one man slightly, and two men dangerously, wounded by neglect of this simple precaution, which would have prevented many a sorrowful wind-up to a shooting-trip. Never leave a loaded gun standing about, never take it into a house, wheeled vehicle, or boat. Shells are so easily removed that there is no excuse for neglecting to do so. Never allow a man to have a gun behind you in a boat. If there are two guns, place both in the bow where the forrard man alone can reach them. Load them both for emergency, but never until you are settled in

your position forward and the craft is on her way to the shooting-ground. Never pull a gun toward you by the muzzle from boat, vehicle, or through fence or hedge, and never allow the muzzle to cover anything you don't wish to kill. Never fire at anything half hidden in cover. Be sure you're right, then go ahead, but never forget that it is infinitely better to lose the finest game in the world, than to take chances which may result in the killing or maiming of a fellow-creature. All the game that ever lived is not worth one human life, and the man who would fire when not quite certain of the nature of his mark, ought to be locked up. Now, I've finished my little sermon; remember every word of it, and there's no collection," he concluded with a laugh.

Joe's practice with the empty gun prevented any feeling of awkwardness, while Monroe's trial shots had, as intended, inspired confidence. In a few moments he was all ready, his pose and every action closely imitating the other's. Monroe purposely sent the can high and straight up, and at the report it lurched slightly, and his hearty "Good boy! you raked it on one side," was mightily acceptable to his pupil. "See, you were a bit to one side. Don't jerk at the trigger. Press it steadily; now try the other barrel." And presently the can went up again. This time, however, a clean miss resulted, but Joe at once exclaimed, "I know what was wrong; please send it up again." Monroe stooped for the can, but under his arm he watched Joe open the gun, carefully peep through the barrels, and reload. "He'll

do; he's a wise young beggar," he muttered as he prepared to again heave the tinware. This time there was no hitch. The can went flying, and when recovered, looked suspiciously like a gigantic pepper caster. Joe felt he had caught the hang of the thing, and a couple of trials proved his idea correct. Then Monroe proposed a change of targets.

"This scheme will give you better practice," he remarked as he made fast a long cord to another can in which he had placed a handful of earth to give it weight. The cord was tied to a poplar branch so that the can hung about four feet above the ground in an open spot. "I'll set it swinging, and you cover it a few times, then try a crack at it," he continued. In a moment the can was swinging pendulum-fashion to and fro in long sweeps, and Joe easily could cover it from a point twenty yards distant. When ready to fire, he felt certain he could fill that can so full of holes that the earth would all run out, but, to his astonishment, the deceptive mark was cleanly missed. The watchful instructor smiled, for he had noted the cause of the blunder. Joe was possessed of that dangerous asset, a little knowledge, and he had tried to catch the can at the instant when it practically stood still at the end of its swing.

"Never mind that," said Monroe; "catching it as it turns is more of a trick than anything else. Birds don't swing just so far and back. What you want to do is to hit that can when in full swing. Get the gun moving truly with it, but just ahead,

and see what happens. Above all, don't stop the swing of the gun as you pull trigger." The value of this advice was proved by a centring of the mark at the third attempt. This was followed by three hits out of four shots, and Joe felt he could repeat it almost as many times as he chose.

"That ends the preliminary course. You've learned a deal more than you realize. Now we'll fix up a few targets and just find out how much your graceful old gas-pipe knows about the Scriptures. The motto of every honest gun should be 'Do good and distribute,' and if yours is as charitable as I suspect, the effects of her good works should be felt far and wide before many moons have waned."

To thoroughly test a gun, a thing which no purchaser of a firearm should fail to do, one should have sets of at least four cartridges, each set containing different powder-charges from the minimum to the maximum for the arm in question. While the resultant patterns probably will show only slight differences, yet there is bound to be some best pattern, and the load which made it is the one for regular use when the gun's full power is desired. The proper target is a thirty-inch circle upon a big sheet of paper, which should be tacked upon a flat surface forty yards from the firing-point. The exact centre should be distinctly marked, and to insure the gun being truly held, it should be fired from a "dead rest," *i.e.* from some solid support. Of course, a separate target is required for each shot, but the

slight trouble of preparing the sheets of paper is by no means wasted. The load used should be marked upon each sheet and the series of targets preserved for careful comparison. With a high-grade gun, the amateur need not bother about the penetration, provided standard loads are used. The important thing is the pattern, the distribution of the shot-holes in the paper, and the greater the number within the circle and the closer and more evenly they show, the better for the owner of the gun. Should a pattern reveal clustered marks in one place and a corresponding blank space elsewhere, there is something wrong, most likely with the load, because a maker of any reputation thoroughly tests every gun before shipping. The forty yards should be accurately measured, not paced off, or guessed at; for few, indeed, are the young sportsmen who can pace or guess within yards of what the tape-line will prove.

"I feel so sure about that gun and the shells we have, that we won't bother with more than a target for each barrel," remarked Monroe as he drew a roll of wrapping-paper from a locker. "We can make up the big sheets from four of these tacked up outside and strike the circles by means of a nail, a bit of cord, and a pencil." In a few moments the first target was in place on the outer wall. "Here's your measure," he continued, as he drew a reel from his pocket. "Just forty yards of silk, less about three inches, which is near enough. Walk away yonder with it and make a mark at the end, then wind up, and I'll be with you. Might as well have

a bird to shoot at," he concluded, and at once his pencil was tracing something near a life-size outline of a sharp-tailed grouse. Then he joined Joe, rested the gun in a poplar fork, and fired the right barrel. "I thought as much — never knew 'em to make a bad one," he muttered as he took down the target and put up the second, which presently was duly peppered. Joe fairly gloated over those papers, which was pardonable; for it was his gun and the apparently innumerable shot-holes were astonishingly close together while beautifully even in distribution. "Joseph, you are the proud possessor of one of the best little guns in the Northwest. Even my old favorite can't beat that pattern. But you are in for it now. When you miss a big fat 'chicken,' as you presently and maybe persistently will, there'll be no use in trying to blame it on the gun. I'll toss up chips for you during the next few days; then it will be chicken time, and I'll see you blooded in the bluffs back yonder."

For the next week Joe devoted most of his spare time to practice, and he made astonishing progress. In addition to being an earnest worker, he was quick of eye and hand, and so enthusiastic that he would have done much more had he been allowed. Monroe soon grasped the fact that he had the genuine material to work on, and the schooling of such a pupil is ever a joy to the master. Hence it was not strange that the novice could account soon for more than half of all sorts of moving targets, and as he gained in skill he longed to try a few of the big

grouse. But if he could not at once shoot some of them, the open season for talking about them certainly had commenced, and in consequence Monroe had a pretty busy time transmitting information about the famous grouse family and grouse-shooting.



RUFFED GROUSE.

"Hold well ahead of all crossing birds," said he, "and, above all, don't stop the even swing of the gun as you pull the trigger. The proper way is to press the trigger by a closing motion of the finger, instead of jerking with the hand and arm. Faulty trigger-pulling is the most common trouble with beginners, but it would not be if every learner practised as you have done. Hold high on birds going straight away about level with your eyes; low on low-flying straightways — the ones that skim the

grass ; and dead on all in-comers. Be sure you are far enough ahead of all quartering and crossing birds. If in doubt, always make it more rather than less, for not one in one thousand birds is missed through overallowance. Inches too far ahead is better than one-sixteenth too far behind, because, in the first case, if the bird be struck at all, it will be in the head or neck, where one pellet of shot may kill. The man who does not hold well ahead of his birds is guilty of needless cruelty, because a large percentage of them surely will be hit too far back, which is apt to mean that thing which all good sportsmen abhor ; *i.e.* a fatally wounded bird able to fly far, be lost, and doomed to suffer for hours."



CANADA GROUSE.

Among other things about the grouse family, Joe learned that the American species include the ruffed grouse, the dusky grouse, and the spruce-grouse, of the woods and covers ; the pinnated grouse, or true

prairie-chicken, the sharp-tailed grouse, often wrongly called "prairie-chicken," the big cock-of-the-plains and the ptarmigan, of the plains and rocky opens. The species they expected soon to be better acquainted with was the beautiful sharp-tailed grouse, the Columbian sharp-tail, sentenced by scientists to labor under the awful classical handicap of *Pediocetes phasianellus columbianus*. Just



SHARP-TAILED GROUSE.

what the poor grouse ever did to have that apparently complete dead language tied to him, the ordinary sportsman cannot even guess, yet in spite of the jaw-breaking attachment, the dead bird is rare good eating, as the live one is a vigorous flier and most interesting object of pursuit. Among sportsmen it is known as the "pintail," "spike-tail," "sharp-tail," and "whitebelly." The nest is placed on the ground in any convenient cover such as brush or grass. The average number of eggs is about a

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dozen, and they are buff, freckled with reddish brown. Only one brood is raised in a season. The chicks are very pretty, the upper parts buff, beautifully lined and spotted with black; under parts yellow, tinged with buff. They are very active and great insect hunters, a large portion of their food being grasshoppers, in the destruction of which they render valuable service. When more matured they eat seeds, berries, and grain.

One of the most peculiar things about all prairie-grouse is their love-making, the "chicken dances" of the settlers. The sharp-tailed grouse is no poor performer at love's minuet. Few of those at all familiar with the plains have failed to notice this "dancing"—the peculiar booming and ridiculous antics of the males, so characteristic of the first few days of early spring. The low booming sound carries far through the still, gray atmosphere of earliest dawn, and when a lot of old males have assembled upon some rising ground, they make a row which at a distance somewhat suggests the lowing of a herd of cattle. An observer with a good glass can learn much about curious birds ways. Then the old males are full of fire, and they indulge in the most absurd posturing, frenzied strutting, and not seldom furious fighting. The big musterings are continued each morning for about a week, and toward the end the whole business is one grand free fight. Finally, when all the available hens have made their choice of the scarred warriors, the pairs scatter far and wide, nesting wherever they find

suitable sites. The young broods remain with the mother until the approach of cold weather, when the broods of a district unite and form what are termed "packs." After the winter has fairly set in, the packs take to the thickest available timber, and



PRAIRIE-CHICKEN.

while a hundred birds may be seen perched in the distance, they seldom allow a gun to approach within range. When flushed, this grouse rises with a great whirring of wings and speeds away to cover, the vigorous flight being alternate periods of flapping and sailing. The cry is a gruff "tuck-a-tuck," sometimes repeated. Birds rising within reasonable distance offer fair but by no means easy marks, and

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the man who can average one-half of them has no reason to feel ashamed of his shooting. Of course the cream of the sport is only to be obtained over good dogs, but in many parts of the West, especially in the vicinity of the Lodge, a well-informed sportsman could easily find a reasonable number of birds by walking a few miles. This was Monroe's custom, because he had no desire for big bags, but paid more attention to observation.

"We'll run up to the Park for a few days," remarked Monroe very early one morning. Within a couple of hours they had completed the trifling trip, and Joe got his first view of that magnificent reservation of the Rockies. The Park is twenty-six miles long by ten miles wide, and is one of the masterpieces of the great western picture gallery. Within its limits are parts of the valleys of the Bow, Spray, and Cascade rivers, Devil's Lake, several noble mountain ranges and some celebrated hot springs. Miles of roads, bridle-paths, and trails lead to the great show-places, and Joe was astonished to find a big modern hotel with a small army of guests, many of them there for the healing waters.

"We'll slip away from this crowd right now, and I'll show you unrivalled scenery and fair fishing," said Monroe after he had secured rooms. "I hate these excursion gangs, but I know a ravine worth looking at and a trail they never can learn." And so it came about that by mid-morning they were over the hills and far away where the most prying of tourists could not possibly find them.

A WEE WATER WORKER—THE PRIDE
THAT GOETH *BEHIND* A FALL—
A RED RECRUIT—SOMETHING OF
AN ALL-ROUND SHOCK

“**I** FAIRLY love this almost unknown spot,” grunted Monroe as the dim trail ended and they found themselves within the wonderful ravine. “Nobody ever comes here; in fact, I’m not sure the hotel people know the way in. Some of the guides do, but thank the Fates they’re all engaged and doing the regular show-routes for those awful excursionists. Did ever you see such a parcel of clucking hens as that last stage-load? I hid while they were clattering round the office. It’s a wonder that such people would travel. If you netted every manless corner of the East, you couldn’t drag in a bonier, nosier glass-eyed lot! But, anyhow, they can’t bother us here with their silly questions and cameras and note-books, so we’ll just enjoy this beauty-spot and sneak back to the house after the apparitions have tired themselves out. Now, Joseph, feast your eyes upon one of the gems of the Rockies.”

Joc snickered at Monroe’s dread of the women-tourists; then he said, “But one of ’em wasn’t nosy or glassy; she was a regular peach, and she looked mighty cute and as fresh as a daisy. Her hair

wasn't dusty and every which way, and she had a regular fishin'-suit on and the nobbiest kind of boots. Bart, you couldn't call her names, I'll bet." Monroe's disgusted "Humph!" ended the discussion, and they devoted themselves to the rarely beautiful view. Imagine an extremely narrow cañon, its half-mile of tremendous, sheer walls curving like an enormous letter S, through which speeds a typical mountain stream, most of it a sweet uproar of snowy suds, the remainder a couple of goodly pools. In the centre of the upper pool is a big rock, probably trundled down by ice in the long-ago. From a mighty shelf some forty feet above the pool the stream leaps bodily into the air and falls clear, forming a wonderful, iridescent curtain, which, when the breeze is right, sways and flattens in toward the rock in a most fascinating manner. When Nature planned this beauteous thing, she was in the millinery business, and she clearly intended her handiwork to bear the appropriate and unappropriated title of "Bridal Veil Falls." She probably also intended to name the towering, wall-like rock "The Lover's Leap," but she didn't. It is a peculiar fact that in all our magnificent land, with its wealth of waterfalls and rousing old rocks, there are no "Lover's Leaps" nor "Bridal Veils." Any one posted on scenery can tell why this isn't so, but the fall now referred to bears the original and vastly poetic name of the "Milk Cascade." They say the namer of it was a prospector, but of that there is reasonable doubt. He probably had been a shad pattern of a farmer in the

East, who, previous to his flight, had owned a small, dried-up, lap-eared cow and a large and juicy well, the products of which he sold for the benefit of himself and some unfortunate infants and invalids. No doubt such a man would recognize "pay-dirt" when he saw it and borrow a name from the past.

"Go ahead and fish. I'm for a lounge and a smoke," said Monroe, after they had rested a bit, and with the words he passed over a little knock-about rod and the fly-book. It was a nice spot for casting, and presently Joe rose and hooked a lively, small trout which he soon despatched. Another and others followed in rapid succession until the sport became a trifle monotonous and he suggested a move to the upper pool. Here the trout proved small but willing—so willing, in fact, that soon the rod was unshipped and the pair of explorers made themselves comfortable upon a mossy rock. As they sat, the twist of the ravine shut out anything like an extensive view, yet the idling was wondrous pleasant. Away overhead was a strip of flawless blue, while all one side and part of the bottom of the ravine were splashed with golden light which wove swift wonders upon hurrying stream and many-colored rock, and through it all, thrilling the solemn blocks of Titanic masonry, they could feel the plunging stream. For many minutes Joe watched the shimmering veil of water, then his eyes turned to the big rock which rose like the back of some huge, prehistoric turtle above the pool. The rock bore many peculiar marks and one curious projection, which to

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Joe's astonishment suddenly moved and took the form of a chunky-looking small gray bird.

"Why, see the queer little bird!" he exclaimed, and Monroe, after a glance, replied, "Good; it's a water-ouzel. Now we'll just watch him and see some fun." The bird was mouse-like in color, its eyes very large and dark, and it kept nodding like the common spotted sandpiper. Its plumage appeared almost hairy in texture, something like that of the coot and grebe. The small bird was amazingly clever, too; for presently it walked down the stone to the water, then in, and, finally, to Joe's sudden astonishment, it actually walked below the surface, and in a moment they saw it running about on the bottom of the pool nearly as easily as it had trotted on the stone. Through such crystal water every movement was plainly visible, and they watched with delighted interest as the small gray form moved about, its supple toes clinging to tiny pebbles, its short wings beating upward in a peculiar way, the reverse of airy flight. Some silvery bubbles were attached to the loose plumage, and the great eyes also showed bubble-like in their brilliancy. In spite of the steady slide of the water, the wee diver seemed to be having no end of fun and business as it energetically prosecuted its search for some food too minute to be identified from above.

"It's coming out," whispered Joe at length, and sure enough, up the sloping rock it trotted till, seemingly as dry and fluffy as before going under, it again stood nodding in the air. Then it made a

quick little run, spread its wings, and flew straight at the water-curtain of the fall, through which it vanished. Not till then did Monroe think of his watch and the lost opportunity for accurately timing the bird's sojourn below. Both he and Joe had been too absorbed in their observation to have any reliable idea of how long it had lasted, and the more they afterward considered it, the less able were they to agree whether it had been nearer one, two, or three minutes. Monroe, however, knew enough to warrant the belief that the nest lay behind the fall, and that the white curtain of Milk Cascade was something akin to skimmed milk in the matter of solidity. So he informed Joe that in his opinion there was a cave-like hollow behind the falling water, also an ouzel's nest of fish bones loosely arranged upon some bracket-like rock. A closer examination of the fall disclosed the fact that a man easily could step through the falling water and explore a bit, and this prompted the next move in the game of observation.

"We'll just strip here in the hot sun, then I'll go through, and if there's as much room as there seems to be, I'll reach back my hand, and you take hold and step boldly through. That's glacier water and cold as Zero's self, but it'll only be for a moment. A trifle of nerve will do the trick, and we'll see something which comparatively few folks have seen." Joe was both game and full of the 'satiabile curiosity of an elephant's child, so in very few moments Hercules and Hermes stood garbed in the old-time

grace. Then Monroe picked his barefoot way over the mossy boulders, halted close to the curtain, then thrust his way through. It seemed to observant Joe that his leader's skin did wrinkle and twitch a trifle as the water touched it, but when a beckoning hand showed he seized it and followed. For one instant, as he almost touched the curtain, the chill steam from it gave him the creeps, and had he dreamed what actual contact with those glacier-tears would feel like, that demure small ouzel's home might have remained unknown to him for one thousand years. As it was, he caught his breath and butted blindly in after the hauling hand which felt as though it had been thrust from everlasting Polar mystery. He had a notion that a naked explorer lashed to the North Pole would have been feverish by comparison; but as he was in, it seemed worth while to run a coldly critical eye over the ice-making machine or whatever might be there. All he saw was a greenish, slimy-looking cave which apparently hadn't been aired and certainly hadn't been warmed since the Ice Age; some equally cold and slimy rocks, notably the one upon which his bluing feet rested; and the ouzel darting forth through a curtain which from inside seemed to be woven of wobbly ice. What might have been a nest lay at the back of the cave, but whether that nest was built of fish bones, icicles, or just fool's bones, Joe did not care.

What he mostly wanted was to butt out into the glad, sweet world and broiling sunshine, where he could get hot at himself and Monroe for meddling

with a decent lady-bird's purely private affairs. But the footing was mighty uncertain, and before he had got half turned about he slipped, hauled madly at Monroe, and backward the pair fell with a duet of howls which must have electrified the young ouzels if there were any in that bony abomination which such creatures call their home. Fortunately, the acrobats landed squarely in the deepest part of the pool, else the consequences might have been serious. As it was, Joe barely had time to struggle before he was rushed through the icy water and forth into the oh! so welcome sunshine.

"Waugh!" roared Monroe, as he swung his arms and slapped his chilled skin. "If that wasn't a retreat from Moscow, I'm a—" The sentence never was finished, for lo! with the jeering mirth of the fall there seemed to be braided a something extremely like a feminine scream. It was sudden, short, and they could see nothing; but the way they hustled into their clothes was a caution, and every now and then Monroe grunted savagely but indistinctly about "confounded tourists" and vague creatures of that kind. Then they held a conference, and Monroe impressed upon Joe the desirability of their working homeward by a roundabout way and carefully bearing in mind that they hadn't seen any Milk Cascades, or water-ouzels, or in fact anything except big Devil's Lake and a lot of mountains which lay in the opposite direction. And Joe promised to be careful, and he fairly smelt of Devil's Lake when later they strolled into the hotel and

found themselves among a lot of tired tourists. A dainty figure in gray was standing beside the clerk, and, for a wonder, Monroe gave a second sharp glance at it. All he saw was a mass of red-brown hair and a flushed, sunburned cheek, then the clerk exclaimed, "Why, there's Mr. Monroe now!" at the same time waving a beckoning pencil. "That's her," whispered Joe, as Monroe stepped forward and bowed with the cool courtesy which so well fitted him. Joe watched curiously as the clerk explained that the young lady was collecting material for a book, and particularly desired the true story of the construction of the railroad and also of the National Park. In New York, at several points along the line, and by the clerk himself, she had been advised to consult Mr. Monroe, for whom she had two letters.

"I have heard so much about Mr. Monroe that I am going to introduce myself," said an unmistakably well-bred voice. "I am Miss Sterling of Baltimore, and I am delighted to meet Mr. Monroe, who has my permission to promptly read those two letters, that he may understand my rather unusual procedure." Monroe bent over the frankly offered hand and gravely assured its owner that he fully appreciated the honors thrust upon him, and as the eyes met, there was the ghost of a twinkle in each, which might have told a better observer than Joe that these people were unlikely to endure many dull moments in company. The first letter was from Monroe's publisher, and it stated that any courtesy extended to Miss Sterling would be vastly appre-

ciated. It did not contain any apology for troubling him, and Monroe could readily guess why. The second letter, as the startled reader realized the instant he noticed the writing, was from no less a personage than Mr. Emmons King. It contained several nice things about Miss Sterling and asked the recipient to spare no trouble that would add to the fair bearer's pleasure. As Monroe finished reading, the gleam in his eye was a thing beautiful to behold — a fact which another pair of eyes was not slow to observe.

"You probably have heard of my young friend here," he gravely remarked, as Joe was presented, but his eyes were laughing in their own peculiar way at the other pair, which seemed undecided as to whether their silent retort should be open defiance or mirthful mockery. For some minutes they chatted merrily, and to Joe's amazement he learned that this exceedingly pretty and quick-witted young woman not only knew Gotham and a broker named King, but many other persons of whom he had heard his father speak. It struck him as peculiar that there never had been any mention of a female who in his opinion owned the most beautiful pair of velvety brown eyes he had ever beheld, yet he distinctly liked to watch those wonderful things as they flashed with every move of what he began to understand was something akin to a playful but brilliant sparring match. When he presently learned that the lady was passionately fond of fly-fishing, his interest increased on the compound basis, but he scarce

could believe his ears when Monroe said airily: "I think there are a few good trout in a near-by stream below what is called the Milk Cascade. If you would care to try it, I'll ask one of the guides about the trail, which I understand is both short and easy. We can be a three-handed party and do our own exploring. They say the scenery is very pretty, so there'll be a picturesque novelty for us even should the trout fail, which is unlikely." Things seemed to whiz through Joe's brain as he heard the lady's ready agreement and pleasant farewells. His eyes had a dazed look as they turned from the retreating figure to Monroe, then the brain-whizzing seemed to stop with a click like a slot-machine, and before his mental vision lay the machine's output in a bit of polished brass which bore the legend Ananias and Sapphira in clean-cut, fashionable characters.

"I like her; she's mighty pretty," he muttered to himself as he tumbled into bed, "but to think of Bart's nerve to stand there and —" The rest was lost in a giggle, and the last thing Joe remembered was drowsily pondering over how unadvisable it would be for him to say, "There's that ouzel again," or one word concerning its nest, or its quest, or anything that was its.

"I like her; she's an epigram," muttered Monroe in the adjoining room. "No wonder poor old Emmy —" then his eyes darkened a trifle, and for long seconds he stared at the truthful mirror. Then he slowly ran his fingers through the telltale hair,

shook the disordered mop rather ruefully, then snapped off the gas with a twitch that almost wrecked the fixture.

"I — like — him ; he's a regular old Greek god ; I'll put him in a story — he'd make an ideal —" Then she started slightly, for lo ! from the big glass was staring a lovely, red-headed, velvet-eyed witch, with a complexion that suggested a recent stirring of an extremely feverish caldron. Slowly the mirrored face changed till its lines were almost harsh, and red sparks glowed in the late misty eyes. "You lie! — you know you do ! I just hate you !" she hissed, and another gas-jet met a sudden death.

If Joe had harbored any misgivings concerning the fitness of small boots for a trail, they had vanished long before the lower pool was reached next morning. It surely was the day of Diana ; for not only was the trim gray figure amazingly supple and strong, but its every move was workman-like, and it could climb over rocks with a panther-like ease which made him feel clumsy. And the casting, too, was a revelation, to say nothing of the masterly manipulation of the fish which seemed to fall over each other in their eagerness for that particular death. Before noon he had lapsed into hopeless idolatry, and was conscious of a sneaking desire to be a half-pound trout, if only to die by that small brown hand. Within an hour his view had broadened : he would rather have been a hundred-pound trout with the opportunity to just yank that red-headed witch into the pool and forever keep her there. And he ob-

served with a vague apprehension that Monroe, too, appeared to think that watching other folks fish was a deal more interesting than getting busy by oneself. By lunch-time, which somehow had slipped half way through the afternoon, Joe's view had again changed as a hungry youth's will. It was a truly noble lunch-basket, and after they had found an ideal spot, and Monroe had cooked a trout apiece over a tiny fire, as he said, "just for the fun of it," Joe acquired wisdom and nourishment in fair proportion. Having arrived at this strong strategic point, he lay comfortably, boy-fashion, and watched the old, old game advance through moves which, so far as he could see, meant certain loss to both players. He didn't care so much about the literary matters of the many-sided conversation, but he did like to watch the two expressive faces and hear the ready quotations from things he had fancied. To his delight, Monroe was skilfully led into poetry, and finally into reciting four verses which Joe never had heard. Something in the voice strangely touched him, and he stole a glance at the other listener. Her eyes were very dreamy as Monroe finished, and in response to his careless, "Do you know the author?" she nodded thoughtfully, and softly said, "I'm afr—that is, I fancy I do."

"Is there any more grub in that basket? I guess I must have fallen asleep!" shouted Joe, as he sprang up, impelled by a feeling that some diversion really ought to be created. And it happened that two people started from half-pictured lotos-dreams and

backed away from that perilously smooth descent upon which, all unconsciously, their feet had momentarily been placed side by side.

"He's a wonder," yawned Joe, as some hours later he fumbled the reef-points of his pajamas, "and — my! — she's — a — bu — ooty," he gasped as he turned in. His own little boyish dream was all knocked on the head, but for that he cared not at all. Not only had the remedy been applied before the disease had taken hold, but he was a boy, with all moods his moods, and if red-headed divinities were not for him, why, black, brown, yellow, and even gray heads doubtless would have their turn. The last thing he heard was a slow, muffled footstep — to and fro, to and fro, in the adjoining room, where Monroe, with bristling hair and slightly drawn face, was what he called "walking it to death." The big fellow well knew there was trouble coming. He was neither saint nor martyr, but he was as loyal and game as a bulldog, one of the sort that is slow to take itself in earnest, but, once decided, will grimly fight even that awful foe, self, to the bitter end. He was the only mortal who knew how he had, as he cynically put it to himself, "won his gray hairs," and the addition of a few extra tufts would count for naught if another soulful scrimmage appeared necessary. As yet he only sniffed possibilities. He knew enough about women to thoroughly understand how time, place, and opportunity may temporarily almost control certain natures, and how those same natures have a lovely knack of shaking off the influence as

soon as the conditions are altered. He reasoned that he and the woman were poor and that the most the future offered was a lot of work and perhaps moderate comfort. True to his nature, he could see that same woman enjoying all the luxuries and social pleasures which King could and would bestow. At the thought his jaw set, for he recalled that other time and its bitterness of defeat, and for an instant an almost savage light flamed in his troubled eyes. But the mood swiftly passed, and again he paced to and fro, thinking of many things. Finally he stood still and slowly shook his head, and the question was decided. King was his friend, and he had grown to love Joe. In fancy he could see the big, rather lonely mansion in Gotham filled with the love and life which were the sole things lacking; his friend King, roused out of his business preoccupation and restored to that social position which rightfully was his, and his other friend, Joe, broadened and bettered by the new, wholesome influence and the life which would fit him for his future. And lastly a radiant beauty, like a reset jewel for the first time given the opportunity to display its true brilliancy, outshining all and glorifying what so long had been something of a social twilight. He also dimly saw an aging, lonely man bending over inky pages, and gradually losing the power which more fortunate influences might have rendered gigantic in accomplishment. He smiled in a grim sort of way and again slowly shook his head. "Emmy, our wires somehow have got crossed again. Good luck to

you," he muttered; "my share in this sort of foolishness ceases right now." And in a minute he was preparing for rest.

And away round at the other side of the house, a face was framed by a darkened window, and from a smouldering gloom of hair two tawny, strangely soft eyes were upturned to a moonlit peak which seemed like the glowing figure of God Himself pointing to love and peace. Somewhere close by, the white war of the thunder-tongued Bow charged down its granite slope. She could feel the quiver of the river thrilling through living rock and lifeless woodwork, and some way it reminded her of that troubled Eastern world she knew so well. Why should she not just leave it all, the countless small worries of a half-aimless life, and spend the pleasant months at work among these glorious mountains and—

"Near Calgary," said the clerk's voice to some one in the darkness directly below; "you bet he's a good fellow, and I'll introduce you in the morning, for he's stopping with us now." She almost shrieked, but managed to choke the explosion into a horrified gasp as she shot back from the window. For a moment she stood shaking with rage, then suddenly realizing several things, among which was the fact that the remark had nothing whatever to do with her, but perhaps was a strange coincidence, she grabbed a mass of loose hair with either hand, folded the silken screen across her burning face and made a swift, half-blinded, and wholly prayerless dive into a softly considerate bed.

A glare of light upon his eyes roused Joe in time to catch one of the fairest pictures of Banff the Beautiful. Straight before his window was the tremendous cleft through which curved the noisy Bow, yet hidden beneath its night-robcs of fleecy mist. As he watched, this mist was strangely shaken as though by the rousing of some gigantic sleeper under its curving white; then in obedience to the Day-King's masterful summons, the wonderful drapery slowly rose and floated away, revealing the almost unrivalled beauty of the valley. Upon either side towered granite heights, their crests slanting apart like the sides of some mighty V, its angle filled with a green-white, reckless torrent, which seemed to shout with joy for another golden day, and to gallop onward, that the yet drowsy lower levels should hear the good news it bore. The whole presented a truly wonderful picture, yet, strange to say, for a few moments, a slightly disappointing one. As happens to many who for the first time see that picture, Joe forgot that his eyes were some four thousand and odd feet above sea-level. Fortunately for his previous dreams of the Rockies, he watched long enough to see a not uncommon morning spectacle. A great cloud, such as Eastern boys term a "thunder-head," came drifting against the blue, and Joe was startled by the grand effect of its velvet shadow stealing across the valley. When first seen the cloud was high enough to further dwarf the opposing peaks, so he made up his mind to delay his dressing till the shadow had crossed the Bow, and the passing cloud had

given a truer line upon the height of the peaks. "It'll go half a mile above 'em," he muttered as the great air-ship, with every inch of snowy canvas drawing, cruised grandly on. Nearer and nearer the unsuspected object-lesson swept, and suddenly Joe gasped in amazement, for the peaks appeared to shoot upward in some miraculous manner, and the cloud-ship, instead of proudly sailing far over their crests, struck and halted, not upon nor near the sun-gilded summits, but at a point which seemed far down one mighty steep. And there the cloud-ship clung and wavered and went to wreck, while far above, the gleaming peaks flashed to their fellows the signal that another of the invading fleet had been taken. It was a revelation, and never again did the now schooled eyes seriously underestimate the size of the mighty vertebræ of good old North America's huge backbone.

To Joe that day was something of a puzzle. As he expected, Miss Sterling honored their breakfast-table, but he was by no means so well prepared for the merry badinage, fragmentary earnest discussion, and apparently inexhaustible quip and repartee, which flashed to and fro. He had fancied he thoroughly knew Monroe, but never had he seen him in so frivolous a mood. It seemed impossible for anybody to say anything which did not call for some jest, and more than once the younger eyes stared wonderingly from face to face as the joyous farce progressed. That Monroe's tongue fairly could blister when he was so minded, had been learned from various stories and

curt comments during the past weeks, but here was an apparently temperless man whose tongue seemed to have been dipped in a blend of oil and honey of marvellous lubricating power, while an absolute non-conductor of any trace of acid. Nor was there the faintest suggestion of the courteous consideration of the master-fencer toward an unskilled opponent. Firm believer as Joe was in the virtue of Monroe's "medicine," he could not help noticing how often the doctor had to take his own dose, for the brown-eyed lady was not only defiant but aggressive, and had not the slightest hesitancy over carrying the war into the enemy's country. More than once had Joe's boyish mirth caused heads to turn in their direction, before Monroe's laughing "Enough!—enough!—I surrender unconditionally, and the horses must be about ready," ended what Joe thought the jolliest breakfast ever he had known. A dozen pairs of eyes followed the lady as she swept through the room, for there was a something in her carriage which suggested the return of the victor with the conquered trundling behind the chariot. A snappy-eyed, black-mustached man at the manager's table bent far over and whispered: "Who the mischief are they? If it wasn't for the boy, I'd bet it was a wedding-trip." Whereat the manager himself burst out laughing, and retorted: "Nonsense! you're about as far shy as you were in the game last night. Eh, girlie?" But the manager's wife did not deign to arbitrate in that unfeminine fashion. Instead, she kept her eyes upon Miss Sterling's back

until it had passed through the doorway. Then the manager's wife's head gave a peculiar, swift little jerk, possibly one-sixteenth of an inch to one side, and she turned a let's-begin-the-conversation-all-over-again sort of a face to the black-mustached man.

The morning's ride further puzzled Joe. The ponies proved as sure-footed as cats, his Western saddle was as safe as a rocking-chair, his trails in the main were easy and the scenery magnificent, but somehow his comrades mystified him. Just what it was he could not fathom, but there was something peculiar in their behavior. Both were enthusiastic over what they saw, and Monroe's description of the railroad-building, the trail-making, the preservation of the wild life within the Park, and the many other interesting things, betrayed a mastery of the history of the place which only a lover of the region could have accomplished, and yet there was a something lacking which for the life of him Joe could not have pointed out. When they made the thrilling crossing of the swift water and stopped for a rest at a commanding lookout, there were a few apt poetic quotations, and for a while Joe thought, "Now he'll let himself out," but, strange to say, the sort of lines he had learned to love were omitted, and not once did the voice touch the peculiar tone which never had failed to carry a new meaning. "I guess Bart's a wee bit tired to-day," was about all the comfort poor Joe could conjure up. One thing he learned was that the lady did not intend going Eastward for some

time, for she said: "You know I've a lot of work to do, and there's nothing like doing it on the spot. We folks who have to work for our living know how to make the most of our opportunities, and I've been trying so long to really get away that I hate to think of the going back. About half of my book is done, the rest I shall do here and elsewhere along the line; but I'm firmly resolved to stick to the mountains, even though they should bring forth only a mouse," she ended laughingly.

"It's a wise plan, I think," replied Monroe, "and I, too, shall get back to work to-morrow. My cepee, of course, is pitched on the Bow near Calgary, and Joe and I have many things to do there. It's an awful shame I haven't a sister, or even an ancient aunt, who would satisfy Madame Grundy. Had I the needful unnecessary, the shack certainly should be honored by your occupancy for so long as you chose; as it is, I cannot even loan it to you, because it's a stag outfit and a bit too far from the feminine element to be suited to your wants. So it's to the work—thou in thy palace and park; I, in my leaf-shaded shack—a case of so near and yet so far," he concluded with a chuckle.

"I believe I'm a wee bit tired; I suppose it's through not being properly trained to these heights," remarked the lady after a bit, and they started upon the downward trail, which necessitated a fording of the Bow at a point where the current was wide, swift, but not more than two feet deep. Monroe's and Joe's ponies were as quiet as sheep, but near the

crossing Miss Sterling's iron-gray reprobate began to show traces of that innate cussedness characteristic of the cayuse and no doubt the fruit of long association with the harshest of Red masters. At the very water's edge the brute stopped and stared stupidly about as though mentally debating whether it was of any special advantage to him to cross that cold water, or even proceed any farther with the business in hand. Most likely he felt he safely could take liberties, for a horse seldom underestimates the powers of its rider. Whatever the reason, the cayuse set his forefeet in an obstinate sort of way and slowly swung his ugly head from side to side in a fashion rather suggestive of a thick-headed old man vetoing some proposition entirely beyond his dull comprehension. In a moment his appearance changed, and Monroe saw trouble coming. The brute's big ears went back against his neck as though pinned there, his back humped slightly, and his cow-hocks bent, and his bushy tail was tucked in as though he had been used to backing against hurricanes, while a ring of white showed about his evil eye.

"Don't mind him; sit perfectly still, and I'll lead the way," said Monroe; but before he could move ahead, the stubborn one suddenly changed his mind, and in the most condescending manner lumbered forward. In a moment he was in midstream and the water rippled just below his ribs, then, to the horror of the human part of the outfit, his rider especially, he stopped, grunted, crouched, and finally

flung himself flat upon his side. A shriek from the lady, a howl of dismay from Joe, and a gruff something not unlike the roar of a shotgun from Monroe gave the startled echoes quite a snarl to disentangle, but in very few seconds the big fellow had left his saddle, ploughed through the water, and snatched up a dripping bundle which he fairly rushed to the farther bank.

"I — oh! — ah! — I'm — all — right! — Please — put — me — down!" gasped a trembling voice, the owner of which was entirely unconscious of the fact that her sharp little nails were sinking into her rescuer's most convenient ear. "Cer-certainly! You — you're all right now," spluttered Monroe as he bent over to enable the small feet to touch rock; "but won't you just let go?" he pleaded, for the claw-like grip was sticking to its hold like a mink-trap. From behind, Joe had a perfect view of everything, and the absurdity of the picture of the big fellow, firmly pinned as he was, called forth a yelp of delighted appreciation. "Oh!" gasped the lady presently as she realized the situation and released the ear as though it were red hot. "That's right — get mad about it — you'll dry quicker!" retorted the emancipated one, and the twinkle in his eyes started the others into what presently became such a three-handed laughing match as never had startled the grand old heights of the Park. Meanwhile, the ewe-neck and fiddle-head of the obstinate cayuse showed above the icy torrent.

"Can you stand it for a few moments? I really

ought to get that bull-headed fool out of there; he'll chill presently," said Monroe, anxiously, but in his heart he bore no hatred against the cause of all the trouble. It was true that his ear tingled and that a wee red trickle proved the power of the late grip, but what mattered a trifle of bloodletting in behalf of a Ladye Faire? All the watchers saw was the stalwart figure wading across the icy flood and the masterful wrench at the sulky one's bridle. Ordinary eyes cannot penetrate fast water nor detect the impact of a boot-toe against gaunt ribs, nor yet the persuasive kick of a spurred heel at a spot where it is likely to do most good. In any event, the soaked cayuse presently decided to arise and play horse again, and the exchange of saddles offered no inducements for a display of further freakiness. A rapid retreat to the hotel, followed by a diplomatic approach to a rear door, enabled the wet ones to safely gain their rooms without too close scrutiny, and when they again met about mid-evening, the shrewdest of observing eyes could not have detected a trace of the adventure.

To Joe's bewilderment, the expected long confab was cut short. He had fancied there would be a lot of fun and that people about to bid each other farewell would make the most of what time remained; but it was not to be. The lady certainly had a good excuse, and scarce an hour had elapsed before she pleaded fatigue.

THE MESSAGE OF THE KING—THE LAST OF THE LODGE—THE EAST- WARD TRAIL

“HELLO! Trying to get the drop on some imaginary foe?” asked the master of the Lodge late one glorious afternoon, as he laid aside his rod and prepared to remove his waders. He had tried some distance down the Bow, and three beautiful fish told that, as usual, his quest had not been in vain. Joe had worked at house-cleaning for a couple of hours, but now he stood at one end of the room, and in his hand was Bart’s big six-shooter, of course empty, yet suggestive of some sort of practice.

By way of answer the man behind the gun scowled most piratically, and slowly drew a deadly bead upon a small object hanging against the farther wall. Bart’s shrewd glance followed the line of aim, and instantly something like a cloud passed over his face, for the object aimed at was a small calendar, a thing in itself beautiful, but for the moment repulsive to both, because it too plainly told how long had been the sojourn by the singing stream.

“I suppose it’ll have to come before many days; most pleasures have an end,” he muttered. “But what put it into your head just at this moment?”

Surely, you haven't received any word while I was away?:" he concluded, as his eyes shifted from point to point where a letter might be lying. He did not expect to see anything of the kind, yet he knew that an Indian, or some trooper whose business had called him in the direction of the Lodge, might have been asked to carry a letter from Calgary, because it was no uncommon thing for friends in town to attend to the forwarding of mail by the first available man.

"Nothing has arrived," replied Joe, "but all the same I'd like to bore holes through that miserable thing. I'd make a sieve out of it if only that would prevent it from checking off the days so fast. And — and — I s'pose I might as well own up," he continued rather confusedly. "I dreamed last night that a fellow rode out here and ordered me to pack up and follow him into town. He was an ugly-looking brute, and he seemed to have some sort of summons, or something, which there was no way of avoiding. So far as I can remember, he wouldn't tell me what it was. Instead, he just stood grinning right in this room, and pointing east. He made me so mad that I woke up and couldn't get to sleep again for nearly an hour. I hope to goodness nothing's gone wrong with father, for the dream seemed mighty real for a little while. You don't think it possibly could mean anything, do you?" he asked, with just a shade of anxiety in his voice.

"Nonsense! dreams always go by contraries," retorted Bart; then he slowly added, "But I sus-

pect we've both been thinking just a bit about the possibilities. Time's slipping away, you know, and much as I hate to break up here, it will have to be done before very long. You see," he hastily ran on, for Joe's face was anything but joyous, "we promised Thompson to have a shoot with him, and there'll be the ducks and 'chickens,' and some work with those grand pointers. Just think of old Thompson driving you in his shooting-trap over miles of prairie, while a brace of those rat-tailed fliers were ranging about as far ahead as you could see 'em. The sort of chicken-shooting Thompson gives a fellow is something worth while, I tell you. We haven't tasted the real sport yet, but we'll get it when the proper time comes."

Joe sighed, and stared straight at the wall. At last he said: "I s'pose it will have to be that way, but somehow I don't fancy the thoughts of it. Bart, this is a bully place to be. I just love it, and if everything only would just drift along, with no change of weather, and leave us to play Indian, I don't believe I'd care a hang if we shot anything or not. But, as you say, father has spared nothing to give me a good time, and I'm afraid he's mighty lonesome sometimes. He never seems to knock around and have fun like other men. The first time he took any sort of holiday was last summer, but that seemed to do him a heap of good. He was only gone a few days,—spent 'em in some quiet little place with old friends,—but when he got back he was like a new man. Do you know,

I — I —" He stopped a moment, then went hurriedly on. "I sometimes wish he'd meet some nice woman who would make him happier than he is. You know I can't remember my mother, so I shouldn't in the least mind if father married again. Do you suppose he'd ever take a fancy to a girl like Miss Sterling?"

Monroe gave a queer little twitch, and his eyes flashed almost suspiciously toward Joe's face, but one swift glance told that the question was a perfectly innocent one. Beyond all doubt the lad was merely troubled a trifle and in one of his confidential moods, so there was no occasion for any fencing. Before the pause had a chance to become awkward, Monroe slowly replied: "I should not blame him if he did. She's a very charming young lady; pretty, clever, and a thoroughly wholesome type of woman. She's the very sort to make a man a noble wife, and if you're going to have a new mother, Joseph, I cannot imagine a nicer one. What thinks Joe 'bout dat, hey?" he queried, purposely assuming a jesting manner which he by no means felt in the mood for. The fact was, Joe's talk about his dream, and the totally unexpected turn of the conversation, had slightly rattled the big fellow.

"I think just this about it," solemnly replied Joe. "If father happened to marry her, it would be all right. I think she's everything you say, but — but —" He squirmed and glanced appealingly at the other's rather startled face. "I — I wish you'd

tackle her yourself! Now, Bart — don't get mad at me! I — I know I shouldn't have said it, but I don't care a hang — I just couldn't help it! But ever since that day we went fishing I've had the notion that you two would make a bully pair. I — I —"

But Monroe could not stand it any longer. The deadly earnestness of the sage counsellor, the anxious misery of his troubled face, were altogether too much, especially after the rather gloomy thoughts of a few moments before. With a roar of gleeful appreciation, the big fellow leaped from his chair and aimed a kick at a cross-beam which was fully five inches above his head. Then he stood shaking with mirth, and managed to splutter out, "You — dear — old — diplomat, — an' — so — loyal — to yer — popper — too! wow! Joseph — you'll positively kill me yet!" And so the conversation on that subject ended.

But hours later, when Joe was, perhaps, planning new philanthropics in his berth, Monroe leaned back in his writing-chair, stretched his long arms to their fullest extent, then sat idly with pen behind ear and a half-covered page before him. The faintest of traces of smoke proved his pipe was going, but for many minutes he remained motionless, his half-closed eyes seeing nothing, his face an expressionless mask. Suddenly he seemed to snap into strained alertness, his eyes gleamed, and his head slowly turned from side to side until he had shot swift glances at every corner of the Lodge. There was not a sound except

Joe's soft breathing, yet the big hand clutching the edge of the table clearly showed something of a strain, while every line of the face was expressive of wariness. He seemed to feel some strange, perhaps hostile presence. At last his eyes turned to the small window. Nothing there, except some streaks of poplar bark showing whitely in the streaming light and a few bright-looking leaves close to the glass. Yet his eyes sparkled with an almost fierce light and his black brows drew lower and lower as he steadily stared at the innocent-looking panes.

Seconds crawled away, but the snakelike gaze never shifted, although the right hand stretched toward the big revolver, now reloaded and lying at the farther side of the table. As the fingers closed upon the butt of the weapon, a white object struck with a soft pat against a window-pane, and he saw it was a big, square envelope stuck in the split end of a slim switch. At once he rose, thrust the gun into his hip pocket, and silently opened the door, slipped out, and closed the door behind him. For a moment all outside appeared pitch-black. He hissed sharply and was promptly answered; then a shadowy figure seemed to drift toward him, and he could dimly make out the dress of a hunter who was supposed to be a Breed, but who had cast in his lot with the Indians. The instant Monroe recognized him, he softly pushed back the door, and pointing within motioned for silence. The Breed grunted knowingly and handed over two letters which unmistakably were from Mr. King, one addressed to

Monroe and the other to Joe. "Boy's asleep; wait, and I'll give you some good tobacco," whispered Monroe, and in a few moments the mysterious but rather startling visitor had melted into the darkness.

"Queer how this should happen after his dream. Bet it's the call home," muttered Bart, as he opened his half of the mail. And so it proved; Mr. King, while unable to spare time to cross the plains and enjoy the hospitality of the Lodge, expected to reach Winnipeg by the fifth of October, and if Monroe would kindly see that Joe was in Winnipeg ready for the home trip in good season, everything would be satisfactory. Monroe stared long at the letter, sighed, shook his head, and muttered, "Hate to lose the young beggar, but there's no getting around it." Then he went out, found the split switch, put Joe's letter into the cleft, stuck the switch upright beside the trail, and went to bed.

"I dreamed that thing again — that brute with the paper was here last night — there's something doing," growled Joe as he tumbled out of his berth and prepared to fetch some water. Monroe bent low over the stove so that his face was concealed, and rumbled out, "You'd best let up on the dream-talk; some things are liable to happen if you talk too much about 'em. Curious too," he grunted, as his eyes followed Joe as the lad, pail in hand, stepped outdoors. A moment later he straightened, and his face showed a trace of grim humor, for from outside came a shrill yelp of dismay which suggested that after all the wilderness mails were not so un-

certain. There was a clatter such as might be caused by a tin pail flushing in thick cover, and back came Joe, pop-eyed and half-breathless. "Oh! Bart,—it—it's true! The dream's true! Here it is!" he gasped.

"Here's what? The dream? Egad! Guess you're right," replied Bart, as he ran his eye over the letter. "Well, orders are orders, and all we can do is obey 'em. We've plenty of time, but the best thing will be to tidy up the Lodge and hit the iron trail east. The sooner we reach the 'Peg,' the better, because then we can have some sport with Thompson while keeping within striking distance of your father's headquarters. It seem's a bit rough, I know, Joseph," he added with a sudden softening of voice, "but it can't be helped. We've had a mighty pleasant time, but we must not forget the father. That letter I planted for your benefit. Yellow Wolf brought it and another for me after you had turned in. He'll be going into town in a couple of days, and I'll have him send out the team. Meanwhile, it's in order to pack up and be ready, for there's fun ahead."

That evening, while Monroe busied himself within the Lodge, Joe sat for an hour in the old place beside the Bow. He could only half understand his own feelings. In the gray light, the hurrying water at first seemed wan and ghostly and its rippling the sorrow of one who mourns alone. But after a while the song seemed to change to a merrier strain. It actually chuckled with glee, and the mirth

of it increased till, as of old, a laughing water danced downward to the great curve which hid its further movements. Then he realized that the first shock had passed, that he truly longed to see his father, and also was possessed of a sudden keenness for the promised sport and the long trail thereto. As a last rite he knelt at the water's edge, placed his hands upon two boulders, and drank his fill of the cold stream. "That's my parting kiss to my Bow," he whispered; "I've got a string on you all right, and I'll come back and take another pull at it some day."

In due time Yellow Wolf called and passed on to send the team. Two days later a hail from the brush warned of its coming. Everything had been made snug, and the double outfit lay in a small pile. "One last ceremony," said Monroe, as he chopped a six-foot length of poplar pole and eight two-foot lengths of smaller stuff. The pole was driven into the ground at an acute angle and across the path; then the eight short pieces were driven upright in a row a few inches apart and touching the slanting pole. As the last was put in position, Joe was startled by hearing a guttural "How!" and lo! Yellow Wolf was standing beside him.

"How!" grunted Monroe. "All right, Wolf; much obliged. Here's for you." And he passed over a goodly package of tobacco. Yellow Wolf smiled his thanks, studied the arrangement of poplar, glanced at Joe, then raised his eyebrows. "Yes," replied Monroe to the silent question,

whereupon the Wolf gravely offered his paw to each in turn, then strode to the trail. Joe was puzzled, but Monroe soon explained matters. "The Wolf read the sign and asked if you were going—that was all. He doesn't bother talking unless it's absolutely necessary, but he'll tell the lot yonder all about your departure. That pole arrangement means that you are going East for eight months and will return about next June. Every upright stick means one month, and the leaning pole points due east. Do you savey?"

"But are you sure I'll come back? I'll be mighty glad if it proves true!" exclaimed Joe, and his face brightened at the idea.

"Yessir! You're coming back all right; of that I'm sure! Why! would you have me guilty of deceiving the poor Redman? Indian signs always are true. Now, let's hustle in the outfit and hit the trail." Within five minutes they had reached a bend which offered the last glimpse of the Lodge, and there Joe stood up, removed his cap and waved farewell to the snug retreat embowered beside the singing water.

It was a perfect day, and the long drive proved most enjoyable. To Joe it had one marked peculiarity. For mile after mile something seemed to keep pulling at him backward in the direction of the Lodge, and this continued until Monroe directed attention to a small mound on top of which lay some bleached skulls of cattle, and explained that it formed an exact halfway mark between the Lodge

and Calgary. Once past it, the magnetism of the Lodge appeared to lose its power, and Joe's thoughts flew forward to the eastward trail and all its pleasant possibilities. Somewhat to his astonishment, after they had boarded the train and settled down for the long run to the "Peg," he found himself positively eager for the end of the trip and a sight of his father. During all the wonderful outing he had not experienced one touch of homesickness, but, somehow, now he was keen to meet again his own, and at least for the time he didn't much care if they did no shooting.

This frame of mind, however, was not permanent. Before long he sighted a good-sized body of dark-looking water, rimmed with a snow-white border which he knew meant alkali, behind which were dense walls of reeds. In this neighborhood were huge flocks of wild fowl, especially geese, and upon the brown grass in the distance were white patches which might have been sheep, or the remains of snow-drifts. These Monroe explained were big flocks of "wavies," as the Westerners term the snow, or laughing geese, which at the season are astonishingly abundant. The other species of geese which breed in the far north are the big Canada goose or "honker"; its bantam relative, Hutchin's goose; the lesser snow-goose, and the white-fronted goose. The ducks of the north include the canvasback, mallard, widgeon, redhead, gadwall, bluebill, and subspecies, the blue-winged, green-winged, and cinnamon teal, the pintail, shoveller, harlequin, long-tailed duck, buffle-

head, eider, velvet duck, surf-duck, black scoter, ruddy duck, goldeneye, goosander, and the red-breasted and hooded mergansers. During the autumn many of these species swarm upon the larger waters and afford sport which it would be almost impossible to surpass.

At a small station not far east of the big lake a new passenger joined them. He had many sporting-traps, including a repeating-rifle, and as he wanted to enjoy a nap, Monroe borrowed the rifle, and from the porter a couple of camp-stools, which he placed upon the rear platform, explaining to Joe that they were nearing a prairie-wolf country and possibly might get a shot at one of those thieves and game-destroyers of the grasslands, the coyotes. Joe was keen for anything in that line, although he had faint hopes of seeing the slinking quarry. "You keep watch that side, and I'll take care of this," said Monroe, as he seated himself with the rifle across his knees. The track was smooth and free from dust, so the outside seats were pleasant enough. Joe kept a sharp watch and saw many gophers, not a few grouse, and at last a big red fox. But that worthy had no intention of offering himself as a target; for when Joe saw him he was fairly smoking along in the direction of some taller growth into which he plunged before the rifle could be levelled on him.

"Watch out; we're getting near a great place for wolves," said Monroe, after a longish wait. At that point the prairie was broken by irregular, shallow depressions, which looked as if water had once lain

there. "Hi! There's a rascal!" exclaimed the rifleman; "watch me put wings on him." Some hundred yards from the track a big clay-colored coyote, not unlike a poorly cared collie dog, was lounging along with an air of slouchy indifference which seemed almost insulting. He probably had been nosing about the track for scraps tossed from the trains, and he looked as if he held train, passengers, and all in profound contempt.

His indifference, however, speedily vanished; for instantly the rifle cracked, and a puff of yellow dust rose directly before his sharp snout. Had the humming lead been a powerful ex-



COYOTE.

plosive he scarcely could have shot into the air quicker or higher. He seemed to be at top speed the instant his paws touched the grass, and the way he skimmed over the plain was a caution. Click-lick-crack! click-lick-crack! click-lick-crack! went the handy gun, and at each crack rose a quick puff of dust, the first right at his tail, the second directly below his ribs, and the third a few inches behind. In very few seconds the terrified villain had hurled himself over a ridge, and the comedy ended.

"Whee!" yelled Joe, "that was great. My! how they can leg it when they have to."

"I ought to have dropped him," said Monroe, "but it's hard to judge the distance. He was a bit farther off than he looked. If I get another — By George! there's his mate." This second wolf was larger and, as it proved, much less wise. It coolly trotted to the top of a small mound and stood staring, its lop ears and hanging tail suggesting the laziest sort of indifference. But at the first shot it sprang several feet into the air, turned over backward, and fell in full view, its legs moving once or twice. "That's the sort!" quoth Monroe. "That's one less sheep-stealing, grouse-killing varmint, anyhow. May the grass grow long through his remains and a decent 'chicken' build her nest therein."

"How'd it be for me to try a shot?" ventured Joe; but this was not encouraged, for the excellent reason that certain failure would have been the result even of an easy chance. It was explained that such shooting was not to be mastered in a few minutes, but was possible only to those thoroughly accustomed to the motion and the making of the needful allowance. Monroe had done a lot of it, and he well knew how heavy were the odds against the gun. Besides, he was not shooting for sport, but with the serious desire to kill as many as possible of the worst pests in the country. But he met with no further success, for only two more wolves were sighted, and they were too far away for anything but the practically random shots sent after them on general principles.

"Might as well go in now, for there'll be no more

wolves; we've run through their best ground." And with the words Monroe picked up his stool and led the way. He grinned as he noticed that all the wakeful travellers were at the windows of the one side of the car. Rather to his dismay, but to Joe's delight, he was welcomed with a vigorous clapping, which was led by a strapping plainsman, who soon strode forward with outstretched hand and fairly roared: "Put her there! Pretty work! I'm a ranchman. Savey?"

The wolf-killing proved the chief adventure of the trip, and at last came the end of the long run. Joe thrilled at the first glimpse of the "Peg," for strangely enough it seemed something like home, although the real article was yet so far away. There is not much of genuine human nature about one who can retrace a long homeward trail and not welcome each successive mark of progress. Monroe had wired Thompson some hours before, and that gigantic infant was at the depot. After the heartiest of greetings, he arranged with Monroe for a "chicken" shoot two days later. Said he, with a suggestive wink: "I know you're tired of this young beggar, so we'll just divide the dogs, and my man shall drive you north while Joe and I will go east. Eh, youngster?" For a moment Joe was a bit doubtful. He hated to leave Bart, but when the advantages were explained, he agreed cheerily enough. He further learned that it would be ducks soon after, which was by no means depressing.

THINGS À LA THOMPSON — THE
GROUSE OF THE GRASS — A HORSE
ON THE HOST

“**A** HA! Fit as a fiddle, eh? Follow me, and we’ll be off in five minutes,” sung out Thompson, as Joe, well fed and on time to a second, met him at the hotel door. “It’s a glorious morning, just enough breeze for my fast fellows, and we’ll have sport before dark, or I’m no prophet.”

Thompson’s favorite shooting-trap was a four-wheeled affair of his own designing and, naturally, in every way admirable for its purpose. Big men always want plenty of room, hence the seat was as comfortable as ample space and generous cushion could make it. In this Thompson was wise, for after all, the object of sport is enjoyment, and when one has to drive perhaps forty or fifty miles between dawn and dusk, it is well to make the task as easy as may be. Immediately behind the seat, the rig was to all intents a snug kennel, having ample ventilators in sides, roof, and rear door, covered with coarse wire netting. At either side were straps for the guns, and below was a sort of sling which held a large keg of sweet water, an exceedingly useful adjunct for a warm autumn day. Thompson knew

every mile of the prairies and the extensive waterless tracts to be traversed, and because he also knew that an overheated dog was apt to go hunting water when he ought to be ranging solely for grouse, the water-keg was full and secure. The shells, raincoats, and lunch-basket were stowed under the seat, and after a shrewd glance over the outfit, Thompson opened the kennel door.

Joe rather expected a small avalanche of dog to pour forth, because there had been a lot of shrill whining from behind that door, but for many seconds not a nose showed. "Belle!" said the owner sharply, and forth sprang a beautiful black-and-white, clean-cut and hard-looking as a race-horse in training. "Up!" and with one catlike bound, the graceful shape disappeared within the trap. "Bruce!" and a larger liver-and-white dog shot from the kennel and dropped at his owner's feet. "Up!" and he too passed into the rig. "Breeze!" and a lemon-and-white lady showed, then joined her mates. "Bow!" and a grand black-and-white fellow followed the others. "They're in rare good fettle and will show you some speed to-day," said Thompson, as he made fast the door. "Hear those other beggars singing. They think they're out of it for to-day, but old Bart will be along presently, and he'll give 'em all that's coming to them before dark. Now, up you go, and we'll be off. The only thing I'm doubtful about is this horse. He looks all right, but he's hired, because I want Bart to have my old reliable fellow. I don't greatly fancy hired horses,

but the livery-man swore he was all right, the truth of which we'll find out presently."

Even an expert like Thompson could find no fault with the horse, which was a powerful, free-gaited animal and in every way a nice driver. Within five minutes they were out upon the open prairie, and the last trace of anxiety vanished from the big man's face. "He's all right and good for wherever we'll want to go. Just hold the lines a moment and I'll light a cigar." An hour later they reached a clump of small timber, and Joe learned that this marked the beginning of good "chicken" ground. "We'll start a brace here," said Thompson, as he got down. In a few moments Belle and Bruce were away in a swift-pipe-opener; then they slowed a trifle, and as they saw the rig steadily following, they settled to their regular fast-working stride.

In a few moments Joe was considerably astonished. He had fancied that field-dogs chased about within fifty yards or so and sniffed here, there, and everywhere for trace of their game—a notion doubtless fostered by the many pictures he had seen of pointing dogs and their owners close up with guns at the ready. But these canines were of a different stripe. They darted away and away as fast as they could lay eager paws to the ground, their courses crossing in long, sweeping tacks. Faster and farther they went, the horse trotting in chase, until Joe scarcely could make them out against the bronzy grass, which was so short it merely served as an excellent background.

"They know their business. Keep your eye on them, and you'll soon see something worth looking at," said Thompson, who was narrowly watching every movement. "Ah!" he muttered, "too bad, but it wasn't her fault." The flying Belle had abruptly halted far away, and what looked like a lark, but in reality was an old pinnated grouse, was speeding in level flight for a remote cover. In a moment Bruce caught sight of his pointing mate, and instantly he stopped some two hundred yards from her position. "I think it's an old solitary, but there may be more. You never can tell," said Thompson, as he clucked to the horse. "I thought so," he added, as Belle began to steadily move forward. Presently she circled a few times, and at once the waiting Bruce swung off on his original line, an example promptly followed by the other. "She's a wee bit overcautious yet; she's young, you know," explained Thompson, "but so soon as she locates a covey it will be all right. The other rascal backed nicely, eh?"

"I think they're perfectly wonderful," replied Joe. "I had no idea that dog-work was like that. I'm beginning to see why Bart is so keen for it."

"Aye," said Thompson; "he's a rare good 'un with dogs, too. But wait awhile; we'll get a closer view before long."

The dashing ranging continued for many minutes, till Belle turned and slanted swiftly toward them, going as though actually racing her shadow. "Look out now; something doing here," muttered her owner,

and to Joe's delight, Belle turned at an abrupt angle and for a moment stopped within fifty yards of them. "Now watch 'em," said Thompson as he checked the horse. "There's no mistake this time, and yonder's Bruce backing again." Joe felt a decided thrill as he saw Belle slowly rise from a half-crouch to her full height and then begin that beautiful movement, the long draw. Sensitive as a compass, mindful of the previous flush, but determined to prove her quality, she marched proudly forward with head and tail rising higher at every wary step in acknowledgment of the delicious something which the steady breeze was bearing to her wonderful nose. Again and once again she halted, quivering with nervous joy, for the invisible message which drifted to her told of grand things and many of them hidden in the grass some forty yards ahead. Meanwhile, Bruce had seen and understood. Right well he knew what his mate was about. He had seen that head and tail defiantly raised before and never without good cause, so, like the gallant gentleman he was, with perfect faith he propped as firmly as a school bench and with head back and tail in one long quivering line, he waited the proving of the point.

Yard by yard Belle measured it off till in the middle of a cautious step the anxious nose said stop. Slowly as she had been going, the actual halt seemed abrupt and instantly the straining tail was hoisted yet an inch higher till it stuck stiffly up at almost a right angle to her back. "She's a stylish piece for you," said Thompson; "now get down and

walk straight to her. There's probably a dozen birds. Take your time, and I'll mark 'em down." Joe was far from cool as he started, but a quiet assurance that there was no need for haste steadied him. But after all, it was Belle that saved his nerve, for as he got nearer, a something in her resolute pose reassured him. He could see her quivering in every line of her graceful body, yet she could stick to her task and prove the worth of her schooling. It would not do to fail before a dog like that. In a moment a big mottled sharptail ran a few steps, then sprang well up and went off with a gruff "tuck-a-tuck." For the few seconds before flushing, the bird made a very pretty picture, the dark upper plumage contrasting sharply with the white underparts and hair-like covering of the legs.

One of the beauties of prairie-shooting is that there is not a thing to obstruct the view, the sport being as open as duck-shooting. The grouse are about as large as barnyard fowl, and while swift and strong late in the season, they offer a not too difficult mark. It seemed such a fair chance that Joe took proper time and dropped his bird. Instantly reloading, he moved a pace nearer the steadfast Belle, who well knew there were more birds. This lot evidently had not been molested, for presently a second and a third straggled up. Into Joe's mind flashed an idea that it was a glorious chance for a double under the eyes of Thompson. It was under his eyes beyond question, but alas! the rest of it did not materialize, for Joe in his anxiety hurried

the first barrel, and the miss with that must have been contagious. Turning toward the rig, he growled, "Hang it all, I particularly wanted to —" Burr! — whurr! — burr! up went about a dozen beauties which he should have been ready for, and the best he could do was wing one, and that as much by good luck as anything else.

"Never turn from your birds," counselled Thompson, as he drove up and ordered the crouching dogs to retrieve. "But you did well enough," he kindly added, "and you'll do better next time. Don't be too eager. There's lots of birds and shells, also long hours ahead of us. Take plenty of time, and don't bother about the second barrel until you are a bit surer with the first. It'll come to you soon enough. Acquire confidence in yourself and the gun, — it's a rare good one, — and you'll be all right."

Joe thought he never had seen a finer picture than was presented by the two dogs bringing in their birds, and as the intelligent brutes sat up before Thompson, and in turn delivered the prizes into his hand, they were worthy of any man's admiration. Then they dashed away, going the better for their taste of sport, until they neared some scrub in which Thompson had marked down half a dozen birds. "I think I'll take a hand here," said he. "You shoot at anything you see rise, but you may find the cover a bit baffling till you get used to it."

Within five minutes the now close-working dogs had located the grouse, which were strung along the edge of the cover. Five singles flushed in measured

succession, and Joe managed to kill two. "Blaze away. I'll do the correcting," said Thompson, as he doubled up a bird which had just been artistically missed — a performance which he repeated again and again. "We must stop 'em right here or not at all," he explained, "for this cover's broad and it's a slow job beating 'em up after the second flush."

None knew better how apt is the sharptail to go driving away for perhaps a mile after being flushed from the first cover and while the dogs were both keen and game to face the roughest growth, there was no wisdom in getting them all scratched up while just as good birds were waiting all about in the broad open. Thompson didn't believe in coddling dogs, but these were going to the trials, hence they were handled rather cautiously. "Let's see; you have three, and mine make eight. That's enough out of one brood. Let's go on. They're pretty heavy, eh?" And in truth, even the trio made Joe's coat drag at his shoulder in an astonishing fashion. "And now the big beggars," said Thompson, as he ordered Belle and Bruce into the wagon.

A minute later, the delighted Breeze and big Bow were tearing away at an astounding clip. "Now you see the genuine grass-cutters," said their proud owner, "and if there's anything better on this continent, I don't know who owns it, that's all. Bow patterns after his mighty sire, and if ever I'm to own another crackajack, yonder black-and-white villain's the article. They're all good, but just keep your eye on that fellow."

There was precious little danger of Joe overlooking anything during the ten minutes they followed those flying forms, and soon he understood why they were called the "grass-cutters." The big dog especially moved at a slashing race-horse-like gallop, his superb action conveying the idea that he was going even faster than was the case. Once the pair split tacks not a gunshot ahead, and Joe's heart thrilled, for he could distinctly see them increase their speed as they neared each other. Brother and sister though they were, they were jealous of their loved master's favor, and their noble rivalry lent an additional charm to the perfect work. Joe glanced at Thompson and smiled; for the big man was staring intently, his face fairly glowing with satisfaction. "She's going great guns to-day; even the big 'un will have to stretch himself to hold her now. Just see that witch race him, will you! But Breezie, my girl, you'll wish you were a hurricane presently when yonder long-gear'd gentleman understands you are trying to outfoot him. By George! Bow's got 'em. How's that?" he almost shouted, for the big dog had whirled and stopped.

"Why! what the mischief's he trying to do? He acts like—" The rest didn't matter, for the dog's actions soon explained themselves. For perhaps ten seconds he remained immovable; then, to Joe's amazement, he reared up like a horse and actually stood for seconds erect upon his hind feet. Then he flashed forward in swift, tigerish bounds—jump—jump—jump, oft repeated. Joe's won-

dering eyes saw the great leaps and, while making the last, the dog, as it were, set himself in the air and struck the ground as rigid as a stool. He seemed literally to throw himself at his point, and something in the apparently superbly reckless fashion in which it was done forcibly reminded Joe of a champion completing a tremendous running hop-step-and-jump. And there the grand dog stood like a flawless bit of sculpture chiselled by a wizard hand to express haughty confidence; for the long, lean head and tapering tail were both as high above the powerful back as they well could be.

“Good boy, Bow! And just notice her ladyship, will you? If that isn’t the swellest thing in dog deportment, I’ll eat ’em both. Oh, he won’t do a thing at the trials, not he! You ought to drop a brace to pay for the picture. Toddle along now and take your time. There’s a lot of birds,” said Thompson. With a glance at stanch Breeze, who was patiently backing, Joe strode toward the big dog, and soon there was thrilling action. The first bird to show went down neatly centred, but the second was missed. “Load, take your time,” said a cool voice from behind, and Joe hearkened and profited, for two birds rose together, and only one made off. In a few seconds three more straggled up, and again one was tumbled and the other missed. Then, with a jarring roar of many strong wings the remaining birds flushed together, and Joe watched them streaming away, alternately flapping and sailing like so many gigantic meadow-larks. They seemed to

pitch in brush about a mile away, and Thompson said he had them marked. At the order the dogs rose and attended to the retrieving, and when this was done, Thompson stretched forth his hand and remarked, "Just shake on your first double -- you'll be a crack shot yet." At first Joe imagined he was being teased, but Thompson ordered Bow off to one side to "seek dead," and sure enough, after going a long way, he found a bird which Thompson had marked down. "It was the fourth one up," he said. "You thought you had missed with your second barrel, but I saw the feathers fly and closely marked the bird, which, from the way it went down, I was sure was dead. So, with all your pains, Joe, you actually made your first double without knowing it. Now for lunch, and we'll attend to those other birds later."

It was doubtful if there was a happier boy in all Manitoba than Joe as he sat upon the grass opposite his host and prepared to do full justice to the good things in the hamper. That Thompson was pleased with him was evident. That he had shot very well indeed for a novice was as true, while the whole outing thus far, especially the grand work of the dogs, had been a delightful revelation. Before they sat down he had worried a little about the last lot of grouse, but he had been told they surely would wait in the cover for an hour or more, so there was nothing to do but enjoy himself. Meanwhile the horse had been taken from the shafts, the bridle exchanged for a halter, the shank made fast to a

wheel, and the noble steed was contentedly munching oats from a tempting pile upon the ground.

"I'll just have a look at the dogs' feet, then we'll hook up and be off after those grouse," said Thompson, as he finished his cigar. The horse had long ended his argument with the oats, so Joe, thinking he might as well make himself useful without saying anything unbuckled the halter and attempted to put on the bridle. Rather to his astonishment, really owing to his awkward movements, the supposed-to-be lamblike steed shook his head violently and that instant grasped the fact that he was absolutely free. Like other unwisely emancipated folk, he rather abused his privileges. His first act was a joyous snort—one of those Oh!-ain't-this-a-snap sort of snorts; then he whirled about and let fly both feet at startled Joe, whom luckily he missed. Then he dashed away for a hundred yards, bucking and kicking like a wild horse every time a strap or tug touched his legs. Then he stopped, lowered his head, bent knees and hocks, turned round a couple of times, flopped upon his side, and began a joyous rolling.

For full a minute Thompson's tongue refused to work. He stood, red-faced, pop-eyed, open-mouthed, staring at hapless Joe; then he fairly screamed, "Why! you bally idiot, what the devil made you let 'im go? He'll put for town in a minute, and here we are with the outfit and my best dogs stuck on this um-ditty-um prairie. Oh! um-ditty-um-dum-dum!" he spluttered as he stamped

to and fro as hot as a boiled ham. Poor Joe was in a fix, and he knew it, but he had just sense enough to keep silent and eye the brute of a horse, which, having completed its rolling, was standing with the harness trailing from it like a lot of old vines. Luckily, John Thompson, while having a gunpowderish temper, really was one of the kindest and most considerate of mortals, and so soon as the first wild flash of his wrath passed, he at once became his old cheery self. "I beg your pardon, son," he frankly said. "The thing startled me so and you've been shooting so well, I really, for the moment, forgot you were not an old plainsman. Forgive me, and we'll try to mend matters, although for the life of me I just don't see how we're going to catch that bull-headed Balaam's ass over yonder. Our only chance is that he may be a new horse and not know the country. I never saw him before, and blank him! I don't want to see him again after to-day. If ever he starts running in earnest, he'll step on the tugs and bust 'em and perhaps every strap on his miserable hide. That's right, cock your fool tail and buck-jump!" he snarled at the delighted nag. "If a dead horse could travel, I'd get you, mister, with the twelve gauge!" And he shook his big fist at the aggravating brute. To Joe, the beauty and brightness of the world seemed suddenly to turn to old ashes that had been rained on, for he realized that they were many miles from the nearest home-stead and that the recapturing of the horse was liable to be an extremely troublesome task, to say nothing

of the almost certain destruction of the displaced harness. Nervous as he felt, Thompson's next remark forced him to laugh, for it was: "We'll have to catch him some way, even without harness, for we might feed on the brute for a week, anyhow. Let's try to surround him, but be careful not to grab at him if you get close; move carefully and look out for those heels, for he'd kick as soon as not."

For one solid hour they stole after, flattered, and almost prayed to that infernal horse, Thompson sweating, and threatening volcanic eruptions of Anglo-Saxon and patois. But it was no use. Half a dozen times did the brute allow them to approach within a yard, only to whirl, kick up his heels, and prance off with his tail over his back like the father of all squirrels. Thompson whistled and swore in fair proportion, but it did no good. Once Joe's heart throbbed with wild hope, for the horse stood facing Thompson, and actually thrust forward his muzzle as though to taste of the few scraped-up oats the proffered hand contained. Then, of a sudden, he reared, and sparged, moose-fashion, with his forefeet, and only Thompson's agility saved him. "You umpetty-ump, man-killing, fiddle-headed fool! I'll blow your putty brains out pretty soon!" he roared, mad all through, for indeed horse-play occasionally palls, and time was passing. "It's no use, Joe, we'll never catch him, and the harness is all busted anyhow," he finally said; and poor Joe's heart sank, for he knew his own thoughtlessness had been the cause of all the trouble.

"You just go to the deuce, will you!" hissed Thompson finally at the aggravating brute; and to all appearances the horse took him at his word, for he promptly bolted. Thompson stared at him till he had run about fifty yards, then suddenly roared out, "That's right! Break your bally neck!—I hope it's in three pieces." The cause of this speech was a magnificent somersault abruptly performed by the horse, which, stepping upon some strap, went end over end, and for a moment lay still. "Mebbe he ain't quite dead, if I can get to him." And with the words he rushed for the fallen one. But luck was unkind; the horse sprang up, shook loose a few more straps, and stood, tail in air, awaiting further developments.

The darkest hour surely is just prior to the new day, for at this juncture Joe happened to glance behind him and saw a team and wagon jogging along the trail some half-mile away. Thompson took one look, then ran for all that was in him to cut off the traveller. To Joe's inexpressible joy the wagon presently halted, and a few moments later a figure on horseback was speeding toward the runaway. The rider evidently was no novice at horse-catching, and very soon the prospect had brightened. At first glance, it seemed impossible to patch up the broken harness, but the stranger had a lot of small rope and copper wire in his outfit, and he and Thompson finally managed to provide a gear which at least would last them home.

"Oh! wouldn't I like to give you what you

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deserve," said Thompson to the horse, as the home-ward trip began. "You've spoiled our day and pretty near run me off my feet, and the worst of it is, I've just got to sit still like an old granny and humor you because if I basted you proper you'd jump clean out of that hardware, hemp, and rotten leather. But I'll whisper a few things to your boss for hiring me a cross between an imbecile jackass and a crazy bull and calling it a horse." Bart told Joe later that Thompson's talk almost set the barn on fire.

A SESSION WITH THE SNIPE—THE
DOMAIN OF THE DUCKS—THE
“BREEDS” OF THE BRUSHLANDS

“**H**ERE we are! Change cars for Clade-boy, Tealtown, Bluebillburg, Redheadhurst, and all web-footed points! Passengers going east will walk, I reckon!” shouted Thompson, as the train pulled up at an alleged station, which, so far as Joe could see, consisted mainly of primeval peace, poplar, and future possibilities. But he found there were station buildings and behind them a modest combination of general store and hotel, which presently proved no bad place to stay.

“Looks a bit rough, but it’s all right, eh?” chuckled Thompson. “Can’t imagine what’s gone wrong with Batteese — never knew him to be late before. I’ll have to — no I won’t either, for yonder he comes!” he concluded, and Joe saw far away a team emerging from the brush. As he looked, a second team appeared, and the two jogged forward at the tireless, all-day gait of the northern ponies.

“Now we’ll stow a square meal, give the nags a chance to rest and feed, then hit the trail. It’s a longish drive, but we have a glorious day, and there’ll be a bit of fun along the road or my name’s

not John Thompson. All hands to the grub-trough!" he ordered, as he led the way to what turned out to be an excellent meal. After that, the men had a smoke, while Joe took a look at the surroundings. These presented a picture of wildness. Gaze where he would, there spread the same patchwork of brown grass and slim, close-crowded poplars,



MALLARD.

their dwarfed trunks showing silver-white like the beautiful birches of farther south. To the four points of the compass ran trails as black as ink. They looked not unlike cracks in a brown crust, and Joe wondered who travelled them, for their condition proved more than irregular use. Except close at hand, not a building was visible, but he later learned that Breed villages, white settlements, and large farms lay in three directions behind the shadowy walls of

poplar. In the fourth, their route, was big Lake Manitoba, and at its southern end their objective point, Clandeboy Bay, of which he was soon to learn.

The lake and bay form a paradise for the wild fowler. Amid leagues of silence, where the brown grass spreads like fur over long, billowy undulations,



CANVASBACK.

sleeps the great lake. Now and then a summer squall hisses across the broad open and sends the white suds growling up easy slopes of sand, the chosen promenade of countless shore birds; but, as a rule, the shining water sleeps as though awaiting the advent of some magician who might command something like sustained activity. At one point, the lake's southerly rim is broken to loop a mighty bay, and here all semblance of sandy beach is lost.

Instead, the characteristic short, bronzy plains-grass creeps to the edge of moist, boggy soil, and there the growth changes. A few yards beyond the firm ground begins a region of reeds which spreads for many miles. In most places the line between grass and reeds is sharply defined by a margin of the



REDHEAD.

blackest of yielding ooze, beloved of the Wilson snipe and his nearer kin. The reeds of the bay are a marvel of rank luxuriance. A tall man standing in a canoe, occasionally can peer across leagues of lonesomeness, the brown monotony only broken by the winding streaks of channels and the flash of half-revealed ponds. If the observer happened to be a tenderfoot, he probably would exclaim, "Get me

out of this grass cemetery, for surely here nature has died!"

During a ten-minutes scrutiny he might see no sign of life, yet his idea of that damp desolation would be farther from the truth than if he had purposely striven to guess wrong, and not only wrong, but as far wrong as his most strenuous effort at imagination possibly could carry him. Silent as is the scene, lifeless as leagues of it appear, the quivering reeds screen thousands upon thousands of wild, free things which as yet are almost ignorant of human methods and which spend lazy, dreamy weeks in fat content. The only magicians who can rouse these fen-folk are two: the one, a lath-lean, umber-visaged, shock-haired Breed; the other, one of those canvas-covered whites who seem to be everlastingly driven into the drowsy corners of creation.

The "silent, smoky savage" of a Breed seldom incites to riot. He hunts of necessity, and until he has had much to do with his white brother, seldom sees the sporting side. To him, cartridges are costly, and punting through reeds laborious; so when he does face the marsh, his chief idea is to get all the fowl he needs with the fewest shots and the least possible labor. Ignorant of town and town ways, he has mastered every mystery of the marsh for miles around; so when he silently launches his canoe and as silently steals along a channel to the reeds walling some pond, it is safe to wager that the pond is of easy access and more or less thoroughly covered with

drowsy ducks. In the art of the paddle, the Breed is only rivalled by those few white men who have devoted years to the study of the silent craft, while none has learned to excel him in that hazardous enterprise — the slow, soundless forcing of a canoe through dense cover within a few yards of the sensitive ears of a host of water-fowl.



BLUEBILL.

There is, perhaps, no more difficult task in all gun-craft, yet the Breed can do it — remarkably well while punting a white man, perfectly when alone in his canoe. He never is in a hurry, and he drifts inch by inch like the shadow of a lazy cloud, till through the thinning reeds his wild eyes can distinguish the open water and the rafts of unconscious fowl. Those wonderful aboriginal eyes are swift as a modern camera. One flash of them takes in everything, especially the closest packed mass of the big-

gest and best ducks, for there frequently are several species floating in close proximity. Noiselessly as a lynx he discards the paddle and raises the cheap breech-loader. The muzzle steadies upon a bristle of unsuspecting heads, and the lead tears a long furrow halfway through the raft, as the gun is swiftly shifted for the second barrel. Then the canoe suddenly springs into the open, for there are stunned and crippled ducks which may presently revive, and a clout from a paddle is much cheaper than another shot, while quite as effective. If a goodly bunch of fowl be secured, the Breed may or may not paddle lazily homeward, or perhaps repeat his deadly work a bit farther on after things have quieted down. But it is very pleasant in the canoe, and hurry is a sin. The sun will not sink to the sky-rim for long hours yet, there is a rough lunch at hand, also pipe and tobacco, and the man who goes home too soon may find trouble in evading a trifle of poplar-chopping, which is not for one moment to be compared with sun-basking in a grass-padded canoe as comfortable as a hammock. Besides, the swart-skinned wife really is putting on a shocking amount of flesh of late, and there is nothing better than some soulful swinging of an axe to reduce the female form divine. If the breeze be right, he may hear a whisper of remote chopping, and smile and snuggle down; for next to the roar of a gun and the wail of a fiddle, he most loves to hear the sound of sufficiently far-away honest labor. And this is the daily story of the Indian summer while the hosts of fowl, bred

yet farther north, rest and fatten in the bounteous bay, while awaiting nature's final order for that marvellous flight to the lazy locked lagoons of a clime that knows not frost. But occasionally there is another story. Near the rim of the bay stands a tiny log shanty, its one wee window peering across desolation. On an outer wall are long rows of stout nails which no Breed would so sinfully waste, while within are upper and lower berths for four, and a low cot excellent for a man-of-all-work. Heavy paper is tacked over the inside walls, there are nails to support all sorts of gear, and there are also a table, some benches, and a fine cook-stove and outfit. All this clearly is White Man's medicine, and burly indeed have been the patients of that prairie pharmacy. Upon the wall paper are the pencilled records of many a glorious day, and a tenderfoot surely would be puzzled by the names affixed thereto. The names, however, are no jokes; for Royalty, Statecraft, Bar, Pulpit, Art, and Science have all snored in those humble bunks, and pricked pleased ears at the hiss of the shaved bacon when the pink forefinger of Dawn plucked at the mist-curtain eastward.

The stowing of the outfit in the wagons greatly interested Joe. Thompson, old campaigner that he was, had seen to everything except hand-bags and guns; and when all hands sought the station platform, they found a goodly pile of stuff which the trainmen had unloaded. But as everything except a roll of old overcoats and raincoats was in neat boxes or bags, the handling was not so formidable

as a first glance suggested. As Thompson had done the purchasing, he alone could check off the packages, and of this he made short work. The Breed wagons proved to be a three-seated spring rig and one of the ordinary farm type, and into the first went guns, some shells, and a small box of lunch. Then the Breed drivers loaded the other as directed by Thompson and Monroe, till the last parcel was snugly in place. "We're all right. Everything's here. All aboard, Batteese, but first shake hands with Mr. Joe King. — This is your punter, Joe, and a rare good 'un he is. The other chap's only a driver," said Thompson. Joe smiled and held out his hand, which Batteese solemnly shook, but there was a twinkle in the wild eyes which told that the observant Breed already had seen enough to reconcile him to the task of looking after the green one. As a rule, the punters are a bit jealous, each keen to ally himself with the best shot in a party, but a private hint from Thompson had not been lost upon the wily Batteese, who was well aware that his brother Alfred was Thompson's favorite, as an older man, an uncle, was Monroe's.

It was a great drive. Once fairly upon the trail, they rolled along almost as smoothly and silently as a billiard-ball. The entire region was one vast, level plain, seemingly an endless reach of alternate wild meadow and scrub, the only proof of progress being the approaching and passing of exactly alike areas of poplar. Thompson and Monroe literally burdened the seat behind the driver, while Joe had

the rear seat to himself. But the big fellows did not forget him, and the first ten miles were enlivened by an unbroken succession of yarns of the fur-trade, encounters with various animals, and not seldom of lively experiences along the very trail they were following. But with all their nonsense and yarns the two men kept a sharp lookout either side the trail, and when about ten miles had been covered, Joe was advised to put his gun together and hold himself in readiness for interesting possibilities. Because Batteese knew his ponies as they knew the trail, there was nothing of actual driving, which left the swarthy one free to observe things on his own account. The superiority of the wild eye was proved when brown hands suddenly hauled upon the reins and a voice like a low growl said "Chicken dur!" the shock head at the same time nodding toward a small clump of low brush some fifty yards away. "By George! he's right; out you go, youngster. Walk straight for him and be ready, for he'll flush before you're halfway there," directed Monroe, and in a minute Joe was moving forward with his gun at the ready. "Bet you a dozen cigars he misses," muttered Thompson, and "Done!" said Monroe.

A slight movement in the brush had told Joe exactly where to look, and as he marched forward it is doubtful if Manhattan Island would have been considered a fair price for his chance. It was a rather tense situation, for he knew three pairs of eyes were watching every movement, and above all he desired to favorably impress those microscopic

black ones. Perhaps fortunately, the sharptail—for such it was—did not prolong the agony. To stand at the ready while watching an undecided bird making up its mind to flush, is not the best thing for the nerve of even a veteran, but this particular sharptail was considerate. As Joe got within twenty yards of the brush, there was a sudden whirring, and a graceful shape sprang into the sunlight and sped straight away, sending back a mocking "tuck-a-tuck!" Naturally, Joe was hurried, for theories are apt to also take wing when a swift bird rises, but at the spiteful crack, to his unmeasured joy, the bird went down with startling suddenness. Thinking more of his good showing than of the game, he glanced toward the wagon, but lo! instead of applause he heard a sharp, "Load, you young duffer, and 'tend to business!" Instantly he remembered that solitary grouse are not the rule, and that bird after bird may straggle up, even after several shots have been fired over them. But this time it was a lone specimen.

"No more, eh? Then gather your bird!" sung out Monroe, whereat Thompson laughed audibly. What it meant Joe could not guess, but a something in that laugh made him feel a trifle uncomfortable. However, his bird was down close by and in the shortest of short grass, so he would gather his game and then find out the joke. But alas! when he reached the spot, the only suggestion of grouse was a mottled feather, and look closely as he would he could find nothing more. The supposedly clean-

killed bird had merely been winged by a straggling pellet, and to his mortification, the late prideful gunner recalled his needlessly hurried aim. But help came from an unexpected quarter. "Me gettum — stan' dur — no move!" rumbled a deep voice, and Batteese slipped past and seemed fairly to glide over the grass toward some larger growth fully sixty yards off. At its edge he halted for many seconds, then suddenly flung himself with arms outstretched upon a tangle of dwarf stuff. When he got upon his feet, a whirl of brown and white told the story. "Good eye, Batteese!" grunted Thompson, and soon the team moved on.

"Always go straight to your bird on ground like this. You can reload as you go," counselled Monroe. "And remember that a bird which goes down in an unusually abrupt manner almost invariably is what we call 'butted'; that is, the wing-bone is broken close to the body. If that bird had been a bob-white or a ruffed grouse, even Batteese's searchlights might not have located it for you. His kind never saw a bob-white, but," he continued, turning to Batteese, "s'posen dat one birch partridge, you find 'um, hey?" "No — him los'," retorted the dusky one. "Him run — no find — 'cept snow. Track den."

They had not travelled a mile before three pinnated grouse, coming from a distance, glanced on set wings across the trail, and pitched in some cover not more than waist-high. This meant a royal chance, for in such shelter, especially just after a longish flight, the

"chicken" is apt to lie very close. With a warning to take his time, Joe started after them, and mindful of the previous experience, as the birds rose, he covered the first and tumbled it dead; but he had held on that a trifle too long, which meant a lost opportunity for the second barrel. But he was quite content, the more because both Monroe and Thompson were unmistakably pleased, while the quick flash of Batteese's snowy teeth was even stronger approval. "I feel ever so much surer of them now—I think I could knock 'em right along," quoth Joe as they jogged forward. "Ya-as?" drawled Monroe, in honeyed tones, "that's the way;" then he nudged Thompson and whispered, "Keep your eye peeled as we go through the timber," whereat the other villain chuckled suggestively.

In due time the trail led through what had been meant by "the timber," a great belt of poplar nearly two miles across. It was a famous place for that thunder-winged fellow, the ruffed grouse, and knowing the bird's penchant for a trail through cover, the conspirators confidently expected to see Sir Ruffs before again reaching grass-lands. Having been warned that both grouse and hare might show, Joe sat with his gun between his knees, hoping for further opportunity to prove his prowess, and, incidentally, himself keeping an exceedingly sharp lookout. But it was the master of snare-placing and wizard of wood-lore, Batteese, who finally saw a light-footed, brown-plumaged beauty sprint from the trail to a clump of fern a few yards ahead. "Birch-partridge

—dur,” he muttered as he checked the team, and down went Joe to win fresh laurels.

Batteese's whip indicated the exact spot, and as Joe moved toward it, he thought that this was the very chance he craved. For the first time he felt that cool confidence which gives the mastery of the gun, and as he glanced along the trail extending like a hallway between almost solid walls of saplings, he knew he could stop any grouse that dared to rise. He would allow plenty of time for the charge to spread, tumble his bird, and if a second rose, make his first double. And if there were four or five and they straggled up, he would rush in a third shell and win great — “Bo-o-o-m!” A thing like a wireless message with feathers on it roared up not five yards away, and instead of taking to the open, it apparently bored a hole through the poplars and vanished. Joe felt himself rock backward, but the gun was not raised an inch. As he regained his balance, “Bo-o-om! Boo-oom! Boooooom!” three brush-torpedoes exploded and unmistakably hasty things curved into the cover and left twigs clicking behind their reckless charge. And the gun had not moved! but from behind sounded noises like water leaving a big jug, and presently Thompson gasped out a delighted, “Wow! Talk about your *rough* grouse! — eh?” Monroe was nearly as bad, for he could scarcely stammer, “Never mind, Joe; we all did the same thing the first time.” Batteese said never a word, but for an instant any one might have counted about twenty of his great teeth, while the

sparkle in his half-closed eyes was a marvel of silent glee.

The rear seat was occupied by a rather subdued Nimrod, who, however, never relaxed his watch of the ground ahead. It was not until they were approaching the open that he saw anything. Then he quietly asked Batteese to pull up, for a brown shape had trotted from the trail a long way ahead. This time Joe hoped to do better, and as he led the way with the wagon slowly following, he kept saying to himself, "Shoot anyhow; don't give cause for another laugh." In this he was right; for it is important for a novice to grasp the fact that it is much better to shoot and miss than not to shoot at all. So, when the grouse roared up like the others and darted into the brush, Joe pulled trigger a fraction of a second too late. He felt he had done better, and did not in the least mind Thompson's sympathetic, "Just a shade too late, Joe; they're a wee bit too fast for you yet." At that moment he happened to catch Batteese's eye, and its curious expression puzzled him. "Tink—so!" said the Breed as he dropped to the trail. "You—hol'—me—look," and with the words he passed Joe the reins and forced his way into the cover. Minutes dragged away with not a sound from the brush, but Monroe advised patience. "Just wait and let him work it out his own way. He saw something we missed. He's a wonder at marking—aha! I fancied as much! Good boy, Joe!" Silently from the brush glided Batteese, and swinging by its neck

from his hand was a grand ruffed grouse. "Good — shot," was all he said, and again Joe saw the teeth and a flash in the eyes, which this time was not mirth.

"Just tip us your fin," said Thompson, as he offered a huge hand; "you were dead on, or the light stuff never would have got to him through all that brush. 'Twas as pretty a shot as I've seen in many a day. You've forever won Batteese, too, if I'm any sign-reader. How 'bout it, Batteese?" And the swart retriever rumbled, "Good — shot." That Monroe was delighted was only what might have been expected. "It was very pretty work," said he, "and you did the right thing. Cultivate the habit of shooting at grouse so long as a feather is visible. The only way is to shoot and keep on shooting, no matter if twenty birds in succession get away. That's my rule, and I'm at least fair at the game — eh, old pal?" Thompson's only reply was a long-drawn "Aye!" but the way he said it meant much.

"Dook — dur!" growled Batteese as they rolled out upon the open prairie, and before he pulled up, both big men recalled a little slough in a hollow just ahead, but at the moment invisible, owing to a roll in the ground. "All hands out and prepare for war," whispered Monroe, and soon two more guns were ready. "I'll go right — you, left. Joe'll watch till we signal, and then slip along the trail. The slough's right beside it, and maybe we'll all get a crack." Joe watched the big bent backs as the crouching figures slipped away, and, when finally

Monroe waved his hand, moved warily along the trail, expecting he scarce knew what, but ready for any form of business. As he topped the rising ground, he saw some fifty yards below a small pond ringed with much lush growth, at the edge of which the trail passed. Monroe and Thompson were skirmishing toward the common centre, and at the moment a big ripple showed on one side of the slough and a dark mass went into the cover. Nearer and nearer the three figures drew, then Monroe called out: "Ready! Don't drop any in the slough. Let 'em fly clear." There was a breathless pause, then, with a bursting roar of wings, fifty or more big gray ducks sprang into the air and started on a course straight between Joe and Thompson. A noble bunch passed so near that their every markings were visible, and at these Joe cut loose with both barrels. Three ducks fell to the first shot, but the second was a failure. Two quick reports, and it seemed to rain ducks over in Thompson's territory; then that worthy's voice rang out, "Quick! watch Bart." A lone pair of fowl had turned from Joe's fire and were rushing at top speed high over the third gun. Up straightened the tall figure, two shots sounded in swift succession, and duck after duck folded up like a brown parcel and came hissing down to strike the grass with a quick whop!—whop! such as only extremely dead ducks can make. And from Thompsonville-in-the-Grass arose a sounding a-ah! of admiration, for 'twas a noble double and the temporary mayor of Thompsonville, etc., was

above any petty jealousy. He had the most ducks, but none knew better than he the difference between flocking a near-by bunch and pulling down such a brace of climbers.

“Thought you had me out in the cold, eh, you rascals? but I did get a crack, after all. Oh! I’ll learn yet. How ’bout it, Joe — little gun reach far, eh? My, they’re a fine lot! Somebody fumbled his second barrel, too, but he did well enough.” The hearty ring in Monroe’s voice was good to hear, and Joe forgot his small second-barrel mistake in his admiration of the performer of the prettiest piece of gun-work he had ever seen. But the real worshipper was standing like a bronze statue in the wagon. Black eyes had noted every move of the brief skirmish, and they flashed honest admiration as Monroe sung out: “Batteese! You see dem try rob me of my chance? Mean trick dat dey do, hey?” But all Batteese said was, “Good — my — brudder!”

That ended the gun-work for the time, and at last they caught the flash of distant open water, near which was what looked like a doll’s house. It proved to be the shanty, and to Joe it seemed a crumb of civilization which might have been dropped from a balloon. Breed hands had cut the rough materials miles away, then put them together under Thompson’s direction, while the door, window, and dressed boards for inside work had been shipped from Winnipeg and hauled the final stage. As Joe soon learned, it was a mighty snug shack. The

long rows of nails upon the north wall suggested that great numbers of duck had been expected by somebody, but the other side of the shack was more interesting, for it supported a rough board lean-to under which lay a big skiff and two fine cedar canoes of the famous Rice Lake model. Inside each craft were stowed two light paddles, a long punting-paddle, and a dozen hollow wooden decoys. To Joe it seemed rather risky to leave such things so easily accessible, but he learned that the natives never meddled. If one happened that way, he possibly might borrow a few decoys, a paddle, or even one of the canoes, but anything used would be most carefully replaced, while word of such using would be sent to the owner at the earliest opportunity.

When the stuff had been unloaded and properly stored, Batteese started a fire and made ready bacon, eggs, bread, and tea for all hands. The ponies were watered, hobbled, and allowed to graze, and the boats were lifted from their shelter and carefully examined. They proved to be in perfect condition, but the huge skiff or punt—for it was a veritable nondescript—most interested Joe. "That's my trading-schooner," said Thompson, laughingly. "When I shoot ducks, I like to feel both safe and comfortable—so there you are!" Monroe winked, for he was a stanch admirer of the cedar canoe, of which he was undeniably a master. The "trading-schooner" was Thompson's, and by no means the punter's idea of what a ducking-craft should be. Not so very long and low, but of tremendous beam, it floated with a raft-

like steadiness. About midships was a great revolving wooden armchair, in which the mighty captain was wont to sit in plethoric ease and administer to the ills of such fowl as evinced any need of a tonic with lead in it. Meanwhile, the unfortunate punter just punted for all he was worth; and when he got back with a choice lot of ducks, as he invariably did, he mostly slumbered till the next starting-time.

When the boats had been carried to the water, Thompson dismissed the punters for the day with the understanding that they would report for business at gray dawn. Joe learned that a tiny village was hidden by the bluffs to the west and that the punters thought nothing of the trip to and fro. As the wagons started, Thompson bawled after them: "If you meet that frog-eating artist, tell him to hustle out here! We're not going to do our own cooking!" He explained that a young Frenchman, an expert at camp cookery, would arrive sometime before sundown, and that the probable reason for his tardiness had been a dance somewhere the previous night, an attraction which no Breed nor French-Canadian could resist. "He's a nice fellow, is Jean; I've had him with me many times and have yet to see a better hand near a cook-stove. Now, we'll get plenty of ducks to-morrow in the marsh yonder; suppose you and I do a trifle of skirmishing afoot. There's a few miles of wet ground below there, and we'll surely see plover and perhaps a few snipe. Let's get on the waders and fill up the time, anyway."

They found Monroe just hanging up the last of

the shooting-togs upon the nails which each was to consider his own, and he had changed from tweed to sweater, cords, and waders, — an example which the others speedily followed. "You two go ahead, and I'll try later; the ground's not broad enough for three abreast," he said, and Thompson bowed in mock gravity and replied, "Thanks, O most gracious monarch of the marsh; thy insignificant subjects be most truly grateful." Joe felt there was something behind this peculiar speech, and as they tramped toward the wet ground, he asked what was the joke. "Joke!" exclaimed Thompson, "there's no joke about it! But I forgot you'd never seen that long-legged old pirate talking to small game. Gad! if he's a joke, I'd hate to be a snipe when a fellow in dead earnest happened along. He's fast as a bullet when he wants to be, and those big lamps of his can see behind like a rabbit. You just wait awhile, and you'll see something worth watching. Now, this is new game for you, and if we find snipe, they'll prove pretty fast, but remember this, they are very small and they seem to be farther away than is the case. They are apt to dodge a bit at first, but don't try to wiggle the gun after them. Get your eye on the bird, toss up the gun, and cut loose. You may miss a lot, but shoot anyway, for no novice ever did any good trying to hold on to these twisty chaps. So make up your mind to blaze away smartly at every chance."

The veteran, in spite of his firm belief in Monroe's superiority, was himself a rare good shot, as Joe

presently discovered when they had reached a few acres of the blackest of mud. From a tussock of coarse grass sprang a swift, brown thing, its bent wings making a "whip-ip-ip!" of hollow sound, its alarm-cry, a rasping "sca-ip!—scape!" as it darted off in a series of most puzzling twists and short zigzag movements. Instantly Thompson's gun cracked, and the wavering flicker of brown changed to a point of white as the bird turned over and struck the mud. "Be ready; another is apt to flush any moment, and you—" "Whip-ip! sca-ip!" twice repeated, and a brace of beauties went tearing along a couple of feet from the ground. Vainly did Joe try to cover his bird. The thing appeared to be possessed and to pitch from side to side in a fashion which no hand could follow, and as a result no shot tried to check its hissing speed. The other gun, however, did better, and the second snipe whirled over, hit the mud, then sprang again and again a couple of feet into the air, sca-iping vigorously the while. Its last useless effort tumbled it into a big pool of water, and to Joe's astonishment the bird swam smartly to the other side and ran into a tuft of grass. "Why! see it swim; I thought snipe only waded!" he exclaimed. "Oh, yes, they can swim all right, so can most or all shore birds," explained Thompson. "We'll get that fellow presently, for I saw where he went. He's only winged and he'll hide where he is. They're great skulkers at times, and the peculiar stripy effect of their backs so blends with brown grass-stems that they are precious hard to locate without a dog."

That particular bird was duly secured and promptly killed. Then they proceeded to enjoy one of those bits of typical snipe-shooting which reward northern Nimrods who chance upon good ground at the proper time. Thompson kept cutting down his birds in a fashion which suggested an entire ignorance of the art of missing, but now and then an artful dodger managed to twist out of the line of fire, whereupon it either pitched within two hundred yards, or rose higher and higher in irregular sweeps until it looked like a tiny, wind-driven leaf. But sooner or later it came down, apparently falling like a stone till within a couple of yards of the mud. Then the strong wings checked the descent, and the bird alighted as unconsciously as though its wonderful earthward plunge had been merely a yard or two instead of a half-mile or more. Joe missed again and again, but he only grinned and kept on trying. At last a bird flushed by Thompson offered a fair crossing-shot, and a winged snipe presently was jumping and scaping its best. Mindful of instructions, Joe kept his eye upon the quarry, which was well; for before he was halfway to it, the bird ceased struggling with its wings and ran a dozen yards to one side into some grass. With his eyes fixed upon the very tuft the bird had entered, Joe moved steadily on to what was destined to be a lesson on the value of protective coloration. The tuft of grass was not two feet across and surrounded by bare black mud which plainly showed the track of the snipe to the grass, but no track beyond. Hence the bird was in the

grass, which was not very thick nor more than a foot high, yet Joe had to scan it inch by inch, and repeat the process, before he made out the striped back and head, which looked as much like standing stems as the long, sensitive bill looked like a withered one.

Not seldom three and four birds flushed in rapid succession, and what were missed swept back to the ground first covered, which guaranteed plenty of sport for the return. At a point some half a mile from the starting-point Thompson halted and pushed back his cord cap. "Guess we're far enough for the first trial; this mud's no joke to a heavyweight," he panted. "How many have you? I've got twenty-four." Joe had five nice ones, and as Thompson smoothed them in turn and praised each shot, which in some curious way he distinctly remembered, Joe felt that snipe-shooting was well worth any man's attention. But there was another lesson coming, for presently he was asked how many shells he had used. It seemed to him he could remember firing eleven times; but Thompson would have none of that, so the remaining shells were counted and by some miracle there were just seven left. There was no disputing the fact that twenty-five had been the original number, yet it required some thinking and an occasional reminder, before Joe could realize that it had taken more than three shells to each kill. "But don't you bother about a little thing like that," advised the big fellow; "you've really done very well, and you'll do much better in a few days. I always count my shells, because I want to know exactly

how I am shooting, and it's simply wonderful the way a fellow will forget a miss here and there unless he has some sort of check on his work. Old sportsmen are too wise to worry about the misses they make; in fact, they don't care anything about 'em. But they do like to know just what they've done each day. It's astonishing how many careful men will get astray when describing their shooting, but they only deceive themselves when they tell of too long strings without a reasonable number of misses. Hullo! Yonder comes old Bart over our ground. Now watch him, and you'll see what crack snipe form looks like," he concluded.

At the home end of the wet ground a tall, erect figure was steadily moving toward them. It suddenly halted and almost instantly they heard a quick crack-crack! as though both barrels had been fired at a single bird. The distance was too great for details, but Thompson simply said, "Watch him gather." The figure resumed its march, only to halt, stoop, move on a few yards, and again stoop. "Good!" grunted Thompson, as the onward march was continued. Five times the advancing gun stopped single birds, and presently its bearer was near enough for the watchers to distinguish every movement. "Now look out," said Thompson; "I think there's two birds right in front of him, and if he happens to get between 'em, you'll see why I just dote on his style. Ha!" The cause of the sudden excitement was the flushing of a brace, — one bird darting due east and the other as truly west, and both going like all

possessed. Crack! and the right-hand bird spun end over end. Crack! and the second spread its wings stiffly and slanted down, a glint of white showing where it turned over on the mud. "That's the way! Good old sort from old Bow River!" roared the delighted Thompson; then he quickly added, "Now watch him retrieve." Monroe, loading as he went, walked straight to the last bird and picked it up, then back-tracked to the firing-point, faced to the right, and walked as directly to the second snipe. "It's a good way, too," continued Thompson; "he knew that last bird might be lying back upward and be hard to see, so he never took his eyes off it. Had either seemed to be not clean killed, he would have gathered that one first, because a wounded bird is apt to run a little and hide. So soon as he got back to his empty shells, it was easy to stand a moment and get a true line on the whereabouts of the first snipe, and you saw how straight he went to it. In snipe-shooting the dropped shells are a useful mark. If the grass was rather tall, he probably would have spread his handkerchief on it as a guide. It is a useful trick, too, because when one is going for a bird in good cover he is apt to flush another, and in shooting that lose his previous marks."

"Well, you didn't kill 'em all, I find," chuckled Monroe as he joined them. "How did you fare, Joe? Five, eh? Well, that's pretty good for a raw 'un." Then to Thompson: "Now, you gentle behemoth, there's more birds for the trip back; we'll just send Joe along in the centre, while we carry the

cambrics at right and left. How's this, Joe?" he asked, and Joe saw a couple of suggestive grins and two big fists digging at their owners' right eyes. "I guess that's about what it will be; I'm in awful bad company, but I just can't help it," retorted Joe, who had been told about wiping a fellow's eye in the field. This, of course, meant giving him first chance at everything and then the right or left man knocking over what he missed—a rather trying process, yet of a certain educational value. It happened, too, half a dozen times; but for that Joe cared nothing, first, because it was an honor to be between those two crackajacks, and second, because he actually killed four snipe out of ten attempts, which, all things considered, was a remarkably good showing. As they neared the house, a figure in shirt sleeves signalled to them, and the smoke rising straight above the roof told that Jean had arrived and got busy. Two hours later a thoroughly satisfied youth pushed back his chair and remarked: "This is great! Jean's the only one who won't kill anything. That is, if we're careful not to eat too much," he added knowingly.

"Now for a yarn, a pipe, and then to bed. The boys will be here before daylight, and we must be into that marsh early. You'll be all ready for us, Jean?" The cook grinned and nodded assent. He could cook a deal better than he could talk, and he well knew what one of Thompson's early starts meant. He would silently prepare breakfast, put up three big parcels of lunch, see his people started, set the house in order, then put on somebody's boots,

fill his pockets full of shells, take his old, cheap gun, and away to the wet ground. Not for snipe — “Heem too small, an’ heem fly too fass, dat small beccasine — yes! But zee plovaire — yes! Heem go slow — beeg flock — brum-brum! Oh! yes.”

As the big fellows puffed twin jets of smoke, there was a most interesting chat on snipe, and Joe learned a lot about the little brown wizard of the wetlands. According to Monroe, the dodging flight was merely a peculiarity and not what many writers have claimed, *i.e.* a crafty scheme on the bird’s part to baffle the gun. In the brave days of old, when such small birds were not deemed worth pursuit by our meat-hunting ancestors, the snipe dodged as he does to-day. Then such a thing as a firearm had not been dreamed of, yet the bent-winged dodger sca-iped and twisted, which proves that whatever the cause of the peculiar flight, it was not to baffle the aim of a gunner, or even a man using any form of sporting appliances. Before the invention of gunpowder, game was trapped, and the larger kind slain with the bow and arrow, some form of crossbow, or by spear, or other contrivance, held or hurled by the hand. A wee fellow like the snipe had naught to fear, except, possibly, some form of trap or net, so there was nothing to foster the development of the dodging flight. Nor does it seem reasonable to suppose the quick spring and twisting movements were intended to confuse some furred or feathered foe, because several other birds more or less closely related to the snipe haunted the same ground and

were exposed to the same dangers, yet their descendants of to-day show no trace of the alleged artifice. Both Monroe and Thompson were keen observers and ardent admirers of our beautiful game creatures, but they placed no faith in those too common writings in which some dreamy but only half-informed pen-jugglers caused the lower creatures to reason and converse like human beings and equal the brainiest efforts of highly developed men.

The snipe dodges because he is built that way, and cannot help it. Something, perhaps, in the relative proportions of the very long bill, the wing, and body, or in the shape of the wing, or, what is more probable, in a peculiarity of the wing-stroke, causes the light body to shift irregularly in the act of attaining high speed. To credit the snipe with an intelligence capable of wing-mancœuvres intended to puzzle a man is absurd. Were it possible to obtain the figures, they might show that one-half or more of the snipe killed were crossing, or at such an angle to the line of fire, that the twisting helped not at all. Birds that knew enough to play tricks might reasonably be expected to also know enough to play them in the only direction in which they were worth playing. The fact is, a snipe, upon a calm day, is apt to fly in any direction, but in a breeze the favorite route appears to be up-wind. A properly educated snipe-shooter knows this, and unless he be one of those who prefer the more or less straightaway shot, he works down-wind, which means that birds rising before him and trying to fly up-wind must pass at either

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side, and offer a chance in which the dodging ceases to be a factor. And as Joe's teachers explained, there was more in the down-wind work than the out-witting of the dodging. The cross-section of a snipe going straightaway, is not bigger than a silver dollar; the rather large wings, too, are then edge-on to the gun, while the vulnerable head and neck are more or less protected by the body. These conditions are apt to mean wounded instead of instantly killed or winged birds. On the other hand, a crossing snipe needs must expose one entire side and something of the second wing, which would mean, roughly speaking, a mark as large as one's hand, instead of the size of a dollar. It is less cruel, too, for the simple reason that the easier the chance, the greater the probability of exact shooting, which means instantaneous and painless death.

The pleasant session closed with a mighty snort and the clatter of Thompson's pipe upon the floor. He had slept but ten seconds, but, as he said, he knew the sign. "Last man dowses the glim," he yawned. "Upper I for yours, Joe." And in very few minutes a sound not unlike distant surf told that the big fellows were away to a remarkably even start. Joe climbed into "Upper I" and stretched himself in luxurious ease in the folds of a huge gray blanket which covered a sure-enough hair mattress. He was not a bit sleepy, so he lay with closed eyes, studying mental pictures of broad wetlands, above which springy bent-winged sprites wove mazy problems for up-wind shooters to unravel. He had

just about made up his mind to doze off when something hauled at his blanket and a voice roared: "Tumble down, you snoring lubber! It's a noble morning, and there'll be doings presently!" Very much astonished, but gloriously rested, he followed directions, which led out into a dim gray world and finally to a tin washdish. Half an hour later the party moved to the waterside, where the punters were waiting beside the craft, which had been half filled with the sweetest of wild hay. "Be careful; there's no bottom anywhere in the marsh. Batteese will do all the work. Shoot when he tells you and come home whenever you feel like it. Off you go, and good luck to you!" said Thompson, and in a moment the canoe slid into open water and headed north. As it rounded the first bend of the channel-like open, Joe saw Thompson's battleship and Monroe's canoe, one heading straight into the reeds and the other going south.

"Load — duck — soon," rumbled Batteese, and Joe glanced through the barrels, loaded, and knelt comfortably, awaiting developments. Soon a quick double-shot sounded from one side, and a long string of fowl came speeding across the course. "Red-head — shoot!" muttered Batteese, and Joe fired one barrel. But the novelty of his position, together with the rather unstable feel of things, saved those ducks, and not a redhead was lowered. As they rounded a bend in the channel some hundred yards farther on, Batteese whispered, "Can — vas — back — dur," and Joe saw about twenty large



"THE RATHER UNSTABLE FEEL OF THINGS SAVED
THOSE DUCKS."

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ducks floating near the wall of reeds. All he had time to notice was the peculiar wooden appearance of the long heads and proportionally long necks, the latter stiffly erect and the heads looking as though they had been stuck on at right angles to their supports. With a quick roar of wings the fowl sprang straight up several feet above the water, and into what looked like a solid mass of white and chestnut Joe poured both barrels. Two birds fell, one instantly going under, while the other shifted about in erratic circles. This one Batteese promptly secured, and forever ended its kicking by nipping its neck between his strong teeth. To Joe's astonishment no effort was made to find the other. "Can — vas — back — dive — no good — look" was all the satisfaction he got. The Breed's shrewd eyes had noted the tipped wing, and he well knew how useless would have been a search in such a place for the master-diver of all our choice duck.

"Teal — dur," he presently warned, and Joe saw a dainty wee green-wing standing close by upon some drifted reeds. The teal appeared so small that Joe thought it was a young one, and when he had been craftily paddled within fifteen yards he was sure of it. But the bantam duck was quite mature and possessed of seemingly electric flying gear; for when it finally decided to depart, it was with a spring and dash worthy of a ruffed grouse. "My gracious!" sputtered Joe as he reloaded and ruefully eyed a speck which was suggestive of an extremely busy bee; "I didn't think the fool thing was in any

particular hurry," whereat Batteese's noble grinders showed from end to end. "Teal — fass — look — bluebill — quick!" And straight ahead streamed a grand flock of fully one hundred of the square-built, lively fowl which so greatly add to the sport of the larger marshes. As not seldom happens, the gun seemed to jump of itself upon exactly the right spot, and to Joe it looked as though at least twenty ducks came down, three or four hitting open water, the others crashing into the reeds. "Quick! — shoot — crippul —" warned Batteese, and Joe understood, and knocked over one duck which showed signs of recovering sufficiently to enable it to get to cover.

To pick up the floaters was a simple matter, and then Batteese gave a touch of his quality. Straight at the wall-like mass of reeds went the canoe, and when she had been forced by main strength twenty feet into the reeds, Batteese said, "Dook — dur!" and Joe saw right below his hand the chunky, floating form of a nice drake. Then out crawled the canoe, only to butt into the growth again and again at various points till five ducks had been boated. And not once did Joe see a feather until the laconic "Dook — dur!" caused him to look straight down and see the floater within easy reach. The last time Batteese worked far in, peering from side to side and parting the reeds with his paddle. "Woundud," he grunted, but the next instant his paddle sung through the air and almost decapitated the duck, which was trying to slip abaft of the canoe and

some few inches below the surface. The canoe was now firmly wedged, but Batteese had an easier method than poling. Moving 'midships, he seized a handful of reeds and pulled stoutly, and the craft at once slid several feet, after which a few more pulls nearly cleared the cover; then he went to his place and backed out with the paddle.

"Put—decoy—dur," he remarked as they neared a long point of reeds, and soon the dozen lures were riding to their weighted cords. Then the canoe was forced her length into the reeds, a bunch of the tough stems was tightly twisted round the middle thwart at either side, and to Joe's astonishment, the late sensitive craft was thus rendered immovable. "Stan'—up—now—careful—no—fall—deep—dur," instructed Batteese; then he changed places, and Joe found himself standing at ease with only his head above the dense growth. To him the picture was most interesting. Immediately in front was the open channel with the decoys shifting and nodding to the breeze in a most lifelike manner. Forty yards away, another wall of reeds, and beyond that a brown, quivering level of foliage which seemed to extend to the horizon, and above the brown, in half a dozen directions, streamed swift fowl in long flocks, small groups, and pairs, while every few minutes sounded a dull rump!—rump! which told that Thompson and Monroe were having a lively time somewhere in the sunlit waste.

"Blue—bill!" grunted Batteese, and there was a hollow humming, and a single duck "cut down" in

the beautiful method of a bluebill stooping from a great height to decoys. It struck the water with a splash straight before Joe's eyes, promptly spied him, and at once rose. But it was so near that he had plenty of time and centred it nicely. Batteese gave it one glance and grunted, "Dead." In a



CORMORANT.

moment he added, "Crow — dook," and Joe saw a line of very large black fowl heading straight for the point. Thrilling with excitement, he hastily covered the leading bird and fired, whereat, and naturally enough, the bird immediately behind the leader fell with a great splash and for minutes kicked this way and that with oary feet. "My! that's a fine one, hey?" asked Joe, enthusiastically, but Batteese merely grinned and shook his head. "Crow — dook

—cor—mor—ant — no good—dem,” he explained, and then Joe recognized the snaky-necked fisher of which he had read, and also seen in the flying-cage in Bronx Park. He felt a trifle sore, but relief speedily arrived, for the ducks were now really moving in his direction.

Bluebills in flocks of all sizes, and, at irregular intervals, redheads, came whizzing along to hover above the decoys and receive Joe's double salute, and as he realized that there were unlimited numbers of fowl, and that he could have as many chances as he chose, he cooled down and began to shoot much better. “More — shell,” remarked Batteese, as he passed a second box of twenty-five. “Plaintee — more,” he explained, as he proceeded to tear open a third box of the half-dozen beside him. He knew that the main flight was yet to come, and that three hundred shells were none too many for a typical day. His wild blood craved slaughter, and if ten thousand fowl were killed, so much the better; but there was little danger of any excess. Heavy shooting is no light task even for a strong man, and as Joe was still a bit unskilled at holding, the gun pounded a trifle. As the flight increased, he perceptibly slowed down and began to enjoy it the more, because he had learned to pick his birds and take no long chances. As a consequence, the shooting steadily improved, and there was plenty of variety. Now it was blue-bill, then redhead, then, with a hollow roar, a dozen swift canvasbacks; then the measured winnowing of a pair of mallard, the steamy hiss of the teal's bullet

flight; the sounding hum of shovellers; and through it all the silent black and white flickering action of pretty little buffle-heads and mergansers. And there was so much of it that before noon Joe was both keen to eat and ready to stop shooting for the day. So the gun was laid aside, and he and Batteese dawdled over the food, heedless of the rushing wings which were audible every few minutes.

"You — go — home?" asked Batteese, almost reproachfully, and Joe nodded. So the canoe was released from her reedy tethers, the decoys were lifted, and Batteese began his quest for the fallen. This was a fine exhibition of the punter's craft, and Joe was delighted. He had no idea of the number of ducks he had killed, but not so Batteese. "Twainty-fo'," was his count, and twenty-four it had to be, or there would be a raking of that marsh by the fine-tooth-comb process. About half the ducks had fallen into the reeds, and Joe had but a vague idea of where any of his victims lay. Strung along for one hundred yards of the open channel were white and dark forms slowly drifting with the breeze, but to these Batteese paid no immediate attention. Instead, he paddled up-wind to a certain point, drove the canoe a few feet into the cover, and said, "Blue — bill — dur," and touching the side of the canoe was the duck. Out went the canoe, then in again some few yards below, straight to another bird. Then Joe grasped the fact that Batteese had gone to the most distant victim, and proposed to drift back and gather the others in turn. It was a puzzle how

he could remember the exact location of each one, especially on the back trip, which meant an entirely different point of view. Yet not once was he astray, although one duck was not secured. "Tink — wounded," he muttered as he drove the canoe far in and parted the reeds just ahead. "Gray — dook — los' — dive — dur," and he pointed at a slight movement in the water, and then the canoe was hauled out. The boating of the floaters was easy, and, lo! the last one made the total twenty-three.

"Batteese, you're a wonder!" exclaimed Joe; "I haven't the slightest idea how you do it, but I've just seen it done, and that's enough for me." The beady eyes twinkled and the white teeth showed as their owner slowly rumbled, "We — go — home — nudder — way — fine — dook — in — pond." Only intense satisfaction could have released this torrent of eloquence, which actually startled Joe. And what followed seemed even more wonderful than all previous performances, for Batteese laid a straight course for the invisible shanty, heedless of what lay in the way. Compared with tracing even erratic channels, it was something like riding across country instead of following well-defined lanes, and more than once Joe felt a trifle dubious regarding the issue. But there was a method in Batteese's seeming madness. Right well that wily rascal knew that between where they were and the shanty were hidden several secret ponds, his own favorite potting-places. Not for a lot would he have revealed them to either Monroe or Thompson, to whom he would

have declared the route impracticable on account of weight, which, while false, would have sounded all right to the ears of experts who understood what extra weight means in a marsh. The simple fact was Batteese wanted more ducks, and, while apparently humoring Joe's desire to avoid too much killing, he really was leading him into temptation.

"Beeg — dook — dur — keep — still," he whispered, and Joe thought he might as well be ready although, to save his life, he could not have guessed from whence the supposed single big duck could rise. Straight into the breeze to which the reeds were whispering crept the canoe and a something in its wary movements warned Joe that it was no ordinary quest, yet they stole on and on for full fifty yards. Then on the breeze came a low murmur of peculiar sound, a droning of many duck-voices, blent with the fluttering of wings and the squattering of feeding fowl. Joe's heart began to thump, for he had learned enough to understand that a mighty host of web-footed merry-makers was concealed somewhere just ahead. A moment later, the cover in front suddenly thinned and he came near yelling with astonishment. About an acre of open space seemed to be covered with a live and exceedingly downy quilt of a most amazing pattern, and its nearest edge was not ten yards away. Perhaps nowhere else in the world could such a picture of wild life be seen, but the view was astoundingly brief. "Me-ak!" shouted one horrified fowl, and erstwhile careless heads bristled up in every direction like so much

stubble. Then with a roar worthy of a lightning express, the feathered host sprang into air in such close order that the sharp biff-baff of clashing wings was distinctly audible. For a moment it looked as if the entire pond had gone up, but Batteese's gasping "Shoot — shoot!" caused Joe to remember the excuse for the intrusion. Up went the gun and covered what looked like a solid mass, but another mass got in the way and the gun turned with its movement, till yet another again shifted the aim. It was like cross-tag with wings on it. "Shoot!" almost prayed Batteese, and then, as the canopy of ducks ripped apart, a charge of shot whizzed exactly through the centre of the tear and ten feet from the nearest feather! Joe swallowed hard and the sunlight played upon a smoothing surface. Whip — whip — whip! A lone, lazy thing slowly rose, and, eager to redeem himself, he carefully covered it, and down it went. "Coot," was the disgusted comment from astern as the canoe moved forward. "I don't care a hang!" snapped Joe; "we've got enough ducks, anyway! But," he continued with a laugh, "I guess it's one on me. Yet I wouldn't have missed it for anything!" Then he burst out afresh, for the remark did seem a bit peculiar. And poor Batteese, to say the least, "Heem — ver — sad," as the way he drove the canoe through the reeds rather suggested. No more clever work for him that day. What he wanted was to get home and smoke and ponder upon the bitterness of his lot, which condemned him to daily association with a tenderfoot

who didn't know enough to wreck a raft of ducks when it floated within deadly range.

Toward dusk the others straggled in, their boats laden with fine fowl, for the older hands shot nothing but the choicer sorts. "They seem a great lot," said Thompson, as the last pair was tied and added to the rows upon the wall; "but you see it's this way. We have many friends who seldom taste game unless we give it to them, so when we come here we shoot for the crowd at home as well. If we killed a thousand fowl, not one would be wasted. Now that we've made so good a start, we'll hold our hands a bit till it's time to go home." And this they did, and day by day the total bag decreased until finally only canvasbacks, redheads, and gray ducks were shot. At last came a peculiar, gray morning, which to the veterans meant Break Camp. All through the previous afternoon long strings of fowl had risen high and streamed away due south; so word was sent in for the wagons. The south-bound ducks proved true prophets; for as the last of the outfit was taken aboard the train, a sudden squall and a horizontal rush of blinding sleet told that the white wolf of the north was afoot for a southerly raid and would be howling at top speed ere the dawning.

A BROKER WHO BROKE—SOME STAR-
TLING INFORMATION — BLESSED
ARE THE MEEK

“IT all seems like a dream — a glorious dream, and the worst of it is it’s mighty near over,” half sighed Joe, as they strode briskly toward the station. “I’ll be very glad to see father, and I know he’ll be as glad to see me, but somehow I wish the climate and everything could just stand still for another month. The fact is, Bart, I hate the idea of leaving you away up here; I hate the thought of New York; I — I — don’t want to go home, and if I thought you wouldn’t make him let me come back next year, I’d run away and be a Breed, or any old thing!”

Monroe smiled and retorted: “Nonsense, son! Of course you’ve got to go home, and equally, of course, you’ll come back. You’re not missing so much as you imagine, for the northern winter is bound to be more or less of a dull time, and you must remember that your experience up here has covered only the very cream of the year. Were it not for the work which will keep me busy till spring, even I should not care for the long sojourn in the Lodge, and it’s never cold there as it will be here within a few weeks. Before you get settled

down at home, the last of the web-footed fowl will be many a mile to the south of you, and all the grouse will be packed and protected for the winter, so the only sport I'll get will be a little trapping. Now, before we meet your father, I want to post you a bit. The reason why I made you wear that shooting-suit is a bit broader than you imagine. I want you to come back, and a little joke may greatly help to that end. When the train comes in, you are to leave me and walk away along to the last sleeper. He will be in that, and I'll bet that if you make no sign, he'll pass you by; be canny, and we'll see how near right I am."

Joe was far from confident, but the humor of the thing appealed to him, and he determined to be as indifferent as a Breed. There were many people of all degrees about the station, for train-time is an interesting period at the "Peg," and perhaps a dozen young chaps wore sweaters, cords, and shooting-boots, more or less like Joe's garb. He did not realize how greatly he had changed from the natty, rather colorless youngster who had left New York. The sun and prairie breeze had given him a coat of tan worthy of a genuine Brave, while steady service had left its mark upon everything he wore. He also had grown considerably, thanks to the free outdoor life among the foothills, and in the rough garb he certainly looked inches bigger all over. Nor was this apparent growth altogether deceptive. The change had come precisely at the proper time, and while, of course, the actual gain in height was

but a trifle, the same was by no means true of chest, shoulders, and limbs, as he later learned when he discovered an astonishing tightness about clothes which had comfortably fitted at midsummer. There was not a trace of fat on him. The gain had been in honest, useful brawn and chest room, and not so much in actual weight. But what he had got would stick to him and benefit him so long as he lived in a rational manner, and any other healthy, growing lad might derive as much benefit from a similar experience.

He lounged forward, and Sherlock Holmes himself could not have detected one trace of Gotham about the swarthy, square-shouldered, wiry youth who, as the express halted, stood indifferently near the steps of the last sleeper, from which an urbane porter was assisting his special charges. "Now, Mr. King, sah!—I've got both bags—yes—sah!" and something in the way the porter said it hinted of a recently fingered fat tip. "Yondah's Mr. Monroe, sah! He's done watchin' the wrong cah, sah!"

"Carry yer bags, mister?" rumbled Joe, as he slouched forward, and in a moment, to his unbounded joy, he had a suit-case in one fist and a Gladstone in the other and was following the impatient New Yorker toward "that tall gentleman yonder."

"Bart, Bart! But I'm glad to see you! But where on earth's my boy?" spluttered King, as he wrung the other's hand, and, to his amazement,

Monroe coolly replied: "Why, Emmy! How many boys do you want, anyhow? Speak to your poor old parent, Joseph." And in a moment the joke was sprung, and father and son were hugging each other in a fashion which appeared to warrant the remark of an interested newsie, who exclaimed, "Ketch on to de prodiggle fodder an' de herd of swine!"

Never during Wall Street's fiercest raid had Emmons King been so nearly "rattled" as when he followed Joe the length of the big station and to the waiting 'bus. The father's eyes could not help noticing the lad's erect carriage, firm stride, and the ease with which the brown hands bore the two rather heavy bags. And a much less astute man readily could have told that the Joe just in front was a grand improvement upon the lad who had left the big city those long months before. "Never would have believed it — never, never! He's great, eh? I shouldn't have known him — gad! I didn't know him. Wonderful! Owe it all to you, too!" whispered the gratified King again and again before the 'bus was reached. By way of reply, Monroe smiled and chuckled and shot peculiar swift side-glances at his slightly excited friend, but it was not till after father and son had enjoyed a long evening session, and Joe had gone to bed, that the lad's holiday was directly referred to. Then King, in smoking-jacket and puffing a big black cigar, slipped into Monroe's room to find that worthy sprawled in one of the two easy-chairs and thoughtfully blowing tiny rings

which chased and telescoped each other in a most amazing way every time the very black pipe was lowered. Upon the table stood a tray bearing water, a small decanter of whiskey, and one glass, and toward these Monroe jerked his head and remarked, "You know my rule, Emmy; just help yourself and then tell me all about everything."

"Bart, old boy, first put it there," said King, thrusting forth his hand. "I've had a long talk with Joe, and he's told me how nobly you have redeemed your promise to give him a royal time. You've made a man out of him, old friend, and I owe you a debt of gratitude which I feel I never can repay. He's nearly as fond of you as he is of me, but that's all right. He has said something of another trip next year, and I tell you right now, that if things go as I expect, you shall have him again, and that's the greatest compliment I possibly could pay you. It's just possible I may have to cross the briny next summer, and while I'd love to take Joe along, I'm a little afraid that the — the — um — nature of the business will, as it were, forbid. But that can wait — we'll settle it in due season. Just a little solid comfort will do for the present," he concluded, as he released Monroe's hand and proceeded to mix himself a comforter of ample proportions. "Sorry you can't join me, but respect your principles," he added as he raised the glass. "Here's to us and those who love us," he chuckled, then whispered something into the glass. Monroe's face twitched slightly, there was a faint click, and the

pipe, with half its amber bitten squarely off, fell into the swift hand, and before King had drained his glass a second and even blacker pipe had been pressed into service. As he filled this, his face was as expressionless as a babe's, but before the conversation could be resumed, a piano somewhere below sounded softly, and in a few seconds a girlish voice rang out:—

“Oh! Love but once again — meet me once again —
Old Love is waking — shall it wake in vain?”

It was an old, old air and the singer clearly had a perilously slim chance of ever attaining to grand opera, yet King was vastly pleased. “Hark, now, that's what I call mighty sweet. Who'd have expected to hear such a voice up here?” he whispered, and as the simple effort ended, he strode to and fro humming a shockingly poor imitation of the unknown siren's lay. Then he laughed a trifle nervously and flung himself into his chair. Monroe said never a word, but his face was a study of grim humor, for instinctively he knew what was coming presently and while he rather wished that particular maiden had been born dumb, there still was a comical side to the situation which rather appealed to him.

““Love but once again — meet me once again,”” hummed King, with the dainty tactfulness of a vivisector. “That's one of those rare songs in which words and air sweetly fit together. Now let me see. I've already thanked you for your kindness to our fair friend; you know I — I —” Monroe's sudden

shout of laughter and frantic effort to avoid going over backward with his chair cleared the atmosphere. In a moment he was upon his feet and holding out his hand, his eyes flashing with temporarily unembittered fun. "Emmy, you're too comical to talk about. If it's settled, shake; and if not, shake anyway. If you can win her, you — you — oh, bother — bless you, my children!" but somehow the laugh was a wee bit strained. There being no fool to compare with a dead-ripe one, King promptly began to explain the how and why and wherefore of his plans, and soon Monroe learned, what he had suspected, that there were other reasons than Joe for King's northern trip. When the session ended, — and King did not cut it short, — Monroe had a pretty shrewd idea that the lady would require a generous supply of indifference to enable her to refuse what certainly was a tempting chance, and he also was informed that she was expected next day.

"I feel like a two-year-old, but it's getting very late, so I suppose I really ought to go to bed," said King, finally. "Joe and I will enjoy the priceless privileges of gentlemen-in-waiting upon our little queen during all that gloriously long trip home, but I think it wiser that the uncertainty and the trip should end together. From here to Montreal I shall be the careful cavalier, but during that final run homeward, if Fate grants me half an opportunity, the matter shall be settled. I think I have something better than a fighting chance, but you never can tell what a woman will do. Were she

an ordinary girl, one possibly might safely calculate upon her probable course, but she is anything rather than an ordinary person. She believes that every woman should be something of a worker, and so she chooses to write. Most young women, if possessed of her snug fortune and backed by an enormously wealthy aunt, as she is, would go in for social fame, foreign travel, and what is termed a 'good match,' but she never has troubled herself with such matters. Her girl friends call her 'the brilliant eccentric,' but she sturdily follows her self-selected path, and to me this active independence is one of her greatest charms. Why, what's amiss?" he asked, for Monroe's face betrayed unfeigned astonishment.

"Oh, nothing; that is, nothing very important," was the reply. "I—I merely had jumped to a natural conclusion and fancied the young lady was a genuine worker. She certainly looks, acts, and speaks the part, and I, of course, asked no questions. I'm rather pleased I did not know, for in my humble opinion wealthy young women are not nearly so interesting as bright, busy ones. But of course there are notable exceptions, and when one happens upon a young person who is the fortunate possessor of all the advantages in question, he ought—he ought—let me see—do as lucky old Emmy King intends to do—eh, old pal?"

"I think so—I certainly do!" exclaimed King, "and he also should promptly write his dearest friend and tell how he fared. Bart, old boy, you'll

hear from me the day after I reach New York. Now, I really must toddle to bed. Joe says you want him for a while to-morrow to see a Mr. Thompson, and will bring him to the train in good time. All right! Good night! God bless you, old chum!" And King, as he put it, "toddled" to what no doubt were dreams which were fairly treacly with bliss.

"To him that hath shall be given," muttered Monroe in a rather grim sort of way as he prepared to turn in; "Emmy always was a lucky dog, but if I'm any judge, what's coming to him now is the greatest he ever has received."

Joe found Monroe in a strangely quiet mood as they went to bid good-by to Thompson. That genial soul, however, having neither blasted hopes nor parting to worry him, fairly glowed with merry kindness. "Comin' back next year, hey? Good boy! We'll be glad to have you. The little jaunt you're starting now doesn't count for much in this country. It'll be next season before you know it, and I'll look after the dogs and the chickens and the ducks, and make 'em raise big broods for your special benefit. Now let's step out; for while we'd like to keep you, it won't do to miss the train."

So between the two huge fellows Joe marched toward the parting he more than half dreaded, and, perhaps fortunately, they reached the train with only a minute to spare. For a wonder, Mr. King showed no signs of nervousness. Instead, he was the personification of jolly content. It was more than

likely that he had not been worrying about anything, for the dainty figure beside him was the sort to make a man forget about time-tables. Strangely enough, Miss Sterling appeared to be the only one at all out of sorts. She looked, as she said, "just a wee bit tired," but there were very few seconds for farewells. She stared Monroe straight in the eye, and there was no mistaking the hearty friendship of her hand clasp; then she sprang up the steps, King and Joe taking the other. As the train moved, Monroe stood with raised hat, and for one second the brown eyes again met his, but this time he noticed what those eyes had lacked before — the old defiant spark which was their greatest charm.

"Come on," said Thompson; "let's get a cigar. I hate seeing folks off, we get so much of it up here. You'll miss the young 'un, eh? He's a nice lad, but he'll come back, all right. King seemed quite resigned, and egad, I don't blame him. If I didn't have the best one that ever lived, I wouldn't consider his two-thousand-mile trip a very terrible infliction, eh, old sport?" and his big hand smote Monroe's back with a bang that might have been heard a block away. Monroe's half cough, half laugh, unquestionably was the natural result of the blow, for Thompson's friendly pats were of the grizzly bear brand.

"You'll dine with us, of course. I insist — not a word; the wife would never forgive me if I failed to bring you," Thompson ran on as they left the cigar store. Although he knew but half the facts, the big-hearted fellow could readily guess how Mon-

roe might miss his young chum, and while there were friends a-plenty for the seeking, one of Thompson's game dinners, followed by what he called an old-fashioned evening in his sportsman's den, was indeed rare good medicine for a lonely man. Monroe the more readily agreed, because for once in a long while he almost shrank from the certain meeting with the good fellows who would be only too happy to do their utmost to make the time pass pleasantly. He and Thompson thoroughly understood each other, while the hostess was one of those wonderful wee women who really master the fine points of their husband's hobbies. In fact, as her big lord often declared, she was as good a sportsman as he was, and liked nothing better than to entertain a scientific Nimrod like Monroe.

"Where in the world are you going? Your baggage is upstairs. The man was sent after it two hours ago," she demurely informed the guest when he attempted to say good night. "Now you sit down in that chair and finish telling about that writer-girl. The boy and his father are all right, but I want to hear the rest about that young woman. You haven't half told me about her, so go ahead."

"I think you're a pair of trappers, but the trap's a mighty pleasant place to be," retorted Monroe, laughingly, "but, honestly, there's nothing more to tell about the young lady. That is—er—um—unless I invent a few facts, an—and of course, you wouldn't have me do that," he concluded weakly, for a pair of exceedingly mischievous eyes were scanning him

with a shrewdness which made his hair feel prickly. The lady's voice was soft as silk as she replied: "Of course not; we don't want any fibs. Truth is mighty, and it shall prevail. Oh, John, the black foxskin! We've forgotten all about it. Do go get it. It's the loveliest of all the beautiful things he's given me. I just love it," she rattled on. "It's so darkly smooth and so foxy. Really, I wonder they ever trapped it. John says a big black fox is the craftiest of all animals—that it can just play with traps. But then, I fancy those buck Indians are a stupid lot—don't you think so?"

Monroe was quivering with joy, but only the twinkle in his eye betrayed him as he solemnly replied: "Yes; I don't think the average buck Indian is much of a diplomat. He's a lazy dog, too, and makes his squaw do most of the work. Now it's just possible, don't you think, that a squaw caught this particular big black fox?"

"What's the joke? Haven't heard you folks laugh like that in moons," exclaimed Thompson, as he returned with the beautiful and almost priceless skin, but he was too full of his treasure to follow up the inquiry. "There it is, the finest, but one, that ever came into the 'Peg.' I couldn't get hold of the other, but this is her little birthday present. Let's see, how many birthdays—" but a crisp "John Thompson!" forever ended that palpable bluff, and soon the three were gloating over the glorious trophy. Then the conversation switched to furs, trapping, and the wilds far north, and presently

a little silent lady with shining eyes was intently listening, for few indeed were the men who could discuss such topics like her lord and Monroe. They knew, and she knew they knew, and not a witchery of fiction could have held her as did that long, earnest discussion of what to most women would have been matters of trifling interest. The long clamor of a big bell ended it, but Monroe's hasty apologies were cut short by a truthful "Nonsense! don't mention it. When you two get fairly started, I feel as though I could listen for a week. And you're the only men I'd say that for," she merrily added. But a little later she said to her husband: "John Thompson, not another word about that young woman. You keep Bart Monroe in this house till he hears from that man King. I want to see him after he has read that letter. He's bound to get one, and — well, it's possible he may get two, — that's all. Not another word, and for your life say nothing to him. Don't boggle your eyes that way; you just wait, and you'll learn something finer than that foxskin. It takes a squaw to trap a big black fox, too! Oh, you men — you wise, dear old ganders!" Then she laughed softly, and Thompson wisely abandoned the mystery to her capable care.

As Monroe said, in such congenial haunts days sped smoothly away. As was his habit, he worked just enough for good results, while reserving the evenings for the hostess. And the more she verified her wonderful woman's estimate, the stancher

grew her friendship and the keener her desire for what she had begun to term to herself "Letter day." Like many other things, it finally arrived. A mixed mail contained an envelope addressed in a fine business hand and bearing a black seal marked with a small "K"; a second envelope was strictly juvenile and double weight; all the others bore print. Any one who knew could have classified those letters under the heads of "Father," "Son," and "Business."

"Joe sends all sorts of kind wishes. Poor chap, he vows he's already homesick for the shack. He's coming up again next year, if I'll ask his father—sure I will!" explained Monroe. "His father is going to Europe on important business," he concluded, his voice all unconsciously sinking a trifle lower and the words coming more slowly. Thompson cleared his throat, caught his wife's warning glance, and remarked, "Ah! That's good—like to see the young beggar again." The little woman's face was as expressionless as a mask, but her lips formed a hard line as Monroe glanced over the other letter. "Yes, King's going abroad, um—um—one of those totally unexpected things. Can have Joe again if I want him—why, of course I want him! That's about all," he hastily concluded; and Thompson nodded approvingly, then stared wonderingly at his wife, for her tense pose had suddenly relaxed before his eyes, her own were very bright, and a curious little smile hinted of deep satisfaction. A moment later she left the room, and he presently followed.

"Whatever's up?" he faltered as soon as they were at a safe distance.

"Everything's up — with King! John Thompson, kiss me for a mind-reader. Bart Monroe wins for a million — and I'm so glad!" And she laughed like a schoolgirl.

"But — but how the mischief do you know? I'll be hanged if I understand you women!" stammered the puzzled one.

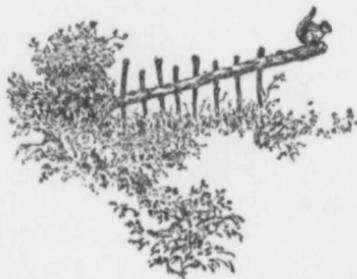
"Oh! you men! you men!" she retorted. "Didn't you see his face and hear his voice? You're a pretty fellow to pretend to be a hunter and sign-reader! Listen! In that little note of a letter old King told Bart he had proposed and had been refused. Monroe wins, and it may be King has said so; anyway, he's said enough. I know of that old affair, and turn about's only fair play. If she's as nice as I'm beginning to think she is, Bart will be as happy as he deserves. Now we must go back, — sober face, mind, — and, on your life, not a word. If that girl is made of the stuff I think she is, there'll be another letter before long. You mark my words. It takes the squaw to trap a black fox!"

"Do you mean to say she'll propose to him?" gasped Thompson.

"Why! John Thompson — you're a — never you mind — you just wait and see. Propose to him! The idea!" And with fine scorn she swept back to her guest.

She had rather a bad forty-eight hours and was a bit puzzled to boot, but her faith was by no means

killed. Then came two unmistakably feminine letters which seemed to have a peculiar effect upon Monroe. He whistled now and then, and his ready laugh seemed to have, as Thompson remarked, "a new ring." Whereat his wife burst out laughing and declared it was the most sapient remark he had made for a long time. Yet anybody might safely have read those letters, for one was just a pretty little acknowledgment from a writer-lady for kindnesses received, while the other was a prim note of thanks from an auntie-lady for courtesy to her dearly loved but eccentric niece. Each, however, expressed a hope that if ever Mr. Monroe chanced to wander in their direction, he would afford them an opportunity for the better expression of their gratitude.



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