Nick of the Woods

BY

ALASKA BLACKLOCK

pseud.
Lewis, George Edward

PORTLAND, OREGON

AUTUMN OF 1916

THE AUTHOR
"Alaska Blacklock"

DEDICATORY

TO

JOHN F. VANSLOOTEN

One of the nearest and dearest of many loyal friends who were associated with the Author in early life where the following tale was born are these pages humbly dedicated and inscribed.

His rich poetic nature, most excellent culture and ennobling principles have for over a score of busy eventful years, inspired the Author to be a better man; and whose recent council in business, and sympathy in sorrow have renewed and strengthened the imperishable ties of friendship.

Most sincerely,

THE AUTHOR.

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THE PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The author of the foregoing, was graduated from the University of Manual labor. These pages are the products of his own early experience.

Essentially the story is quite true; with the exceptions, the few fictitious characters, and a few events. The flowers, berries, fish and game, are accurately discribed. The lakes, rivers, hills and valleys all graphically pictured, and the men, homes, crafts and customs are exact. The various kinds of trees, the lumber-men's methods, the weather, the modes of life and labor, from the ax, adz and saw, to the Sway-bars and Toggle, from the to-loader to the Roust-a-bout; yea-from stump to finish, the every explanation is in perfect order.

It was necessary for the author to misplace certain events, and to mis-locate certain people, and also to put certain ones through things which in real life they did not exactly do, always, as he pictures it In making a new phase of litature it was necessary that he personally refer to many of The Lumbermen, Merchants, Farmers, Mechanics, Millmen, Rivermen, Shingle-weavers, and Shanty-boys; but in doing this, he has sought to make mention of those whom he best knew, and highly esteemed. Therefore as it was impossible for him to interview all of these before the publication, whose eyes may chance to fall upon these chapters, he begs that every one whose name he uses will feel assured that honor and friendship urged him to do so. He also wishes to have you, whose names are not mentioned, understand that space, rather than memory forbids.

In this remarkable book, the author has given a candid setting of men and events in and about the

home of his boyhood, and has not made one single ungentlemanly reference. How pleasing it is for a Publisher after a careful perusal of the whole text to find every reference made with sincere affection leaving all to infer, that he always lived in harmony with all his yoke-fellows, and to know that after the lapse of thirty years his associates still are fresh and green in his memory.

No matter who you are, or where you are from, nor your rank in life, the book is worth your reading. The very sweetest strains in all the book are the tributes paid to the noble men, and heroic women, and the poetic offerings to the sweet Arbutus blossoms, to the mossy valleys, the sifting snows and whispering pines, all of which joined in the sublime back-woods.

Melo-drama staged before the fanciful foot-steps of the unselfish man, who has in a unique and untiring manner endeavored to make immortal not only his friends and fellow toilers but the country beautiful in which he was reared and to which he dedicates his labor and his love.

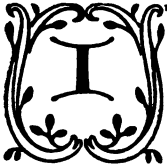
In writing the work the author journeyed back again to the old familiar haunts where the scenes were laid in boyhood, that his mind might be refreshed, and the settings arranged more properly.

If our note could express our feelings, your gratitude would be greatly augumented.

Very sincerely,

THE PUBLISHER.

CHAPTER I.

T was October on the Big Muskegon River, back in the early seventies of the nineteenth century, when two rough and hardy men stopped at Norway Haul. The genial cook had given that timely and welcome tune on the six-foot dinner horn, which reverberated over the broad acres of stumpage, and called the lads to chuck. It was but a few minutes when the lads riding their horses, driving the oxen, and others stepping sprightly, came pouring into camp. The wash-basins rattled like the ware of a Yankee tin peddler, and the hemp towels were soaked with the wipings from knotty hands inured to toil. There were sawyers, choppers, swampers, teamsters and roust-a-bouts, and when they had washed and combed they filed into the cook camp in orderly style, leaving the newcomers seated on the bench by the fire. When the last regular toiler had been seated still there was room for

more, and the second cook politely invited the strangers to come to dinner. This was all that was necessary and with the sons of the pinery they ate their meat with singleness of heart.

The two strangers were brothers of the flesh and chums by mutual choice, though long ago some readers may call them to recollection; as they were not creatures of imagination but men of the earth, clothed in flesh, for no novelist ever pictured out of imagination with a pen of iron such characters of real life. You are not pursuing a vainglorious dream, but reading of actual actors in the great natural drama "The Shantymen's Life, in the Days of White Pine." It had been ten years since they bade farewell to their parents in Old Erin, the time had been spent in the harvest of the pines. The strangers were first to finish the noonday meal, made to satisfy appetite, not to supply ceremony and fit fashion. They arose from the table, thanked the cook, which was the common currency of the time for camp board, and made for the foreman's office.

The foreman was a fat, good-natured fellow, gentle as a duck but somewhat odd in attitude. He would hire a man after dark and fire him

before daylight; the lads used to say "without even learning the color of his eyes." Modestly the two brawny men approached the magnet of the camp and the older and larger asked for work.

"What can you do?" was the response to the solicitation, which came from the boss while he was marking down the men's time, and he spoke without even looking up to see what the job seekers looked like.

"We are able bodied shanty-men, but we prefer to saw this winter," came the reply.

"Do you saw together?" asked the boss while he closed up the book and tucked it under the blankets of his bunk.

"Yes, sir," answered the speaker.

"What's your name?" inquired the foreman, as he reached for a book to make a new record.

"Nick," was the answer.

"Nick what?"

"Just Nick."

"Where did you hail from?"

"The woods, sir."

"Then I will call you Nick of the Woods. And your name?" the boss inquired, pointing his blunt

lead pencil at the silent man.

"Max," said the fellow, betraying his Irish brogue.

"All right, you're entered for the race, Nick of the Woods and Max," jollied the fat boss. "When do you want to start at it?" he inquired.

"We are ready now," said Nick.

"Then go to the van, pick out your saw, hang your axes, cut your measure, champer your wedges, get a chore-boy to fix you up a bunk and go to work tomorrow."

Two hours before daybreak the day following Nick and Max stood next to the camp door waiting for orders, anxious to prove to the other eighty lads that they knew the arts and crafts of timber. Suddenly the huge door was pushed open and the foreman's inevitable "Hurra Lads" thundered through the camp.

These words silenced the tales of the men, out went the pipes and on went the mitts and caps, as these jolly lads whistled away rapidly to their toil. These were the days when every man got his pay, his fill, and his just deserts.

Norway Haul was a novel abode. It was so named because formerly surrounding this pic-

turesque ridge the tallest, straightest and thriftiest Norway grew, and it had required skill and endurance to haul these tall timbers to the river, and so it was named in memory of hauling Norway. At this time not a tree stood in sight to witness the name still clinging to the camp; they had been cut by the timber reapers, sliced into lumber, squared into car-sills, or barn-beams, bored, dressed, matched and polished to suit the taste of folks in cities far away. It was fully two miles to the forest, the present scene of action. The men were engaged in harvesting tall cork pine, which was interspersed with beech, birch, basswood, maple, ash, ironwood, cherry, hemlock and other species. There were twenty crosscut saws running on the job and the output was a million feet of logs sent to the river every five days.

Times were good, wages high and work plentiful. Chuck was dished up in royal fashion, the camp was a paradise for the lumbermen. It was just after the age of pork and beans and just before the advent of cereals. Pancakes and molasses, brown bread and beefsteak, potatoes and turnips, ham and eggs, coffee and catsup, pickles

and crackers, canned peaches and raisin pie, as a dessert, was the weekly course, and the man was not born and his mother was dead, who would kick on the chuck at Norway Haul.

Just a moment, please, till I make you acquainted with the members of the crew—take a knock down to Murphy, the chore-boy, sixty years old, still at a boy's job. Perhaps you have forgotten and perhaps you never knew the odd jobs he had to do. He had to stir up forty heaps of rye straw and straighten eighty blankets over these heaps, which he called making the bunks, they furnish rye straw because the oxen nor horses could not eat it, and then it was bearded like a porcupine, and the men could always be awakened easily when they slept on it. The box stove ate a cord of block wood every twenty-four hours; this he had to cut and haul to camp on a hand-sled. There were two vinegar barrels to fill with water, every morning this had to be packed from the spring twenty rods away. There was the floor to sweep, and about fifty pairs of stags and rubbers to put back under the right bunk; the chore-boy had to know every man's old boots, shoes, stags, sashes and socks. There

were two other camps to heat and keep clean, the cook camp and the foreman's office; there were roads to shovel, errands to run, letters to mail and if he ran shy of employment he could pare the potatoes for the second cook, which required five pecks a day; should this not engage all his time he might wipe dishes, mop floors, wait on the sick and injured——put it down in red Murphy never got homesick because of idleness.

Now just meet Fisher, the musician, he is left-handed, lame in one knee, minus a big toe, has a bald pate, a watch eye, a stammering tongue and a cherry picker's beak; but he can almost rival Ole Bull on a violin.

Meet Tommy Fitzgerald, who with a hundred charming melodies sang the weary men to sleep so often long ago.

Here I will present to you Charley Dalb, the Dutch Humorous, who spilled his jokes in reckless profusion.

And see here is Larry Phillips, the wizard of all ox-team hoodoos.

Please meet old Ed Rogers, the king of top-loaders—what a bunch of vaudeville stars, but just remember that they did all these stunts for

fun, but had to work to make a living.

Nick and Max cut their first tree on the sixteenth day of October. There were seven logs, five sixteens, a fourteen and a twelve, they scaled six thousand feet. Pat Omelia put the whole seven logs on a Russel Logging Car, the side geared engine, with Dan O'Brien at the throttle, made the summit grade and before nightfall the new gang had made a deposit in the Big Muskegon River. After they finished the tree, swallowed the sinkers they had taken for lunch, and started on another pine, the foreman, who had spent the morning with the new gang, looked at his watch saying: "It is only ten o'clock and you fellows have cut six thousand feet of logs, I guess you will match up with the rest of the crew." He left them satisfied they were among his best sawyers.

In the evening at the camp there was plenty of excitement. Fire Department and Shuffle the Brogue were very popular games, because they were very rough. Those who did not join the games played pedro, read novels and smoked Peerless. Those who were musically inclined gathered in a group, tuned their instruments and

rendered some fine music. The singers would gather at the far end of the camp, which was eighty or ninety feet long, and sing the current songs of the Shanty-man's life. Dad Gordon, the saw-fitter, told a continued story for forty nights, about the early settlers of Indiana, Whoop-pole County, catching a black fox.

Nick slept on the ground floor, used his pants for a pillow and pressed them on the benches Sunday morning. While some of the lads were more or less dirty about their underclothes and ears, rust settled frequently on their elbows and wrists. Nick was neat about his person, and fathered the rule that all newcomers had to take a bath, and while a greater per cent of them murdered the King's English, Nick addressed his comrades in well chosen sentences, speaking in a low undertone.

Camp life was very agreeable the whole year around. One of the efforts then put forth was to make this forest barrack homelike. The melting pot was introduced to punish the skippers of the undershirt; rules were willingly obeyed, the cleanliness and good humor of the men was very commendable. The lights were extinguished,

except on Saturday nights, at nine o'clock, and every man abed; if anybody attempted to talk after they had "doused the glim," a dozen raps of protest could be heard from different sides of the camp; after that, if they still persisted in the forbidden indulgence, bootjacks, stags, stools and cord-wood would be flying your way too fast to handle. In camp the clock was about two hours ahead of the regular time, the chore-boy called the crew three hours before daylight in winter. The only light they had in the morning to dress by was the great red-hot stove, livid from base to stovepipe, and frequently the pipe would be as red as a cherry to the very peak of the shanty. By this light they arose, sorted their socks and dressed their feet; they slept in their undershirts under gray woolen blankets, dressed warm and experienced little difficulty in keeping warm at work, protected by the great forests. The wind, which is the most disagreeable of all elemental conditions, and most disastrous to traffic and manufacture, scarcely bothered at all until the forests were either cut down or hewn thread-bare.

Beakfast was served early, the crew ordered

to the woods fully two hours before daybreak. The walk of two miles seemed but a moment's ramble, the tools were dug out, the frost melted from the ax-helves, and the blade was thrust in the fire made from the dead branches of the huge trees; the steel wedges were arranged in a row near the flames to warm and draw the frost so they could be used when a log pinched or a tree had to be thrown the opposite way from which it leaned. The last hour at night several trees were sawed down, marked off, and at each place the tree was to be cut in two they would place a stick across so when it was dark they could find where the log was to be cut when they felt along the tree till they came to the stick. They would saw several big logs before the first gray streak broke in the west, and Charley Dalb said "I wore out my new mittens on the job before daylight." When Old Sol did appear and the oblique rays shot over the earth they did not add to their warmth very much, but added to their vision of the frosty air and the dim, distant hills wrapped in the robes of a winter's morning.

The Van, or Supply house, usually kept by the boss, was to accommodate the members of

the camp. Pipes, tobacco, rubbers and socks, jackets and mackinaws, shirts, caps and mitts were kept in stock; the lads were supplied, the goods charged up to them and subtracted from their pay-checks in the spring.

The cook, Frank McGovern, was banker pro-tem and kept safely in his rusty lard-can valuables galore. Trinkets, watches, rings, purses, letters and photographs of wives, sisters, mothers and sweethearts were unanimously placed in care of the honest cook. Many of the men had no home but the camp, no goods but what they tied in their grain bags, no clothing but that on their backs, whenever their hats were on their houses were shingled.

The equipage of the shanty was also very simple. Stationary benches reached around on all sides of the men's camp, with several movable ones and some stools which were used by the men in reading and playing games. Tables for cards and books were in evidence, a large box-stove set upon legs of brick, in a base of sand which served as a spittoon. There was a grindstone, two barrels of water, one for drinking and one for other purposes, there were wash basins,

towels, soap and a can of kerosene to fill the lamp, and lanterns for the teamsters. At one end of the camp was a door and on each side a half window; the bunks were three tier high and those on the second story were the favorites. A hay wire encircled the stove; on this they hung their wet jackets, mittens and socks; the socks furnished an abundance of perfumery, which was quite unlike a newly opened box of California oranges. On the tables were some of Diamond Dick's novels, the Muskegon Daily Chronicle and a deck of cards. The most useful piece of furniture was a backwoods barber chair made out of rough pine plank, with an old broom fastened to the back for a head-rest. A few feet off stood the cook camp; this was a very popular place indeed, for as the lads used to sing "It isn't the style of a Shanty-man to lose his chuck you know." In this camp the cook, second cook and two or three helpers lived and labored. The spacious tables were stationary, fortunate indeed it was, too, had they not have been they would have broken down under the load of food which was piled upon them without measure. They ate from tin plates, drank out of tin cups, basins were

used for the dark brown sugar, molasses was housed in pewter pitchers, yellow earthenware was supplied for soups and sauces, iron knives and forks with tin spoons were furnished. A pure white oilcloth covered the table; this was washed spick and span. No talking was permitted, except to ask for food to be passed, and save the clashing of knives and forks, the rattle of basins and other dishes, the meals passed off in a genteel manner.

Saturday nights the mossbacks (a term applied to the early settlers) would go home from work and often invite their partners to go with them and stay over till Monday morning, and it was usually quiet over Sunday. Those who remained in camp would read, play cards, sing songs, dance clog and juber steps, darn socks, patched pants, sewed on buttons, wrote letters, cut hair, shaved and the like; few ever hunted, fished or indulged in physical sports. A few would don a clean shirt or wear their best shoes, but ordinarily they were stags, argued innocently, scuffled good naturedly and thus the day passed by.

It was not in camp, however, that the most

interesting and entertaining part of the logger's life was seen, it was amid the tall and waving pine where they were more beautiful to behold. Here was their home and they were the masters. Sawing, chopping, skidding, loading and swamping was their delight. Each was proud of his dexterity, many a feat of skill and strength was exhibited. McQueen, with his timber cleaver weighing as it did two ounces over seven pounds, hung on a handle he had shaven from the trunk of a rock elm tree, would step up to a pine and darken the sun with chips, not an ax mark could be found on either stump or butt, so accomplished was he in his craft, the ply of that mighty ax, the magic of the deepening notch, made one feel that the tree was but wax and the ax-man a giant from some other world. The champion gang with the cross-cut were equipped with a seven foot Atkins saw, and on a wager for a new hat, pulled at the rapid rate of three strokes a second, and cut a thousand feet of logs in fifteen minutes. In this registered feat the Zipp brothers have never been excelled.

Loading logs with a single chain with swung whiffle-trees and two horses has never been im-

poved since the days of old Ed Rogers, the hero of Norway Haul. On this job, which was a pine tree harvest at its best before the times of cutting low stumps and making logs out of limbs; at present everything is used that will square a window stop or make a streak of sawdust. Skidding, boating and tonging were different ways they employed to get logs from the stumps to the loader. About every forty rods an improvised railroad track was laid. A pole tram was used by Scot Garish, but here they used light iron rails. The ground was soft, nothing but yellow sand; you could easily dig with a tin pail if you were minus a number two. It was but twenty rods from the most distant tree to the skidway, and you can imagine how rapidly the acres were eaten. It was fifteen miles to the rollway on the Big Muskegon, which bore upon her shining bosom billions of feet of logs during the lumber period which lasted upwards of thirty years.

The character of the men was far above the average laboring man. The writer has personally known thousands of the lumbermen, and visited almost every class of men from the cactus belt of Sonora to the Sourdough haunts of the

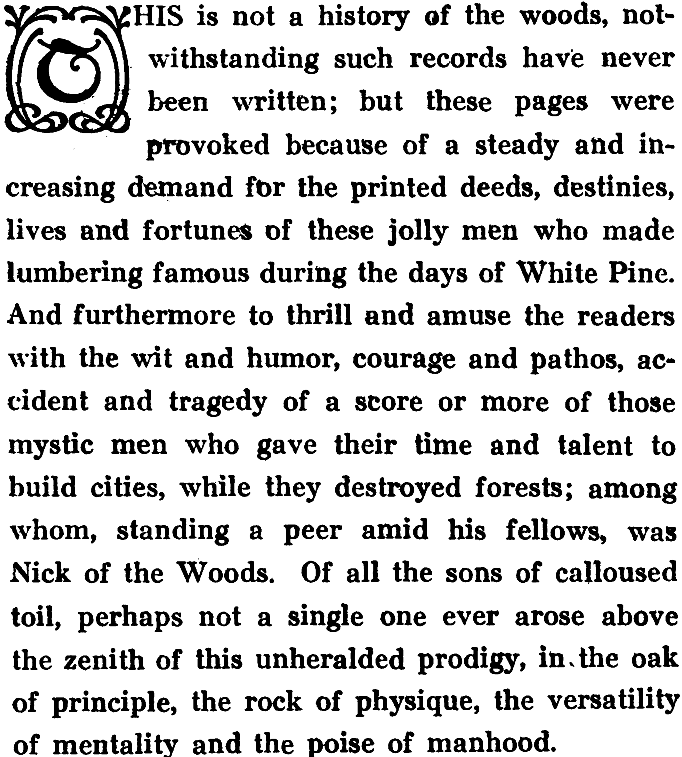
Arctic Divide and from the Longshoremen of the Pacific to the Wharf-rats of tre Atlantic, besides cowboys, ranch-owners and farmers throughout the Middle West, as well as artisans in great manufacturing plants in the centers of commerce and the marts of trade; and feels competent to affirm that no class of men ever more willingly put their shoulders to the golden wheels of labor than did the lads of the lumber woods.

Rivermen were lumbermen under other circumstances and then their acts of courage, honor and obedience have never been surpassed. A few of them were like bad Indians, diabolical when red liquor was boss, but they did not represent the rank and file of the men. Perhaps no other class of men have proven their generosity as eloquently as they when a comrade was in distress. The first thing for an unfortunate was a liberal subscription, and woe betide the gink who gave less than a cartwheel.

It should be related that not all of these fellows were here out of sheer necessity. Charley Dalb said, "I work in camp to wear out my old clothes." Roy Forsythe said, "I am here because I am too heavy for light work and too light for

heavy work." Charley Haveland declared "I am working in camp to plague my mother." These were jokes only, but there were men there whose fathers were rich farmers in the southern part of the state and their sons came to camp to spend the months that would have otherwise been dull and quiet on the farm. Others came there from the pent up wall of industry, where the vitiated air had sapped their red cheeks and manly vigor, seeking health in these rugged shades. A few bad men sought the woods as a covert to elude the law, but they talked litle and took no active part in fashioning the life or establishing rules. Should you associate with all grades of men from boot-blacks to bankers, from the country justice to the United States Senator, you would find that none of them outclassed the lumberman in wit, humor, ability and behavior in the days of the Shanty-man's life while lumbering White Pine.

CHAPTER II.



HIS is not a history of the woods, notwithstanding such records have never been written; but these pages were provoked because of a steady and increasing demand for the printed deeds, destinies, lives and fortunes of these jolly men who made lumbering famous during the days of White Pine. And furthermore to thrill and amuse the readers with the wit and humor, courage and pathos, accident and tragedy of a score or more of those mystic men who gave their time and talent to build cities, while they destroyed forests; among whom, standing a peer amid his fellows, was Nick of the Woods. Of all the sons of calloused toil, perhaps not a single one ever arose above the zenith of this unheralded prodigy, in the oak of principle, the rock of physique, the versatility of mentality and the poise of manhood.

Dad Gordon had finished his continued story of the black fox. After exhausting the resources

of many a backwoods Hoosier, and eluding every pursuit by occult if not by proverbial strategy, the cunning and mysterious animal was taken, skinned and dressed, the bounty paid in full.

The camp was to close down for the Holidays. The foreman expressed a desire to get acquainted with his wife, as he had not seen her since the spring drive. A new cook was to be secured, and the maority of the men wished a week of rest, and so the work was discontinued till after the Holidays. The checks had been dealt out to the members of the logging staff; each fellow was given as much as he felt the need of to carry him over the vacation, provided, of course, that he had that amount to his credit. Many of the men had been in since the Fourth of July without the loss of a single day and could draw a clean hundred and fifty if he chose.

After supper the night before Christmas, while the men were seated in rows around the camp eating apples which were given them by the cook, who was leaving his position, and were engaged in loud and exciting conversations about what they were going to do and where they were going to go to spend the outing, two gentlemen,

attended by the second cook, entered the camp. They were well dressed, showed themselves agreeable and were strangers to each other. At once they engaged in conversation and spent the evening talking to different members of the crew.

One was Guy Clute and represented the Louisiana State Lottery; he made a number of sales and seemed very popular. The other was an agent representing the Mercy Hospital, the only real charity resort in the lumber zone. He was not so successful, though his representatives were everywhere worthy and was a blessing to the camp men, while the lottery was a bane. Nick and a few others invested and two or three had their old tickets renewed. These tickets sold for twenty dollars each and were good for one year. They entitled the holder, should sickness or accident overtake him, to a bed and board, a doctor and a nurse, till death or recovery. The camp men were victims very many times because of their honesty and innocence; frequently the grafters appeal to them before the Scarlet Women spread their captivating snare or the saloon-keeper gave his transforming nectar.

At five o'clock in the morning Murphy called

for breakfast. Ed Shaffer had broken his suspenders; he was saving money to start a gin mill and was too stingy to buy a new pair. Dalb said to him, "Ed, if swearing would mend or restore them, you would have a carload to give away." Billy Fitz had his socks on the wrong feet, Tom Hogan was trying to squeeze his number twelve into Steve Whallin's number eight boot. The cook had burned the stack of cakes, Scoby was blustering at the jacks, when the train gave the two toots for off brakes, like so many wildcats, belts unbuckled, grain bags half closed, jackets flapping, caps thrust on awry. This body of hardscrabbles mounted the trainload of logs which was to bear them to the junction where they would transfer for the lumber metropolis.

The first thing the members of the crew did when they reached the metropolis was to hasten to the bank with their checks to have them cashed and after this they scattered and were lost in the shuffle of the crowds.

There was an old wooden building four stories high with a bar adjoining which was the favorite inn for the timber men; at this noisy and much patronized resort many of the fellows from Nor-

way Haul spent their time.

Nick and Max had secured a room in this favorite place with several others and here they spent the entire vacation. Nick sent a few gifts, attended mass, wrote letters, told stories in the bar room and had a dandy good time. Max boozed a bit, retired late, arose ugly, quarreled and browbeat his brother and his friends. Nick talked to Max about his uncivil behavior, telling him that a son of Erin, and of such parents as they had, was a disgrace to both his parents and his country. Max resented it sharply by asserting that he was not subject to his brother's bossing and he earned his own money and would spend it as he pleased, and then he went and got roaring full. Nick was afraid he would get in some serious trouble, and so he entered the saloon expecting to find him and hoping to get him to the room. Max was not in the saloon, however, and the bartender showed himself very cordial. He was dressed finely, wore a pair of twelve-dollar trousers and sported a big diamond stud, and when he extended his soft hand Nick grasped it and heard for the first time on these shores "I wish you a merry Christmas." How

very unfortunate this was. How sad to know that the first Merry Christmas was wished him by a man who sold booze. Nick referred to it long years after as "Drawing a bad card from the pack of fortune." So it was that the bartender gave Nick a card inviting him to a pig-roast that night and a free lunch. There was not a hotel nor a private boarding house that did more to please their patrons than did this saloon on that occasion. The free lunch counter, loaded with almost every kind of edibles, hot frankforts, baked duck and roast pork included.

There were many of the men really too stingy to drink, which is a virtue when carried to such a fortification, and would to God more of them were stingy. Other fellows had no desire for drink; they found sweeter joys. But many who were stingy drank; they would not feel the preciousness of coin nor the sacrifice of bone labor when they were fired by demon alcohol. There was a large per cent of the men who had no moral obligations nor religious training; true, they came from respectable families, but left home early in life and had never been taught that health and prosperity depended entirely on

good behavior. Then please bear in mind that the majority were in their youth and that they have changed, many of them in after years becoming men of profession, merchants of note, mechanics and farmers of great usefulness and progress.

Billy Fitz spent the week with his mother. She opened up the most precious jars of preserves, cooked her fattest turkey, and made cranberry sauce. She wondered at his courage when he told her how early he had to get up in the morning, and assured him she was glad somebody was more successful than she had been in waking him up.

One lad ate ten pounds of pretzels and soaked up a keg of silver foam and was heaving up Jonah when the train stopped at McBrides.

Fisher purchased a set of fiddle strings, lay around on the benches, slept, ate hot cross buns, read a love story, sang a carol or two and spun yarns meanwhile.

Rogers sashayed the city with his new queen, Maybelle, took in the dances, ordered oyster stews and bought a bouquet of cut flowers.

Jim O'Brien and Dick Elwood hired a livery

rig, but the team was fractious and they were tipsy; as they rounded a street corner at top-most speed, the cutter turned turtle, spilling them into a heap of snow which took them in as though they had dropped into the bottomless pit. Next day the city street commissioner wrote them a note, telling them if they were the parties who leveled off the streets to please call and get their pay.

Two of the lads had been to town the Thanksgiving before and had ordered a chicken dinner in a colored restaurant; as they were passing by the place where they ordered the dinner on Thanksgiving without coming in after it, the keeper saw them and knew them. He rushed to the door and said, "Hay, thar, you fellow, them chickens am jist dun."

Billy Wells, the second cook, enjoyed a peaceful time with his family, had his clothing washed, socks darned, mittens faced and came back refreshed.

Nick blew the froth from the Boot Leg slipped to him by the barkeeper, poured the contents into a spacious cuspidor, consumed the roast pork and baked duck, relished the radish

and boiled egg, smacked down the rye bread and switzer, winked at a pretty girl passing by and elbowed his way out of the blear-eyed, bragging bunch of brawlers.

It was the fifth day of January when the camp opened up again for business. Some of the lads never came back to Norway Haul. Others came in too late and found their places filled. With a few exceptions the lads were all on the job. They were blue a bit, some had the big head and a few had black eyes, others were generally upset, because city life the way they had lived was very disagreeable and expensive.

All went well till the last day of February, when Harry Phillips, who had ridden to dinner on the engine, tried to jump off and land right side up, but had slipped and bent his Irish mug almost beyond recognition. Next day Dick Elwood cut his foot. Dalb examined the boot before he saw Elwood and remarked if the gash in his foot is any relation to the slash in the boot it's a good hearted cut. Two days after this Bill Blockston was kicked sky-high by a loading horse, and following these catastrophes Joe Reeda, mossback teamster, the clown of the

woods, noted for awkwardness—he couldn't walk without stepping on himself—while draying out a load of logs stumbled, fell headlong, the team jerked sideways by the reins tipped over the load on the unlucky driver, and when he was extricated from the mess he had a broken leg and a bruised arm.

A liberal subscription was taken for each of these unfortunates. As the boss came to Jimmy O'Brien and asked him what he wanted to give he said, "Oh! a flat dollar, but," said he, "don't take the one I earned today; it is too cold, I had to work too hard for it; take out the dollar I earned yesterday."

Nick and Max had not missed a single day; they were much admired by the boss and favorites of the entire gang. They had been well reared and properly educated. Their parents had suffered because they had taken an active part in an Irish revolt. Their father had long been a Home Rule hero, and had paid the price for his patriotism. Their mother was reared near the Giant's Causeway. When the Spanish Armada was destroyed by a tempest on the deep and by British cannon, several of those proud

Castilians came ashore in North Ireland. They dared not go back to Spain and were refused harbor in England. One of these men of renown married an Irish girl, and Nick's mother descended from that union. Nick inherited considerable of this chivalry, enough so that it had its effect on all his life. Nick was a handsomely built fellow, six feet three inches in height, broad shouldered, deep-chested, and regular in proportion. He had a Grecian nose, Scotch blue eyes, a big orotund of a mouth and long Spanish locks, like those worn when "Knighthood was in Flower."

On Saturday afternoon as he and Max were cutting down a tall, shaggy tree, unexpectedly it started to split up. Nick tried to save the saw as the tree crossed the stump, a sliver stripped from the sap, flew like a whip-lash and inflicted a severe wound in his thigh. He was carried to camp and the wound bandaged. But after the doctor had been called it was decided that he must go to the hospital. After he was examined by the House Physician in the hospital the wound was found much worse than was expected. At once he began to suffer severe pains. His brother

Max attended him closely and came several times every day to find out his condition. The fifth day blood-poisoning set in, and Nick was thought incurable. He was unconscious for many days, his leg was swollen twice its usual size and he was black and blue up to his waist. After he began to recover honors were conferred upon Sister Amelia, a faithful and patient nurse, because it was her persistence and unceasing attendance that pulled the lumberman through. May I add that this persistence was born not all professionally, but partly out of a personal affection which Amelia had for the patient and obedient lumberman.

CHAPTER III.

APRIL was drawing to a close when the nurse championed over the Pale-Horse-Rider—"DEATH"—and when Nick was able to sit up, the lumber crew had scattered and the camp was closed at Norway Haul. The yellow adder tongues were blooming in the valleys of the thick woods, the lilies white as the robes of winter on the hills; everywhere the banks were bursting with green and the fields were aflame with flowers. Nature had kindly beautified the beds of the logging roads with pansy blossoms, and set the forest athrill with song.

As Nick grew stronger he was permitted to take an outing. First he was wheeled out and afterwards trusted to a crutch and then a cane. After a few weeks he was able to walk to the river, where the river-men were at work. Many hours he spent watching them roll the logs into the deep channel from the wing-jams and beach-

heaps as they were twisted in a mass like a box of spilled matches. How charming to watch these fearless fellows as they rode out over the deep waters and with jam-pike and peavey urged the lazy logs to the busy mills at the mouth of the rolling river.

Usually in the afternoon rambles his nurse, Amelia, would spend her out-of-doors hour with Nick, and they would sit and watch the river-men under the railroad bridge at that dangerous and scenic vocation. They were a bold lot of drivers, and like all true sports their daring feats increased particularly when they were watched by spectators. Without the least fear or hesitation they would ride through the roaring rapid flume on a peeled pine where the frothing, boiling waters ran thirty miles an hour. Sometimes two would ride the same log, other times one would ride two logs, a single slip or a twist of the tossing log might draw the calk from his hold and dash the rider to instant death. Bucking bronks and Texan steers are easy feats compared to the dashing, burling, tumbling and twisting logs, struggling with the gigantic powers of tons of water trying to hurl the rider from the

unsaddled back of that slippery and difficult charger.

At length the crutch was discarded and Nick only used a cane; he was loath to lay that aside because he would have no reason to linger in the hospital and he looked forward to the day of departure with no little dread, because he had learned to love the companionship of the beautiful Amelia. Day after day they continued their visitations to the river and their affection mutually increased with every ramble. After each happy stroll he would say, "Tomorrow, Sister Amelia," and she would reply, "Yes, again tomorrow." The cane at last became a mere toy, and no longer served as an excuse for the lumberman to tarry at the hospital. Both well knew that the discharge would come very soon.

One sunny afternoon as they were seated upon a boom-pole, which was swung out over the stream, a fair face looked up at them from below where the rivermen were wrestling with a huge dead-head stuck on a sand-bar; that fair face exchanged a smiling greeting with the blushing Amelia, and she smiled in return. Nick saw that blush and smile and never forgot it till his dying

day. Then that fair face turned to the blackness of pitchy night and shot a sharp, cold glance like a blade of poisoned steel at the pale convalescent shanty-man. Volumes of envy and revenge could be read in that one last look he gave Nick.

They had often resorted hither with ease and complacency, but now suspicion haunted him and he suggested a new place for recreation and ramble. Nick was greatly puzzled over the unknown riverman; he wondered who he was and where Amelia had formed his acquaintance. He had felt for the past few weeks that he had no rivals, but now he knew by that smile accompanied with a reddening complexion that Amelia was more than passing friendly with the driver on the Big Muskegon. Nick was tempted to ask Amelia for a full explanation, but what right had he to do this? She had a moral right to know men and she legally owned her own frowns and laughter; thus he reasoned, and instead of having a thorough understanding of the whole matter he carelessly remained in a quandary. What a difference it would have made with them both had he have been as frank with her as he was wont to be, had he only have expressed his

embarrassment when she bestowed those generous smiles upon others and urged her to only allow him to feed upon those maiden blushes, the tale of the campman would be different.

Behind that white veil beat a human heart, not unlike those of many other true and noble women. Love snaps every tie that earth has yet invented, if that tie is to sever those who hunger to be united. Is it possible to love two at the same time? This is oft disputed. Bobbie Burns thought not—his only love was sleeping in the land of Ayr by the gentle Afton waters and no other could arise to shine over his dark life like Highland Mary, and so in four lines he pens his tragedy:

> "Had we never loved so kindly,
> Had we never loved so blindly,
> Never met nor never parted
> We would ne'er been broken hearted."

Lord Byron, with his powers of expression unsurpassed and with personal experiences unequalled, for the Don Juan he writes about was himself, first writes of his love, Haidea, as he rambles the South Sea Islands amid the fronded palms, and then the fair Spanish queen whose

dark eyes dripped with love's honeyed dew was his fawn in old Madrid. And a third love stole his heart, the Grecian belle, and he writes:

"Maid of Athens, ere I part
Give oh! give me back my heart,"

and after this he finds other soul-mates and charming idols, and so runs the argument, and herein the experiences strangely woven by the mystic fingers of fate were not alien to the events and experiences of those who lived in other kingdoms and distant ages.

Sister Amelia had never been doubted in her devotion, but of late there was some misgiving awakened in the bosom of the Mother Superior. She knew the nurse was love-bound and she prayed ardently that God would break the spell and restore her to her holy and heavenly calling. She had little or no fear that earth would triumph over heaven. Not a single Nun had ever broken her vow in the ranks of those mighty and immaculate millions who had given their all—friends, loved ones, kindred ties and earthly ambitions; surely Amelia, the patient and true, would not disgrace her heavenly calling. She knew the day was dawning when the physician

would discharge Nick and then he would disappear and be forgotten.

It was nightfall by the murmuring river. Nick of the Woods and Amelia, the Nun, were nearing the poplar shades which surrounded the Mercy Hospital, and as they walked and talked the conversation turned to the future with an afterglow of their painted past.

"It has been pleasure rather than pain to be here," he remarked.

"Has it? Indeed, a compliment for the hospital," said Amelia.

"Yes," he retorted, "and your goodness forced the compliment."

"Oh! don't rob the hospital of her mercy, Nick, and turn over the treasures to a nurse."

"I am not, Sister; cold brick and pine floors, iron beds and doctors never made anybody warm in praise, and so you represent the hospital and may assume the compliment." As he finished his last words he stooped, thrust aside the dead branch of a thornapple that challenged the way and plucked a sprig of Sweet Arbutus and gave his fond compainon.

"I have learned things I had forgotten about

women and medicine," he said, "since I have been here, too."

"What have you learned about medicine, Nick?"

"I have learned that it is spelled in four letters, c-a-r-e, and that it is faith when it heals and only bitter drugs when it fails. When mother wished to heal the bruised boy or girl that fell down at home she would wet her fingers with her tongue and rub on what she called 'Soldier Salve' and it always cured; that was childish faith."

"And what have you learned about women?"

"Oh! lots of things I had forgotten; mother and sisters had taught us at home, but hard words and hardships has knocked them all into a cocked hat. Camp life is cold as cannon balls, coarse as the hair on a Clydesdale, it is bad women and masculine thought, rough wit and rude behavior. I have been taken back a bit toward innocent and quiet beauty and will miss it when I get back in camp."

"This," he added slowly, "is our last walk together, for I am going away tomorrow."

"But," she added, "you haven't been dis-

charged by the physician yet."

"I don't need that; I was not told by him that I was hurt, neither," he said rather humorously, "and I also know when I am well—I have to thank you for health, I'm no heathen, and I thank you, too, and that's all I have now, but some"—here Nick was interrupted. Amelia laid her hand gently on his brawny arm and shook him slightly, shaking her head, indicating that she knew his words would fall short of the mark which his appreciative actions had not missed.

"And have you told me all you have learned about women of late?" she inquired rather shyly, as she tucked the arbutus blossom under her white veil against her fair temple almost as pure and delicate as the flower, the favorite of God and man.

"No, Sister, I have learned many other lessons, but it's too late to recite them tonight."

It was almost dusk when they arrived at the hospital; he looked mysteriously at her and she stood half expecting him to give expressions to his thoughts which seemed struggling for words to unload them, when the sacred chimes of the curfew clock struck the hour of eight. Like the

day of doom, the silvery song ran up and down the corridors and every inhabitant knew that this was the hour for prayer and meditation.

Sister Amelia arose early and gladly assisted Nick in packing his newly-washed clothing in his brand new grain sack, the traveling bag of the typical lumberman. She tied the top neatly and accompanied him to the river, where they could take their farewell unobserved.

Nick had never whispered a single word about his love to Amelia nor any other person. He knew that it was impossible to love a Nun with any degree of reciprocation, and well knew the Clergy would never tolerate it for a single second. She had never given him cause to make a committal of the same, as she was conscious of his ardent love and cheerful sacrifice for his own beloved Church.

Nick had but one right to claim as he was taking his departure and that was the right of friendship, and can love be spelled like that? He had been well reared, but is there any rearing that will fit one to govern love's proud passion? The records of lords and ladies utterly disprove it. What did she seek, an Irish boy with orange

Mackinaws? Without finance, profession or a business? No. She was attracted by what he was and not by what he had. She saw the real background of manhood, and loved it, if it wears denim or velvet it is exactly alike. Venus passed by her, soft eyes gazed on him burning and tender, her attitude may have been inopportune, or unwise, but there was no remedy. Two rivals had met on a fair field of war—faith and love—and love was crowned Empress forever.

Do you know the secret of the Black and White veils? If you do you will appreciate all the more the meaning inscribed here, and if you do not know you will ascertain and, at both events, you will be the wiser.

These two wandered listlessly, each struggling with former vows and present heart-throbs; they came to a bend in the road that followed the bluff that overhung the river. Before them were the tall, slender Norway waving in the gentle winds singing pine tree music; behind them was the busy little city ateem with life and labor. From where they stood they could see the Church spire rising like a holy beacon pointing them to heaven, the seat of duty and the convocation of

saints. The birds warbled around them, the arbutus was in blossom, the silver river sang as it flowed so softly down between the clay banks and sild under the great iron bridge. They stopped, she must return, he must go onward, accident had led them together, duty witnessed the union and love forged the link. Nick felt an impulse to make an open confession of his love, he knew there was something on her part more than friendship; and it was now plainly written in characters of love's pink flame alternating like the rosy glow of the Arctic Aurora upon her choice cheeks tinged with the heart's ruddy nectar. Yet he reasoned this would but augment her emotions, and so reason surpressed love. Nick extended his hand as he hitched up his shoulders to straighten the sack that hung suspended from his back. Warmly the Nun grasped the big, hard hand and gazed into his honest countenance, she read his thoughts there in language that needs no schooling. She saw the broad and giant breast heaving slightly like a summer sea trembles with an under tide, that bosom upon which her hot tears had fallen when he was unconscious of it and when she was

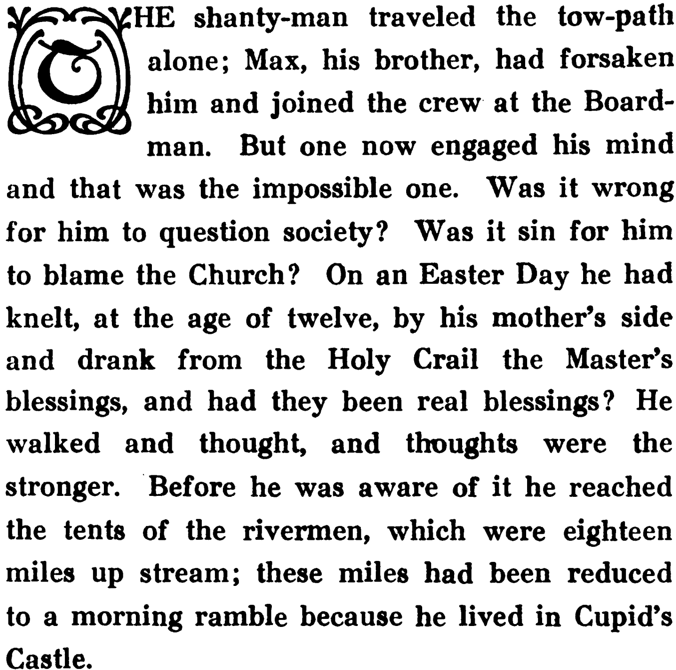
grappling to defeat grim death, and set up instead the king of life. For a moment only they lingered and these moments are so brief, she took her last view at that forehead that was to cherish her memory forever, a heart-throb and a pulse-beat. She said "Sometime" and he answered "Yes, Amelia."

As he looked back from the last knob where the lower river and the bluff road are visible he saw her still standing where they parted, and he repeated:

"If you watch your lover out o' sight,
It will bring you grief and pain,
For if you follow that ancient rite,
He will never come back again."

She went back to the hospital that had forever lost its charms, and the duty that was not any longer a mission of unselfish love. She was tempted many times to revisit the river and look for the wearer of that fair face, but memories haunted her, and she never saw another face that awakened within her the thrill and anxiety, that provoked the rapidity of the heart action as did the loved and lost Nick of the Woods.

CHAPTER IV.



THE shanty-man traveled the tow-path alone; Max, his brother, had forsaken him and joined the crew at the Boardman. But one now engaged his mind and that was the impossible one. Was it wrong for him to question society? Was it sin for him to blame the Church? On an Easter Day he had knelt, at the age of twelve, by his mother's side and drank from the Holy Crail the Master's blessings, and had they been real blessings? He walked and thought, and thoughts were the stronger. Before he was aware of it he reached the tents of the rivermen, which were eighteen miles up stream; these miles had been reduced to a morning ramble because he lived in Cupid's Castle.

Neil Beaten had long been foreman of the beat at the big bend of the Muskegon River, but had been promoted to the coveted and elevated position of "walking boss." Nick stopped at the

camp for dinner and asked for employment. He was shocked and surprised to see that the newly chosen boss was none other than the riverman who had looked up at him and Amelia as they were seated at the boom-pole under the bridge. He felt sure he would be refused, but in this he was mistaken, true bosses never allow personal dislikes to interfere with the business of the firm which they universally seek to promote; and he did not know whether or not the man placed him in the role at the river experience with the nurse, but he did gladly give him employment and put him as "push" over the gang of "Sackers." The new boss did not betray the slightest sign of recognition, and if he did know Nick he was certainly exceedingly cool.

The newly appointed boss was a well-known and conspicuous character. He could hate like a beast and love like a pigeon. He was a formidable and magnanimous fellow. Tall and handsome, quick to grasp ideas and lightning in executing those ideas, he was visionary and speculative, fearless as an African lion and had never been bullied by any lumberjack, riverman or tenderfoot. He was known as the "Black

Wolf" and hailed from Vassar. Was a past-master on the river, the lads used to say he could ride a bubble, but actually did ride across the raging Tittabawasse on an empty pork barrel for a wager of ten bucks. This was the boss Nick had to cheat or beat. But Nick was more than a match for the boss. He was younger and stronger and gifted above him in wit and wisdom. While Nick was open, frank and very free with his fellows, the Wolf was mum, self-sustained, sly and morose. He could smile at you and drive a knife to the hilt in your heart. Nick was outwardly and inwardly alike, his every joy or sorrow was written upon his honest countenance.

Dinner was over, the cook had given Nick a bunk and he had deposited his clean grain sack, at the charge of the boss taken his gang of six burly fellows to the shallow water to sack. The suspcious Black Wolf sat around the cook tent and as he passed to the office he saw the clean white sack in Nick's bunk, the pink strings at the mouth attracted him; he drew near, pulled at the strings, they untied and out dropped a neatly folded piece of paper and a small photo-

graph of a fair young girl. What a temptation. He stooped and picked them both up, the face he recognized instantly as that of the Nun at the hospital. The note was too big a temptation for him to master, he looked around to see that no one saw him and then he unfolded it, read—and re-read—the loving lines written in the delicate hand of the Nun, expressing her love for Nick and requesting, if he really loved her to make a reply. Had the Black Wolf have played the part of a man, he would have followed his first thought, which was to put back the photo and the note, and let Nick find them and keep himself aloof from the love-affair. Had he have done this what a difference it would have made in three lives. But manhood was to fall under the blow of that green-eyed monster—JEALOUSY. The test of his weakness came, as in some form or another it comes to us all. He was weighed in the balance and found wanting. Dazed with anger and his past disappointments, he crushed the note in his giant palm with wild emotion and threw it in the fire; then he watched those lines of innocent maiden love vanish forever. Little did he dream that all his future happiness and

peace of mind burned to ashes with that tiny scrap of paper. He tore the border from the picture and stuck the face inside the crystal of his watch, grabbed his peavey, sought the men and poured out his spite on the rivermen who had never been so blindly and madly driven at work as they were that afternoon.

That evening the Black Wolf sat and muttered as he thought of the note he had submitted to the flames. "Ye Gods, fate is a fiend; why can't I have something but husks, nut shells, rinds and core! It seems that all the devils in hell are after my pelt, I'll make it hot for this d—n bunch this season and that lumber-lout Nick—I'll skin him to a finish and he will know the difference between tweedle-de and tweedle-dum; the rind on him to come here with love notes and photos to plague me, I hate the whole creation and I wish everybody was dead."

He was interrupted in his mad soliloquy by a gruff but good-natured voice sounding a deep musical, "Hey boss." Was the welcome spoken by Nick? "We have found fifty big cork pine logs scaling over half a thousand a piece that have never been stamped; what do you think

about that for a beginning?"

Logs floating in the river without hammer marks to prove the firm who banked them were the property of the finder. This lucky find somewhat brought out the good humor in the Wolf and together he and his sub-foreman hastened to the bank where the logs were beached.

The logs scaled twenty-seven thousand feet and sold on the spot for six dollars per thousand. The local firm sent their stamper over at once to put their stamp initials on the newly purchased property, while the Wolf and Nick walked to camp.

"Gee whiz," exclaimed the Wolf, "twenty-seven six dollars bills for a river horse boodle, they look eleven feet long; who would have thunked it!"

The generous Wolf gave his under overseer a ten spot for his find and crammed the check given him by the lumber company down his jeans. The find put an extra summer's wages in the empty pockets of the boss, but even this was soon past and forgotten.

The Fourth of July came with its feats of

daring. Knot-Maul corners located on either bank of the mighty river held a big celebration and gave a liberal purse to the winner of each sport. John Price won the ax championship against a dozen husky wood choppers. The feat was to chop off a log two feet in diameter, and Price finished an easy victor.

The broad jump was pulled off and Charley Monteith, supple as a deer, hopped off twelve feet and two inches. Old Ed Rogers picked up the sixteen pound dumbell and lit six inches over Montcith's best effort. "The money's yours, old pal," shouted Monteith, patting Rogers on the shoulders and the lumber crew shouted like thunder.

Then the leaders put up the tug-'o-war between the rivermen of the Big Bend and the crew at the mouth of Black Sand Creek. A two-inch hawser slipped from the boom pole at the bridge was enlisted and forty-eight rough and rugged men seized the rope. The prize was a barrel of beer to the winners. After fully ten minutes of cat-hauling, mud-scraping and muscular exhibitions, the crew from the Big Bend brought the other gang over the dead line and

won the prize.

Then the free-for-all foot race was called and Circus Jack, who could sprint the hundred yards in ten seconds with a plus mark, carried the game without an effort. One by one the games were put forth and at last the greatest and most exciting game of all was called up, the log-burling contest.

There was only one man who was in any way a match for the Wolf in such a contest, and that man was Nick of the Woods. It was not the policy of the merchants at Knot-Maul corners to put up in any one game two men from the same locality, but rather they pick men who represented different quarters. So many of the old and well experienced log riders were called upon to test their ability with the Wolf on a log, but each one refused, for everybody knew in all that region of his wonderful dexterity in that particular.

This was the most exciting and entertaining feat of the whole day and the prize was valued at twenty-five dollars. The village shoemaker, Bosse, had offered this reward, which was a handsome pair of river boots of his own make.

They were triple soled, equipped with spring calks, high French heels and the tops were very nicely stitched with silk thread, representing those worn by the Cattle Kings of Utah.

Nobody would go up against the Wolf and it looked for a time as though there would be no burling contest. Nick had been urged by a few who had seen him perform on various occasions, to go in on it, as all others had refused, and the prize would not be given unless the contest really came off. He had taken no part in the sports that day except in the tug-'o-war, and his side came out victorious, so after several fellows urged him and no one else could be induced, he peeled his jacket and made for the log.

"What's your name?" asked the secretary.

"Nick of the Woods," he answered.

"All right, go to it," came the permission.

"Take care, the water is ten feet deep, cold as ice and there is a swift under current," warned the village Marshal.

Nick tightened his sash, pulled down his cap, picked his peavey and mounted the log. The Wolf frowned as he saw Nick really intended to go up against his boss. The log was a large dry

pine, selected for the occasion, it would hold the two logging giants easily and still remain six inches above the water. It was as round as they could choose, but had a bump on the butt end, which was chosen by the Wolf as his place to burl. The river was full of boats loaded with eager spectators, the boom poles and logs were alive with boys and younger men who were preparing for the drive later in life. The river was lined with women and girls, farther back in their wagons and surreys sat the mossbacks with their families, when the two paragons of the age and mighty athletic rivermen began to burl the log. The feat was to dump the other fellow into the stream, by making the log roll so fast in the water that he could not stick on. And the rule was that the fellow who was dumped twice out of three times was the loser. The Wolf had the advantage for, whenever the log turned round and brought up the bump side he would step on the bump and hasten or slacken the speed at his will.

"Come over in the middle and let her spin," called Nick.

The Wolf was game and saw he had to play

fair or lose his rep. He did as he was bidden —then those who stood by saw some fine work. After several seconds of the most rapid burling they had ever beheld the Wolf, who had never before been ducked, was spun free from the log and sent sprawling headlong into the stream— he swam back like a river mink and mounted the log like a hero.

"Dry clothes, boss!" insisted Nick.

"Not till we change together," came the hot reply.

Then again with mighty power they spun that log like a circular saw in its lightning flight, the water frothed and foamed while this great log, three feet in diameter, revolved under the calk boots of those river kings. Nick gave the log a sudden increase of speed and a second time the defeated Wolf was buried in the waves.

"It's Nick of the Woods' prize," said the secretary, holding up the finely finished pair of boots. A few cheered when these words were spoken, but the mass of the great crowd was disappointed, they expected to see the old champion drown his opponent. The sports were now over and the prizes were awarded. The barrel

of beer was tapped, both sides drank freely and none cared and few remembered by whom it was won. The Black Wolf was a poor loser; every true sport takes defeat good naturedly, but the Wolf sneaked off without even thanking the fellows who rooted for him, and had always on former contests cheered his victories.

After the work opened up again at the Big Bend the men plainly saw that there was no such a thing as a reconciliation between Nick and the Wolf. And all very easily observed that the Wolf was putting Nick in all the difficult and dangerous places, out of which the latter had escaped successfully.

A few weeks after Fourth two of the men were engaged in chaining a boom pole to a big stump which stood on a small elevated spot of ground in the middle of the stream, that was an island when the waters were normal; but overflowed when they were high. Suddenly the chute-gate was tripped by some unknown power, the waters were high—they had been dammed up for a week—down came the roaring mighty waters upon the two unfortunate men, which submerged them beneath the waves; they struggled to their

feet, stood waist deep in the current, which threatened every second as the waters increased to sweep them into the deep channel below. They were absolutely helpless. Twenty-four able bodied men dressed for everything and anything were lined up on the shore but eighty feet away. No one knew what to do, but something must be done and that right quickly. Nick was on the job and no comrade would go down until he had done his best to save him.

There was no time for mathematical calculations, Nick seized his peavey, mounted a small peeled pine, shoved off into the river and made straight as an arrow for the doomed rivermen. Before he reached them one was swept like a wisp of hay over the bar into the dark waters below. Summoning up his almost superhuman strength, he reached the bar and called for the struggling man to grasp the log and cling on for dear life. To reach the shore was a demon task, the mad waters pressed powerfully against the slippery log; but with arms of iron he sunk his peavey to the bottom of the stream, and while the floundering man clung to the twisting, tossing log, by a succession of ponderous strokes

he reached the bank. The riverman was rescued. When the daring feat was done and the listless men again breathed a long breath, they discovered that Jimmie Flynn had sunk to rise no more, but the Black Wolf had been saved from a watery grave.

Not a single word of thanks ever came from the Wolf to Nick for this heroic deed. And no one ever learned that the Wolf ever referred to it in any manner.

Shall we exonerate Nick? When we shall have finished the tragedy, you, my fond reader, may do as you choose.

During all the forced associations and business conversations that passed between the Wolf and Nick neither of them ever mentioned a word about the Nun.

The latter part of the drive extreme bitterness sprung up between the two rivals. The Wolf gave Nick his time and informed him he was not wanted on the drive; but Nick refused to quit work and continued to lead his six burly, willing fellows to the beach as though nothing had happened.

After several days of horsing one another,

Nick determined to have it out with the big bruiser of a boss—kill or cure. After supper, late in August, Nick went directly to the tent occupied by the Wolf. Fortunately they had an opportunity of coming to an understanding without any interruptions.

Men of their metal one hundred years before fought duels to the finish with pistols or swords. Ranchmen, cowboys and sourdoughs would have shot it out regardless of circumstances. Southerners would have settled it with dirks and bowies. College chums or common lovers would no doubt have settled it that very hour; but these two men resorted to braver, cooler and a manlier course. They agreed to fight it out with bare fists, with the understanding that there was to be no kicking or biting, nor any illicit means resorted to whatever. The time they deliberately had chosen was at six o'clock in the evening on the last day of the drive. This time was decided upon that they would not infringe on the firm that employed them and paid them for labor, not for fighting. It was further agreed that Nick and his six men continue as they had been doing and that they were to receive full time for the

days which had elapsed since the boss had ceased to mark down days to their credit.

The whole community for miles around incidentally learned what was going to take place when the drive was up. The opinions expressed as to which one would conquer, about two to one favored the Wolf. The few who favored Nick did it only as they judged his endurance and general tactics from a personal experience with the apt and able fellow. It need scarcely be mentioned that this was a much talked of affair. It created as much sensation as the Centennial Exhibition which had recently taken place. It aroused and intensified the hot bloods about as much as did the battle of Heenan and Sayers. Excitement ran high throughout the whole valley watered by the Big Muskegon and her many noted tributaries.

The day came for the big battle. The two widely known and universally admired river masters were to measure their strength, skill, endurance and valor. The drive had been finished shortly after noon; and the mossbacks were pouring down the valley towards the tents of the rivermen to see the tiger-toss. From the upper

and lower beats came the lads in squads. From the near by towns and small cities many had flocked hither to witness the battle.

The two actors in this backwoods drama had laid around all the afternoon. At five o'clock Nick arose and began to dress for the fight. He wore a black sateen shirt with the sleeves rolled up above his elbows, showing his red woolen undershirt. He donned his favorite orange mackinaws and his light hen-shin shoes and wrapped his green sash round and round his waist to show his colors, as he expressed it.

The Wolf shaved clean and donned his stagged gray trousers and his "alligator" shoes; he wore a brown wool shirt cropped at the elbows and loose in front. The ring and watch he always had on his person he handed to the cook, saying: "If I get killed, never show that watch to the flannel-mouthed Irishman."

The hour of six was at hand, the two big giants, attended by their referees, took their places calmly as you please. They faced each other unflinchingly and every eager spectator saw at once there was no yellow streaks in these men. There was considerable excitement run-

ning wild in the disorderly crowd; that was self-governed, not an officer of the law was present. Time was called and both of the pugilists squared for the offensive—suddenly the attention of everybody was attracted in another direction, a deadening lull smote the crowd; without warning a big, handsome gentleman sprang into the ring. It was Neil Beaten, the "Walking Boss."

"Hold men, don't fight!" cried the princely foreman.

The men dropped their dukes, knowing the game was up, and over one thousand disappointed spectators began to hiss. Suddenly over one hundred able-bodied rivermen sailed into that insulting crowd, that had dared to hiss Neil Beaten, the walking boss of the Big Muskegon. A big burly jack grabbed a jam-pike and appointed himself captain, surrounded the crowd with his bullies and exclaimed, "Neil Beaten fights and allows fighting when he chooses, but when he calls a halt, d—n the bunch of pikers who dare hiss, and now," he continued, "every mother's son uv ye cheer Neil or down goes your shanty."

The swaying crowd knew they were in for an

apology, and that if they refused to do as they had been commanded they would be battered from every side, and they knew in those parts from past experience what it meant to get into a free-for-all; so according to request the woods and valleys echoed and re-echoed with the loud applause which was given from a thousand throats for Neil Beaten, the Walking Boss.

Scarcely had these hurrahs died away over the ridges and up the sandy valleys when Neil, the Old Viking of those parts, yelled:

"Attention!"

Everybody listened to hear what he had to say.

"Lads and ladies," he began, "it is supper time."

And they knew it well, for the moment he had spoken it as sweet a tune as was ever heard from the big tin dinner horn was played to that crowd who had gathered from far and wide.

"Friends," continued Neil, after the horn ceased, "It's not a fight, but a feast; it's my treat, fall in line."

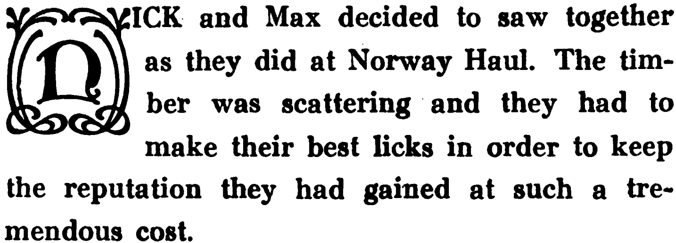
And then farmers, rivermen, shingle weavers, lumbermen, tanbark peelers, tie makers, pole

peelers, lath sawyers, lumber mill men, merchants, school teachers and sports fell to the greatest feast ever celebrated in the state.

Neil had planned the occasion and only the cook was put wise to the scheme. This was a splendid side track to the big affair which could only have decreased the pedigree of the rivermen, who were ordinarily much superior to such affairs.

After this the crew broke camp. The Wolf went back to Vassar, and Nick went to his brother Max, who was employed on the Boardman River.

CHAPTER V.



NICK and Max decided to saw together as they did at Norway Haul. The timber was scattering and they had to make their best licks in order to keep the reputation they had gained at such a tremendous cost.

Nate Andrews, a genuine hero of the forest, wearing long thick whiskers sweeping his broad breast, drove the big red oxen and skidded the entire winter for the two brothers.

Christmas week came and Nick decided to remain in camp. He spent the time practically alone; cooked his own food, cut his wood, and amused himself as best he could while the sixty lads had the time of their lives.

Max went to town, spent one hundred and forty-eight dollars; when he returned after New Year's all he had to show for his investment was a pair of socks, a haircut and a black eye.

The following spring they drove the Board-

man from the Forks, or the Twin-Bridges, to the Boardman Lake. On this drive they met the famous character commonly known as the Poet of the Pines, and on this drive the poet composed the widely known and much loved song entitled, "The Boardman River Boys." After they had ridden down the pretty river and were camped at its mouth the song was made popular by daily singing, while crowds of men and women visited the rivermen as they halted on the drive. Many will recall the sentiment it expressed by the following lines:

"Now we're at the lake, boys, ragged as you
please,
Jolly as the sons of wealth, sporting at their ease;
Many a raging river we have drove throughout
this land,
But now we're at the Boardman, with our peavey
in our hand."

On this drive they shared the comradeship of the far-famed Jack Hagedy, the unfortunate lover of the maid from Flat River, known as "The Girl with Auburn Hair."

The next winter the brothers sawed together as they had for fourteen successive seasons. Max

was yearly growing away from Nick, and as they disagreed with each other their work became more difficult. Nothing is possible at its best unless harmony prevails; and these willing and skilled woodsmen could not do their work with any degree of satisfaction chewing the rag about minor details. Max would quarrel, brow-beat and booze—all these actions disgusted Nick.

One day as they were sawing, Max yelled across the log, "Let's quit sawing together, you say you are losing a pound a day."

The witty Nick answered, "Well, suppose I am, you say you are gaining a pound, and it's all in the family, let's stick together."

That night while walking home from work Max asked Nick:

"Why don't you buy some rags—or are you sending all your swag to that kid at the hospital; you're ragged as a bum-stew, you patch your pants, face your mittens, darn your old socks—the next thing I know you'll be a beggar; you never lay off and go outside, never buy a fellow a bootleg and you muck like a slave." There was a twang to his syllables that indicated disgust.

Nick looked Max in the face and said: "I

am not sending my coin to that kid, as you call her, but I am making payments on my pine."

"Your pine, what pine?"

"The clear section I bought five years ago out of Chase, it's a good investment; it's within two miles of the switch of the P. M. R. R. I made the deal for fifteen hundred dollars, the last cent is paid and the deed is on the way."

"Gee, your smooth—aye?"

"You will think so when I rake in a cool hundred thousand for it."

"Bah," snarled Max, "I'd rather trust my money in the bank, than let rich lords play with a poor fool's cash."

"Yes, the saloon keeper's bank," said Nick.

"Oh, don't get chesty, I can shoot it in as I choose."

"Yes, to be sure, but had you have heard what I heard the other day I guess you would change banks—the rusty proprietor of Hank's place, lately known as first chance on one side of the sign board, and last chance on the other side, was riding out in his new forty dollar cutter and as he passed the lumber boys at work, he would say to his friend in the cutter:

"D'ye see that d—n fool, he's working fur me."

And then, with a cynical grin, he snapped out: "Yes, every man who rolls logs, files saws, holds the ribbons, swamps roads, drives the river in all this region is working fur me."

"How is that?" inquired his companion.

"You see," he added, "I run a gin mill down at Traverse, I cash the lads' checks free and then to 'ciprocate they booze it all in my joint— it's all right, ain't it?"

"How do you like to work for the last chance or the first chance dive, Max?" hotly asked Nick.

Max was mad as a hornet and shot up to camp ahead and it was several days before he would exchange words with his brother.

The custom has always been for the lumber lads to change camps on an average of once every two seasons. And these two we are following, after several years on the Boardman, determined to pack their grain sacks and steer for deeper water and taller timber, which they found near the Dead-Stream. There was one hundred and forty fair fellows in Shaffer's camps, and a gallant pack of workmen; many

of the ablest experts the age had produced.

Rancour, the premier of cruisers, se-gasheyated as general transmogerator in telling the fortunes of the timber. He knew the age and descent of any tree off-hand. If he was a bit precise he could tell you how many toothpicks it would make, begory.

Old Dick, as he was known, claimed to be the author of the "Swamper's Guide," a book that never existed. He clung to this camp because it was the only place they would allow smoking while he swamped.

In the Autumn when Dick began his winter's work the lads made him tell a story, and he related the following:

"I knew a man in Canada that would stand ten feet from ye, and strike ye 'tween the eyes with both heels, and swat you in the gob with his fists at the same time; and now ye bitter sit back ur I'll sick 'im at ye."

Dick was an inveterate smoker. As he grew older tobacco was not stout enough "fur 'im," as he expressed it, and true to Irish fashion, he mixed in a sip of tea. The last job at night for one of the younger members of that family of

twelve boys and half as many girls was to fill from heel to top that generous calabash, which held about a pint, and then mix in a lettle ta—.

George Campbelle, a red-headed Hoosier, was Cock o' the Walk in these parts, and believe me it took more than hot air to maintain his much-coveted position.

Lary Clary was boss. It was six miles to the river from where they cut and slashed the noble timber. Great windrows were mown daily in that virgin forest, and as one looked at those windrows from a distance it resembled a huge harvest field; the logs grouped in bunches ready for the big wheels passed for bundles dropped from the binders of those prodigious wizards of the woods.

It was late in May and still the boss ordered the lads to the timber at daybreak—he was long winded—it took many hours to satisfy him that a man had really done a day's work.

"Spring time rolled around, business began to
thrive,
Three hundred able-bodied men were wanted on
the drive."

And now on the West Branch there flourished

the three noted brothers from Barker Creek. While they managed, hired and fired, fixed wages and laid out beats, it goes without saying that nothing ever excelled this drive known as the "All Star Beat." These good-natured, big-hearted rivermen gathered about them fifty of the greatest drivers on the planet. Andy McFarland, Black Water Jack, Ol Crothers, Tom Williams, Fred Umlor, Henry Seaten, Clate Dowen, Dead Stream Dick, Jack Mallory, Joe Miller, Pat Downey, John Buckle, Charley Shaver, Emmitt Price, Jimmy Carr, Wallie Blue, George Weaver, Pat Loup, Billy Hawkins, Herb Tyler, Charley Pierce, Fred Hamilton, Art Davis and others chosen from hundreds who were anxious to join the memorable company. They were all young and in their prime, happy and willing to risk anything to promote with rapidity and skill the gigantic task of driving the round stuff to the slaughter house in far-away Manistee.

Here they had some rules which usually worked with some degree of entertainment; but I will make mention of one case in particular which will serve as an interesting reminder that even the best of us gets fooled. The rules were

that every newcomer to this job had to, on the first night, sing a song, tell a story, treat the crowd or go over the beam.

The beam was about fifteen feet high and in order to go over the beam the victim had to be tossed over by ten strong men out of a blanket.

Silver Jack, from Saginaw, chanced that way, sought employment and on the first evening the scurvy secretary read him the rules. He hesitated a moment and then very firmly declared he would not comply with them.

"Very well," said Umlor, "get the blanket, over the beam he goes."

Ten big, burly fellows lined up, all hands circled the blanket and Kinney made for the newcomer, who quietly backed into a corner, whipped out a handsome Smith & Wesson and sent six bullets to the farther end of the shanty in less than that many seconds, and every ball drove nails.

"Now," said the silver champion, "if you want any more of this whiskey," as he pulled out a second gun, "just bring on your blanket."

There was silence for a space of half an hour, no one noticed who put the blanket away,

neither did anybody see Silver Jack go over the beam.

The following winter in camp on the Big Cannon Creek near Jam too many accidents occurred. Haywire Pete was asked for an explanation of these calamities and made the following reply:

"You see, these fellows come here from the south with hayseed in their hair, mud on their boots and a husking peg in their pockets, then set themselves up for woodsmen; they had better go peddle buttermilk in a leaky boot!"

Haywire Pete had a farm on the Burndown and had to go mighty saving to make his payments. He never wore any socks; as a substitute he purchased a yard of outing flannel, cut it in two pieces and put his delicate number ten in the center of each rag, wrapped up the corners around his ankle and pulled on his boot. When holes were worn where his toes and heels were he would slip the cloth sideways to a sound part and again wear it for weeks. By this means he would get as much wear out of that cloth as he would in ten pairs of socks.

To this camp came that vagabond, Chicago

Dan. One look at his rosy face would chase trade from a glue factory. He was rusty with tobacco juice and all the duds he wore wouldn't pad a crutch. He stalked into the cook shanty while the lads were at dinner and in his squeaky voice piped out:

"Cook, do ye see any haywire hitched to me?"

"No," said the cook, "why?"

"Well," said Dan, "them fellers over there said I had gone haywire."

He tackled Clark for a job.

"What can you do?" said Clark.

"I can drink whiskey every rosy time I get it, you A. P. A., you," said Dan in his womanish tones.

"Can you drive logs, Dan?" asked the good-natured Clark.

"Can I," he answered, as he tightened up the old suspender he wore for a sash, turned up his coat collar and pulled down his ragged hat, "I gist came from the Little Betsey where the lads float stones down the swift currents. ME," he muttered, "I can drive logs where the water runs so swift that you wouldn't dare throw a stone in—Clark, I can niver forgive ye, ye hav insulted

me; I will never speak to ye again in public, our friendship shall cease; I'm too rosy for ye—kin I heve some dinner?"

This was a fair sample of all his conversation. He tramped from town to town and was moved from public place to public place, was witty, wise and one of the greatest humorists that ever lived.

While on the Dead-Stream Old Bob applied for employment. He wore a straw hat gone up to seed; it was in November, the snow was about a foot deep, but in spite of it Bob wore on one foot an old boot and on the other a woman's buttoned shoe. He cut three circles round the boss, stopped and straightened up, looked him squarely in the peepers and said:

"Can ye use me?"

"What the h—l can you do?"

"I genely cook," he answered, "but I gist as sun swing an ax this winter."

"You'll have to hit the pawnshop, pal," answered the boss, "nuthin' doin' here fur ye."

And just as happy as though he had found employment he took his back track for Fletchers Postoffice.

These haunts was the home of the Northern Michigan Giant. He weighed three hundred and sixty pounds, could punish whiskey as rapidly as any living man. Many times he consumed two gallons of pure rye whiskey daily. On one occasion he bought a bushel bag full of raw peanuts, of Bailey, and a pail of candy from E. C. Brower, hit the plank trail of the village and treated every man, woman and child he met. He went to the metropolis and got completely sozzled, sat down in the middle of the busiest street and played marbles with the boys. For this attractive conduct the police arrested him; he would not walk to jail, he was too heavy to carry, they had no patrol wagon and so they had to let him go. He had a great fever sore on his shin, it took something less than a bolt of factory cloth to wrap it up. Sometimes on his long drinking bouts the rag would come loose and drag along behind him, and often would the street urchins run and jump on this trailing bandage just to plague the harmless lumberman. His lung power was equal to thunder, his epigram was when he struck town, "Here comes the Northern Michigan Giant, pull in your stove

pipes, it's going to rain."

Everybody knew when he came and when he departed. You can imagine his enormous size, for he yoked himself up to a lone ox to skid logs by the thousand. The snow was deep and had a thick crust, being the early part of March. He would shovel one track for the ox and could, with his big feet, which required rubbers almost as large as Yukon snowshoes, walk on the crust and pull his end of the log. With this dumb partner the peerless lumberman completed the job.

One of the most peculiar misunderstandings that ever happened in all these parts was related by Lonesome Lee, later of Wyoming, internationally known as "The Mountaineer Musician."

A certain ox-teamster was driving to Hart's mill, while on his way he met a man a-foot. The stranger said to the teamster, "Can you tell me the way to Hart's mill?" The stranger talked through his nose very badly.

"Yes, sir," answered the ox-teamster, "you go right straight down"—here he was interrupted by the man a-foot, who said:

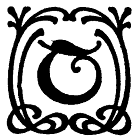
"Now, d—n you, don't you mock me, if ye

do I'll punch your head off."

The ox-teamster jumped off the wagon and said, "I never allow anybody to swear at me."

They stripped their coats and went at it. Nate Andrews happened along, he parted them and they were a sick lot, eyes swoolen almost shut, lips bruised and cut, faces skinned, hair matted with blood and generally in bad. After they had been separated and the cause was ascertained for which they fought each discovered that both talked through his nose naturally and neither had mocked the other. Lonesome Lee said you could have bought them for a cent.

CHAPTER VI.

HE heart of the pinery was Michigan, and the Manistee was the great artery. No river in any country ever ran through a more evenly timbered valley than this much employed and widely known stream. From the source, which was about thirty miles east and south of Petoskey, to its mouth, which was at the fair city of Manistee, it was six hundred miles by hook and crook, and only two hundred the way the crow flies. This waterway was reinforced with many charming tributaries, whose confluences added to the speed and value of the river. Upon this famous water-course and her many tributaries floated the fortunes of many noted and honorable lumber kings.

Dempsey, Sands, Filer, Peters, Hannah, Lay, Noble, Blodgett, Fox, Dexter, Chick, Hodges, Glitten, Mitchell, Cobb, Diggan, Ward, Blissby, Hagadorn, Chickering, Clark, King, Comstock,

Harding, Buckley, Duglass, Ruggles, Knoll, Moores, Dancher, Hewett, Read, Mathews, Palmer, Fuller, Nickols, Chase, Winchester, Hovy, Noud and others equally as honorable and efficient owned and managed the lumbering in the greatest belt that has ever yet been harvested.

The leading walking bosses were Nick Dowen, Bob Edmons, Charles Haywood, John Snushall, Pete Moorehead, Bill Kidder and Hank Louks. Of course there were others, but these are those best known and who participated particularly in the valley of the Manistee.

The leading foremen were Thurston, Bloom, Tripp, White, Clary, Scobey, Kelly, Rickmeyer, Frazier, Blue, Strahan, Moran and others.

To call the roll of the mighty men engaged in these parts would be very long indeed. It took many minds to clear the river in this region, which had long been dammed by the cunning beavers, and to build roads through the tangled forests which would carry these huge trees from the lost hills and lonely fastnesses, where they could be fitted for the building of many mansions which now so beautifully adorn our great commonwealth.

Time fails and space forbids the telling of incidents, accidents and circumstances, the generosity and deeds of daring; we can only here and there pick a flower of friendship as we march to the apex of the tale which centers around Nick of the Woods.

Perhaps never before and never again will men be permitted to settle such a valley as this watered by the shining Manistee. The entire belt was studded with white pine and stalwart Norway; the gentle hills bore upon the soft shoulders earth's fairest harvest, and that had not been sown by man but planted by God in centuries past and gone. The soil was a chocolate loam, and readily produced corn, peas, wheat, beans, potatoes and fruits in abundance. In the wild woods were various species of game. In the rivers and brooks were grayling and dappled trout. In the lakes, and they were many, the fisherman found his real paradise—pike, pickerel and bass were easily taken.

Huckleberries and wintergreen berries covered the plains, raspberries and blackberries grew in the timber. Plums enriched the thickets and beechnuts were plentiful on the ridges. One

hundred and forty kinds of wild flowers, the sweetest and rarest of all was the arbutus, grew to beautify the wilderness and the waste places.

The early settlers used to say they had to live on squirrel tracks and gopher holes, potatoes and slippery elm gravy, with soft maple buds and imagination for a dessert but this was not necessary after they had planted the first crop. Not for crops is this effort put forth, but for the men that country produced—and manhood is the fairest and greatest of all earthly product.

In October the snow began to fall. This was the steady warrant of success. Nothing was possible by way of logging unless they had snow, a proper amount and in due time.

The white feathery flakes fell often in the night without even a wind for a warning. Where the men worked in the dry leaves the night before, perhaps the following day when they returned three feet of snow would divide them from the toil of yesterday. If the ground did not freeze before the snow fell, then it would not freeze all winter. The early settlers would leave their potatoes in the hill till spring as they kept better than they did in the pit.

The lumbermen could find dirt whenever they wanted it to draw the frost from the iron wedges when they wished to throw a tree in a special way.

The mossbacks and lumbermen alike were always prepared for that happy event, the falling of the first snow. A great pile of maple block wood was cut and hauled, a shed filled with linden and dry pine spalts had been prepared. The root cellar was filled with potatoes, carrots and turnips; the house stuffed with edibles, and as the poet of the pines expressed:

"Our cellar is stuffed with cabage and fruits
Such as onions, squash and potatoes;
Our pantry with cream, which always suits,
And sweet pickles made out of tomatoes."

They had no dread for the clouds of whirling snows, the flurries of those incessant storms which lasted sometimes for thirty days, scarcely ever were attended with any regret or seldom stole upon these busy and industrious people and found them unprepared.

One hundred and sixty days of sleighing without a break was an average winter. This could be increased thirty days by the manipulation of

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the road sprinkler, which made a bed of ice that would last till June.

No element ever came, not even the sunshine over the broad acres of Dakota, that was more welcomed than the gentle snow of the north. The logging sleds were dug out and the prancing horses, mettled and filled with ginger because of the invigorating air, seasoned with snappy frost, were harnessed and hitched to these conveyances and long before the break of day the whistling teamsters, sitting astride the peeker, would be on their way to the rollway, which was in some instances but a mile away, and on other jobs ten times that distance. Woe-be-tide the loader if he did not balance his load, for if the load was bunk bound on the way to the river the little failing usually cost him his job.

Oxen were used as well as horses. The ox had to be shod when used on the roads. The shoe was made in two parts to fit the split hoof. Oxen would not stand to be shod like horses and so they had to be swung up in the air, feet up and back down, in order to get the shoes on.

The sleighs were constructed out of elm and oak and the runners were shod with a thick piece

of steel. The bunks were from eight to eleven feet long and by decking the logs to a peak from fitfeen hundred to five thousand feet of logs could be handled on a single load.

What the prairie west was to the Sioux, and Sutters mill race to the prospector, such was this belt to the lumbermen.

And after a survey of all the region, the timber, water and the people, Nick of the Woods determined to end his camp life in this valley.

As he began, he still continued, industrious and unselfish in friendly relations with both God and man. Max had been a great trial to him, in vain Nick had tried to induce that wayward brother to take the rich treasures offered him by Heaven, and line his pockets with silk and his purse with virgin gold. How easily he could have filled the silver pitcher of opportunity with those rare golden apples which ripen but once during man's life on earth. But after all his kindness, tactics and sacrifice for the cleanliness of his brother's character and that they might be sons honorable indeed, he utterly failed and Max forsook not only his counsel but separated from Nick forever. Nick never gave up and long

years after Max would no longer pay any attention to his pleadings, Nick wrote him and urged him to brace up and return.

Contemporaneous with the lumber camps there grew in this versatile valley a string of pretty hamlets, villages and cities, which embellished with art's fair fingers the peaceful vale watered by the Manistee. Ere the cities began there came to the lumber lands the pioneers, who came to be the tillers of the soil. They were the primitive settlers and by them school houses, churches and grange halls, with other public buildings, were erected and used. Then society began to change slightly, formality began to grow more popular; instead of the grove of graceful and tossing pine, one beheld the tasseled corn, and these fields of cultivation heralded the first note of the passing of the lumberman forever.

Among the pioneers who first settled in these parts were such sturdy stock as the Hodges, Pierces, Barnums, McCoreys, Cuttings, Loups, Finches, Dutch Pete, Osterhout, Forsythe, Gillmore, Dowens, Battenfield, Downeys, Walker, Immens, Sparlings, Wall, Umlors, Cobbs, Bancrofts, King, Van Camps, Beebe, Marshall, Coles,

Rices, Potter, Arthur, Passage, Hamilton, Learns, Scott, Baker, Martin, Clark, Fuller, Fleet, Millers, Call, Andrews, O'Brien, Mc Ketchnie, Castell, Kellogg, Olds, Eastcott, and two hundred other families highly respectable and active in the transition period, when the country was passing from the ax of the lumberman to the landside of the farmer. Many more could the author name with very pleasant reminiscences, but sufice it to state that time and space rather than memory forbids it.

Society in the beginning of the farming period was informal and accidental. In no stage of civilization has that artless age been excelled.

On Saturday nights the lumbermen were invariably invited to all the dancing parties, which were celebrated either in a rude log house or on the threshing floor of some newly constructed barn. To these periodical events invitations were sent to all, none were ever slighted, few inhabited these unpopulated realms, which an immoral character forbid their welcome. The fiddle, banjo, mouth organ, melodian or the old fashioned cottage organ were the musical instruments, and when the merrymakers hit upon the

munny musk, devil's dream or Virginia cake walk many a lumber lad and jovial mossback with their modest rural maidens tripped the light fantastic toe. Dances were not often, only occasional, and those who attended them were none the worse nor were not maddened by the event; dancing jacks and female maniacs were reserved for another age.

At the dawn of civilization appeared on the horizon the pioneer preacher, with his messages of heavenly love. Everybody everywhere revered the forensic and beloved man. His visits were seldom, his presence pleasing, the cabins, camps and sheltering trees were his chapels, the whole broad valley was his parish; labor was his delight, for he was to find rest in Heaven. In that big, neglected scope few were the beds where grim death hovered where the reverend champion did not stand, offering as God's greatest gift to all the human race the immortality of the soul. Few were the funerals of either settler or lumberman, mother, son or daughter, but this servant of God said in pious reverence, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," as they laid the loved ones down to sleep till the call

of the Master. Whenever an accident occurred to a riverman or a lumber lad the good man was notified, frequently by a messenger after an all-night walk or ride through deep snow or in drenching rains or tangled wilderness ways; and invariably at the bier stood the ambassador from the King of Kings. Sometimes a walk of fifty miles for the preacher before he could officiate, but to him it mattered very little, just as long as God gave him good to do.

Whenever called upon they came cheerfully and gladly, without even asking or caring to whom they were to minister. It mattered little if they were Christians or not, denominational relations never had a bit of influence then, enough for the minister to know that the needy was formed and fashioned after the image of Almighty God. Enough to know that they were kindred in flesh. Now when you come to see the word album where the actors in this strange wild drama repose, you shall see the grave-mounds of these servants of God, the early heralds of the Cross.

There was Eldred, the mighty prince of back-woods preachers. When he preached he set up

the text like a wedding cake, and with the sword of spirit he severed it in a thousand parts, gave a piece to every one present, and they went to their labor and their homes fed and watered with the food and drink that sustains and strengthens the inner man.

Tommy Bayington, the friend of lumbermen and shingle weavers, pure and true as the spirit that charged him with his holy calling, never once in all his life refused to pray or preach, sing or assist at any time in any place to one or more, no matter what they were, who they were or whatever the consequence.

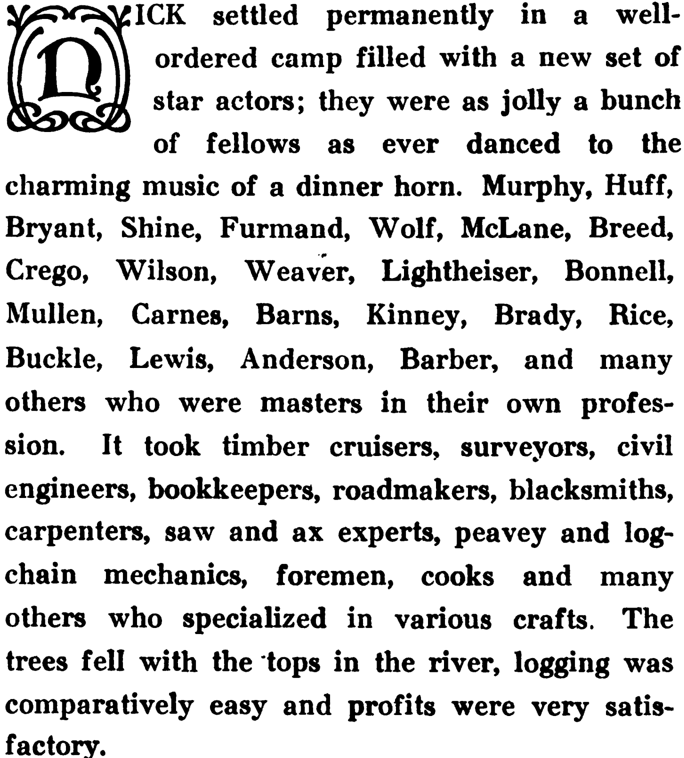
Elder Kellogg, the just and merciful man of faith and lover of souls, walked and sang, preached and labored, always doing his utmost to lead his fellow men to that better country wherefore God is not ashamed to be called God.

Rev. McKinley stood many times where the scythe of death had mown and with his loving words, seasoned with bitter tears, he gave the message to the hopeless age and the thoughtless friends that long ago Jesus gave to Mary when her brother had died.

Then there was Green, Hewett, Watkins, Sav-

age, Lake and others who wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword and out of weakness were made strong.

CHAPTER VII.

ICK settled permanently in a well-ordered camp filled with a new set of star actors; they were as jolly a bunch of fellows as ever danced to the charming music of a dinner horn. Murphy, Huff, Bryant, Shine, Furmand, Wolf, McLane, Breed, Crego, Wilson, Weaver, Lightheiser, Bonnell, Mullen, Carnes, Barns, Kinney, Brady, Rice, Buckle, Lewis, Anderson, Barber, and many others who were masters in their own profession. It took timber cruisers, surveyors, civil engineers, bookkeepers, roadmakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, saw and ax experts, peavey and log-chain mechanics, foremen, cooks and many others who specialized in various crafts. The trees fell with the tops in the river, logging was comparatively easy and profits were very satisfactory.

Before the lumbermen had blazed the trail into this charming valley where the Big Cannon

joined the murmuring river in its southward journey, came a pioneer with his wife and eleven children. They had erected an old fashioned log cabin forty feet long and twenty-four feet in width. It stood proudly in the center of a small grove of silver poplars, and in their honor was called Silvershade.

The walls were logs peeled and flattened, dovetailed at the corners. The roof rafters were straight cedar poles, the roof covering was pine shakes split with mallet and fro by the master of the house and his eldest sons from a straight-grained pine. The gables were boarded up with whip-sawed lumber, and battened with edgings ripped from the wider boards. The floor was basswood puncheon (planks about four inches thick), split from butt logs and evened up with adz and broadax. The floor sills were laid with strong oak and made a lasting and substantial base. The beams—or more commonly known as collar beams, were peeled tamarack, not liable to checks and very stiff. It was necessary to make this backwoods dwelling strong, for it stood where a tree might blow across it at night, and where winter after winter the snow was

piled upon it by the ton. At one end a broad stairway led to the chamber, which was curtained off in several sleeping apartments. From the chamber floor, which was thin split cedar, it was but four feet to the eaves, which had been corked up with moss from the black ash swale. In the winter the snow would blow through the shake roof and sift into the faces of the drowsy inhabitants. In the summer time how consoling the rain drops were as they pattered on the roof only a few feet above their heads.

The lower part of the dwelling was without partitions. In one end was an elevated oven cook stove; and in this end of the room they cooked and ate their meals. In the opposite end was a Jim Beckwith Round Oak heating stove, which swallowed the great chunks of maple, beech and birch, reddening with the laughter of flames on all sides, stimulated by that gaseous material, and giving in token of attention that cheerful glow and indispensable heat. On the walls hung several oil paintings, portraits of distinguished people dressed in Pilgrim, Puritan and Colonial garbs. These were the eminent ancestors of the inhabitants. On the walls in the

end of the room, occupied by the stove and kitchen utensils hung tools, guns and other accessories. In one corner the coats of the boys were kept and in the other the capes, bonnets and outer wear of the women was neatly hung. Then in different places on wooden pegs driven in auger holes were suspended several musical instruments.

The inside of this proud old mansion was cleanly, spacious and convenient. It was cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The fine flakes of snow that infrequently blew through the shakes into the rosy faces of the sweet children, all the more helped them to enjoy this safe and snug retreat from the elements. Under the stairway that led to the chamber was a narrow stair covered with a trap door. This door was raised partly by hand and partly by the assistance of a weight in the form of a round stone tied to a small rope that run through a pulley fastened on the wall. This stair led to the cellar curbed up with split cedar logs The steps to the cellar were solid square timbers. The floor was native hard pan, the red sub soil of the entire country. Butter, milk and vegetables were all stored in this cool retreat,

which was as safe from frost as it was from heat.

The cabin was imposing from an exterior view as well. The flattened poles which served as roof-boards extended ten feet over the gable that stood toward the road; this end was shaked over, supported by two tall porch posts and made a space ten by twenty-four feet for a front stoop. Two small Norway pines were scooped out and placed at the eaves for a rain trough; these were arranged so the water would run toward the rear of the house and empty into a great pine vat, which had been chopped out of a huge tree which was five feet in diameter and twenty-four feet long. This reservoir held fifty barrels of water and served as a cistern. The walls of the house were chinked up with quartered pine chinking, the cracks muddied with white marl from the river bed. Everything was finished neatly and looked substantial and inviting.

The one outside door was home made, four feet wide, six feet six inches high and was spiked together three ply thick of whip sawed ash. This welcoming and generous door was hung on dry ironwood pins set in two great rock-elm sockets. A huge beech latch with a pin extending through

both sides of the door was the only means of fastening this great door. Ash when sun-dried and weather-beaten looks fully as well to one who loves timber as it does dressed, filled, stained, rubbed, varnished and polished.

In all this construction but three things were considered, and these were durability, comfort and convenience. Not a drop of paint, varnish or gilt was dreamed of. The hardware bill would not exceed ten dollars. This mansion would sell in any city for five thousand dollars.

Life was enviable in these selected quarters, free from worldly care, social criticism and political unrest. For wealth they never thirsted, for honor no hankering and for luxury not the slightest emotion. None sought for fair finery, nor were they moved by that mass of restless millions who vainly seek an Eldorado, never to reach the object of their search, but sure to find a tomb. Time touched them gently as he measured the years, and from their raven locks solitude withheld those silver flakes.

On the quarterline somewhat back from Silvershade and still deeper in the hemlock woods, stood a cabin somewhat similar, but smaller and less

pronounced, bearing the poetic title of Idlehour. The family here consisted of father, mother and one daughter. This daughter had been chosen by the Poet of the Pines for his prima donna in his native ode, entitled "The Pets of the Gods." Mazie of Idlehour was fair to look upon, unskilled in coquetry, yet in her middle teens. As she emerged from those sylvan and somber shades dressed in pristine calico—for silks and satins then belonged to dreams and duchesses—you could easily have supposed that she was the fairy sought by the scarlet gowned and immortal hunter Robin Hood. Permit the writer this one personal pleasure—to speak of her with reverence due her virtue and a pathos born of sweet meditation.

Eastward from Silvershade stood giant trees of some forty families. Northward ran the memorable Manistee, making its silver bow to wash the fir-crowned hills on its southward circuit. Westward were the prim arbutus meadows dotted with an occasional bush oak, rose willow and hazel brush. It seemed that nature had assembled all her graces to make enchanting this fair abode. The songs of the innumerable wild birds, the fragrance of the sweetest flowers mingled with the sighing winds and swaying branches charmed childhood till day dreams and night dreams were sisters. The sky was the academy, the birds were

the books and the seasons were the teachers, the sun was the call bell, the moon was the curfew; life was a wonderland. Tragedy, comedy and sublimity chased each other over the faded background in charming succession. Do not ask me to restore this ruined mansion, it is lost with the arts of the ages. The plash of the dappled trout, the leap of the agile grayling in the limpid streams, the grasshopper as he cracks his tiny bones, the cricket sawing his black fiddle, the treetoad blowing his native flute, are artists in this passing drama; and as they united to produce this wilderness symphony time stole from the gem casket some of earth's rarest jewels.

Silvershade was to have a house-warming, an event of annual interest to which everybody from all directions were invited. This celebration was to commemorate the day that family moved into the log mansion. People from every station of life gathered at this place to enjoy the event, and among the shantymen who came from the camp, situated at the Ox-Bow Bend, was Nick, in company with his partner, the poet, as the latter was a member of the family at Silvershade.

Nick was introduced by the poet to his father, mother, sisters and brothers (seven boys and four girls), and Nick taxed his memory to its limit to properly place each member of the family, and

associate their faces and their names.

There was a crowd of about sixty people, ranging from graybeards to babies—a heterogeneous company—lumber jacks, rivermen, mossbacks, bosses, agents and others.

Few were the preparations made for the amusements beforehand, but the stress was laid on the comforts, the harmony and the feast. These major details had been carefully and tastefully looked after by the mother and the older girls.

The games played were of the simple backwoods quality, chess, checkers, cards, tin-peddler, "take home what you borrow," "the happy miller" and the like. The various classes assembled informally in twos, threes or larger groups according to the games and amusements which had been chosen.

After a pleasant time had been enjoyed, merely in a welcome and salutation, they naturally came to order and were seated on the clumsy wooden chairs and benches and were delighted to hear the announcement that Lee, the musical prodigy of the family and the surrounding country, would favor them with a medley.

The young man drew from a red calico case his home-made banjo, having a long black ash stale, white maple keys, redwood frets, a leatherwood bridge, horsehair strings and a new white

skin head stretched over the drum, made from the cover of a cheese box, around which he had set a full dozen home invented brackets.

The observing mother eyed him mysteriously, yet with a certain pride which imbues all true parents, then she burst into words:

"I thought your banjo head was broken?"

"It was, but I have a new one," he answered.

"A new one, indeed, but tell me this instant where you got it!"

As his inquiring mother said these words she assumed an attitude of control which characterized her determination. This was particularly noticed by the good-natured company of people, now supposing something unpleasant was connected with the new banjo head.

"Had to do it, mother, dear, you know, isn't that explanation enough?" mildly exclaimed the long-haired, brown-eyed musician.

"Had to, is not excuse for supplying your want, which was not your need, my son; we will talk later about this."

As the mother settled back in her chair, cool and self-possessed, curly haired Ann, the baby of the household, puckered up her pretty pink lips and sobbed sadly. Belle tried to soothe the family favorite while the young musician rendered a medley of banjo music that would have pleased

the mighty Mozart; and after the melodious twang died away Ann sobbed bitterly and muttered in child fashion:

"Muver, I can hear old Omar meow ev'ry time bruver plays."

At this outburst Carleton interrupted by saying: "I know where old Omar is now, play another tune on the old cat, Lee!"

Lee smiled roguishly while Dlos piped in:

"Yes, play the tune the old cat died on."

As Ann continued to cry, they all understood that Omar, the favorite house cat's pelt was stretched over the drum of Lee's instrument.

"That's one of your old tricks, Lee," said Beaver, the trapper and hunter of the family, "and had ye spit it out of you I'd trapped you a bobcat and their skin's tuffer"—

"Catch me one, Beaver, will oo', me isn't got no kitty now, boo-hoo," interrupted Ann.

"Yes, I'll get ye a link, an ermine and a woodchuck, und a porcupine with pink eyes and white quills, a big coon"—

"Oh, a coonie, too, like the one of Letson's oo' shot fur oo'r cap."

The silence was painful, at this betrayal. Letsons had missed their pet coon, Beaver had killed one at the front door and Ann saw a blue ribbon tied around its neck, and at once they all knew it

was the neighbor's pet. And the past winter on dress parades in the wilderness, Beaver, the trapper, had sported a handsome coon-skin cap; sitting next to Beaver was the oldest son of the Letson family, his face reddening almost bright enough to light a candle from, then after the chagrin, whitened with rage.

"What did you do with the gingseng we dug last fall, Beaver, if you did not buy that cap with it?" Belle inquired.

"Now, Beaver," warned Dlos, "don't tell about the three pounds of yum-yum."

"I'll tell 'bout every derned thing I know if ye spill any more un me," his black eyes snapping like the jaws of a fox-trap, " 'bout Otto und the maple sugg', 'bout Belle und Minnie und the dried apples, 'bout Dlos und the 'baker, Will und the preserves and 'bout Carleton and his sweetheart, Annie Nichols, and"—

"Hush, children, that's entertaining, but it's getting too real," intercepted the master of the house.

"Oh! a game, a game for the young folks only," broke in Mazie, the idol of Idlehour.

Sarah Murphy looked approvingly at this suggestion, but watched to see how Gene Warner would feel, for tho' she was nearly forty she still counted herself with the young folks. Jim Nichols eyed Mazie mysteriously while she was speaking,

and seemed trying to consume her beauty with his devouring gaze.

"Jack in the dark," cried Beaver.

"Spat 'em out," piped Belle.

"Pizen," insisted Dlos.

"Bull in the ring is best fur us boys," said Art, while over a dozen girls hissed in utter disgust at his selfish discrimination.

"King's den, is a good game for us all," added Nick.

"It depends on where you come from," put in Gene Warner, edging her way to play with the unmarried folks.

"Let it be a three-ring circus," added the father, "you boys play on the far side of the kitchen stove, let the girls have the center of the room and we will have chess, checkers, music and stories here."

All fell in with this happy suggestion, the boys locked hands for their choicest game, "Bull in the Ring," with Beaver in the pen.

As the boys formed a big circle their hands locked tightly. Beaver slapped his hand on Nick's hard arm, saying, "Whut's this arm?"

"Basswood," was the answer.

"Gee, it's tough as leatherwood, Nick, guess ye don't know timber this side ov Ireland."

"And whut's this arm, Dlos?"

"Old Hickory," came the information.

"And whut's this, Bill?"

"Brass, you bet, and hard to break," assured the big brother as he tightened his grip like a vice which made his pal squirm, fearing the agile trapper was going to test his arm of brass.

"Whut's this arm ov"—

"Old Hemlock," declared Ned.

"Whut's this un made ov, Lou?"

"Gold, ye prospector."

"Whut's this arm made ov?"

"Steel, case-hardened."

"Begorra," said Nick, "then a file won't touch it."

"But I'll tech it, then," added Beaver. "And this?" as he clapped Carlton's forearm.

"Silver, you sausage, pocket it if ye dare," so saying he tightened his hold.

Basswood, old hickory, brass, gold, silver, steel, repeated Beaver. Then like a panther he sprang at the arm of steel; the strong knotty hands were gripped like iron in a persistent deadlock and corralled the young woodsman for a moment, but shifting suddenly from steel to old hickory, he broke through the ring, all joining after him in a hot pursuit. The fleeing backwoodsman cleared the cook stove at a bound, stormed through the flock of girls who were playing "My Old Injun,

My Old Squaw," and up to the farther end of the cabin sped pursued and pursuers, upsetting the checker board, which spoiled the rub game between two of the neighborhood champions, and raised havoc in general.

"Suppose you fellows brimfull of ginger play out doors, you might knock the shanty over," joined in the senior Biglow.

At this suggestion Beaver rounded up the young men and said, "It's moonlight, I've forty traps out and thirty snares of wire, and two bear deadfalls—whut ye say und ye all jine me in lifting me traps and combing me snares and spying the deadfalls?"

No second to this suggestion was needed, caps, jackets, mittens and scarfs were slung on in a hurry, two guns were primed, an ax and hatchet in arm, and all was in readiness.

"You're not going, it's too late and I want Nick here," declared Minnie, the eldest daughter and the head of the house work and chief entertainer.

"We'll only go fur 'nuff to bring in a hare from the swamp where I fixed me new wire snares," added Beaver.

"I'll not be stubborn, brother," answered the girl in modified tones. "Be gone but an hour; it's 10 o'clock now."

Out into the still cold night sauntered these

backwoods fellows, wading through the frosty snow and inhaling and exhaling the sharp air sparkling with frost; the steam from their breath blown into the brisk air froze into a white veil over their woolen jackets and they looked like a crowd of Dutch Santa Clauses, as they went on towards the swamp. At intervals a hare would bound off into the forests, only visible for a jump or two, for his robe of winter was as white as the newly fallen snow.

"Whoop, don't shoot, it's caught, let me get it!" said a half dozen voices all together, as a large hare bounded like a rubber ball in the runway ahead of them.

"Let's bag it alive and turn it loose in the house when we go back," suggested Dlos.

"All right," said the trapper, "but his leg's broke," as he held up the fine specimen of a jack-rabbit.

"Let me carry the game," said Nick. "I can carry all you can get this winter."

"Don't be too sure," added Jim. "Beaver is a wonder, you don't know him."

The snare was laid down low and the noisy crowd proceeded farther into the forest.

"Let's go to the bear pen and 'zamin the bait, Beaver?" suggested Art.

"Well, that's all y'ed 'zamin, you tenderfoot;

ever sence the frez, don't ye know bears are seven sleepers, and crawl intu the ground or a holler log, or a tree and suck ther paw till a big thaw or till spring, and then come out fat'es mud?"

"Naw, the duce you say, I hev seen bears all winter, lots 'o times," said Dlos.

Bang, bang, bang, went the woodsman's gun in lightning sucession, and away ran the hunter and finished the game with the helve of the ax.

"It's a dandy red fox, hey?" said Nick. "Hand it over, I'm the warden of the woods," he added. While Beaver buttoned up his coat, primed his gun, ready for whatever might pop up.

"Go slow and don't talk now, we're comin' to where I 'spect a cat,' 'said the hunter.

They stole cautiously onward, bowing down under the low spruce limbs ladened with great heaps of snow, till suddenly Beaver, always in advance, beckoned for them to stand still. He gave a sudden kick at a small pole which was laid over a bent tree, and goodness, up flew the tree twenty feet in the air, pulling up with it a steel-jump trap which held in its icy grip the left hind paw of a big bobcat.

"Smithering Moses," uttered one.

"See her spin," cried another.

"Yawl, ye cat-o-mount, blast ye," said a third.

While the big cat spit, swung round and round,

bit the trap, clawed at the tree and squalled till the night air fairly echoed with the weird wailings.

"Hand me the ax," said Beaver, the master of the occasion. And with three ponderous blows at the butt of the ironwood sapling which had been bent down and looked like the fixture in a figure-four to which the trap was fastened with a staple, he severed the tree and the sapling, trap, chain, cat and all fell in a tangled and lively mass, burying themselves in the snow.

"Surround him, boys, let's take 'im alive, Nick's warden," commanded the trapper. While the dozen husky fellows circled the lively spot of snow that was boiling with bobcats, traps and brush.

"Davy Crockett and all the rest ov ye," yelled the trapper, when he saw that the sapling had fallen on the identical spot where he had set another trap, which had evidently caught the female cat. The chorus of screams made plenty of noise, and the scrambling cats, the flying snow and the excited boys made the woods ring.

They cut clubs and closed in, Nick dealing a deadly blow on the female and Beaver succeeded in bagging the tom-cat alive.

After the traps were reset, with their live rabbit, live cat, dead fox and dead cat, they hastened

for home.

It had taken them but an hour to make the rounds and without letting the folks at home know what they had taken from the traps, leaving their bags outside, they entered the cabin and joined in the sports.

At this period the benches were set aside and the dance was begun. Sixteen persons, or two sets, could be enjoyed at once, and with four musicians, twenty were engaged at a time. The master of the house played his harp, the banjo managed by Lee, the violin by Rupert and the mouth organ by Jake Buckle.

At 11 o'clock the matron passed the maple sugar. It had been moulded in patty tins, small heart-shaped receptacles, which made pretty scalloped cakes, and this was enjoyed then fully as well as chocolate or brick ice cream is at present.

At 12 o'clock the tables were spread, chairs set and a regular backwoods banquet was served.

Nick sat next to Minnie and greatly enjoyed the hearty repast. They were much amused with each other, she admired his native cleverness, and wit, while he smiled satisfactorily in return.

The orderly society mingled in merriment and frolicked in funny epigrams. They cracked jokes, guessed conundrums, gave impromptu speeches,

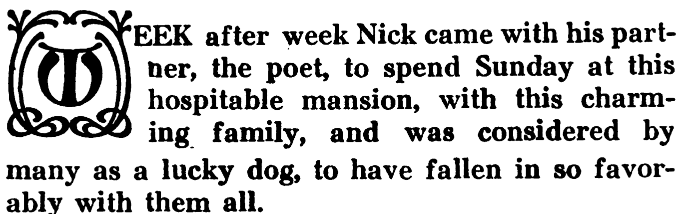
exhibited extemporaneous oratory and measured with with one another.

It was one by the grandfather clock, and as the ancient timepiece struck his single blow from his station on the stair, the friends, neighbors and lumbermen expressed themselves that it was time to break up. The smaller children were asleep on chairs and benches, but still the matron was serving the browned buckwheat cakes hot from that family griddle—the older members of the company were smothering with maple syrup those palatable favorites of cookery—when suddenly a great bobcat that looked like the dream a hunter might have of a tiger, leaped upon the table between Nick and Minnie, cut down the extended board, hair ruffled, foot bleeding, knocking over catsup bottles and syrup pitchers. The frantic yells of the revelers almost scared the life out of the intruder, and it bounded from the table and lit in the pancake batter, leaving three tracks on the red-hot griddle, and then shot out the window, which was opened to allow the smoke to escape. As the cat landed in the snow outside there was a spit and a spat, a howl and a scrap. Kyser, the big Newfoundland dog, ever on the alert, had been guarding the cat in the bag, and when the tormentor Dlos had stolen out to spring the joke he watched, rather expecting the cat to escape. When

the excited boys reached the door the invincible dog had conquered and the cat lay dead in the path.

The event came to a close, though rather abruptly, but satisfactorily, and they took their way homeward. Nick was invited to come again and he gladly thanked the matron for the welcome and assured her he would comply most cheerfully.

CHAPTER VIII.



EEK after week Nick came with his partner, the poet, to spend Sunday at this hospitable mansion, with this charming family, and was considered by many as a lucky dog, to have fallen in so favorably with them all.

Spring came with its thousand charms, the camps broke up and Nick was to spend the transition period between sledding and wheeling at Silvershade.

It was sugar-making time. Four hundred ash and basswood sap troughs had been chopped out by the younger brothers, and had been singed inside so the sugar would not taste of the wood. The spiles had been made from the stems of sumac. (This wood grows in small bushes and has a free pith, which can easily be punched out, and was therefore used for spiles.) The candy pails for gathering the sap had been taken from the shanty in the sugar bush and washed out, the neck-yokes were repadded and everything set in readiness to tap the bush just as soon as the wind blew from the south.

Minnie was an immaculate housekeeper, her mother was delighted with her virtue and obedience. Nick grew very fond of her. She was vivacious, lively and amiable, read extensively, sang

and played in a charming manner. Nick needed a sister and Minnie was all that to him. This acquaintance was no love match, while she was a sister the boys were as brothers to him and the parents were as his own.

During the warm spring days the young folks greatly enjoyed themselves in the manifold amusements possible, under such circumstances and afar in the wilderness. They hunted and fished, and both hunting and fishing were fine. If they lacked knowledge in either of these crafts, Beaver gladly gave them information.

"Boys, boys, get up, it's four o'clock, the wind's in the south, we're going to tap the bush," came the words rather slowly from the master of the house to the boys in the bed chamber.

"Be quiet, don't wake up the two little lads and Ann," charged the father as he tip-toed down stairs.

It was April. There had been many sunshiny days, but the wind was cold and held in the north, the sun had melted the snow especially on the south side of the hills. The sunshine and cold wind dries up the sap and is a poor time to tap, so at the first approach of spring with soft south winds they usually tapped the sugar bush.

"Aren't you going to have any breffust, or make a fire?" asked Dlos.

"No, pull on your boots without warming, let your feet warm them, and we'll come back to breakfast after we have tapped fifty trees," answered the master.

The boys hurriedly dressed, pulled up their well-worn woolen socks, darned nearly to death, tossed on their caps and with brace and bit, gouge, mallet, ax, drawshave and jacknife, made straight for the sugar bush.

"Nick, you tap with the ax and gouge, yo're an ax expert, drive the flat spiles in after you have pulled out the gouge, make a little notch above the spile and be sure the sap runs on the spile and set the rough straight so it will hold an even paul, tap on the southeast side of the tree, unless it leans too heavily in the opposite way; Carlton will carry your spiles and trucks," informed the father.

Nick went at the task with all dexterity, while the father, with brace and bit and the round spiles to fit the holes he bored and those which had been punched so the sap would run through, with Dlos as an assistant, took his place before sunrise in the east side of the bush and began to tap the sugar maples. The other boys were detailed to carry the troughs and place them at the trees after they were tapped.

"Crackey," shouted Nick, "how she spurts," as he pulled out his gouge and hurriedly reached for

a spile.

"Come on, set the trough, I'm ready; it will be full before breakfast if it continues."

"That's fifty for me," said the master.

"And fifty-two for me," said Nick.

"It's brekfust time fur me," snarled Dlos.

"It will be here pretty soon, we can't go after it, we must be boiling by 10 o'clock because the troughs will be running over," said his father.

"I'll make a fire in the arch and we might as well pull out the sap pans and go at it," said Bill, the older brother.

He put the bars over the center of the arch to support the middle of the great pans four feet wide and six feet in length and eight inches deep. Laid the fire with dry maple split fine, arranged the barrels in rows to receive the sap as it was carried by the other boys in large wooden pails by the assistance of a neck-yoke, turned over the big log receptacle which held two hundred pails and did other necessary things.

"Breakfast everybody," called Minnie, as she sat down a great basket filled with edibles. Everyone came at the first call and did justice to the warm, nutritious food.

By 10 o'clock the sap was boiling, two hundred trees had been tapped and sugar making was on in earnest. It was 10 o'clock that night before

a mother's son left the bush. They sugared off and syruped down a handsome lot of sweets, carried the sugar home and slept like bears.

For three weeks the work was carried on, and sometimes it was very exciting when the sap would spurt for twenty-four hours without stopping, and it had to be boiled down or waste. Many times the pans were humping night and day; words cannot describe the fuller joys of boiling sap at night alone in the big woods.

It was the last night of sugar making, Nick was to keep fire that night and boil a race with nature and the south wind. It was midnight and as he sat drowsily before the arch watching the flames leap up to the long pan and run along the whole length and blaze out the smoke-stack thirty feet backward, a big old hoot owl screamed his ghostly "Hoo hoo augh," then a deer, attracted by the light of the flames, snorted and fled into the thicket. The light blinded Nick's eyes so he could not see, and all of a sudden "Bang!" went a big gun, both barrels at once—splash, dropped an owl in the pan of fresh sap, throwing froth from the boiled feathers in the face of the midnight toiler.

"Did I get 'm?" inquired Beaver. "I shot 'im on the wing."

"Yes, I got 'im on the wing, too," responded Nick. "Have some boiled owl."

"Not on yer tin-type," was the reply, "biled owls are tuffer'in tripe."

"That's a sweet mess," added Nick, as he fished out the dead owl. "I might as well throw the sap away, I s'pose I can hardly catch up anyhow, the sap is just spouting. Blisby was over in the evening and said sap run better when the wind was north, if it was not too cold."

"P'raps so and p'raps woodchuck," said Beaver. "These things are unsarten, nothing worth while but game and fish here. Nick, I hev a mind to go at it for good, and go where it will pay mi."

As the two emptied the pan and filled it again with clean sap and stuffed the great mouth of the arch full of dry maple wood, they talked of hunting and trapping and life amid the wilds.

The two boys sat down on an old bench braced up against the sugar camp and while the fire lit up the woods and sent the warm beams against the camp, this cheerful scene was attended by the roar of the flames leaping up the throat of the smoke-stack, and the sizzling of the cold sap against the sides of the sap pans; Beaver opened his heart to Nick in the following manner.

"Dad went West, so am I goin' sum time; I hain't lazy, but I want'er do whut I want'er do. I mean to be a scout, a hunter, trader and trapper like Carson, Boone, Brady and Kenton; if

ther're any Injuns left fur me to make my glory on."

Nick nodded occasionally, while he skimmed the sap with a tin plate punched full of holes and tied to a long handle, almost ignoring the future intentions of the backwoodsman.

"Hev we got any sugg' out her Nick?" inquired Beaver, changing the subject.

"Lots of soft sugar in the tub under the bench in the shanty, and here's the spoon," handing Beaver a clumsy wooden spoon he had whittled out.

Beaver filled the saucer, emptied it, refilled it and devoured it again; then he sat down before the warm fire and fell asleep. He was awakened at six o'clock to assist in syruping down the last batch that year. After they emptied the small pan that stood at the rear of the arch they went to breakfast.

The ground was hard enough after the spring rains to begin wheeling early in June, and Nick had hired out to Pierce to drive the big grays on the wheels. But before he left the young folks planned a day's outing and invited Nick along. The place they had chosen for the object of their outing was about five miles east, commonly known as the Beaver Meadows. This was a long strip of lowlands skirting the Ausable, which at some early day had been heavily timbered—but had

been cut by beaver and the material used for dams in the various creeks and rivers.

With plenty of food the company of twenty girls and boys left the house at seven o'clock; the dew was very heavy, the ferns and berry bushes were loaded, so the boys went ahead to brush off the dew for the girls. To gain the open country that walking would be good, it was necessary to ford the Little Manistee, but when they reached the swift little stream the girls feared to cross.

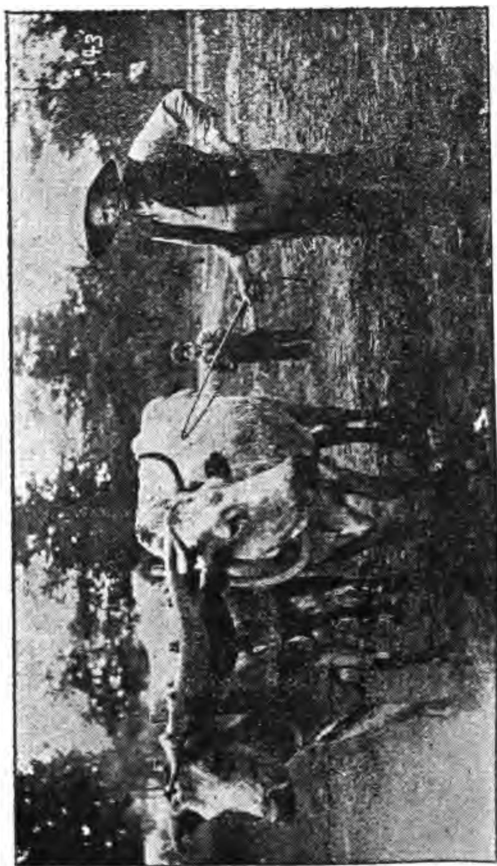
"Here's your pack mules," called Nick, as he, Beaver, Carlton and Dlos backed up to the shore with their jeans rolled up to their hips. "Four girls at a time and two round trips are all."

As they reached the farther side of the river safely and hit into the thin woods, something attracted Beaver's attention off south.

"Screenchin' bobcats, here's the pigin rookery," exclaimed the trapper. "I knowed by the clouds of 'em that passed over to the Travis Bay that it was nigh here where they nested. They fly every night 'n morin' fur water and food 'bout sixty mile."

"They must all be home now, there's billions of them among those Jack-hemlocks," added Bill.

"Their eggs are good eatin, und I know fresh uns, they're white-es chalk, while the old uns are old iv'ry color," remarked Beaver.



A Relic of Early Days—The Ox-Teamster

"Let's have eggs for dinner," shouted Dlos as he ran for the rookery.

"Get the white uns, und I'll wring the heads off some ov the roosters; I know um by the special blue and green shade ariund their neck, and there're fatter, too."

"Don't kill the mother birds, if you do I can't eat a bite of dinner," added Belle.

"No, nor the sons and daughters," concluded Minnie.

"I'll see that all they get will be aunts, uncles and grand-parents," Nick added, as he hastened to the grove of small jack-hemlock, alive with passenger pigeons. The boys returned with a generous supply of eggs and fully a dozen fat roosters in their game bag.

They had to cross over a wide marshy place overgrown with tag-alder, willow, shintangle and occasionally a tall tamarack, the black offspring of the noted larch.

"Give me a boost, Dlos, and I'll get that chewing up thar," said Beaver, pointing to a great lump of tamarack gum.

Like a cat he scaled the tree, broke off the gum, slid to the ground and divided it among the crowd.

"Wonder what that blaze means on that big tree, nobody lives 'round here," yelled Bill.

"That's no ax blaze, don't ye know that, it's bear signs," said Beaver, as he pulled off the rough bark and pointed to four deep holes, which looked as though spikes had been drawn out from the tree. It was six feet from the ground and evidently the work of a black bear.

"Gosh," said Dlos, excitedly, "don't let the girls know we're in a bear's den!"

At this the boys joined with the company of girls.

"I'm getting dry," said Minnie, "and we forgot to bring cups."

"Here's a drink," said Nick, as he stooped down and picked a small green globular plant, shaped almost exactly like a French goblet, which held about one-fourth of a gill—and was brimming with rain water.

"Wait till I fill it with fresh nectar." And stooping again, he dipped it full from a tiny stream, working its sedgy way between columbine and cowslips, and handing it to Minnie he exclaimed:

"Adam's ale, in Eve's mug, my fairy; drink heartily, is the toast."

"Oh, whoever saw such a thing growing before?" questioned Mazie.

"I hev, lots ov em, ther frog-cups," said Beaver.

When the company reached the higher ground

and emerged into the thick woods, Beaver stopped and peeled several bushes, stuffing the bark in his pocket.

"Come on and stop monkeying, Beaver, or we'll never get to the meadows," growled Dlos.

"I'm getting some leatherwood bark, it's useful, and not much of it in these parts; it's good for bow-strings, and it ken be used to weave snowshoes; it's suthin like buckskin."

They walked on in silence for some time, Beaver ahead, when he broke the silence by saying: "We're goin' too fur south, I ken tell by the moss."

"By the moss, what's that go to do with it?" inquired Nick.

"It has this," answered Beaver, "ye see most all moss grows on the north side ov the trees, and when ye look thet way ye ken see lots ov it, and when ye look thet way ye ken see just a leetle."

"I see, then when you look south you see the moss, do you?" inquired Nick.

"Exactly so," said the trapper.

Shifting to the south by the new compass, they were halted by the sudden noise of a hen partridge in their path. She ran ahead of the company, scratching the dry leaves with her spread-out wings and whistled like a school boy—then after

this mysterious maneuver she rose and flew.

"Whoop," cried Beaver, "a nest ov yung uns."

As he said this he cocked his eagle eyes steadily around him. "It's yung uns, here's one," he said as he picked a little chick from under a large linden leaf.

"Are there others, brother?" piped Belle, eagerly.

"P'raps thirty or less, right round us," was the answer.

A careful search revealed three more, and Dlos also found two young blue-jays sitting alone on a limb.

"Let's take them home," pleaded Belle, "and let my old hen Blackie raise them, she's a good mother."

"They'd die or fly away," said Beaver. "They're shy game. Did ye see the old hen maneuver when we first seen 'er, she was tryin' to 'tract our 'tention while the chicks hid."

While they held and examined the chicks, Beaver made a cage with leatherwood bark and put the young birds in it. With the happy find and the cage so ingeniously constructed, the company, all but Beaver, proceeded on their way. Scarcely had they disappeared when the old hen came scurrying back, giving that occasional, inimitable whistle, which Beaver had tried so hard

to mimic, but failed; and at her call, from under bunches of dead grass and old leaves, from hemlock and myrtle cautiously came forth about twenty little partridges and the family was restored.

As Beaver caught up to the company he heard Kyser barking off to the left, and he warned them that there was something to bark for, so they all went to his rescue. As they approached the dog would bark up a big hemlock tree and then run and bark into the end of a hollow log. Beaver pulled his six-shooter and clipped off the head of an old rooster pheasant sitting fifty feet high on a hemlock limb. Then he hastened to the log, and suddenly he seized Kyser by the collar and slipped over to join the company, saying, "Pugh, a pole-cat."

On the edge of the meadow was a pretty glade, and here they decided to spread their banquet.

"Wait till I boil the eggs and cook the birds," said Beaver. So saying, he rolled three stones together, gathered some dry limbs and built a fire. Then he took the pail and filled it half full of water, dropped in a couple of dozen egg, and set it on the stones over the fire.

"Now bile," he addressed the pail, then turning to the girls said:

"It takes thirty-two minutes to bile eggs soft,

and then ther dun. Now Dlos, take that lump uv clay," as he kicked a big chunk of blue clay from a knoll, "and wrap up the birds, feathers und all, and bake em in the fire."

"What are you going to do?" Dlos asked.

"I'm goin over to the woods thar to pick squirrel corn, and dig sum groun' nuts fur a relish," answered Beaver.

After the noonday repast the boys went fishing in the Ausable River, capturing a handsome string of grayling and spotted trout. They rolled them in wet leaves and put them in the bottom of the game-sack. As they were leaving they heard a floundering noise, hastening to the place they saw a great fish trying to get out of a shallow place in the river.

"Lasso him with your leatherwood, Beaver," cried Dlos.

"It's a shark, sea serpent or a night-mare," muttered Lee.

"No," said Nick, "it's a sturgeon that run up from the lake; there are plenty of them in Huron, but I never saw a big fish in little water before."

"Hurrah, boys, grab a root," called Bill, "let's pen him up; thank heavens he can't fly, and we must get him."

They all laid hold of a long log, placing it between the fish and deep water, thus cutting off

his retreat. With a club they stunned it and then succeeded in landing him on the bank. Then running a pole through its gills, and with one end on Bill's back and the other end on Beaver's, like the biblical grapes of Eschol, they managed the big fish without difficulty, considering themselves lucky fishermen.

While the boys were thus engaged the girls swung on the tangled wild grape vines, gathered bird's eggs, marked their initials on tree warts, painted their pink cheeks blood red with Indian strawberries and trimmed their hats with myrtle and cock-fern.

"Who's going to marry first?" cried Sarah.

"How can we tell?" inquired Mazie.

"Oh! simple enough," said Sarah. "All sit down, now shut your eyes tight, every one of you; are your eyes all shut?" she inquired, and all answered in the affirmative. "Now all pick a violet, they are yellow and blue all around us; the one who gathers the largest one will marry first, and the one who gets the smallest will be an old maid." They all jocundly fumbled for violets, every one securing what they sought.

"All have a flower?" asked Sarah.

"Yes, now what?" asked Belle.

"Now measure them," she added.

"Oh, Belle's got the largest one," laughed

Helen.

"And Minnie's got the smallest one, 'old maid, old maid, old maid," laughingly cried Donna.

"I will not be an old maid," retorted Minnie, "fortunes reverse, too."

"Now, I can tell who's going to die first, by testing the stem of an adder tongue. Everybody get a strong stemmed adder tongue and come here," said Mazie. "Now sit opposite each other and lock your flower heads together and pull gently."

"Minnie's broke first," said Belle, "and mine last."

"That's unlucky for Minnie all around," sighed Mazie.

"I might as well die, I suppose," said Minnie, "I can't get married."

Mazie and Donna sat opposite, locked their tender flowers, and off came the delicate head of the adder tongue held in Mazie's hand.

"See our catch, girls," shouted Dlos, as the boys entered the glade where the girls were at play.

"Oh, fine indeed!" they all exclaimed together.

"Reckon we'd better hit the trail fur 'ome, it looks stormy, und it's six miles back, counting crooks," said Beaver.

Then he clapped his hands together, locked his fingers over each other in a funny fashion and

gave three conch-shell blasts for Kyser. The old dog came to camp with his tail down and acted very sheepish.

"What's the matter, you half-breed?" scowld Beaver. "Oh! you darn ole dogen, ye hev a dos fur yer whiskers. See here Bill, Kyser's been killing a porky, and his mug's full of quills; see em driven in his sides like shingle nails where he banged 'im against him, when he shook 'im."

Kyser was the old family dog they had brought into the country with them and was considered a member of the family. The old dog whined with pain as he went from one to the other, holding his big mouth open.

Belle began to cry, fearing Kyser would die before they got home.

"Keep still, Sis, pa can pull them out; he did twice before."

"Yes, I know, but he said if Kyser killed any more porcupines he would not try to pull the quills out as it was such a terrible job—and if he doesn't pull them out they will work through him and kill him."

"Never mind, Belle, I'll see that Kyser goes to the dentist and has proper care," were Nick's consoling words.

When the crowd crossed over the tamarack swamp on their homeward journey they captured

some frogs, and Dlos got a small turtle and all were slipped into the game-sack.

"I wus 'fraid we'd get soaked," muttered Beaver as they gained the woods.

"Why," asked Bill.

"'Cause I knowed by the sand-flies, an no-see-ums, say nuthin uv the 'skeeters, this time o' day it 'ed rain."

"Thunder," said Belle, "a big storm coming up from the west and we are three miles from home, oh dear," and as she finished her words another big clap from the hammer of Thor re-echoed through the dim aisles of the wilderness.

"Let's get under that big hemlock tree," said Dlos.

"No taking to trees in a thunder storm, it taint thunder thet hurts but lightnin', and it hits hemlocks furst," warned Beaver.

"Where'll we go?" asked Carlton. "I hear the rain pounding on the forests over yonder."

"Here's a turn-up," said Beaver, stopping at the root where a big elm had been blown over and had raised a bank of earth high in the air making a flat wall about ten feet across. The dirt, being a soft damp loam, mixed with marl, had curled over and by the assistance of the limber elm roots, which supported the ground, made a spacious canopy, large enough for them all to

crowd under.

Hardly had they gathered when the great tempest so common to those parts this time of the year came down upon them in all its ruthless fury. Everything was totally drenched, sheets of rain mingled with hail and accelerated by the heavy winds, roared, poured and rattled, till the woods fairly rang with the battle of the elements. A deafening clap of thunder followed by a series of crashes, blinding the eyes and stunning for a moment the young folks, crowded like a brood of chickens under the roots of the turned up tree, added to their discomfort, and when they became composed again they saw that the big hemlock under which Dlos had suggested they seek shelter, had been demolished by the lightning, and all around for several rods slivers were sticking into the ground like the spears of some giant warriors.

In about thirty minutes the storm abated, and the young folks, as dry as sunshine, went merrily on their way homeward.

With various experiences of a similar nature to those related, they reached home at sun-down. Kyser was operated upon by the master, with a hand-spike over his head and a clevis to hold his mouth open and with a pair pinchers the good master extracted the quills.

CHAPTER IX.

INDEPENDENCE DAY arrived — Nick and Minnie were to drive to town to spend the gala day. Nick promised to bring back a part of the day in the form of fireworks, which satisfied the younger and more enthusiastic. The time Beaver intended to spend in the woods, as he wished to add to his aquarium, which was the huge trough in the rear of the house. Here he kept his turtles, frogs, tadpoles, fish, snails, lizards and wigglers for pastime and study. He had manufactured a wooden cage where he kept a pair of bald eagles and other smaller cages where he kept golden robins, bullfinches, linnets, cook-coos, thrushes, jays and various other birds. In an old dry stub was a nest of woodpeckers and a father wren had bored a tiny hole and chopped out a small house for himself and his bride, just below the red-headed woodpecker. Within a rod from these possessions was a cub bear tied to a stump by a log-chain, also a part of Beaver's menagerie.

Thus you can understand that Independence Day had no attractions for this child of the for-

ests.

Lee, the magic musician, had a new ten-cent mouth organ and with this tied to a stick, and fastened firmly, so he could run his lips over it without the use of his hands, he picked the banjo with his fingers, and sawed his huge base viol with the bow tied to his bare foot. These three instruments played by one individual attracted wide-spread attention.

Carleton had arranged a handsome bouquet to send to his sweetheart and Dlos had stealthily placed a big odorous leek right in the center of the flowers, which greatly detracted from the sweetness of the offering.

Others of the family rambled down the old logging roads overarched with a cavern of leaves and carpeted with blue-joint and dandelions. They scared one another with snap-dragon, tickled with nettles, pinched soft maple pods till the water flew in the face of the near by companions, picked wintergreen berries, raspberries and dug gingseng. In this simple but satisfying amusement the day passed by.

Nick and Minnie rode to town, thirteen miles away, behind old Stub and Twist, the master's big red oxen. They were hitched to a two-wheeled cart, minus springs, the wheels were cut from a round cherry log and were but twenty inches in

diameter. These wheels were tired with iron hoops taken from a vinegar barrel. It was while taking this ride, at the rate of three miles an hour, that Nick for the first time opened his heart to Minnie, who was fifteen years his junior. As he repeated the narrative laden with love's disappointments, big round tears glistened like diamonds in those large and beautiful gray eyes, then rolled down those plump, pretty cheeks, which blushed like roses of Oregon. Nick wondered if these generous tears were all given in sympathy, or if they were shed in regret, because he rehearsed his former love-dream, rather than propounding new-born affections. A few days revealed the facts—Minnie gave him sympathy only, and never had given love a single thought.

The Fourth of July spent at this primitive and typical village, situated on the banks of a lake far more enchanting than fair Killarney, was indeed a merry event.

Many of the mossbacks' daughters were there dressed in white dresses girdled with pink or blue sashes. In their hair they wore fox-gloves, iris and other wild flowers.

Unique were the decorations for this novel event. And the improvised stands occupied by the novice fakers of those days were interesting indeed.

A large bowery dance hall was the center of attraction. This was simply a floor made of pine boards. For walls, trees had been set in double rows to add to the seclusion and to keep out the sunshine. For a roof they had the canopy of heaven. Within this enclosure they danced and enjoyed the merry occasion. After each set the young folks would skip to the far end of the bowery and drink with their gay partners red lemonade, a newly invented nectar. The shantymen assembled in groups, for the bowery had many attractions for them. Some were dressed in the latest style, tailor-made trousers, tight at the knee and flaring at the foot, square-cut sack coats, white shirts and paper collars. While the day was hot, the modest shantymen wore their coats, though merchants and others peeled the outer superfluous garments. Then some of the shantymen who had no new clothing joined in the amusement, never being refused a dance by the girls for lack of a new suit, and they danced with considerable grace and regularity. There was another class who drank, though often this class were the quiet gentlemen at camp, but made asses of themselves when booze was boss. They provoked the quarrels which sometimes ended in a free-for-all. As the day wore on the order was less and the riot and wrangling increased. It was

fist bunting and that only. Guns, knives and weapons were considered cowardly by the shantymen. There would be no grudges after the fracas, they washed up, bandaged the cuts, tied beefsteak on the battered eyes, shook hands and drank again.

Few were the bullies those days. They were not encouraged, muscle in bulldog fashion was not lionized, but detested and deserted, hence it decreased rather than multiplied.

The hamlet on this day swelled to ten times its normal proportions. Nearly everybody, or at least every family in all the country, was represented. Many never came to town but once in a year, and it was always on this glorious date.

There was little or no gambling, the roulette wheels, three-card monte men, faro fiends and shell game sharks were operating in other quarters. No class of men ever kept themselves so clean from evil devices as did the shantymen on the Manistee.

The day soon wore away, the dews of darkness enveloped the scenes, the dim store lamps flickered from the windows and shot a mellow ray across the sandy road, where the foot races and wrestling bouts had left deep and desperate signs. The bowery was deserted, the musicians had flown. The fumes of black powder hung low

near where they fired the sun-set salute from the blacksmith's anvil, which passed for the rural cannon. The lights were extinguished in the board saloons, the belated lumbermen and river-drivers slowly tramped down the plank sidewalks, reeling, singing, and swearing big oaths, they reached Clark's boarding house, turned in and were silent. The mossbacks drove back to the country. The white dresses and pink sashes were soiled a bit. The mossbacks' sons turn to the plow and the oat harvest, the maidens to the kitchen, pantry and chamber work. The shantymen cut the timber, the rivermen pursue their fascinating employment with peavey and jampike.

Four hours after dark Minnie and Nick reached home. Sweet indeed were the hours of slumber. Minnie was the first alert the next morning, and it took her the greater part of the day to relate the experiences in the village.

Belle, a sweet, blue-eyed, delicate girl, over whose fair neck fell her soft brown hair in gorgeous ringlets, talked much of that upper country and pined for heavenly associations. She usually absented herself from all worldly amusements, refrained from cards, disdained dancing and refused to read novels. And it was often said of her, "Belle belongs to the stars." While three years younger than Minnie, she was much in ad-

vance of her practical sister in moral ethics, heavenly visions and religious ideals.

It was the kind sympathetic sensible Minnie who had taken full charge of this hospitable mansion. She wisely and fairly divided the work among the three younger sisters. The chairs were washed white as snow, the puncheon was scrubbed daily with a rock-elm splinter broom, the clothing was rinsed in abundance of soft water and was white, clear and clean, dust never settled, the biscuits light and flakey, the peachblow potatoes baked in the oven, the puddings, salads, gravies, corn-cakes and everything they ate was well cooked, properly seasoned and tastefully served.

The matron of the manor was a woodland queen. Handsome as the portrait of Cleopatra; tall and erect as the Maid of Athens, her eyes were black as night and her curly black hair fell deeply over her fair shoulders. She was nearing fifty in years but was young as we count age. She had never known the sins of society, nor jealous rivalries. She was just a pioneer, brave and full of fortitude, and for thirty years had never called a doctor.

While she knew little of books, she knew poetry galore, and knowing nothing of masters, but possessing most of their deep and immortal truths. She could spell down every school master

who ever came to the country, and it was often asked, "How can she be educated, having never studied?"

The matron knew herbs perfectly and compounded all her drugs. She knew the intrinsic value of boneset, noble-liverwort, sage, gold-thread, tag-alder, smart-weed, hoarhound and skunks-cabbage. She knew all the natural diseases and applied the proper remedy. Diphtheria, scarlet fever, pneumonia, mumps, measles, tonsilitis, influenza, she mastered them all. Fear shrank from her and her undaunted courage baffled and beat every foe.

If the harp-chord broke while the master played, she would entertain the company that no lax hours intrude. She would relate the thrilling tale of Captain Lawrence at Put-in Bay; the story of the young commander in the frigate from Baltimore, or recite the wild tragedy of handsome Harry who was drowned by the ghost of his jilted sweetheart.

The master of Silvershade was without a peer in the region. Widely traveled, highly schooled and richly endowed. His cultured tenor voice was clear as a meadow lark's, his deep blue eyes beamed with a liquid glow as he pored over the harp, and when he sang minds traversed backward through the dim ages where song was given

birth. He was noted also for his great versatility. The adz, fro and shingle knife, the beetle and wedges, gluts and maul, square, compass and jack-planes, he had mastered. To bring in a buck or a bear, a fox or wolf, was a common feat for him. He could converse about the gold fields of California, draw a map of the Mormon trail and recite life on Fifth Avenue, New York. Could read Greek and Latin, speak French fluently, talk politics sensibly and dissect the literature of the ages, could sing, play and entertain in a wonderful fashion.

The Poet of the Pines enjoyed a wide acquaintance He inherited both from his father and mother, her poetic nature and his sweeping versatility were discovered in the talented son.

In all his manuscripts, now lost forever, he reached his grandest climax, not in the sunshine he so dearly loved, neither in the birds, nor the dashing woodland rivers, not in the sweet arbutus flowers of which he often sang, nor in the silken web of youth, much as he adorned it in verse, but the grand climax for him was the immortality of the soul. He delighted to transfer his earthly vision to that of the heavenly. And when the pioneer preachers, Eldred, Bayington, Green, Watkins, Hewett or McKinley came with their inspiring personalities, with their sacred messages, fer-

vent prayers and indomitable counsel, combined with learning and logic, which transcended all others, the Poet and his sister Belle sat eagerly at their weary feet and drank from the fountain of their souls.

Minnie, not wicked nor irreverent, but sensibly practical, we say, would often rebuke them for their sanguine aspect of everything. She called the Poet a drone and Belle a dreamer, and pitied a world made up of such sentimentalists, whose idols were only words, and whose visions vanished in vapors.

The camp where Nick was employed near the Ox-Bow-Bend had taken on a new cook. He was odd, snappy and deceitful. He came into camp one hot muggy night wearing an old overcoat, over a faded pair of brown bib overalls, had an old bent dicer on his pate; his red hair was badly disheveled, he was pickled in whiskey—you could smell booze when he sweat. On his bootleg was a red stamp which advertised a popular brand of rum. Through Nick's influence, which was more out of sympathy than acquaintance, he secured a position. Withstanding his imperfections, he was a splendid cook; it would not do to write about his mixtures, they have vanished from the earth, and be contented to read the description of the cook himself. He had many shadows over his

past career, but this was not ascertained until he had been hired and had tickled the lads' appetites till they were satisfied the new cook had no superiors.

It was rumored a few days after the cook came upon the job that he was a friend of the Black Wolf and that this undesirable individual was to seek employment with his chum, the cook. It was more than a rumor, it was made real in a fortnight, the Wolf had settled at Pierces and was given charge of the rollway and the crew that kept space.

Nick was a general favorite in this camp, drove the big grays, a large, lengthy span of percheron mares—the best wheel team on the river. He was hauling logs from the highlands to the rollway, about a mile; the hill was so steep that he had to tie clogs to the wheel axle to keep the horses from being run down by the big wheels. Nick did not relish the appearance of the Wolf, but he had no fear of him, kept up his sunny disposition and continued to engage the fellows during the evening hours with tales and wit, for which he was so noted.

"Tell us a story, Nick," asked Ote Hampdon, as he filled up his briar after supper.

"I'll give you a lecture on brains instead, if you don't mind," he replied.

"Swede Pete has written a book," he gave the flattering title. "A pound of brains," chipped in Price.

"How could he, he didn't have a pound?" added another.

"Why, you lunk-head, he could write about a pound of brains if he only had an ounce, the same as Weaver thought he was rich when he only had a hundred dollars, and same as Brown thought he had a car load of beer when he only had a bottle, and that was on the inside," continued Price.

"Auger for a story from Nick, you blab-mouths," cried Furmand, and Nick proceeded.

"In Indiana there lived a man who had the heaviest brain ever analyzed, it even overweighed that of Daniel O'Connell's and Napoleon's. O'Connell's weighed 57 ounces and Napoleon's weighed 56. This man in the Hoosier state was a common bricklayer, poorly educated and only had to his brain credit a prodigious memory. The scaffold on which he stood laying brick, six stories high, broke down, he fell and fractured his skull. They took him to the morgue and the doctors bought him for experiment. When they weighed his brain they found it weighed 64 ounces, a full half pound more than the man who at the age of twenty-six, by the use of his mathematical calcu-

lations conquered Europe. And think of it, this common bricklayer's brain weighed seven ounces more than the brain of the greatest Irishman, at

The Broken Wheels—Now Cast Aside

least since St. Patrick. Fellows, do not wiggle and grow restless when I talk of brains," he continued, as the restless men shifted round and some dropped out, "I can always tell those who haven't any brains when I relate this story—they wiggle and twist around and can't wait till a fellow's done."

"By hokey, that's a good un on ye all, ye lousy louts, if I's Nick ef I ever found an' old chaw of 'baccer that ye spit out, I'd kick it all to blazes to git even on ye," said Ole Blue, as he kicked off his stags and climbed the three tier of bunks to bed.

Nick made six trips daily to the rollway. The work of the rollway men was to pull away the slip skids until the team and wheels passed even up to the rollway, then to put them back under the load before the chain was unhitched and the tongue let back in the air, which allowed the logs to drop on the skids. The Wolf had ten pairs of big wheels to unload and some drew nearer than others, and on an average one hundred loads were to be handled daily. He had five men besides himself to unload, dump in and keep space.

Thus it was that Nick and the Wolf were again forced to work shoulder to shoulder, yet they never spoke, while they had to at times roll the same log, one keeping his hold, while the other took a lower grip with his peavey on the same log.

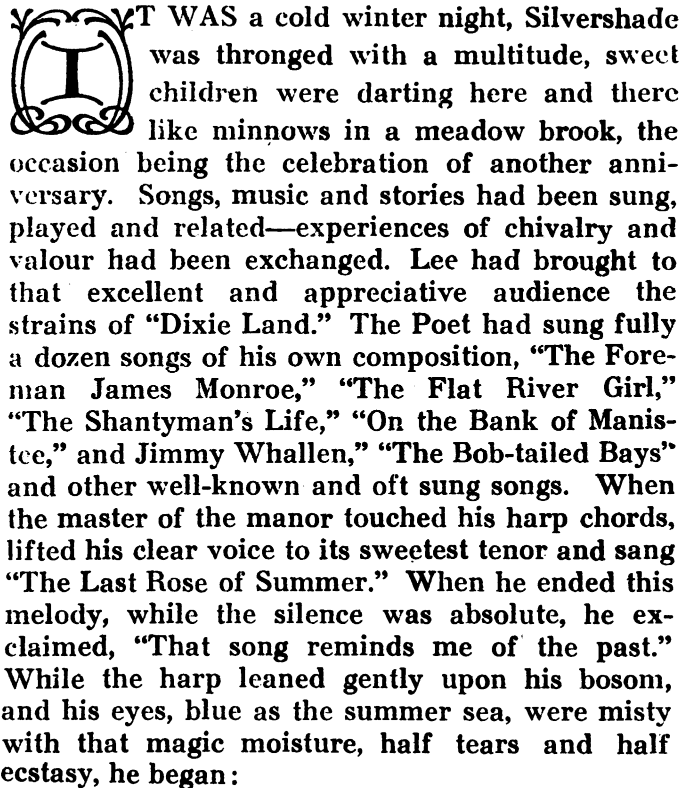
One Saturday afternoon, the men were all gone home, every teamster had turned in but Nick; he

had on his last load. It was a single log forty feet long and thirty-six inches in diameter at the scale end.

The Wolf put the slip skids under the front and back ends as the team stopped, Nick unhitched the chain from the whiffle-tree, unwound the tie chain from the logs which was wrapped around the tongue and the logs and allowed the big tongue to fly back like lightning as the whole weight of the log was upon it. It struck the end of the log within six inches of where the Wolf was in the act of stepping over to the rollway side. Nick had his back to the Wolf and did not know that he was there, but as the tongue snapped out of his hands he quickly turned and instantly gave the big wheel a sudden kick, which geared it slightly around and the tongue missed the man by the margin just depicted.

The Wolf was as cool as a cucumber, and when Nick wrapped up the chains and started the team and came back to assist in rolling the log to the main rollway, where it could be easily handled by one man, the Wolf flung in his hook as though nothing had happened, and in silence they did their work as usual.

CHAPTER X.



IT WAS a cold winter night, Silvershade was thronged with a multitude, sweet children were darting here and there like minnows in a meadow brook, the occasion being the celebration of another anniversary. Songs, music and stories had been sung, played and related—experiences of chivalry and valour had been exchanged. Lee had brought to that excellent and appreciative audience the strains of "Dixie Land." The Poet had sung fully a dozen songs of his own composition, "The Foreman James Monroe," "The Flat River Girl," "The Shantyman's Life," "On the Bank of Manistee," and Jimmy Whallen," "The Bob-tailed Bays" and other well-known and oft sung songs. When the master of the manor touched his harp chords, lifted his clear voice to its sweetest tenor and sang "The Last Rose of Summer." When he ended this melody, while the silence was absolute, he exclaimed, "That song reminds me of the past." While the harp leaned gently upon his bosom, and his eyes, blue as the summer sea, were misty with that magic moisture, half tears and half ecstasy, he began:

"On the banks of the Hudson in old Hoboken, opposite New York, early in the present century,

stood a grand old mansion, there were seventeen occupants—father, mother and fifteen children. The father had mastered three popular arts and was known as the 'actor, author and artist.' He had also traveled extensively abroad and knew by a personal contact the wilderness. In 1804 he had been chosen the Indian interpreter and national artist in the historical 'Birch bark canoe expedition.' In his various experiences in the wilderness and along the frontiers he had painted the portraits and sketched the memoirs of Red Jacket, the great orator; Black Hawk, the wicked warrior; Osceola, the chief of the famous Ottawas, and fifty more of the best-known Indians in North America. He left his wife and children under well ordered provisions; crossed the Atlantic to beg permission from the Virgin Queen of Great Britain to publish and offer for sale in the English Islands, his works, which he entitled 'The American Aboriginal Portfolios.' This permission would not only have made him wealthy, but would have established his undying fame as an author and artist. He had at a great expense printed a single copy on Rain-Row Vellum and had bound it with golden lids, and initialed it as a souvenir for the permission which he expected from the Queen. But she withheld her signature, owing to the influence brought to bear by Lord Melbourne, who was a rival of the young American artist, and had also sketched many of the Indians of the continent, and wished to have exclusive rights throughout the English possessions.

A lawsuit resulted and continued for years. While this suit was pending, the artist had to remain in London. The wife grew tired and impatient without her husband's company and assistance, and her complaints were negotiated to her brothers, who lived in the Middle West. They felt too that their proud and beautiful sister had been long neglected; they came to Hoboken and took their sister almost by force, and all her children with many old heirlooms, back to their home. It was ten months after this when the artist lost in his suit, shorn of his ambitions, and beaten in a British Court, he sailed back to his wife and family, more dear to him than all earthly honors. Imagine his disappointment when he found dust, silence and cobwebs, in that once immaculate mansion, instead of welcome, love and laughter. The artist was a typical New Yorker of a century ago, and when he learned the actions of his brothers-in-law at once demanded not only the return of his wife and family, but an apology and indemnity besides.

"But after a tedious and unsatisfactory correspondence, the unfortunate, embarrassed, if not penitent wife, died with a broken heart. Then the artist broke under this, his greatest grief; she had fed his pride and fused his ambition, facing financial disaster, feeling that for years he had been a victim of ill fortune, he gave up and settled down to the monotony of a portrait painter.

"The youngest son, at his mother's death, was six years old. His aunt, at this tender age, gave

him his worldly possessions, tied in a red kerchief, and ordered him to shift for himself. With various experiences, many hardships and rebukes, years drag by. At the age of twelve this unfortunate reaches the city of Detroit, determined to go to New York in search for his father.

"There was, however, one difficulty which delayed his journey; he lacked three dollars of having enough money. While seeking means to earn the required sum, he crossed Cadillac Square, then a grove of trees; to his surprise and delight, before him, in the path so well beaten and often used, lay a purse; he picked it up, hastened to a covert, opened the purse and found exactly three dollars in coin. In the purse was a note which was the exact duplicate of the handwriting of the boy's dead mother, and all the eloquence on earth can not alter his views, which were that his angel mother dropped that purse for him, and enclosed the note which read—

> "There's a sweet little cherub on land and
> on sea
> That watches o'er the life of poor Jack."

"The daily papers did not cover the details of life in New York as at present, consequently there was no means by which the lad could ascertain the whereabout of his father. He was confused by the crowds, muddled by the glaring lamps, frightened by the officers and naturally became a waif. He slept at the old Battery, ate what he could hustle, sold papers and almanacs, and got on in a sad fashion.

"After a long stay in the metropolis, as he strolled up Broadway he was attracted by a show window decorated with beautiful paintings. As he gazed upon them with artistic instinct and appreciation, he was startled when he saw his father's name in the lower right hand corner of them all. He hastened to the merchant and asked him where the artist could be found. He was informed that at eight o'clock the following morning the artist would come to this store to make a collection. The youth, beaming with high hopes, returned to the Battery, informed the Night Guard, who had given him shelter, and spent the remainder of the day telling of his discovery to the waifs he had met. The next morning he arose at four o'clock, and without the least thought of food, washed his face a bit cleaner than usual, brushed his hat and coat, and with his boyish fingers tried to press out the numerous wrinkles. After making his toilet the best he knew, he took his stand on the store steps fully two hours before the appointed time. How slowly the hours dragged by, nervous and impatiently he waited; he could not remember his father, he only knew him by hear-say—it had been seven years since he had met a single relative, and how lonely and dejected he felt. Five minuts of eight he looked across the street and saw a tall, stately gentleman, wearing a silk plug hat and carrying a gold headed cane, turn on the cross walk and made straight for the store. The gentleman passed by, all but brushing his

clothing; the youth stepped toward him, but the gentleman thinking he wanted him to buy a paper, shrugged his shoulders, shook his head and started up the steps; the youth, overcome by the presence of the finely attired and dignified gentleman and with the overwhelming joy that this was his father, began to cry; this halted the proud New Yorker, he turned and asked:

"What can I do for you this morning, my boy?" his tones were sweet and musical, his attitude was graceful and kind.

"Did you paint them pictures?" asked the waif, pointing to the show window.

"I did, my boy, what of it?" came the reply.

"Then you're my—my—father," said the waif, breaking into a sob.

"The man turned scarlet, wildly and eagerly asked: "Your father, my God, who are you?"

"The waif, trembling from head to foot now with the most intense excitement, answered, "I'm your little Wallie."

"The big gentleman stopped down, picked up the ragged waif, pressed him to his bosom, while the tears ran down his face and dropped upon his breadcloth coat, against which the face of the ragged waif was pressed in a fatherly embrace. In the rear office of that store this father and son together enjoyed a blessed reunion. In course of time, through the persistence of the father, this son was graduated from College, a School of Dramatic Art, and a Conservatory of Music; from each place in highest honors. Going

from these successive triumphs to shine as a star in the first magnitude on the American Stage. The first year of absence, his father, alone and unattended, paid the debt of nature. His brothers came from Philadelphia and laid him to rest under the shades of beautiful riverside; his losses were over, his crosses had been bravely borne—grief had found her own.

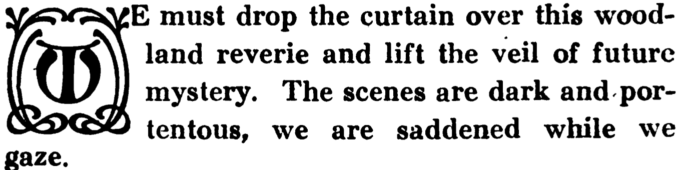
"After many flattering engagements with the leading Dramatic companies, the call of the west captured the actor, and he exchanged forever the mimic stage for the arena of reality.

"The actor's ancestors had long been associated with the frontiers. Their records run backward to the medieval ages. They came from the Frankish Empire early in the Ninth Century, were vassal and shepherd Kings in Wales until 1636, when they departed from Dartmouth, in their own vessel for America. They have participated in every American war; have lifted their voices in powerful eloquence to inspire patriotism, set a signature to the Declaration of Independence, and sealed that immortal document with their own blood. They have laid out National boundaries, and blazed trails for the hardy pioneers. One of them with less than fifty followers, ascended the Big Muddy and the distant Yellowstone; explored the Black, Barepaw, Bitter-Root and Cascade Mountains; entered the Jaw-Bone Canyon and discovered the Lolo Pass. With their Sioux, Cheyenne, Snake and Umpqua guides they descended the mighty

Columbia, the father of western waters, and were halted by the great and eternal sea. The last survivor of this famous family has crossed the American Desert and braved the Apache Pass; challenged by savage men, wild beasts, hot sands, dagger cactus and poison reptiles, as many times as there are fingers on his hands. Has hunted with Carson, and trapped with Thomas Eddy; has studied with Gerard, and acted with Edwin Forrest; but now the woods have beguiled the rover and the proofs of this romantic tale look down upon you from the fair faces upon these walls; they charm you through the accomplishments of your neighbor and shall ever lull you with music sublime from the soul of this Victoria Harp."

The Master had unfolded his own history. The Company, speechless and amazed, rode to their respective dwellings; but never forgot the tale told that winter night.

CHAPTER XI.



WE must drop the curtain over this woodland reverie and lift the veil of future mystery. The scenes are dark and portentous, we are saddened while we gaze.

The Black Wolf was desperately in love with Sister Amelia, and purposed in his heart to have her for his own, no matter what it might cost himself or anybody else. He had repeatedly gone to the hospital to accomplish his design. He had unfolded to Amelia Nick's flirtations with Minnie and charged him with all the drunkeness his brother Max had committed. The Nun discouraged him from making these remarks and the Wolf discovered that she held Nick in fondest memory; he then determined anew to silence Nick and win the Nun. The cook gave him all the information necessary, as he kept strict track and close account of all that Nick said and did.

All mails were forbidden at the hospital to the Nuns, and consequently none of Nick's notes ever reached the mark. They were carefully sealed forever and unopened.

As the years slipped by Nick would sometimes feel prompted to go and beg Amelia to forswear her former vow and be his bride. But again would

his manhood forbid, and still he remained silent. Belle was his secret counsel and they both agreed that his sacrifice was not greater than her service, so argument and impulse would not permit his declaration of love unfeigned.

In the palmy days of Silvershade there came upon the scene suddenly and unexpectedly, as a bolt of lightning from a cloudless sky, a beautiful and attractive woman. She came from the city, was gowned elegantly, was shy and winsome, a blonde of super-beauty. At once she impressed her personality upon the community life. She was known as Madame Corbett. There was no small comment regarding this charming personage. They wondered why she came, who was responsible and how long she would remain. She introduced many new fads into the rural life. She set a craze for wealth, finery and honors. She was jealous, scoffed Christianity, praised pride, was ultra-modern, advocated suffrage and encouraged Life Insurance.

Like in kind is never single very long and before autumn there came to these hitherto peaceful haunts, a man who in outward show and inward principle was Corbett's second.

His name was Archie Cain, he was tall and handsome, well reared and bore a striking personality. His dress and manner were distinguished; he had a high intelligent forehead and large expressive brown eyes. He was kind to every one, was manly by nature and loved his associates.

Madame Corbett seemed to influence Cain in

every action. At once they became friends. They made their home at a backwoods rendezvous that had little or no reputation and was named Lost Cabin. When this isolated resort was dedicated by the proprietor Rex Mills, he said, "I am going to make it just as near h--l as I know how," and, judging from results, he must have had a perfect knowledge of that infernal region.

Lost Cabin was about a dozen miles from Silvershade. The first half was an old by-way and the last half was circuitous paths, no two running in the same direction nor converging at any single point. The west, south and north sides of Lost Cabin were absolutely unapproachable. These sides were protected by a series of precipitous and broken ravines, matted with wild Haw, and prickly ash, which could not be penetrated by animal kind other than wild beasts, capable of slipping through the thorny perforations of this impregnable and impassable hedge. This great barrier of nature stretched out for miles on the three sides mentioned above, and in order to find the approach to the rendezvous it was necessary to pass the place four or five miles, when as one looked backward, it stood plainly in view and seemed easy to reach, but there were a number of mysterious ravines which wound around in a very deceiving manner, these ravines were covered with a thick wood; the earth was a peculiar rock covered a foot thick with moss and as soon as one passed by their tracks were not discernable, for as soon as the foot was lifted the moss came back to its former position,

like walking across a mattress filled with feathers. Very often would hunters, surveyors, timber cuisers and others attempt to find ingress, only to be deceived. They would gain a position which appeared to be the true location from the pre-view they had taken as they saw it from a distance, but alas no sign of the mysterious cabin was in sight.

So successful was the cunning Mills in choosing the location for Lost Cabin that for many years over half of the population that settled along the Manistee and her tributaries, doubted if a real Lost Cabin ever existed; but it did as we shall see presently.

To add horror to mystery was the next move of this scurvy illegal landlord. He possessed two great dogs of prodigious size; these beasts were half Mastiff and half Siberian Stag Hound. Mills, a canine prodigy, tied the mother hound alone in the woods where he discovered the den of a huge blue-wolf, and following this crafty experience a pair of peculiar pups grew up to be the most dangerous and ravenous of the entire dog family. Their first act was to kill their mother, this taste of blood was an incentive and forever afterward these brute beasts thirsted for the ruddy drops of life.

Not a single person ever crossed the threshold of Lost Cabin except those who were met at the beginning of the east front ravines and were guided and protected until the huge beech bar dropped behind them and the guide, shutting out the beasts that snarled, howled and raved to tear

the flesh of every intruder. The story runs that but one woman ever entered this wretched joint, and that was the fascinating Madame Corbett.

There was but one approach to this base dive, even after one was fortunate enough to gain the proper location, and that was upon a round log which had fallen over a deep ravine. This log was eighty feet in length and the ravine was over two hundred feet deep and was strewn with boulders and dead timber stretching along like skeletons of great fish and these hideous objects below made the dangerous walk the more difficult.

The landlord, Rex Mills, was a degenerate, a typical sex-pervert, combined with dangerous elements in his half animal and half human composition. He was small and slim, had a long beard which masked his peeked chin; his disheveled hair hung in ropy locks, he had small snaky optics which had won for him the name of Hawk-Eye.

The mess pot was hanging on the crane at Lost Cabin, the mush was boiling in bulls-eye blubbers, five plates were laid at the mystic board, the maple syrup had been set on in generous quantities. Three raps jarred the huge door, evidently made with a heavy tool or timber, the landlord understood these signs and threw back the bar, lifted the home-made latch and opened the portal, the guide, a lank, agile man, with his face covered with a mask, made from a red pocket handkerchief, ushered in the cook, Wolf, Cain and Madame Corbett.

The supper was served and garnished with

green corn and potatoes roasted in the fire. After this backwoods banquet the jug was passed, all drank heavily. Time and again the jug went round until the revelry became loud and boisterous, the leud program was drawing to a close, it was nearing midnight, and every intruder that ever found ingress to Lost Cabin must also seek egress before the first herald of dawn.

"What do you think of the situation?" asked Hawk-eye, as the revelers quieted down for a moment.

"Fine," said Cain, "I have discovered that they are a lot of rusty rubes and wouldn't tumble if a brick block fell on them."

"I'm not so sure," said the Wolf, "I have discovered that there is some warm bright blood in this neck of the woods. That young lad known as Black Beaver, is as keen as a briar, fearless as a lion, can hear the grass grow and can smell the shadow of a louse."

"Oh, yes! But he's a native; he got his name from old Shoffnegon, the Chippewa chief, because he caught the only black beaver ever known in these parts, and we need have no fear of his suspicions," added Corbett.

"Sarten, easy slipin', the world by the handle and a down-hill pull," chipped in the cook.

"Yes, of course," added Corbett, "no piking, we are mammoth plungers, there are three fools born every minute and these parts have their share."

"How about Nick; who'll handle him? He

stands for all the questions in the farm and woods belt. His words are law, his judgment is never doubted and he's next," continued the Black Wolf.

There was some misgiving as to the pre-arranged scheme going through, when Madame Corbett mounted a chair, lifting her fair arm high over her head, began:

"God sent me to be a scourge, to purge society, to worship wealth, to force ambition, ignorant mossbacks must pay for their indolence, the game is at hand, let's spring the trap and make the catch. I have the hand of a woman, but the heart of a man. Who dares cast the die and do as we have proposed?"

Every man arose and pledged his support.

"I will go the limit with you," added the Wolf, "if you will grant my only request."

"What is your request? Name it quickly," said Corbett.

"To win the girl that wears the white veil."

"It shall be done, so help me God," said Cain and Corbett both in the same breath.

"And what is your quest?" Cain said as he addressed the cook.

"My quest is that of my friend the Wolf," he answered.

Madame Corbett then turned to Cain and said: "You mind your biz and I will manage the pudding."

"Where do I shine?" asked Hawk-eye.

"You," said Corbett, "will furnish the food

and the drinks, cover the tracks, cut the pigeon wing, come in on the alibi and be accommodating."

"And you, Wolf and Cook, mind your ps and qs, be mum as toads, tight as ticks, ignorant as asses, think lots, say little—do you lumber lice understand?"

The two accomplices nodded their consent in drunken stupor and grinned in miscomprehension of her meaning.

Again the jug was passed. Madam Corbett poured only a few drops into the thick cup of giant-ware, gazed wildly at it, dizzy and enraged, putting the cup to her lips once red, now pale with rage and resolutions, she touched the liquor with her fevered tongue and drew back as if stung by a viper. The cook, the Wolf and Archie Cain filled their cups flowing full, then drank and filled them and drank again of that red ruin. They threw back the beechen bar and silently and stealthily passed out into the dark still solitude.

The Black Wolf had lost in the game of life. He ruined his professional career by drink, blocked his advance by subterfuge, and added to his downfall by the choice of bad companions. He resolved in this midnight conspiracy to cast the last red die of life, to win in love's hot battle. With him it was now or never. On previous meetings he had pressed the question to Amelia, had demanded a hasty reply, but adroitly, if unwisely, she evaded the question,

not positive in her denials, which left a fragment of hope to illuminate his dark heart. He knew full well the stimulant that delayed his all-important answer was Nick. If he was out of the way, all would be well. He also knew how Cain and Corbett hungered for gold and their lure for wealth, and his love for Amelia enlisted him as their servant.

Madam Corbett and Archie Cain cared nothing at all for the love affair of Nick and the Black Wolf; but at all events they must hold the Wolf for a tool, so they coddled him for silence and service.

Nick's troubles began to wear upon his physique, and to become visible in the face once free from care and sorrow. Love's tedious delay and Max with his drink and diabolical attitude became painful. He had won many warm hearts, enjoyed the society of the settlement, but fortune now began to frown upon her favorite. His parents had died and Max was lost in dissipation. Are we experienced in the rough rock of manhood? Do wo knew the finished product of manual labor? Do we know that it breaks hearts as well as backs? All who perform the functions of those laborious tasks were not ordered by nature. Many, because of ill-born circumstances, much to their regret were driven to these menial tasks to reap the last full measure of dissipation. Our American prosperity has produced a quarter of a million of men whom we call tramps. The pine harvest has also

left its fatal brand upon noble brows moulded for the kiss of God. Many a noble fellow has spit his prayers in the cog-wheels of graft forged by human selfishness instead of whispering them to Heaven. They invested muscle and drew at last from that bogus bank, weariness of the flesh, hopes deferred and talents blighted forever. One dollar a day, the average pay received, would foot up to $9,550.00, allowing a man could work thirty years without an accident. Is that all life is worth on earth? Thus they reasoned, and can we blame them? God forbid; and who is to be blamed? Nobody that we know of, neither individual nor collective; it is one of those broken links in the chain of our civilization, which, if supplied, would usher in the golden age of mortal perfection.

One by one came Nick's disappointments, the deed to his pinery was defective, by sharks it was contested, and after a long trial, which greatly vexed all concerned, the suit was lost and Nick was as poor again as when he landed at Ellis Island a score of years before.

While Cain and Corbett were visiting at Idlehour, Cain and Mazie were suddenly taken ill. They were taken with a pain in the head, began vomiting violently and went into spasms, and before aid could be had they both passed away. The father and mother of Mazie were frantic, and Madame Corbett could not control her grief, she walked the floor incessantly, raved and wept like a maniac; and during an outburst of grief

she was heard to exclaim, "Oh, my beloved husband!"

This shocking gush of grief began to unveil the mystery. For many months the settlers had wondered at their intimacy, and not a few had blamed them for their indiscreet conduct, but now every one pitied the bereaved woman and did their utmost to assuage her tears.

Cain carried a liberal life insurance of $10,000.00 running to his wife, whom the community knew as Madam Corbett, but named as beneficiary in the policy, Lucile B. Knight.

After Corbett had drawn the amount in full of Cain's policy, she retired from the scenes of rural tragedy and returned to the city from where she came at first to the Manistee.

The funeral of Miss Mazie was sad indeed. Eldred, the Methodist minister, came eighty miles to preside at her interment. It was the lot of the poet to write the mournful incident to her lover in Nebraska. And this day her poor old Jim lives the life of a hermit amid the Big Horn Mountains by the flow of the tiny Rosebud, isolated from the world in memory of her.

These sorrows deferred Nick's intended visit to the lumber metropolis to visit the hospital. It was a spring morning and ten years had elapsed since he left the hospital. Now he stands again, after the lapse of years, rings the Spanish bell, and waits, expecting to see the fair face of Amelia. The door opened softly and the Mother Superior, sweet and graceful as ever, greeted

the old-time patient. When an opportune time presented itself, Nick inquired about Amelia, and the Mother said in modulated tones:

"She has donned the black veil and taken a ward in the West."

Nick gasped, looked strangely from place to place, things grew dark and afar off and finally he forgot everything. When he became conscious, the sweet Mother sat by his side, fanning his forehead.

He murmured, "Mother, I loved Amelia."

"Yes," she whispered.

"Did she ever know it, Mother?" he asked.

She nodded in assent.

"Mother," he continued, "I love the Church. The Master gave his rich young life for it, and I have given my love. Because he gave his life, I knelt at her chancel in Dublin by my mother's side and pledged my faith. I have kept that faith."

The Mother touched her milk white fingers to her lips and made upon his bosom and brow the sign of the cross. Nick arose from the new baptism and started for the door. He staggered a bit with weakness; she pressed his calloused hand and kissed his sunburnt cheek, brown as oak leaves in October. Oh! could Amelia console him! but she never did in life's high noon. He sighed, "Farewell, Mother," crossed himself, bowed to the crucifix, and departed.

CHAPTER XII.

"HELLO, Nick! Back again, are you? Welcome to the woods," were the wholesome words which greeted the shantyman who had long been absent from the pinery.

"How are you all, and how's everything?" asked Nick.

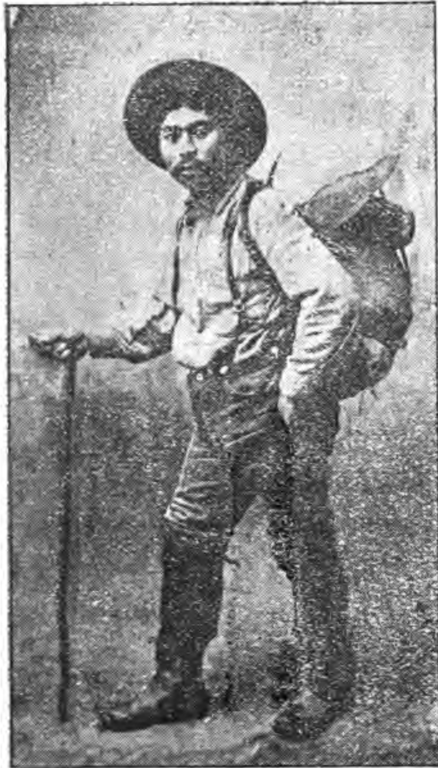
"Lots doing since you left, the Wolf and the cook got the bounce for getting too thick with Mills and have gone over to Peter's camp to work. The Osceola gang of counterfeiters and trainrobbers have been seen in these parts, and it is reported that Hillbourn and Smalleys have made a visit to Lost Cabin. Madam Corbett is back again, staying over at Silvershade, dressed like a peacock; and the young feller you used to hunt with, Black Beaver, has skipped the country with Shoffnegon. It was reported that he went to Trout Lake with the old chief and was transferred to Long Knife and this bad Indian has taken him to Fort Collins, Colorado."

"Well thar, old pard," came the salutation from Havelin, "we're goin to have a little program tonight. We'll make it a bit extra in honor of your return."

"Yes," added Weaver, "we don't have to douse

the glim tonight till ten o'clock, and the curtain for the performance rises at eight."

Order was maintained at the appointed hour, the benches hustled into rows while fifteen or twenty wrestled like unmanageable school boys, for what they called the baldheaded row. And



The Cook

the remainder of the men gathered in groups, smoking cob and clay pipes, chewing Peerless and Plug Nymrod.

The first on the program was a tall knocked-kneed, raw-boned, lantern-jawed specimen of the backwoods; when his name was read for a speech, he very bashfully gathered up his long legs, pulled in his prodigious feet from the different corners of the room whither they had strayed, unfolded his arms like a jack-knife, arose to his full height, his cap all but touched the collar beams which were seven feet above the floor.

"I don't speel much," he began. "I haven't the gift of gab, but I hev traveled lots and niver had sech experiences es I hev here. I came from Pennsylvania afoot and niver told the truth onct on the way. I used to be a tanbark spudder thar, and I rode the river too; I settled over here near an Irishman named Shine, 'tween us a login road runs, and it's saved our lives many times; he daren't cross it nur I neither."

"I had a flock of cheekens. Onct after we got to bed I heard a hen squak; I told Jeannette to git up and light the lantern, for there wuz some animal in the hen roost under the porch. She hurried and so did I, we bumped together when we met comin from different directions around the house to the porch; I slipped the board we used for a door aside, and crawled under, after me came Jeannette. She was a small bony woman, her feet is the biggest part of her; she

held the lantern and with the brum for a war club I was prepared. Es I looked around I saw a big mink that hed gist let go a hen, and saw ten or twelve dead uns layin on the groun. The first time I struck I kiled a hen, the next time I killed a ruster, the third time I hit Jeannette, and the next time I broke the lantern—then I got mad and rained blows about fifty a second, I knocked down the prop that held the door up and the dom mink jumped out and escaped; I had killed a hen, my ruster, broke the lantern, wounded Jeannette and spiled the brum.

"I'm the gink you-ve hearin of who packed the two bushels of seed taters twelve hours 'out settin em down; I held em on me back while I swilled down twelve quarts of silver foam at Smith's, yes you'll hear all manner of things 'bout me.

"I hed a sack of flour, 'twas a hundred pounder; I started for hum, 'twas four miles; I was a leetle on the 'posite side of sobri'ty. I stepped on a mushroom and slipped down and bumped my top-end against a pine stump like a Bull tractor in a headon collision. It broke the flour sack, bein only paper; when I rounded Baker's hill, the breeze blew perty stiff and the flour blew all over me; then it began to rain and I wuz lookin like a big wrinkled loaf of salt-risen bread when I got hum.

"My neeber is a Catlic, you know their toe-lickers; he sez tha Priests better in us fellers, cause they drink alone and say their prayers

afterward but I wouldn't give him much fur his god, fur he don't protect im. He's 'fraid t' cross the road from us, two trees rub together and make a squeakin noise—I told im that was a cat-a-mount, and now he niver goes out after dark. He carries a pistol loaded to the muzzle and takes his lantern before dark and does his chores early and comes in and nails up the door fur the night.

"A man I knowed onct hed a cancer on his lip and he persisted in runnin a meat market. Now seech a feller orter to know better. I patronized im after I got mi back pension, I bought a chunk of pork, Jeannette put on to fry. The dog was sleepin in the kitchen, the door was opened for suthin while the pork fried, and he slid out like a skyrocket, all I could see wuz sand and gravel stones flyin after im as he shot southward; I soon discovered what ailed im, the pork was so strong and smelled so male-like thet he left the state. I seized the half-fried meat, took it with me which wuz worse en smallpox; I boarded the 'spress train and headed im off next day in Indiana. He turned his beat when he got another whiff of that bore-belly; when I got hum he was there but his feet were terrible sore from the run. I told the incident and the market had to close fur lack of biz.

"I'm proud cause I cum from Pennsylvania."

With these rude, but original, tales he sat down while the men cheered like rooters at a ball game.

The next was a mock trial. An ax had been left lying across a log and the sawyers had fallen a tree which happened to hit the helve, which sent the ax flying like a projectile shot from a catapulp. The swamper, Harvey Rial, had carelessly left the tool in this manner and when it lit it came nearly hitting Ferguson, the teamster; so they tried Rial in public and sentenced him to six months in Canada with a dull ax, or three weeks in a soup house with a muzzle on.

O'Connor was to bat and Blissby on deck—O'Connor was to relate what he knew to be true.

"Me niber," he began, "was buildin a stye for his pig, when one of the little girls came running to him and said, 'Pau, Johnie's dying,' my Guid, I dropt me log and killed me pig, it was rubin on me shin, 'twas bothered with skurby; I run to the house and there stood the ole lady and thare sat Johnie, both lukin in the coot Johnie had made in his foot with the ax. Ther're both timid and azy to scare, when they saw me they both droped over backward stiff as two sticks. I toted em to the huse, put em abed, and doused a half bushel of ice water on em to bring em too.

"Nate, me niber, was crossin over Dick's land when Dick up and denied him. There was a brush fence 'tween em. After hearin a fuse fur a long toime I hiked up nearder and be golly thar they stood, one on the off side and tother on the nigh side of the brush fence; one had a knife and tother had a ax, and the one with the

ax said, "Come aver here and I'll chop off yer leg and leave ye hoppin on one fork," and tother who had the knife said, "Will ye, ye hellyun? Come over here and I'll cut tin tom-cats out of ye, ye bum sozzler."

"Blissby up," called the platform superintendent.

"I hav the biggest 'orse in Traverse County, when I got er home and led er in the barn I could hardly git out the barn was so full; when I came frum Montana I stopped for a spree in Kalamazoo, I hed so much money that the police wouldn't 'rest me; I showed them over eighty dollars.

"Blissby," interrupted Dowen, "tell us about the pigs, we don't want that rabbit hash you're warming over."

"Perzactly, yer honor," said Blissby. "Speaking of pigs," as he said this he dumped out his quid and rolled in another one big enough to dam a mill race and repeated—

"Yas, speakin of pigs, when I cum home from Jam One I had money, and it waren't white hourses nither. Dad said Drummonds had two pigs fur sale and so I shouldered a coffee sack and set out fur his place five miles west; when I got there I seen the pigs running roun on the pole fence like red squirrels. The school-mam, Mrs. Drummonds and me run em down; I paid four dollars for two, dropped em in the bag and went home. My four sisters and five brothers organized to fatten these slim jack-knives. They

picked white oak acorns for miles around the house, the white oak acorns are sweeter than red oak, then they boiled em up, shelled off the case and fed the pigs for a week, but no improvement; then they husked corn on shares for Learn and Scott, biled the corn in a kittle and fed em with a spoon—no improvement; next they fed em on oat meal, corn meal and a dozen other kinds of cereals and stylish diets, without success, for they squealed so nobody livin in the section could sleep. Next dad suggested they hed scurfy, we heated water and washed em clean and nice in the tub, but the water was too hot and it took the hair off in places, so they shivered on cold November mornings, yet they did not seem to improve; so dad studied a treatise on Swine-ology, and decided that they had black teeth, so we took em down and sure enough their teeth were black as the ace of spades. Dad put a clevis in their mouths and knocked all of their teeth down their throat with a cold chisel. Then they couldn't eat at all, they dragged around pulling themselves with their front feet and got poorer than ever. Leonard Baker said to cut off their tails would cure them, for he thought they had kidney trouble; then I hopped into the pen and cut off both tails with my knife. They bled bad and got weak frum it and took to the straw entirely. Mother took em in hand then, but in spite of all her care one died Christmas and tother kicked the bucket New Years."

"The next on the program," yelled the superintendent, "will be a dance, everybody get your partners."

The mouth organ played by Buckle, the violin by Rupert and the accordeon managed by Swede Pete, struck up and one of the greatest Stag Dances that ever took place was on.

"I'll be a girl," modestly piped in Huff, and then spreading out his pantaloons, trying to imitate a mother-hubbard, stood waiting for a fellow.

Many of the lads were in the habit of dancing on the girl's side and there were few errors in the whole mass of hopping lumberjacks.

When Nick paid his first visit to Silvershade after he ruturned, they all readily saw that he was a different man. When Minnie asked him about it he sat down and calmly related the whole incident, and then asked the sweet, unbiased counsellor:

"Tho' Providence has ruled unmercifully, should I behave unwisely?"

Both Belle and Minnie advised him safely at this critical period, appealing to his faith in God. Nick was somewhat altered in his attitude.

Madam Corbett, tamed and subdued, came to the scenes of her former life.

The cook and the Black Wolf were still inseperable and were now employed at Peter's camp. These spacious shanties stood at the foot of a big bluff which was semicircular and known as Webb Hill. It had been the custom for many

years for the family at Silvershade to visit the camps, and sometimes remaining over night and on other occasions riding home after nightfall.

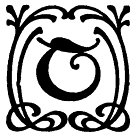
It was Good Friday, the cook had on this occasion put forth his extra efforts to suit the taste of the jolly-hearted crowd that had ridden over from Silvershade; with Nick and Madam Corbett, they pulled up the huge pine bench and ate with the crew which for them was always a delight. Every one ate heartily of the corn-beef and cabbage, except Nick and Madam Corbett, upon whom the cook piled his humor because they let religion interfere with their appetite. The cook urged them to partake of the extra dish, but Nick smiled and refused, while Madam Corbett said Dutch dishes did not appeal to the Irish.

The ride homeward had scarcely begun when Minnie was taken ill, and one after another became dizzy and began to vomit in a violent, convulsive manner. The parents ate very little of the corned beef and cabbage, Nick and Corbett ate none at all, and the fact that these four were not affected proved that the effect was from eating this well arranged dish. When they arrived at home the children were all desperately ill. Every native remedy was given but without avail, and before medical aid could be summoned to counteract the illness three had succumbed. Minnie was the first to go, and was quickly followed by two of the younger brothers.

Elder Kellogg was summoned, and sad indeed

was the early spring day that they laid them down to that long, silent sleep. The death toll of that supper was eleven souls, eight shantymen and the settler's three children. The community arose as one man and came to their consolation. Strong men in mackinaws came in squads. What a funeral it was. No idle spectators. The sweet voiced German, John Buckle, led the singing, they sang "Oh, Say Will You Go to That Beautiful Land, the Far Away Home of the Soul?"; and for Minnie, the Reverend Champion chose the apt words for a subject "Her Sun Went Down While It Was Yet Day."; and for the brothers he chose the appropriate text, "They Were Lovely and Pleasant In Their Lives and In Their Death Were Not Divided." It was not till after this woodland palace was striken with its triple grief that the inhabitants began to enjoy the sincere love and friendship of their neighbors.

CHAPTER XIII.

HE years that no man can chain, no combination of circumstances impede, came and went like the dreams of a child. The angels had sown flakes of silver over the fair temples of the Master and Matron of Silvershade and the children had grown to manhood and womanhood. As the schools and churches sprung up just as rapidly were the camps closed down and the busy mills dismantled forever. The Circular Saws no longer ripped the slabs from the Norway timber, but instead the plowshare cut the roots and the dynamite lifted the stumps where the pine once grew, that a different crop might be harvested where the shantymen flourished and faded from the country.

It was late in October, the first autumnal snow had sifted through the cedar boughs and all nature, tho' unwillingly, had assumed the robe of winter.

The settlers had filled the root-house with a store of vegetables; the wood shed was stacked full of block maple, blue beech and capped off with pitch pine kindlings. A great bunch of hemlock knots had been gathered and laid for long fires, and as they were placed in the wood pile

they looked like so many buffalo horns. These with the fat-pine were never excelled for the cook stove. The barns were filled with timothy and clover hay, cut, dried and hauled with a drop of rain on it, no dust, no smut, was bright and nutritious. The corn stocks stood in a row of shocks protecting the cattle shed on the northeast.

A host of merrymakers, farmers, river-drivers, shantymen and others draw their chairs closer to the round oak stove as the Mistress of the Manor pours out the following story—

"You have long wondered why I have chosen the wilderness as my home and have rambled by the woodland rivers, listened to the songs of the birds, the claps of thunder, the roar of the blizzard and the purl of the rushing torrents. Why I delight in the flowers of springtime, the silver birch and pretty pebbles in the bed of the brook, and why I gather noble liverwort, mix medicines by boiling up various herbs; and know how to make ink from soft maple bark; always treat Shonagon kindly, and give butter, milk and maple sugar to the bands of red men as they pass; and get in return the saddles of the fattest deer, the steak of the best bear, the choice fish and rarest ducks and pheasants. Why I always wreath my cakes with myrtle vines, and never call a doctor; make tea of wintergreen and wild hemp, and do all the other acts unnatural for white women.

"On the North Bank of the Niagara River there lived a Seneca Chieftain. He had one son, White

Eagle, a noble Indian. He came to Hamilton to collect bounty and sell his numerous pelts. He saw a girl fourteen years of age, she was fully developed. He loved her and she loved him in return; he asked for her and honorably married her. She became my mother—and when I was just a few months younger than my mother when White Eagle first saw her, an actor in the wilds on his vacation passed our cot, lost in the breast of nature; the actor looked back at me, and I saw that look, we understood; love blazed in the forests; he stayed his journey; that week we were wed and he took me to the city. I was lost and abashed. Three years chased away, and every year the great Spirit gave us a child. The western world rang its fascination tocsin, he wanted a home for his birds. He left us with this purpose, but without making any explanation of such intentions. I sought him for months, but in vain. The earth seemed to have swallowed him up and left no trace behind. After months I received a paper from the west which stated that he was drowned in the Father of Waters. That he had taken the river barge named The Isle, and that this barge had sunk with all on board. After this I married again and there was born to us two black-eyed sons. Their father enlisted in sixty-one and was shot on the battlefield of Shiloh. In despair I sat down, twice widowed, still under twenty.

One rainy November day, while sitting in the window looking across the street, I saw a man

who attracted my attention, he looked and walked familiar. In a few moments there came a rap at the door, I opened the door and there stood my first love.

"I was terrified, sorry, glad and dazed. I uttered, why, I thought, yes, I read it, well it was not, was it oh! God, no, it was not. He knew me and took me calmly and led me to a chair. We sat down and he said:

" 'For you and ours I went West. I knew you would not consent and so I left you all I had, six hundred dollars, the gold I got from my rich uncle's estate. I signed to go on the barge Isle, but I could not make a settlement with the Rock Island Bridge Co., for whom I labored, and had to start the next day. I did sign the log-book and gave them my full description, initials and occupation. That boat was sunk but I landed safely at St. Louis and sailed the prairies in a canvas schooner. I often wrote back to you, but I suppose the Indians robbed the mails; and as I never heard from you, I supposed you had forsaken me. I waited at Fort Bridger for an answer half a season, only to be disappointed. I know what happened while I was gone, I first learned it today; had I known it before I came to the city, I never would have returned.'

"As he said these words I cut a lock of hair from his forehead, wrapped it in tissue paper and related the tragedy, because I was misinformed. I led him to the cradle and let him look at two boys that belonged to his wife but not to him.

While he gazed I said:

" 'The price of our amibtion."

"He nodded and sighed, 'Yes, my ambition.'

"He sank into a rocking chair and I sat upon his knee and held his throbbing temples, while his heart grasped at the new and bitter situation. A blue-eyed girl came singing into the room, she blushed and backed away as she saw the strange blue-eyed, handsome man; then a boy but twelve months younger came in, running after his sister —I saw emotion and expectancy in the eyes of the lover of my youth, he was looking for the babe he kissed that midnight long ago when he went west. He arose, deliberately took the lock of hair I had folded in paper and threw it in the fire, and then flung himself into my barren bosom, drew the two children, his and ours, into the reunion and wept long and loud. Then he walked to the cradle, lifted each of the boys out and kissed them tenderly as a father, adopted them voluntarily and no one but he and I ever knew that they did not belong to us both.

"Next day I led him to the cemetery and together we wept by a new-made grave, cut in the November sod, under which I had laid away the darling daughter while he was gone, the tiny babe he kissed when he departed. We were married again, eight children blessed our second union and we have long years ago forgotten that there was a break in our link of love."

The tale broke off, Belle pulled the dried beech-nuts from the oven, passed around the

chunks of slippery elm bark, the boys had cut from the root of the tree where it grew thickest and most tender; this was the ancient caramel; then she turned the can of pitch into a pan of boiling water and served to that company the best chewing gum ever offered to the world.

The poet of the pines, after the tragedy of Peter's Camps, ceased his labors which he had followed so long, had bowed at the altar of the village church and taken up the life of Methodist Itinerant. He had always been highly esteemed by the farmers and shantymen and had refrained from all forms of sin. His lips were untainted with liquor and profanity, and in his mouth was found no guile. He never fell into those fits of uncontrollable passion which was so common to his kind. Rev. Carrell, a saintly and beloved Minister, had urged him to give his life for the Master. He gave himself unselfishly over to the labors of love, beginning his services in a log schoolhouse near the scenes of his former occupation.

He had never suffered criticism, but now he saw that it was different when he took a positive, not a passive, stand for righteousness. Folks openly shunned his counsel and old friends parted ways with him. But to offset this unlooked for attitude many came to him for advice, and thus encouraged him in his work. Night after night he had spoken to a handful of folks who gathered to hear the untrained, illiterate backwoodsman preach, but had no marked success. At the close

of the second week of protracted meetings, just after he had given out his text, which was, "What Will It Profit a Man If He Gain the Whole World and Lose His Own Soul?" a squad of rough lads bolted in and listened attentively to the sermon. As the invitation was given to come forward the whole bunch rose as one man and deliberately and earnestly gave themselves to Christ. This was one of the greatest nights the valley ever knew, and as a result from these meetings in that old log schoolhouse, over fifty churches have sprung up, five thousand people have been converted, and thirty-five Ministers of the Gospel have preached a reformation.

The "Poet Preacher," as he was known, grew to be a general favorite; he was sought by all where sympathy and Gospel were needed. The greatest amount of his energy, if not his talent, had been wasted in the forests, while young as we count years he was old with hardships, and knew that what he did must be done quickly. Rheumatism had set its vise-like grip upon him and colds contracted and allowed to continue, had stolen his manly vigor. He was a keen, sensitive, wide awake boy, and now as he advanced in years he saw all these had drawn from the storage-batteries of life. He had woven rhymes while others had slept, studied while others played games and pursued pleasure, had given himself in unlimited measure while others only gave what they could easily get along without. As the years passed by, one by one the old Preachers who had

held aloft the flaming ensign of Calvary and had shouted the burning messages of salvation, fell in the fight, leaving no successors.

It was a cold midwinter night, the snow whirled round and round in flurries, the wind blew a gauger. 'Twas one of the great blizzards which came later in the country after the forests were thread-bare and the hills and valleys unprotected. The Poet was stopping at Gillmores, on the Jam One road; they were about to retire when a rap came at the door and Hank Lardy was admitted with the information that Max had been killed that afternoon on the railroad track and was to be buried the following day. Nick, out of respect for the family, had requested that the Poet Preacher come and officiate at the funeral of his brother, who had long been excommunicated from the faith of his fathers. It was a diffifult task and the Minister, full of pathos and loving words, did the part well; all the rude men who met that day to hear the oration from a fellow comrade over the bier of a life-long friend, forever afterwards loved and revered the servant of the living God.

After the death of Max, Nick decided to leave forever the valley of the Manistee. But this was learned and was gladly hailed by the desperate set of black-legs that seemed to multiply in and about Lost Cabin. The entire community, knowing that he was the only one they feared, prevailed on him to remain at least until the community was freed from the ravages of such noted char-

acters.

The community was again startled by the sad and sudden death of three more of the inhabitants. A husband, wife and little babe.

Shortly, after this, one night came a small, keen eyed man to Silvershade, conversed for an hour and passed on to Peter's Camps, where he found employment.

At the camp he served for six weeks, bucking the tiger-grinning logs out of the Black Ash Swale. There was quite a commotion one morning when he snapped the handcuffs on both the cook and the Black Wolf and ordered the boss to hitch up and carry him and his prisoners to town The boss and some of the boys were indignant, but when he showed them his star and Federal papers signed at Washington, they gladly gave him all the assistance he needed. The boss offered to pay him for his work but he refused, saying "I draw my pay from Uncle Sam and I can't put in double time."

On the way to the County Seat he urged the teamster to drive south two miles and pass Silvershade; as they did so he chained his two prisoners to the wagon wheel, locking them safely, and came back presently with a third prisoner and that was Madam Corbett. The drive was somewhat tedious to the County Seat, eighteen miles away, but before night fall the three apprehended persons were landed safely in jail.

The whole valley was ablaze with wonder and excitement in less than a week. Like lightning

it flashed over the entire region. The day came for a hearing and after each had been questioned the charge was made against them by the small, bright-eyed officer.

"Will the three suspects hear the charge against them," were the words of the Prosecutor; "it is as follows:

"In less than five years, sixteen persons have suddenly and mysteriously died. No one but Nick of the Woods ever suspected anything was wrong, but through his suspicions this Detective Robert Aide was detailed to investivate, and now charges Madam Corbett, The Black Wolf and the cook with the murder of Archie, Mazie of Idlehour, Minnie and her two brothers of Silvershade, eight men on good Friday night, April 17, 1884, Jim, Sarah and Johnnie Mead, February 4, 1886, making a total of sixteen persons. The charge is that Madam Corbett did the premeditating and the Wolf and cook were her accomplices. Madam Corbett is an astute individual, money lured her to first give the poison for Cain's insurance, and others who knew her wily and dangerous disposition became her unfortunate victims. It is known that she refused to partake of the special dish that the cook mixed at camp that fatal Good Friday night, knowing that is was seasoned with a deadly dose. I, Robert Aide, charge all three with murder in the first degree."

When these words were read the hundreds who had packed into the courtroom fairly gasped. The plot was exposed and without a trial every-

body knew at once they were guilty.

The cook denied it all and scoffed lightly. The Wolf put his head down, and his dark handsome face assumed the pale, rigid position of a lion at bay. Madam Corbett was transposed from the gay, gaudy peacock to a sad and deserted woman. They were led back to jail and lodged for the night.

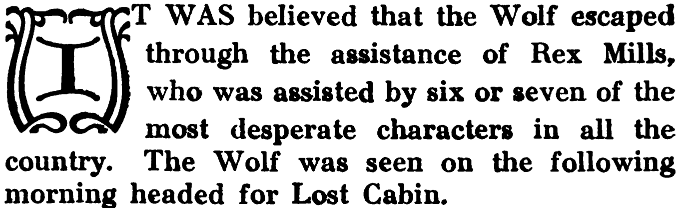
That night somebody gave the Black Wolf a steel watch spring; he made this into a hack-saw, filed off two bars and escaped.

While he was making his escape Madam Corbett was making ready hers also; but in a different manner. Sometime in that night in this sad and serious condition she drew from a hollow link in the chain that encircled her neck an atom of powerful poison, and as her many victims had writhed in the throes of death by her own evil hand, she, too, must suffer in like fashion; young and beautiful as she was, prostrated under the awful charge of many crimes, she ended that dark and dangerous career. The jailer found her next morning with a written confession at her side. They folded her white hands over her fair bosom, under which such dark plots were brewed; and in her own clean gowns, white as her brow of marble, they buried her, deep in the jackpine forest, while the Poet Preacher sadly said:

"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust." And for many years as one passed that way they could read on a split pine slab these words, "Madam Corbett, Aged 30 years."

The cook was sentenced to prison for life. But he lost his mind and was returned to the asylum, where he soon died. He was buried in an unknown grave, because he had disgraced the noble lumbermen on the Manistee.

CHAPTER XIV.



IT WAS believed that the Wolf escaped through the assistance of Rex Mills, who was assisted by six or seven of the most desperate characters in all the country. The Wolf was seen on the following morning headed for Lost Cabin.

The country was up in arms over the arrest, charge and now the suicide and confession of Madam Corbett.

Nick of the Woods was deputized and sworn United States Marshal, detailed to either kill or capture the gang at Lost Cabin.

He chose Andy McFarland, Jake Wolf, Hank Seaten, John Price, Charles Mack, Darb Welch, Billy Moran and Mike Barrett, the bravest, ablest, most trusty and peace loving lads that ever graced the Manistee, to be his companions.

They planned the capture, were armed and prepared to storm the hill where they had long held in fear and mystery a terror to the state.

For several days they drew the net closer and closer, evading the bag the wily men had held for them, expecting that they would fall in and be silenced. As they drew nearer the rendezvous occasionally they would discover the traces of the wicked work done by the desperadoes.

It became very hot and dry, the limbs would crack under their feet and the work grew tedious and more dangerous. They well knew that they were dealing with men who could shoot the eye out of a bird on the wing, snuff a candle with a pistol, and perform other feats of backwoods skill. They had every reason to believe that the crack pistol shot in the United States was with them—one who could split bullets on the bit of an ax forty feet away, and he was reported to have been seen with a long range rifle, located on a leaning tree that overlooked the whole vale where the officrs must approach.

At midnight they camped, they were within two miles of the cabin. It was four o'clock when they awakened, and as they turned their eyes westward toward the hill Nick exclaimed, "Smoke!"

"What?" inquired Andy.

"I see smoke and fire, too." At the words of fire every man arose.

A shudder came over them at the mention of the name of the most dangerous and disastrous foe of the region.

"Sure 'nuff," said Nick; "and I think it's this side of the river."

"It is, boys, and the whole grove will be melted, I never seen it so dry before," said Nick. "And the prickly ash, black haw, briars, and shin-tangle will all go up in smoke; you'll have no trouble seeing Lost Cabin, if it's standing, by sundown."

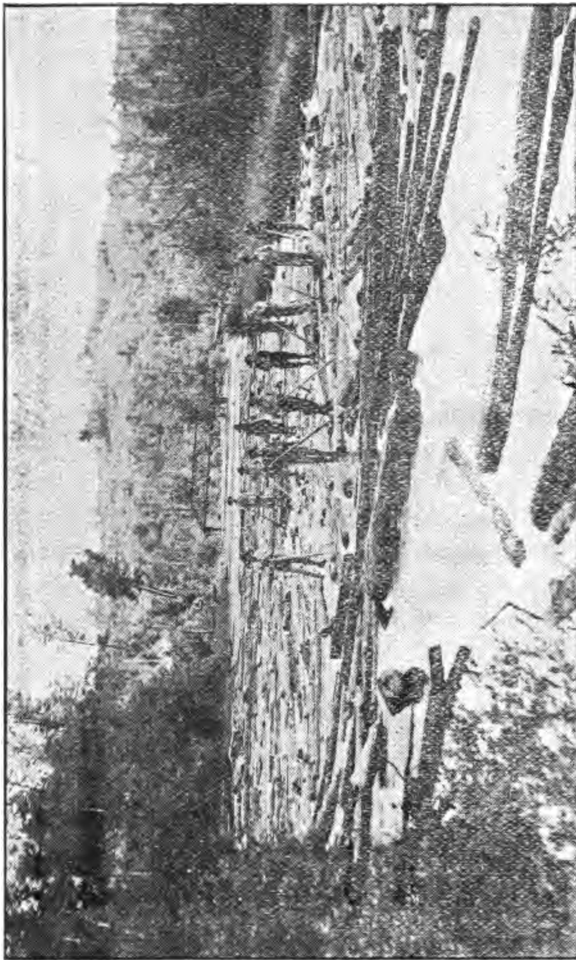
"Which way's the wind?" asked Price, as he put his forefinger in his mouth, wet it and held it up. "It's westward," he exclaimed, "cause that west side of my wet finger feels cool with the breeze."

"Boys, now listen," said Nick; "we're going to have a fight. You all know Black Wolf, leave him to me. By noon every man on that hill yonder, (pointing toward Lost Cabin), will be driven our way—all we have to do is to tree where we can see each other and pick our men when the flames drive them our way. I'll take the center, this old elm's a good shelter; now scatter out and don't shut your peepers nor lose your nerve; aim low, don't kill unless you have to, wound and disarm your man; there is one man apiece, I am sure. Take your places; prove yourselves men."

As he made this short, pithy speech every man took his place.

"Andy, you stop at my right over there, and Mack, you stand over there on my left, and the rest of you scatter out, covering the strip of ground where it will be possible for the bandits to make their escape."

In a few moments they had all taken shelter behind a tree and were equally distributed over the only patch of ground where the gang of ruffians could escape. Here sat these forest rifle rangers, all of whom had graduated from the university of hard knocks, ready and willing to face the most dangerous and desperate foe if circumstances demanded.



The Last Drive—A Scene on the Manistee

The demon tongues of the forest fire licked up every scrap of combustible matter from the root of the gnarled oak to the topmost leaf of the lofty ash, and through the forests, like an all-devouring and conquering army, marched those columns of red and blue. Ashes and black smoke, sparks and cinders, roaring like a cyclone, mingled with the cry of the bird, the whine of the cub wolf, the shriek of the hawk and eagle and the various death wails of innumerable bugs, insects, chipmunks, squirrels, hedge-hogs, moles, mice, mink, marten, weasels, fox and other animals that inhabit these great wild groves. By ten o'clock the broken and precipitous ravines, which were matted with black haw and prickly swept clean as a pipe-stem.

ash, and numerous trees and underbrushes, were

While Nick and his assistants were waiting for fleeing men, seven other fellows, instead of fleeing to fall into the net so cunningly spread for them, were fighting fire and had been since dawn. Two had been overcome, their retreat cut off, escape was impossible and they were burned alive; the others fought stubbornly to beat back the red foe which came onward like the waves of the deep, and onward came those red hordes till at last they leaped up the sides and over the roof of Lost Cabin, like beasts of lightning.

Suddenly there was a tremendous explosion, the whole earth shook for miles around, and the debris composed of split logs, pieces of rude made furniture, stove pipe and other fragments of

household effects, mingled with limbs and brush, fell for over a mile around the hill where the great shock occurred. This upheaval, like a volcanic eruption, scattered the fire far and wide; it swept like a stampede of wild chargers towards the woods where Nick's riflemen lay waiting the retreat of the bandits. Nick saw at once that he and his men must beat a retreat before a deadlier foe than had ever cocked a gun, or wielded a bloody knife; at Nick's order every man left his tree and fled down the slopes, pursued by the lapping and cracking flames, fanned forward by a mighty western wind.

Ham Creek, with its ripples of ice water, stayed the flames, the red ensign of devastation fell upon the green cedar boughs that skirted the quiet valley and expired like snowflakes in August waters. The forest riflemen camped on the bank of the protecting creek, and just after midnight a great peal of thunder broke the solitude of the woods and a bright banner of electricity lit up the dim aisles of the virgin groves; down came the rain, drenching everything and drowning all forest fires in the country.

At the breaking of day the officers, led by Nick, very cautiously returned, climbed the hill without a single challenge, and stood before the spot once occupied by the detestable dive. The logs were partly devoured by fire and others blown out of sight entirely. Where the cellar must have been the bandits had stored dynamite, shells, powder and other booty, a great hole was

torn in the earth large enough to bury a lumber camp. On the western brow of the ridge they found two charred and disfigured bodies, and near them shovels with which they had evidently been trying to stay the fire. On the hill top, in different localities around the cabin, they found five other bodies, burned beyond recognition; and just before the mystic rendezvous lay the frames of two ill-shaped and monstrous beasts, the miserable offsprings of the stag hound mastiffs and wild wolves.

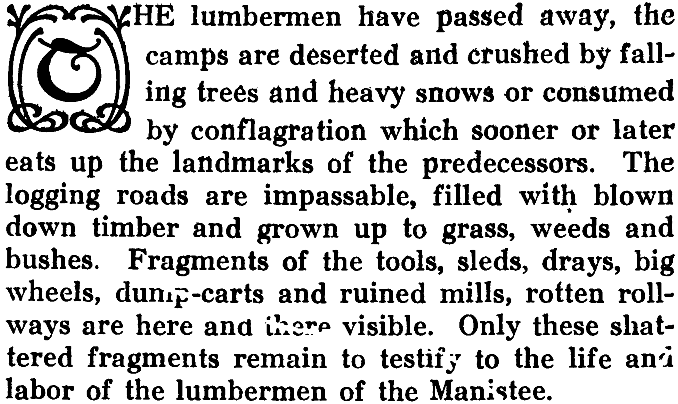
The men reverently dug a place on the eastern front of that picturesque and coveted location, and laid the men away, covering the mound with red sand stones to keep away the foxes and the wolves. Every one supposed that one of these blackened bodies was that of the subtle and unfortunate man, the Black Wolf from Vassar.

Nick and his fellows returned and gave a full report of all that happened. The whole country rejoiced, more particularly because protective Providence had taken the initiative, and had ruined with fire the cabin and destroyed the lives of those vicious and heartless men who had long terrorized the country, and left Nick of the Woods and his brave and noble companions conquerors without taking the life of fellow man or shedding a drop of human blood.

After all these years the rumor runs that when belated forest rangers pass near that cursed and hideous territory on their way to the Ausable, they see the skeletons of two ill-shapen brutes

tugging at their chains from the summit of the hill growing over with another forest; and the woods, river, glade and valleys ring with their unearthly howling. It is also told that sometimes on cold moonlight nights when the robes of winter are spread over the long deserted hill, that the demon shadows of seven men can be distinctly seen from the winding river below and the sky-line wagon road above, flitting around loading guns, fighting fire, dishing up mush and laughing in diabolical fashion, exposing the deeds of other days.

CHAPTER XV.



THE lumbermen have passed away, the camps are deserted and crushed by falling trees and heavy snows or consumed by conflagration which sooner or later eats up the landmarks of the predecessors. The logging roads are impassable, filled with blown down timber and grown up to grass, weeds and bushes. Fragments of the tools, sleds, drays, big wheels, dump-carts and ruined mills, rotten rollways are here and there visible. Only these shattered fragments remain to testify to the life and labor of the lumbermen of the Manistee.

Silvershade and Idlehour are deserted now, their fond inhabitants have gone the way of all the earth. The Master and Matron sleep with their fathers and the children whose labors were lightened with love have scattered far and wide.

Of that bright company only one remains in these forsaken haunts, and she, like the last leaf on the family tree, clings lovingly, tho' sadly, to the old realms where happiness came and ended in the night of darkness and despair. Belle goes about sowing the seeds of kindness and Christian love, her frame is aged now and her once golden locks are thinned and whitened by the hands of Father Time. Where the Poet Preacher fell at his

all glorious and immortal duty she picked up the ensign of the cross, which his feeble hands had dropped untimely and still carries it forward toward "that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Lumbermen from the Manistee float down the Frazier River, through the Canadian Rockies, or dare the wild Kickinghorse. Some float the lazy, murky bayous of Mississippi, and the redwood groves in California ring with their labor and song. They are represented in South America and Australia under sunnier skies. And over the Chilkoot Pass, down the Whitehorse Rapids to the mighty northern rivers, the Yukon, Tannana, Copper and Kuskokwim they float and toss in icy waters fed by giant glaciers. They have mingled with professional men and become agriculturists of note and merchants in the greater marts of trade. But the mass of them are resting now, freed from all the cares, spared from all the weariness and worry that flesh is heir to.

The pioneers who converted the forests into those trim little farms for which the valley was noted, have likewise gone into God's ash heaps and much of their labor has followed them.

The lumber Kings have left a name only. Many of them gave to the causes of a greater city, to the construction of bridges, churches, schools, libraries, roads and various enterprises, thus staying the utter stagnation of civic progress and moral reform. It can be intelligently and truthfully stated that as they received from the brow

of honest labor their golden rewards in the same bright streams have they given back that which they gathered to relieve the want of men. As their honorable descendants will testify.

The merchants who dealt in the wares of life, who took white horses for pay and trusted everybody, have likewise made their contribution to the world and the ages past. No better, nor more honorable men, ever carried on a business of any sort with a greater degree of success and under more poverty stricken circumstances than those in the lumber belts.

"And ye, thou proud and beloved valley—
Where smiling spring her earliest visit paid
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed."

Can we with a broken reed dipped in soft maple ink write for you a proper epitaph? We lament over our failure but rejoice in your victory. Nature has wooed and won you back again —time has restored your once punctured and tattered gown, rent by our ambitions. Many a hill and glade, vale and upland pasture lie silent and unclaimed. Many a plashing river flowing in its secluded highway has welcomed back the cunning beaver to cut the timber of a second growth and dam the river which flows in idleness and beauty.

The forest ranger, dressed in his fascinating khaki, patrols the lonely plains, sweetened again with arbutus and wild strawberries, camps by the rivers and fishes for dappled trout. The broad

area is green with a different forest instead of a slender moaning pine, are the bush oak, popple and the silver birch. The only witness for the labors of the lumbermen are the blackened stumps, which after forty seasons still testify to the once charming operations of those jolly men.

In the picturesque Willamette Valley, where yellow fir is king, Nick now pursues his craft. He is old and his frame is shrunken, his steps once so light and elastic drag slowly and wearily by. Evenings and mornings and Sabbath days he idles by the silvery river, thinking all over again the times he and she sat by the Big Muskegon, where love was born to flutter and fall like the snow flakes on the stream. He wonders how she looks now—for she too must be old, for time never favors certain individuals however good and fair; as he thinks of the Big Muskegon again, like a summer dream the tragedies, excitements and sorrows flit over the background of the past.

The camp where he was employed stood at the base of a noble and noted mountain, where above the timber line, high upon her brow lay everlasting snow.

As he looked westward toward the ocean he saw a ridge gracefully fringed with a shaggy forest, which reminded him of the high bluffs of the distant Manistee. And as he stood upon the scenic eminence two of earth's greatest water courses were painting their silver bows tinged with a summer sun, they united as they ran and gave their pure and generous offering to the sea. These

rivers reminded him of two other rivers smaller and unknown, which mingled their soft, sweet waters in that distant and enchanting vale never more to separate and at last to flow into that ocean of eternity, upon the banks of these distant rivers he and she met, loved and parted.

The boss of the camp once rode the round stuff on the Ausable, Betsey and Tobacco rivers, where Nick had passed his manhood years. Often would the two old friends recall these distant scenes. The boss lived in a fir cabin with the wife of his youth, but she was an invalid and was cared for by a gentle nurse.

One night as they were recalling the past the boss asked:

"Whatever became of the Black Wolf, Nick?"

"Did you never hear? He was burned up at Lost Cabin," was the answer.

"Is that so? I have heard that he was still alive."

"I have too," said Nick; "but I doubt it, because if he were he would still be making it hot and heavy for me." As he said these words he assumed an easy composure which indicated his satisfaction.

"I have heard a number of tales about him," continued the boss. "Some say he froze to death and was buried like a dog in the woods back of Dutch Pete's place. Another states that he was drowned on the Dead Stream, and was never taken from the black waters. And Carnes tells me that he allowed his black beard to grow, went

east and is mayor of a city; you know he was well educated. And I also am told that he still pursues his craft on the distant Kickinghorse. And I want to tell you the latest report is, that he married a nun and lives in the wilderness in a secluded spot."

"Well, whatever has happened to him, I have not been cursed by his presence, nor stung by his guile for many years and I am satisfied."

There seemed some misgiving in his mind as he finished the sentence, and with a far off look in his eyes, dimmed with years and shaded with heavy brows, he turned to his old companion and said:

"I have treated him fair, and every other man, woman and child on this earth; have never betrayed a cause nor an individual; life has been sad but it has been a success; sorrow is not failure, disappointment is not destruction; if I had it all to do over again it could not be corrected very much and I repeat, I am satisfied."

As he said these words he arose and opened the door, saying: "It's bed time, so long; I hope your wife sleeps like a baby tonight." And then he stepped out from the dimly lighted cabin under the stars of God.

Just what took place the next few minutes must be heard in the footsteps of the dead, and seen with eyes of imagination. We cannot imagine the thought of all men, nor the attitude they may assume, but we have known Nick long enough and well enough to know that his thoughts

and his actions were always noble and heroic.

He was halted on his way by a big, black, ill clad individual. Before Nick could defend himself, this unknown giant grabbed him by the throat and brandished a long, silvery knife, while in husky tones he mutters:

"Faith of the Fathers saved you then, but what God or whose devil can save you now, for I am the Black Wolf."

Then like a bolt of lightning the knife descended and Nick fell mortally wounded. The Black Wolf fled into the wilderness and Nick crawled to the cabin door. Groans disturbed the boss, he arose, opened the door, and called the nurse. Together they laid the bleeding comrade on a cot in an adjoining room and the boss was dispatched for a physician. The sick wife charged the nurse to give the man her entire attention, but her services were useless; the wound was fatal.

The nurse opened his shirt bosom to place absorbent cotton over the wound, to staunch the flow of blood which was rapidly emptying his struggling heart; when she did so she staggered back and sighed—"Holy Mother of God." Over Roman gold, and from it was suspended a cross his bleeding bosom was a small chain made of and a crucifix. This was the secret of his noble life, and the Sister at once recognized the emblem of his own childish faith, that she had discovered upon this same bosom forty years before. It was as long, long ago—the helpless lumberman and

the angelic Amelia—she, with a trifle of rudeness to her action, folded back the black veil, in a regretful manner as though she disdained the cloth of separation, from pleasure and from personal love, said with pathos:

"I loved you then and I'll love you forever."

As she said these words she drew her head down and for the first time in all her life kissed his lips, trembling with a thousand expressions that her eager ears would never, never hear. He moved his hard, rough hands, scarred and knotty with manual toil, and reverently replaced the veil over her fair brow and down over her heaven kissed cheeks and smiled in his victory. He had given love, his greatest earthly joy, to adorn her fair face with that dark veil, the emblem of charity; and now in his last earthly hour, and with his dying fingers, covered the brow that must be hidden until unveiled by Gabriel on the morning of eternity. He was passing from the kingdom of words, to that country where idols are not in flesh and blood and human beauty, and summoning up all his strength in that lonely cabin at the quiet midnight hour, where no eager spectators were to throw shadows over the sacred scene, he sighed softly, which betrayed his weakness.

"My Amelia, my Amelia, now and forever." Then sank back and never breathed again. He had conquered in love's hot battle, love had begotten love, and life had been sweetened by immortality. He had parted with her not on the Muskegon, but on the banks of the beautiful perennial Jordan; not to travel to the upper camps, but to wing his flight to that upper coun-

try. He died in the arms of the woman that breathed the fragrance of love upon his cheek in early manhood and lighted the holy tapers of his undying affections. And not till the physician came at the breaking of the day could the nurse be influenced to release her clasp from the dead shantyman, her lover for forty years.

Camp men, like wild wolf hounds, sought the assassin at daybreak. They found him only a few rods from the roadside with a bloody dagger driven to the hilt in his heart. Amelia at once recognized him and asked that he be buried decently.

The angry men flung him into a hole in the ground, wrapped in his old mackinaws; covered the mound with stones hurled angrily upon the lonely spot, now entirely unknown to living men.

On the bank of the murmuring river at the foot of a proud old fir, they laid down the form of the pioneer lumberman, who had kept the faith and honorably won the golden crown the angels set upon his brow at that gorgeous coronation.

In less than a year after this tragedy, another procession of silent mourners passed down the hill road and stopped at the foot of the fir; in this procession there was no nurse, as there had been the preceding year. The two are sleeping now side by side far from the sweet arbutus where love was born.

It was a long drawn tragedy, sad and pitiful. Some time we will go again and linger near the two well kept graves under the western fir, where in graceful repose lie—Nick of the Woods, and Amelia, the noble Nun.