

WHERE THE LOON LAUGHS.

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"Of course you are not well, and I doubt that you are particularly happy," says Kitchener at the close of a twenty-page letter, "and for the reason that you have forgotten the traditions of your lusty youth, that you have drifted away from the sweet and satisfying things that used to put the tan on your cheek and the brawn on your shoulders. Man! how long is it since you had a gun in your hands with a cocker ranging the blueberry scrub ahead of you, or held a troll in your teeth while you drove your canoe softly over the water in the shadow of the bank where the black bass lie? Sick Thing, will you yield to the snare I have tried to set for your unwilling feet through all these many pages? Will you come with us for one glorious month to the land where the loon laughs in the hush of the night and the crane stands on one leg to gravely consider your camp in the half-light of the shadowy dawn; to the haunts of the wood duck, the partridge, the big fight-full bass and pickerel, to the land where high serene thoughts come unbidden and the town-worn, weary man sits humbly at the Master's feet, learning again the half-forgotten lesson of life? Or do you intend to remain upon your knees, babbling sordid prayers to the unresponsive wooden god you glorify by the name of Business, until such time as Death comes stalking silently and lays his cold hand upon your shoulder?"

The Sick Thing heaves a great sigh and then reads Kitchener's long letter all over again. But he has made up his mind before the sigh is well begun, and the rereading of the letter is now only for the further delight of the thing. When he has finished, he touches a button under his desk.

"John," he says to the boy who appears in response to the summons, "find out for me the quickest and best way to get from New York to Toronto. And when you have done that, secure me a through sleeper for to-morrow night. Then telegraph to this address in Toronto and say I am coming."

Forty-eight hours later Kitchener meets him at the railway station in Toronto.

"Everything is ready," he announces. "All the stores are bought and the canoes have gone on by express. We leave at noon for Orillia, and the other two men are to meet us at the South Parkdale station."

"What about the guides?"

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"Do you happen to know what a Corinthian is, in modern parlance?"

"Can't say that I do."

"Well, a Corinthian is a gentleman who scorns all guides and cooks when he goes into the wilderness. This is a Corinthian expedition. We'll all have to work like beavers, and that means that we'll get all the fun and all the benefits without having to endure any of the ordinary drawbacks."

By 4 o'clock of the same day the party of four stands on the wharf at Orillia. City clothes have been exchanged for comfortable and durable camp togs—the butterfly having crept back into the chrysalis, so to speak. With rough work to do, rough clothes must be worn. When the clothes have to be washed and mended by the man who wears them, they are neither numerous nor ornamental. A flannel shirt, woolen socks, khaki tunic and trousers and substantial laced boots of amphibious character, are, more or less, what each man has on. And the greatest of these is the boots, for they must wade, cramp under the canoe thwarts, climb over jagged rocks, plunge through tamarac swamps, submit to be baked by the sun, parboiled by the bog and supersoaked by water, and yet remain to the lattermost day a tough yet pliant protection to the wearer's feet.

The Sick Thing is gazing upon the two long, slender canoes lying side by side upon the wharf, and looking like a couple of pickerel treated to a coat of red paint.

"Kitchener," he says, solemnly, "do you seriously contemplate putting all these dunnage bags, guns, four men and a dog into those things? You'll sink 'em if you do, and they don't seem designed for submarine work. If you don't mind, I think I'll walk. I used to be very fond of walking."

Kitchener, with an arm thrust deep in a dunnage bag, bestowing the last of the loose articles, grunts softly as he works.

"Huh!" he grunts "point of view of the latter part of a misspent life in New York. You used to care mighty little whether you traveled above or below the water. But for to-day, we'll keep on top—mostly—just till you get used to it."

"There isn't anything of these ridiculous little things—they haven't any beam worth mentioning," the Sick Thing grumbles, squatting down to a closer examination of the canoes.

"Goodness knows that isn't the trouble with you, nowadays. Now we're all ready. Just get hold of the end of the canoe, Sick Thing, and lift it into the water. Good! Now, then, the bags. Now step in yourself."

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"You don't happen to have a derrick about you, Kitchener, do you?"

"Nonsense! Just lay your foot fairly in the middle of the floor and step in. She's as steady as the Bank of England. There you are! That was splendidly done—for an elephant."

"If the Bank of England isn't any steadier than that," the Sick Thing remarks, clutching the sides of the canoe as Kitchener steps in, "then the Lord have mercy on the nation's finances."

"Come along, you fellows," Kitchener shouts to the others. "We've got to make camp somewhere before sundown. You don't mind the sea, Sick Thing, do you? It's running a bit high for the amount of freeboard we've got. Are you pretty comfy?"

"Lord, yes! This is simply luxurious. Vestibuled limiteds are not in it for a moment with this. I'm wet to the waist already."

"Hark!" says Kitchener, pausing in his paddling. "See if you can make out what Cyclops is shouting back there on the wharf. Confound this wind, even a fog horn like that can't carry against it! Something's wrong. I suppose, and we'll have to go back. We can't put about in this sea. Just back water, will you? We've only got twenty or thirty yards to go."

They back up to the wharf, keeping the nose of the canoe to the wind, Cyclops in the meantime shouting prodigiously.

"Shut up, you infernal calliope," Kitchener growls. "Now then, what is the matter?"

"Have you got any tobacco?" Cyclops says, mildly.

"Chuck him your pouch, Sick Thing," Kitchener says with feeling. Then as the Sick Thing bows his head over his paddle in an anguish of laughter, Kitchener gives himself over without let or hindrance to a glittering flow of profanity.

"I wish I could swear like you, Kitchener," the Sick Thing says, wiping his eyes on his shirt sleeve. "It's beautiful."

When they are once more well away from the wharf they are brought to a halt by another voice.

"It's the Little Officer Boy this time," Kitchener says, gloomily. "He seems to be dancing and waving his hands. Now I wonder what in the name of Job he wants. Well, back her up again. If this goes on, we'll have to sleep at the hotel to-night."

When they are alongside once more, the Little Officer Boy makes himself understood:

"Why the deuce didn't you fellows stay where you were?" he cries, indignantly. "That's what I was telling

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you. You looked fine out there with the sea coming over you and the light was just right. I should have had a bully picture in a minute if you'd only kept still. Go out again, will you?—and come round into the trough of the sea, so as to get it good. I'll have my camera out in a jiffy."

"Step out, Sick Thing, and land the bags," Kitchener says, in the tone of a man who sees the sheriff coming with a writ. "We'll have to dump—the water's half-way to the thwarts already."

While this operation is being performed, Kitchener turns to the others and says quietly, but in a way that brooks no question, "Get off, you fellows, and we'll follow."

When the emptied canoe is again placed in the water and the bags are being lifted in, the other canoe is seen to be backing toward the wharf.

"Well," roars Kitchener, "what is it now?"

"Either of you fellows got a match?" Cyclops inquires, in a casual way.

"He insisted upon coming back, you know," the Little Officer Boy says, in explanation.

"Here, catch my match safe," Kitchener growls. "Now then, get away with you, and don't stop paddling until I give the signal to make camp. It's a quarter to five now, and the tent's got to be up by seven. Get off now, and don't let me hear another word out of you."

The expedition is started upon its first stage at last with all Lake Couchiching ahead of it and a stiff breeze to work against.

"How are you feeling, Sick Thing?" Kitchener sings out presently.

"Both feet asleep," the Sick Thing responds. "Don't mind me. I'll be all right when it spreads. It's creeping up my legs now."

"Don't bother about your feet. It always strikes a man like that the first day or two. Are you pretty comfy otherwise?"

"Long, thin pain from the small of my back to the nape of my neck; big square-built pain in my diaphragm; my left ear and the right side of my nose are itchy, and if I stop to scratch 'em, I know I'll get a tubful of cold water in my stomach. Yes; quite comfy, thank you. What was that poetical thing you said in your letter about the land where the loon laughs in the hush of the night? If he has any sense of humor, he'll laugh himself sick when he sees this procession go by, hush or hurricane. I say, Kitchener, don't you imagine that I'm not enjoying this thing. It's splendid, of course, but I don't want to glut myself with it. What's the matter with making camp now and getting something to eat?"

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"Do you see that little island straight ahead? Well, we'll make for that and put up there for the night. I figured it out from the wharf before we started as about eight miles, so we'll only have about six more to go. Just stick to your paddle and you'll be there before you know it, and with an appetite of heroic proportions."

"One of my hands seems to be stuck tight to the paddle now, oozing blood, and with a loose bone working out between. Only six miles more—ch? Well, I'm going to give myself over to a silent enjoyment of it. Please don't talk to me. When you reach the island, just lift me out and put me to bed. I shan't want any supper."

The canoes reach the objective point about seven o'clock, the Sick Thing is helped out, and being beyond all inclination for speech, is laid away in a blanket. Within half an hour the tent is up and the supper is cooked. Kitchener gently prods the Sick Thing with the toe of his boot.

"Supper's ready," he announces. "I say, supper's ready. Do you think you could manage a mouthful? Poor old chap; we've worked you too hard the first day. Do you want to go on sleeping, or will you join us at the festive board?"

"Gracious!" says the Sick Thing, rolling over and opening his eyes, "I feel as if I'd been in a railway collision. Yes; I think I'd best try to swallow a little something. What's for supper?"

"Fried bacon, boiled rice and raisins, hardtack and tea. How does that strike you?"

"Strange to say, it strikes me as somewhat alluring," the Sick Thing says, getting painfully to his feet and beginning to limp toward the fire.

A rubber sheet is spread upon the ground between the tent and the camp-fire, and on this, four tin plates, four tin cups and a working force of knives and forks and spoons are ranged, with a tin plate in the center heaped with hardtack. At the edge of the fire stands a big, blackened tin pot containing a couple of quarts of tea, and near it a frying pan with eight thick slices of bacon half-submerged in brown juice and covered, more or less, with a deposit of wood ashes. Kitchener gathers the embers of the fire into a heap and places the frying pan on top for a last warming. When the brown juice is boiling he drops into it a handful of broken hardtack. When the hardtack has absorbed all of the juice, the preparations are complete. Each man gets two slices of bacon, a spoonful of fried hardtack and a big cupful of tea.

"Not in the spirit of criticism," says the Sick Thing, "but merely by way of friendly comment, I note the absence of butter."

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"You do?" says Kitchener. "And ditto the absence of cream. You've left the dainties behind you, and for the next month will have nothing but plain soldier's fare, bar the fish and the partridges we take—and they won't come our way for the next day or two. I've never been over this route before, but as I figure it out on the Government maps, we'll have to have a rapids or two behind us before we get into the fish and partridge country."

"Did you bring a saw with you?" the Sick Thing asks, turning a hardtack biscuit over and over in his hands and being evidently unwilling to risk his teeth on it. "What do you mean about having rapids behind us?"

"Just lay it on the ground and smash it with your heel. What I mean is that for the first day or two we shall be in the country of the summer vacationer—the thing that comes from the inland towns of the States and wears a yachting cap and fishes with a worm. That kind of a fellow doesn't like either rapids or portages. Consequently he stays on the safe side of them and fishes and shoots all day, taking all the game he can get, whether he can eat it or not. He's probably been hard at work upon this part of the country for the last ten years, with the inevitable result that nothing is left but the scenery. How do you like the grub, now that you've got into it?"

"It's really very good. All one needs to enjoy it thoroughly is teeth, confidence and hunger. I never half believed the starvation stories of men eating their boots before. There doesn't seem to be anything improbable in it. What's in that other pot?"

"That's the rice pudding, my boy. It's the coping stone of the feast. If you're ready for it, just wander down to the water and wash your plate if you're particular to have a clean one."

"I think I'll have the pudding on the plate just as it is, thank you all the same. And give me another pint of tea and one of those cast-iron biscuits of yours."

When the supper is ended and dishes, pots and frying pan washed and set away, the four voyageurs group themselves comfortably in a convenient position for viewing the wonder picture of the lake. The wind has now gone down, and the moon throws a palpitating track of silver light over the expanse of black water, making a central point of attraction from which the eye strays reluctantly. The black lines of the mainland and the dim shapes of distant islets are merely a frame and setting for it. For the moment that shimmering highway of light, leading—who knows?—to the gates of paradise itself, is the recompense of human suffering, the reward of human effort, the guerdon of life.

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"Any of you fellows got any tobacco?" Cyclops inquires, casually.

"Child," says Kitchener, "you would do well to thank God daily that your jaws are permanently attached, for you have at least that part of the machinery of smoking always about you. Hand me over the Sick Thing's pouch and my match safe, which you will find in your pockets, together with your own pipe, which may be anywhere, and I will endeavor to supply the principal need of your existence."

Cyclops makes a lazy effort in the direction indicated, but finding the labor involved too great, presently desists.

"Just roll over, you know," the Little Officer Boy says, "and I'll go through your pockets for you."



Early the next morning the canoes move across beautiful Lake Couchiching to the mouth of the Upper Severn River, indicated by an iron railway bridge thrown across it. This part of the Severn is a narrow and tortuous stream shut in by clay banks and broken at close intervals by small rapids and falls about which short portages have to be made. Half way down, the canoes are confronted with the problem of floating logs, and lumber booms stretched either straight across or lengthwise through the middle and edging gradually toward one of the banks to end at last in a "bag" of logs constituting an absolutely impassable barrier. By creeping among the floating logs and shoving them this way and that, gradual headway is made. The booms across the stream have usually an opening at either end large enough to let a canoe through; and the lengthwise booms are crossed by running the nose of one canoe atop and sinking the timber sufficiently to allow the other to scrape over. By nightfall the little saw mill town of Severn Bridge is passed, and camp for the night is made below. Next morning the expedition moves on, crossing Sparrow Lake to the entrance of the Lower Severn.

The whole character of the country seems to change from this point, the banks of the river rising high and almost sheer and formed of granitic gneiss, with pines clinging to every little point of vantage, and the stream flowing between with greater depths of dark color, and a new air of strength and majesty. It is the first real taste of the wilderness—the beginning of the end of human settlement. The wind sweeps through the high walls with a touch of coldness in it and with that keen tang of the forest that quickens the pulses of the town-bred man shaking off the shackles of convention at

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last and claiming his share in the joy of a common birth-right. From this on no blade of grass is seen—nothing, indeed, but gray rock covered with stag-moss and lichen, masses of dark forest of white and red pine, with here and there a small oak or maple, and a sprinkling of juniper and spruce. Here and there along the banks of the river and lake the cardinal flower stands forth flauntingly against the background of dark green and slaty gray—a little shaft of vivid scarlet that comes upon one like a suddenly shouted defiance. The Indian or the French Canadian may pass it by all unheeding; but when the town-bred man meets it, his dripping paddle comes out of the water and he pauses to do instinctive reverence to the wonder and the beauty of the thing. More shy and modest, and crouching low at the feet of its splendid relative, the little water lobelia grows. Find a cardinal flower and go down on your knees by it, and you will come upon its timid little neighbor hiding in the shadow as if dreading discovery. From afar you may see the cardinal, but you must search for the lobelia if you would find it. Yet it is always there. Here and there, in little sheltered streams, by far and by far, you come upon patches of water lilies, with olive and green sepals and pink edges, pure white petals and perfect hearts of gold—smaller, daintier and sweeter-smelling lilies than grow in the southland.

The first stage of the next day's journey brings the two canoes to a rapids, the roar of which has been heard through the previous night. As the first canoe is swept down toward it, Kitchener stands up and makes a quick examination.

"All right, Sick Thing!" he shouts above the roar of the water, "We'll try it. When I give the word, paddle as though all hell were behind you and all heaven before!"

Then, as the first inrush of the water grips the canoe and whirls it forward, he shouts to the others, "Land, you fellows—land! Don't follow!"

The rapids is something lustier than he had expected, and disaster seems imminent. But he is an old voyageur, cool and quick, and with the most sympathetic wrist that ever worked wonders with a paddle. There is a boiling column of water spouting in the center that means destruction to the poor canoe if once it lay hold of it. The canoe sweeps forward, helpless in the grasp of a mighty force. In another instant that spouting devil that stands there waiting must have it. A lightning turn of Kitchener's flexible wrist, and the canoe sheers off, ducks under a mighty wave, and escapes.

"We're awash to the thwarts, Sick Thing!" he shouts. "Make for the shore and get the bags out."

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The Little Officer Boy comes dancing down over the rocks with his camera in hand.

"Oh! oh! oh!" he shouts; "confound it, all you know! I missed that, and it would have made the bulliest kind of a picture. It was lovely when you shot under that big 'un. If it isn't too much trouble, you know, would you fellows mind going back and doing it over again?"

The Kitchener curses him softly in Moccasin—and that always hurts the Little Officer Boy's feelings.

"You seem a trifle wet, Sick Thing," Kitchener says a moment later when the bags are safely out of the water. "Just slip your clothes off and hang them up to dry. We might as well have a swim and lunch here, before we go on."

From this on the river widens into a series of beautiful little lakes and inlets, all fringed about and shut in by high headlands. A few miles further along, and it rushes through a narrow gorge, the whole body of it compressed into a fifty-yard channel. It goes through in swirling maelstroms and sucking undertows that snatch the control from the paddler's hands, but really mean no danger to the canoe, for the banks are smooth, the water deep, and the course straight. Below this is the Raggedy Rapids, a half mile dash of roaring water and gaping rock that no canoe could live through. The beginning of the portage stands out, fair and clear, on the left bank, and for this the canoes make. The tump-lines are adjusted on the dunnage bags and a pair of paddles lashed lengthwise to the center thwarts of each canoe. Cyclops whirls a canoe about on the point of its nose, bottom up, and slips his head between the paddles. Then, grasping the sides in his hands, he proceeds to climb the precipitous bank of rock and slipping sand as unconcerned as though he were doing an everyday thing of the most commonplace character. Then the Sick Thing follows with a tump-line over the top of his head and a big dunnage bag resting in the hollow of his back. Before he reaches the top, his head has been nearly jerked from his shoulders, his breath comes in painful gasps, his hands and knees are cut and bleeding with falls, and he is bathed in perspiration.

"All right, old chap!" cries the Little Officer Boy, laden with another dunnage bag about as large as himself; "you're doing fine. Keep close after Cyclops or you'll lose the trail and get lost in the bush. Here comes Kitchener with the other canoe. If we get in his way, he'll swear horrid."

As the Sick Thing staggers along the trail, feeling that every step must be his last, he is turning a curious reflection over in his mind. Up to this point in his life he had taken it for granted that he knew how to walk;

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he now realizes that what he knows of the matter is very rudimentary. With twice his load Cyclops has climbed the face of a precipice without a slip, and now he is traveling at a kind of jog trot over every conceivable kind of obstacle with as much carelessness and certainty as though he were traversing a flagstone pavement.

"Out of the way, you fellows!" Kitchener roars.

They step off the trail into the bush, and Kitchener goes trotting by with a canoe on his shoulders and a couple of guns in his right hand.

"He's as strong as an ox, that chap," the Little Officer Boy remarks. "He and Cyclops are just the deuce and all at this kind of thing. I'm a bit soft myself. What do you say to a rest?"

"You are just saying that for my sake. Thank you for your kindness, but I can hold out a bit longer."

"I'll go ahead, if you don't mind. Take it easy, you know, and drop the blooming bag when you've had enough of it. I'll come back and fetch it when I get to the other end."

A few minutes later and the Sick Thing has the trail to himself. He moves slowly, picking his steps with the utmost circumspection, but missing his footing every yard or two, nevertheless, and with each such experience the dunnage bag swings to the right or left and gives his neck a further twist in the direction of ultimate dislocation. The solution of his troubles would be to set his load down, but something in him forbids the thought as unworthy of his manhood. He toils on, gasping and trembling, but grim and determined. Presently he meets Kitchener and Cyclops coming back for the remaining bags.

"Poor old chap!" Kitchener said kindly. "This is a deuce of a hard portage for you. It's a good three-quarters of a mile. Do you think you can stick it out?"

The Sick Thing says nothing, passing them without a word. He is not without appreciation of Kitchener's sympathy, but he has no breath with which to express it.

"Clear grit to the heels!" Kitchener shouts after him. "You're as right as they make 'em."

The Sick Thing's benumbed hands grip the tump-lines closer yet, and his whole body braces under the tonic of the compliment. He knows that he is far from deserving it—indeed, he tells himself now that he is only a doddering old man from whom the glory of youth has passed, and with it the courage to endure. Nevertheless, upborne by his friend's commendation, his determination to carry the intolerable load to the end is confirmed. There is only one thing that can prevent him. He may faint. He fights against the growing sickness which he recognizes as the forerunner of this disaster,

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and he strains forward with every ounce of force which his will can lend to his failing body. The Little Officer Boy comes running along the trail toward him.

"Oh, I say, old chap, you know!" he says, "you're like Jack Falstaff, larding the ground as you go. Let me take the beastly thing and you lie down and have a rest. You won't do it? Well, you're a tough one. All right; I'll go along with you and show you the way. It's only a few hundred yards more."

How the Sick Thing gets over the remaining distance he does not clearly know. He has an indistinct idea that the Little Officer Boy chatters without ceasing, and that he likes it and gets a sort of comfort from it, though what it is all about he has not the remotest conception. But at last he is at the water's edge, where the canoes lie, and he shoots the big bag over his head and drops down beside it. When Kitchener and Cyclops arrive, he is fast asleep.

"Let him rest a bit, poor old chap!" Kitchener says. "And while we are waiting, I am going to try a cast in that pool. There ought to be something good to eat in it, from the looks of things. See if you can't find me a young and innocent frog, one of you fellows, while I get my rod out."

In a few minutes, Kitchener, his hook baited according to his desires, has crept out upon the rocks to a point where the tail-end of the Raggedy comes swirling past, leaving a sheltered pool in the lee of the land. With his first cast, there is a quick strike, and the reel pays out with a shriek.

"He's a big 'un, a big 'un!" the Little Officer Boy shouts, beginning to dance with excitement. "For glory's sake, don't let him get off!"

The Sick Thing opens his eyes at the shout, and gets up with alacrity, forgetting all about his late sufferings.

"Any you fellows got any——" Cyclops begins.

"Stuff that brute up with tobacco and keep him quiet," Kitchener calls. "One of you fellows get the gaff out and bring it here. I've got my hands full with this chap. If it's a bass, he'll leap in a minute."

The line, which has been tense as a bow string against the curved rod, suddenly slackens. At the same moment Kitchener begins to pay out from the reel and then the fish leaps high in the air. But with the slack line which Kitchener had provided, the fish fails to jerk the hook from its hold—an ancient device of the bass—and he plunges again into the water, defeated and raging. The wary fisherman lets him take all the line he wants, keeping it taut only until such time as the intention to try another leap is shown by a sudden slackening, when he pays out quickly again. Three times does the bass try

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the device of the leap, and each time Kitchener defeats him with a slack line. Then, little by little, the line is reeled in, the bass fighting stubbornly for every inch of the way, but bass strength and bass courage cannot much longer endure this strain, and so it comes to pass in the course of the next ten minutes that the doughty fish is brought into shallow water and there landed without the help of the gaff.

"A fine fight, a fine fish and the certainty of a fine supper," Kitchener announces. "And, now, gentles, let's away."

The canoes are floated, bags and what-not packed in, and the expedition moves forward once more. A few miles further down the Severn, another rapids is reached, but so wide and straight and free from rocks that there is no question about running it. Nevertheless, as the canoes shoot through the dancing water, the paddlers catch a fleeting glimpse of a gleaming white cross standing out from one of the banks, commemorative, doubtless, of the drowning of some unfortunate voyageur. A few miles below this, camp for the night is made. While Kitchener is preparing the big black bass for supper, and Cyclops is getting the tent up, the Little Officer Boy goes back into the country upon an exploring expedition for blueberries. He returns in half an hour with his hat filled with the luscious fruit.

"Boys," he says, "I never saw so many blueberries in my life, and the partridges are so thick it's just disgusting. They've fed on those berries till they're too fat to fly. I was falling over them at every step. We'll have to stay here to-morrow and have a go at them with the guns."

"Season doesn't open until the first of next month," Kitchener announces quietly.

"Look here, Kitchener!" Cyclops says, growing suddenly excited, "there isn't any law of God or man that'll keep me off those birds. What the dickens did we bring the guns and the dog for, I'd like to know! A fellow that croaks about laws in such a country as this ought to have his head stove in and be fed to the pike."

"Oh, well!" Kitchener responds with an amused smile, "sooner than suffer an ignominious death at the hands of outlaws I suppose I'll have to submit. If the worst comes to the worst we can plead the necessities of hunger."

"Plead nothing!" Cyclops cries, indignantly. "You talk as though there were a magistrate around the next point. Why, confound it all, we might stay here for a month and never see a human being. It's downright immoral to talk about laws under the circumstances."

"Right, child, right!" Kitchener responds serenely. "I

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stand corrected. As the poet says, 'there's never a law of God or man runs north of fifty-three.'

"This isn't fifty-three by a long shot," Cyclops says sulkily; "but it's far enough north for a decent man to do any bally thing he wants to."

"There, there, Cyclops; there, there!" Kitchener answers soothingly. "You have ridden me down, and there's no need to trample me to death."

"Kitchener," says Cyclops in a milder tone, "have you got any—"

"Yes, yes, child; here's my pouch and my match safe, and you can get my pipe out of my coat if you can't find your own. I hope you'll not stop smoking for so many minutes again. It seems to get on your nerves."

Next morning, long before the others are awake, Cyclops steals off with his gun and the dog. Kitchener and the Sick Thing are roused at last by an angry malediction from the Little Officer Boy.

"What is it?" Kitchener exclaims, springing to his feet. "What has happened?"

"Here's Cyclops gone and hogged all the fun for himself," the Little Officer Boy cries. "He's sneaked off with the dog and he'll not leave a bird in the whole blooming country. I call it a dirty low mean trick to do a thing like that, and I'm blessed if I won't tell him so when he gets back."

"Oh, is that all? It isn't enough to get wild over. He'll be back by breakfast time, and you can have your go at the partridges later. Come along, Sick Thing; roll out of your blankets and get into the water."

A moment later they have their night woollens off and go shivering through the raw air of the morning to a point of rock where the river runs dark and deep. One after the other, they plunge in. The Little Officer Boy and Kitchener come to the surface at about the same time.

"Hello, where's the Sick Thing?" the Little Officer Boy exclaims, looking about him.

"Oh, he'll be up after a bit. He's the most swimmingest chap I ever knew when his hand's in. And I fancy he's beginning to feel a good deal more fit than when he started. Isn't the water jolly warm!"

"Yes; it's like coming in out of the cold to get into it. I wish that beggar'd come up. I'm getting anxious."

"There he blows!" Kitchener cries. "We thought you were lost, old chap! You're feeling pretty coltish this morning—eh?"

Half way across the stream the Sick Thing's head bobs to the surface and he blows the water out of his nostrils with a mighty sound.

"I haven't done the like of that," he shouts back, "since

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somewhere about the beginning of the century. Kitchener, I believe I'm getting to that state of body which the Americans describe as 'so's to be around.' I'm feeling fit as a fiddle. Don't wait breakfast for me—I'm going down the river for a bit of a swim."

"You are going to do nothing of the sort," Kitchener retorts peremptorily. "You are coming ashore at once for a rub down and to get into your clothes."

"All right" the Sick Thing answers with a good tempered laugh. "I suppose you know best. But, really, I feel fit for anything this morning."

When they are dressed, Kitchener sends the Little Officer Boy off in the canoe with a trolling line and an order for something weighing about seven pounds, for breakfast; and he then sets to work to build the camp fire and get the kettle boiling. In ten minutes the Little Officer Boy is back with a big black-backed pike; and thirty minutes later breakfast is ready.

"I'm not going to spoil my fish by waiting for Cyclops," Kitchener announces. "I'll keep his share hot, and we can go ahead without him."

Breakfast is finished and the matutinal pipes smoked out, and still Cyclops has not returned. The miscellaneous work of the camp keeps everybody busy for another hour, during the latter part of which a general disinclination for conversation is observable. At last the Little Officer Boy voices the general uneasiness.

"I believe the chap's lost, you know. It's the worst looking country back there you ever saw. Nothing but nasty little lumpy hills that you can't see over, and scrub and scraggly pine till your heart aches. I didn't tell you fellows, but I had to climb a big white pine to find my way back yesterday. One spot looks for all the world like another, and there isn't a landmark to swear by. I believe that Cyclops has gone grubbing along after the birds, just watching the dog and slipping the shells in, and never looking where he was going. I've been sick about the thing for the last hour. Will anybody come with me? I'm off to hunt for him."

"Yes," says Kitchener quietly; "I'll go with you. We'll take the guns and the compass. As the wind blows now straight against us, there is no use in trying to signal to Cyclops, for he couldn't possibly hear the shots. But the wind may go down, and the guns will be the best way I can think of to foregather with him. Sick Thing, I'll leave you to take care of the house. We ought to be back in a couple of hours. If we're not, don't be uneasy, for the compass makes us safe enough."

The Sick Thing settles himself down to do a little necessary sewing. There is a large rent in one of his garments which he decides may be remedied by a neat

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patch. He gets the sewing-huzzy out and selects a needle which he thinks to be of about the right caliber. After spending an exciting half hour in a perfectly futile effort to introduce the thread into the eye, he decides that what he needs is a larger bore. He therefore puts away his first choice and selects instead a darning needle of heroic proportions. The thread goes through the eye without the slightest difficulty. "This," he tells himself, "is something like it." He inserts the point of the needle in the cloth, and is astonished to find that it refuses to go entirely through. He therefore inverts the needle, lays the head against his leg and bears down upon it, with the result that he at once inflicts a painful stab upon his anatomy. Profiting by this experience he now uses a small stone as a means of ramming the needle. This proving eminently successful he proceeds to draw the thread through. His thread is so long, however, that the utmost stretch of his arm fails to carry through more than half of it. He therefore places his mending on the ground with the stone on top, and moves a yard or two away, from which point of vantage he is able to achieve his object. He is a good deal chagrined, however, to find that the thread, not content with going to its limit, passes entirely through the cloth and comes out in his hand. "What that thread needs," he soliloquizes, "is a knot." He digs the needle into the earth to keep it safe, and crawls back to the end of the thread. He makes a knot and examines it critically. "Not big enough," he decides. So he makes another one with the intention of sliding it down on top of the first. But instead of doing this the contrary thing makes itself fast about an inch higher. He now tries to make a third knot which will fit in between the two first. When he has finished it, he finds, to his intense surprise, that it stands half an inch above the second. Abandoning the knot problem as quite hopeless, he proceeds with his mending. By keeping the article to be mended on the ground and kneeling a foot or two away from it, he is able to draw the thread through to the knots without moving his knees. He has simply to lean back over his heels and extend his arm in the same direction over his head. He decides, after a few minutes of this, that sewing is an uncommonly good exercise. The problem of holding the garment to the ground while he does this, he solves by laying a large stone on top, and he thus has the smaller stone to use as a needle-rammer. Despite the most skillful manipulation of the rammer, however, he stabs himself with the needle over and over again. Sometimes it is the point that catches him; sometimes the head, and occasionally he gets both of them at once, the head going into his hand and the point into his leg. "I believe," he says,

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reflectively, "that this is how Kitchener learnt to swear. It certainly is very aggravating." He finds on examining his work, when he thinks he has made some progress, that the thread, instead of passing through evenly, has left a lot of various sized loops on both sides of the cloth. Moreover, the patch will not lie flat, but insists upon humping itself into annoying festoons. The thread being by now short enough for closer operations, he takes his sewing on his knee, and proceeds calmly with it. He thinks he is doing finely in this position until he discovers that the last five stitches have firmly attached the leg of his trousers to the article being mended. Then he repeats rapidly all of Kitchener's profanity that he can recall, cuts himself free and flings his sewing into the tent.

His watch tells him that it is half past twelve, and he decides that he must get something to eat. There is no sign of the absent men, and as yet he feels no anxiety about them. He starts up the fire and puts on the kettle. Tea is the only thing he knows how to cook, and he is largely theoretical about that. In the course of half an hour he has made about two quarts of a very inky brew, which he is surprised to find quite unlike anything he ever tasted. By adding large quantities of cold water, however, it becomes fairly palatable, albeit somewhat chilly, and with this and hardtack he makes a lunch which, though not exactly appetizing, satisfies his hunger. Then he sits down to smoke and wait. By three o'clock, there still being no sign of his friends, he becomes anxious. As the wind still blows strong from the same quarter, he knows there can be no use in attempting to signal with the gun. All that he can think of doing is to wait until nightfall and then build a bonfire on the high land back of the camp. For this purpose he gathers all the available wood and carries it up to the point he has selected. Six o'clock comes and still they have not returned. He eats a miserable supper of hardtack and cold water, being too unhappy for anything more ambitious, and then sits watching the slowly darkening sky. Shortly after seven, he climbs to where his wood is stacked, and starts his fire. He sits before it, feeding it, and listening intently. The sky is completely overcast, with not a star showing, and no sound comes to his strained ears but the mournful whine of the wind through the trees. The stillness is terrifying. Out of it there suddenly comes to his alert senses the startling sound of a far-away laugh. It is so human and at the same time so weird a sound that his heart stands still. It is like the laughter of a maniac—wild, disordered, uncanny. His first thought is that it is one of his friends, gone mad with hopeless wandering in a desolate coun-

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try. But immediately on the heels of that fancy comes the recollection of a sentence in Kitchener's letter—"the land where the loon laughs in the hush of the night!" That is the satisfying explanation—it is a loon and nothing else! He piles the drift-wood high upon his fire and watches the flames leap upward. Surely so vivid a point of light must be visible for many miles! It must guide the wandering steps of the lost ones—are they all lost by now?—back to the safe shelter and the comfort of the camp! Taking solace in the thought, he sits on the ground with his back to a rock, and watches the fire. From it he occasionally casts a furtive look into the black of the night about him. But instantly his eyes revert to the fire. He is shut in on all sides by an eternity of void space. The whole of his world is the few feet of ground between his rock and his fire. When he has to get up to add another log to the flames, he moves with trepidation. A step beyond the line of light would mean a plunge into black space, thereafter to fall forever. From the far shore of the river comes the plaintive grieving of a whip-poor-will, three long, sad notes, and then silence again. The weary hours creep forward laggingly, broken only by the work of feeding the fire and by mournful and terrifying sounds that come to him out of the desolate forest about. The last time he looks at his watch he finds it is past midnight. Then a new sound comes to his ears, borne from afar by the breeze, that brings him to his feet with a jump. There can be no mistaking it—it is pleasant human voices shouting a rude chorus. He cannot hear the words, but the dear familiar tawdry tune shapes them for him.

"It's the soldiers of the Queen, my lads."

He stretches wide his arms and shouts in the teeth of the breeze, his full heart choking him, "Kitchener! Kitchener! Kitchener!" He knows his voice will not carry half the distance that still separates them, but still, from sheer joy, he continues to shout as he piles fuel upon his beacon fire that is casting its light afar and bringing the lost ones home again. How they meet at last, and spend the rest of the night in feasting and singing; how he is told that the needle of the compass got off its axis and was of no use to them, and how at last they foregathered with Cyclops by getting to windward of him by chance and his hearing the faint bang-bang of their guns and running them down just about sunset, is afterward a confused and delightful recollection to him.



Three luxurious and happy days are spent in camp before the expedition moves on. Then everything is

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packed away, the dunnage bags laid in the canoes, and a start is made. Just below the camp they pass the entrance of Lost Channel, and a mile or two further down come to the entrance of North Channel, closed by a boom. They slip around the end of the boom without any difficulty, and proceed. North Channel is a series of little rapids and falls, every one of which requires a portage of fifty yards or less. To the Sick Thing it is an interesting experience to observe how close to these rapids and falls Kitchener will guide the canoe without apparent danger of being sucked in. It is simply a matter of making use of the back water and keeping close to the shore. Then, when a clear view is obtainable, the Sick Thing lays hold of a rock and Kitchener stands up to inspect—the other canoes waiting for orders. By noon the last of the rapids is passed and the entrance to Six Mile Lake is observable in the distance. It has been a hard and quick morning's work, and everyone is hot and tired. Clothes are off in an instant and all four men plunge into the tail of the rapids. Then comes a luncheon of hardtack, stick chocolate and raisins—a delightful feast to ravenous men. After that, a quiet smoke, and then on again. Six Mile Lake is lashing itself into fury under a stiff breeze, and the heavily loaded canoes take in a good deal of water. But the open water is passed over safely, nevertheless, and camp for the night is made on an island which promises good shelter from the coming storm. By the time the tent is up and the fire started, the rain is coming down in torrents. How Kitchener accomplishes it the others do not rightly know, but while they lie comfortably in the tent, he actually prepares and serves a big pot of delicious soup, a pot of refreshing tea, and what goes by the name of a rice pudding. By the time this is disposed of, the rain has ceased, and nothing is left of the storm but an occasional flash of lightning and the grumbling of distant thunder. In the twilight, a loon passes close overhead, his wings making a loud whistling; and a moment later a stately crane goes by. The fire is flooded out by the rain long since, and the fuel lying about is too sodden to make another. There can be no cheery camp fire for this night. But presently the moon comes up, shining weirdly through driving clouds and lighting fitfully the black water and blacker headlands. Then, away in the distance, comes the voice of the loon. For reasons of his own, probably, the strange wild creature is not laughing to-night, but instead, indulges in an undertoned whimper broken at intervals by an unearthly shriek.

"Boys!" says Kitchener, solemnly; "there's the agony and despair of twenty centuries in that creature—and let

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me tell you why. The soul of Judas Iscariot, the man who betrayed his Friend for money, dwells in him."

Nobody makes any rejoinder. The thought sinks in and becomes part of the gloom and the silence of the night. Until they creep at last into their blankets, the four voyageurs remain in melancholy reverie.

Next day, the sadness of the preceding night all forgotten, they go forward again. At the end of Six Mile Lake they pass through a narrow channel into Crooked Lake, at the extreme northern limit of which they find an abandoned lumber camp. According to the map, there should be a portage here, but so far as the eye can discern there is no possible way through the tangled growth of forest and underbrush which fringes the shore. Kitchener lands and plunges into the bush. In fifteen or twenty minutes he returns.

"I have found it," he says; "but it's the most dubious looking trail I ever saw—hard to find and harder to hold to. However, it's all there is."

As they are taking the bags out of the canoes a big, straight, keen-eyed young man, carrying a Winchester over his shoulders and holding it by barrel and stock with both hands, comes out of the bush and approaches them. It appears from the little he says that he is a French-Canadian farmer from Go Home Bay, about twelve miles to the southeast. He grows a little garden truck, owns a cow and a horse, raises a few hogs and chickens and hunts for game the year round. "All the year round?" "*Mais non!*—honly w'en she was allow it by de law." This with a quiet smile. "Yes; that is the portage—dam bad portage, certainlee!"

The beginning of the portage is a plunge into the bush and then the faint outline of a trail. Then a broken and rotten bridge of logs that would be hazardous enough to cross empty handed. Then a long flight through an almost tropical growth, climbing over dead trees and plunging unexpectedly into sodden spots of morass where the foot sinks to the ankle—a short portage after all—only about two hundred yards, but an exceedingly bad one, and ending by the margin of a little stream choked with weed and bullrush. Following this a few yards down, open water is reached, but apparently landlocked.

"There isn't any outlet from this," the Sick Thing announces.

"Do you see that tangled mass of swamp weed straight ahead?" Kitchener asks.

"Yes; but you don't surely imagine that to be a channel! It is evidently impenetrable."

"The reeds bend in that direction. What movement there is in the water is through there. Let's try it."

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The Sick Thing laughs derisively. For once Kitchener's woodcraft is at fault. But they drive the canoe in and pull themselves along by the help of the sturdy bulrushes. In five minutes they have won through, and there before them stretches open water. It was the channel after all, and the Sick Thing hastens to apologize. At the head of this water an ancient dam is found. Then follows a portage, commencing over steep rocks, continuing through a ravine choked with dead timber, and then on over a fairly good trail—about one hundred and fifty yards in all. At the end of it, the canoes are slipped into a little stream perhaps five yards wide. A dozen yards down this a big dead tree blocks the way, and too close to the water to allow the canoes to pass under. The bags are lifted out and laid atop of the tree and the canoes passed over, a ticklish operation. Then, five yards further along, a submerged tree blocks the channel, too high in the water to allow the canoes to pass over and too heavy to be sunk by any available means. Fortunately it is covered with slime, and by dint of coaxing, lifting, shoving and wriggling, the canoes are at last got over it. Five hundred yards further, the open water of McRae's Lake is found. At the northern extremity of this, a dam with an open flume is reached. The canoes slide through the flume without having to be unloaded, the men stepping dryshod over the rocks alongside. The four voyageurs are now in Georgian Bay. Camp is made at the first convenient spot on the mainland, and a hearty supper and ten hours of unbroken sleep follow. A seven pound pike for breakfast, parboiled for twenty minutes and then fried with bacon and seasoned with pepper and salt and a dash of curry, and the expedition moves forward once more. It passes the deserted lumber mill village of Muskoka Mills, stopping a moment to leave letters to be forwarded by the next steamer, and then on to find good camping ground for the night. This is found to be not only good, but really delightful, and a whole day is spent in luxurious idleness. There are socks to be darned, shirts to be washed, buttons to be sewed on, and a world of social happy talk to fill in the time, with the smell of the birch log from the camp fire at night and the glory of the heavens to gaze upon.

As the course from this on is likely to be somewhat puzzling, Kitchener submits the Government map of Georgian Bay to the first native he meets.

"We think up here," says the native, "that the survey must have been made in the Government offices in Toronto. The map is worse than useless. You would do well to put it away and ask your course from point

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to point as you go along. I know every inch of the coast from here to the entrance to Moon River, myself. I'll draw it on the blade of a paddle, if you like; but I warn you that even that won't be sufficient. There are big bays you are certain to go into, if you are not careful, and they'll cost you anywhere from three to twelve miles of paddling. Stop at every house you come to and ask. That's the only way to do it. The first you'll come to is Jimmy Darling's, on Aberdeen Island, and the next is Loudon's, on High Rock. Those are two points that will see you safely over part of your journey. But for heaven's sake look out for the bays!"

He makes a rapid, free hand drawing on the paddle, and leaves them. They go straight to Darling's Island through a sheltered channel, and from there see the open water of Georgian Bay, white-capped and threatening. A call at Darling's house results only in an interview with a servant, who seems profoundly ignorant of the geography of the country. However, she is quite sure there is an inside channel, back of the islands, that will afford safe passage for the canoes. Another glance at the tumbling water convinces them that the inside channel must be found, and as there is no one else to consult within several miles, they proceed to search for it themselves. In a few minutes an entrance is found back of what seems to be a large island facing Darling's. This they enter, and find themselves in a wide and sheltered stretch of water dotted with innumerable islands. Never doubting that this is the channel they are in search of they proceed. After several hours' paddling they discover they are in a big landlocked bay—one of the snares the native had warned them against—and they have to turn back. They eventually creep out by the same channel they entered, and are once more in face of Darling's Island, with only enough daylight left to make camp for the night. They sleep that night with the booming of the surf in their ears. Shortly after 7 o'clock next morning the canoes are launched again. As the sea in the open has gone down, and there is no wind worth mentioning, they decide to cut through the wide stretch of water and head directly for Loudon's Island. The next island with a house on it that comes in view they stop at, and Kitchener climbs over the rocks to interview the inmates. Nobody being astir, Kitchener boldly knocks at the door, and presently it is opened by a man in his night shirt, who takes in the situation at a glance.

"What can I do for you?" he asks. "I suppose you are lost—everybody who ventures into Georgian Bay gets lost sooner or later—and you want me to find you again. Where are you headed for? Moon River? Well, come

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out here and I'll try to show you; but I warn you that you are more in the hands of Providence than in mine."

He steps out upon the rocks with his solitary garment fluttering in the cold morning wind and proceeds to point out the way.

"You fellows will have to hurry," he says, in conclusion, and wagging his head at the sky, "for it's going to blow like blazes."

They steer for a fishing hut which appears in the distance, and there interview a lone woman guarded by two fierce dogs. Her opinion is that they will never find the entrance to Moon River though they search for it for a month on end. Nobody ever finds it, that she has ever heard tell of. Sometimes it seems to be in one place—but mostly it isn't. But they can try for it if they want to. There isn't any law against that that she has ever heard tell of. Then she exhausts her store of knowledge by telling them the way to Indian Harbor.

They pass on to the next objective point, to-wit, a small island with a solitary tree growing on it, and marking the entrance to the harbor. Indian Harbor proves to be merely a channel between an island and the mainland. At the end of it the open water of Georgian Bay is again encountered. A long paddle through tumbling seas brings the party to the next indicated point, namely, Jubilee Island. Here an intelligent half-breed, in charge of a Mackinac boat, is found; and from him minute instructions are obtained with the usual warning against landlocked bays. Despite this, not only is the entrance not found, but once more do the weary voyageurs find themselves at the end of a long bay with a great stretch of paddling to live through before the open is reached once more. Then, night coming on, camp is made at the first available island. Supper finished and black night shutting in, the four gather round the blazing logs, light their pipes with a live ember—which, by the way, imparts a new and delightful aroma to tobacco all its own—and settle down for a comfortable chat.

"Do you know, Kitchener," the Sick Thing says, drawing dreamily at his pipe, "I have made a discovery on this trip! The waterways of this country, all of it probably from the Atlantic to the Great Divide, were used as highways by the inhabitants long before roads were even thought of. If they wanted to get from the interior to the seaboard, from trading post to town, or from their own settlement to the next settler's clearing, they used the waterways. Here have we been traveling over lakes and rivers we never saw before, and the course has been marked for us by thousands and thousands of men who have gone before us. And another interesting thought

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comes to me. We are traveling just as the early voyagers did—like La Salle or Marquette, or any of those splendid old chaps who did it for glory or for skins, or to preach the gospel to the red man. I wonder if they ever went over our course."

"The usual course from Quebec and Montreal to Mackinac and beyond was up the Ottawa to Lake Nipissing, down the French River to Georgian Bay, through the Soo, and so on. Our course has too many portages for big canoes and heavy loads. However, it is quite evident from the plainly marked portages that the course has been in constant use from the beginning—probably from the earliest settlements in America."

"Wonder if the priests did any swearing on the portages," Cyclops remarks, sleepily.

"I fancy they did a bit of praying, you know, when they passed through the shoals of Georgian Bay," the Little Officer Boy says, reflectively. "They're just awful."

"They'd be all right in a breeze," Kitchener says, "for they'd be shown by the whitecaps then. But in such a day as we've had, with the water almost still, why, they're enough to make a man old before his time. My hair has stood on end so long to-day that I doubt it will ever lie down again. It's nothing but shoal and sunken reef from the time we left Darling's Island. The first thing you know there is a sudden yellow gleam through the black water, for all the world as though some submarine monster were reaching out to crush you in its maw, and you just sheer off in time to save the canoe. But if we can find the entrance to Moon River to-morrow, I think we shall be free from that part of our dangers. I don't mind rocks above water, but I hate those sneaking things that lie hid just below the surface."

"The rock formation in this country," says the Sick Thing, "is most interesting. We are probably standing on the earliest geological formation known to science—on the very backbone of old Mother Earth, so to speak. And what an idea you get of an early molten condition with mighty forces heaving and twisting in the birth-throes of creation! How the river courses are marked and scored with the passage of glaciers! All the rest of the earth is young compared with this. Why, the very rock we are sitting on may have stood exactly where it stands now ten thousand years before Moses came upon the earth to make his great trek into the wilderness according to the will of God! It is to me a most solemn and——"

"I say," Cyclops interrupts, and is promptly checked by Kitchener,

"Be quiet, child! Go on, Sick Thing."

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timber which throws it into deepest shade, is a charming bit of traveling. A few miles further along it runs more swiftly over a pebbly bottom, so shallow that the four voyageurs have to step out of the canoes and wade the rest of the way to the next dam. At this dam there is an awkward lift over an almost perpendicular bank, and a short portage beyond. The canoes are set down in the midst of a tangle of logs, beyond which is a boom which the canoes slide over. Then there is a little bay, completely shut in by forest, at the far end of which a river is found flowing through drowned land. By means of a dam the lumbermen have so raised the level of this stream that it overflows both its banks and submerges the forest. As the stream itself is choked with logs, a short cut through the forest is made—a decidedly novel experience in canoeing. Every condition of a stroll through summer woods is there—the hum of insect life, the shy call of a bird, the multitude of forest colors, and above all the solemn hush of the woodland. It is slow progress, but so delightful an experience that the voyageurs feel no impatience, but rather regret when it is ended and the river channel reached once more. This part of the river, too, is filled with floating logs, which have to be slowly manipulated for every foot of way the canoes make. At last the dam is reached and the tired men land, strip, and plunge into the water just where it comes tumbling over. Then, luncheon—and after that the weary trail. A portage of something over a mile—an easy one, however—brings them to the water above a flume. More logs and a boom, and after that a half hour's paddling into Crane Lake, where camp is made. It is evidently an old camping ground, abundant evidence of sojourners who have gone before being found—some of them not quite satisfying to dainty nostrils. Kitchener is a sworn enemy to making camp where another camper has preceded him, but in this case there is no alternative, the afternoon being too far advanced to permit of further search. On one of the trees is pinned the following curious legend: "Hemah che lie juh no Moon ewh O mah ah yah—Mr. Elijah Yellowhead from Orillia, Ont., Aug. 12, 1900."

Next morning the camp is visited by a Fire Ranger, who serves the customary notice—Victoria, by the grace of God, desires her well-beloved to carefully extinguish their fires before leaving, whereby Her Majesty's forests may be preserved, with minute instructions how to proceed in the matter. The Fire Ranger carries in his canoe the invariable fire pail and the equally invariable rifle, without which latter no native seems ever to stir abroad. He is a big, straight, alert, self-reliant young man with

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"What is it, Cyclops?" the Sick Thing says, indulgently. "Tell us how it impresses you."

"I was only going to ask if any of you fellows had any tobacco," Cyclops says, giving vent to a mighty yawn. "Sorry I interrupted you."

They all replenish their pipes, and then fall into a comfortable silence, gazing steadily into the glowing embers of the fire. There is too much lazy content to require the stimulus of conversation. It is sufficient to sit and think, or even not to think at all, but just to smoke and smoke, growing deliciously sleepier with every moment. And then, the unspeakable comfort of creeping into blankets laid atop of odorous spruce twigs, to fall asleep on the instant and lie quiet and dreamless for ten blessed hours of forgetfulness!



Next morning Kitchener and the Little Officer Boy go off in one of the canoes to explore for the entrance to Moon River, while the Sick Thing and Cyclops remain on the island and keep house. According to the Government map there is a perfectly straight entrance from Moon River Bay into Blackstone Harbor. When Kitchener returns, after an absence of about five hours, he has a different story to tell. The entrance may be described as follows: Sadie Island, lying at the southwest corner of Moon Island, is the beginning. Its name is plainly painted in large characters on a rock. The course is then southeast, following the main channel and avoiding the bays on either hand. Then comes Keller's Island on the right, also plainly marked, and further along, Island 62 on the left. About two miles beyond this an island lies in mid-stream, which may be recognized by a large rock shaped like a sugar loaf, which is a prominent feature of it. Here a turn to the northeast is made into Captain Island's Straits. The course is then along the left bank until a house on the far side of a bay is reached. This house marks the entrance to Blackstone Harbor.

The expedition does not move until the day following Kitchener's investigations and his redrawing of the Government map. The two canoes find their way into Blackstone Harbor without any difficulty. They cross the harbor, keeping a long point of land on the left, and come to the entrance to Blackstone River. This is closed by a boom, necessitating unloading the canoes and a lift over. Then comes a dam and another small portage. The Blackstone, a narrow, winding and picturesque stream flowing between sedgy banks and shut in by heavy

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a wonderful air of dignity and good-breeding about him—the kind of man one would desire to know more of. Out of native politeness he makes an effort to translate the inscription on the tree, but fails for want of knowledge of the tongue. He hazards the opinion, however, that it was written by an Indian guide who took a party of Americans through recently, and probably contained some timely hint for other guides to follow.

“Down on Georgian Bay,” the Sick Thing says, “the natives would have characterized your Americans as a d—d Yankee push.”

“There’s no call to speak of the Americans that way,” he answers, quietly. “We get lots of them through here, and they’re as decent men as I want to know. They take care of their fires and leave their camps sweet and clean. They don’t take any more fish than what they can eat, nor cut any more wood than what they need. The Americans are all right—as right as they make ’em.”

Next morning, the channel from Crane Lake into the Upper Blackstone Lake is found to be an easy course, there being only one dam, and that open and with sufficient water to float the canoes through. The Upper Blackstone breaks upon the view like a glimpse of paradise. It is so entrancing a spot that the voyageurs, though they have paddled not more than five miles since breakfast, decide at once to make camp. From the spot they select for the purpose they can see, away in the distance, a clearing in the forest with a scattered group of little houses in it. When the tent is up and everything made snug, one of the canoes sets off to visit this clearing and obtain, if possible, a supply of fresh vegetables—anything, in fact, to vary the ordinary round of camp diet. Potatoes, eggs, bread and butter are the fruit of a ten miles paddle, and the voyageurs live high that night on black bass, bacon, blueberries, fried potatoes and great slices of good white loaf spread thick with the unaccustomed luxury of butter. To properly appreciate such delicacies one must have been deprived of them for a week or two. Then, they are eaten in a kind of exalted ecstasy, as something almost too precious for mortals.

The delights of the Upper Blackstone are so great that it is left behind only after several days, and then with regret. A climb of perhaps sixty feet by a trail through the forest brings the party to Birch Lake. A mile’s paddle brings them to a dam with a hundred and fifty yards portage around it. Then a half mile through Burnt Lake, and another portage, beginning with a sharp ascent and then winding for half a mile through the bush.

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Then Portage Lake, with a mile and a half portage over a wagon trail at the end of it.

"Boys," says Kitchener at the beginning of this, "as this is a long portage I propose that we make it in one carry. Sick Thing, are you good for two of the bags?"

"Sling 'em up and I'll try it," the Sick Thing responds.

He starts with something more than twice the load he has thus far carried. At the end of half a mile or so he shoots his load over his head and rests. He is doubtful about ever getting it up again—but he must rest. Then, when his breathing is easier he lifts the heavier of the two bags to his shoulder, adjusts the tump-line about his head, and slides the bag to the hollow of his back. Then, taking the other bag by its tump-line, he swings it over him and drops it on top of the other, finding the operation much easier than he had dared to hope. Training has done wonders for him. Another half mile, and he rests again. Kitchener goes past him now at a jog trot, a canoe on his shoulders and a miscellaneous load in his free hand.

"Can you do it, old man?" he calls.

"Yes; to the Queen's taste. I just stop now and again to admire the scenery."

When he has his load up again, Cyclops trots past him bearing two bags, an axe, a couple of guns and various odds and ends. He looks quite comfortable and entirely happy. A shorter carry this time, and the Sick Thing admires the scenery once more. The Little Officer Boy now passes him, bearing a canoe, and the Sick Thing falls in behind and makes a lusty effort to keep up. But he cannot do it, and when the Little Officer Boy has disappeared around the next turn he lets his bags drop once more. Then Kitchener comes running back to him.

"By George, old chap," he cries heartily, "you've done it within a couple of hundred yards. This expedition is just what you needed. It's made a lusty youth of you."

The course from the end of the portage is into Lake Joseph, and thence by a small channel into Lake Rosseau. At the far end of this is Morgan's Bay, the ultimate destination. Just three weeks have passed since the four voyageurs left Orillia. The remainder of the month is to be spent in permanent camp in fishing, shooting and in limitless idling. Though the mainland is dotted with summer cottages and the village of Rosseau lies in a corner of the bay, civilization is still sufficiently removed to be easily forgettable. Camp is pitched on a little island nearly three miles from the mainland, and the only sounds which reach it, other than the familiar sounds of the forest, are the occasional hootings of

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a steamer passing in the distance, the steamer which will ultimately carry them homeward again. The place is as wild and primeval as though there were not a settlement within a hundred miles.

One of the first excursions the party makes is to the wonderful Shadow River—one of the show-places of Muskoka. The canoes go dancing across the bay to this. Even with a load the canoe, modeled directly after the red man's primitive design and changed in no particular save that basswood takes the place of birchbark, has a certain capriciousness in its motion. But with just two paddlers in it to carry, its coquetry breaks out and colors all its behavior. It goes swiftly through the water, but with a little mincing way that is indiscribly charming—never steady for a moment. The little creature seems to enjoy herself too much in her play with the water to be sedate. She curtsies to it, invites it, shifts away from it, coquettes with it, and acts generally like a willful, beautiful hoyden in the presence of a big lover she is more than half afraid of.

The water of Shadow River is so dark and still that it looks like a pool of ink, and the shadow pictures in it are depicted with extraordinary fidelity. The stream winds and winds through ever-changing banks, and the sheer beauty of it is beyond description. Here it will be shut in and overarched by deep, dark forest, with now and then a little opening glade that gives you a vista of a hundred yards or so, not of the ordinary tangled mass of rock and rotting timber common to this country, but something as soft and soothing to the senses as an English landscape. Then the banks will change to rocks and ferns and gorgeous wild flowers, with little curving pools formed for no other purpose than to delight the eye. Sometimes the trees shoot straight up and leave the open water to paint its color harmonies of sky and cloud and bank, and then, again, the overarch is so complete that the sun only comes through in little flecks and splotches. But, sun or shadow, the pictures are always there—such pictures as it is worth a three weeks' journey to see. There is a curious illusion forever in the mind of the visitor to this extraordinary stream. He is led to expect that the next bend will bring him in sight of some bit of ancient architecture—a monastery, a cathedral, a battlemented tower, something to complete the impression of old-world mystery and romance which seem to belong by right to magical Shadow River.

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Kitchener's Memorandum of Expenses, Treasured by the Sick Thing as a Memento.

FOOD SUPPLIES (FOUR MEN FOR ONE MONTH).

40lbs. shanty biscuit. 20lbs. smoked bacon. 5lbs. clear pork. 10lbs. small white beans. 30lbs. granulated sugar. 3lbs. Edwards' desiccated soup. 3lbs. black tea. 7lbs. oatmeal. 7lbs. cornmeal. 6lbs. Carolina rice. 6lbs. sago. 8lbs. evaporated apples. A few cloves. 5lbs. dried apricots. 6lbs. cooking raisins. $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. white pepper (in a bottle). 2oz. India curry powder (in a bottle). 3lbs. table salt. 5lbs. flour (for thickening). 2lbs. macaroni (broken into short bits). 5lbs. Canadian fall cheese. 5 cakes Ivory soap. 1 cake Sapolio. 1lb. 12s paraffin candles. 3lbs. sweet stick chocolate. Matches in a tin box.

Cost of above, \$21.60.

All in separate drill bags made to fit. Tea, soup and salt to be covered in addition with oilcloth. All bags to have tie strings at mouth.

Five dunnage bags, water proof, 24 × 36in., with flap at top and rope through the grommets to tie—\$10.

Five leather tumplines 7ft. long, with head bands, $3\frac{1}{4}$ × 12in.—\$3.75.

Three waterproof sheets—\$3.

Frying pan with folding handle. 3 tin pails, the largest 9in. in diameter by 9in. in height, all to fit into each other, and all with covers. 4 tin cups. 6 tin plates, $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. deep by 7in. in diameter. 1 tin spoon 9in. long. 4 tablespoons and forks. Candle lantern. Light axe with cover—\$3.90.

Carbolated and plain petrolatum. Pond's extract. Purgative. Carminative. 2 rolls surgical bandages. Quinine pills—\$1.50.

Combination tool holder containing screw driver, file and awl. Small pincers. Copper wire. Some 1in. riveting nails. Strip of tin 5in. wide by 10in. long. 1lb. white lead and putty mixed, two parts of former to one latter. $\frac{1}{4}$ yd. stout canvas. Some $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wood screws. Some 2in. wire nails. Oil stone. These are for mending possible leaks in canoes—\$1.75.

Rent of two William English canoes for one month—\$10.

Rent of 7 × 7ft. tent with 3ft. wall, one month—\$4.

Total cost to each man—less than \$15.

All food supplies obtained from Michie, a dealer at No. 5 King street west, Toronto. He can direct strangers where to get canoes, tent and dunnage bags. Bags are carried by railroad as baggage. Expressage on canoes is not expensive.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT FOR EACH MAN.

Khaki suit. Extra trousers. 2 flannel shirts. Sweater. Belt. Suit heavy underclothes for night wear. 2 pairs heavy wool socks. Hockey boots with rubber heels. Tennis shoes. 3 large bandanna handkerchiefs. 3 white handkerchiefs. Slouch hat. Tuque for sleeping. Seaman's long oilskin coat. Tooth brush. Hair brush. Comb. Shaving tackle. Sewing outfit. Bath towel. Pair heavy blankets (two pairs sewed together form sleeping bag for two men). Clasp knife with ring and lanyard. Compass. Match safe.

Total weight of entire equipment, including everything but canoes, about 300lbs.