

The Free Press Short Story

The Tree Trooper of Hogback Ridge

By Frederick Hall

CONCEALED by the gathering dusk and by the thicket in which he crouched, the man was keeping a vigil of cautious waiting upon the outskirts of the camp when a figure in khaki appeared, coming down the newly-made trail. "Howdy, son," he called softly. The young man stopped. "I reckon you're one o' Cap' Zachwell's boys."

Ethel's letter was of course nonsense. Mr. Flint was just talking and Blanche would have work for a week at least. The part was not nonsense that his people missed him, or that he missed them—legitimately. Just now the whole affair was made far worse by this last remark that he felt to be Captain Zach's injustice. Suppose he just walked off! What could be done about it? This was not like the army, no getting arrested for desertion. The other officers could not stop him if he went to the captain and said he was going to leave. Suppose he said nothing, what then?

At nine o'clock next evening, Ward was lost; the sky was threatening. He stopped to ask his way at a lonely cabin—the only light being seen in the past half hour—and stared in amazement at the room into which he was invited. On the floor were Navajo blankets and Oriental rugs which he did not recognize as such; before the open fire was drawn a low, cushioned morris chair. Two walls were lined with books, and on the other two hung several paintings and etchings. The middle-aged man who received Ward was roughly dressed, but his speech was not that of the mountaineer.

Weekly Garden-Graph



Beauty masks for better grapes. One can grow de luxe grapes on home vines by the simple expedient of providing each bunch with a "beauty mask."

Paper bags from the grocery store will serve for this purpose. The bags should be tied securely and the bottom corners snipped off just enough to allow any rain water that may seep into the bag to drain away.

TRINIDAD'S LOVELY ROADS ARE DUSTLESS

Two thousand miles of well-oiled or asphalted roads provide fascinating excursions under archways of bamboo and through miles of sugar cane, cocoa plantations and virgin forests, interspersed with glimpses of the primitive but picturesque habitations of the native folk.

The captain said nothing, but Ward was not reprimanded or questioned, and later his line was reinitiated. The doctor dressed his burns and gave him two days off, with pay. In the Recreation Hall, he read and wrote letters with a bated breath: "He was regarded, he found, as something of a hero. The second day a letter came from Blanche, saying his mother was up and about again. His idea of going home had come to seem silly."

Four months later, Ward appeared one day in Captain Zach's office. "It's this way," he explained. "I'd thought you know, of re-enlisting, but my sister has regular work now and a man that I used to be with says he'll give me my old job back."

"I'd take it," the captain spoke with decision. "This life hasn't much more to teach you. My advice is, go back to the life that you know the best and make a place for yourself there."

"That's a forest fire!" his host exclaimed. "We must get busy." As the sun rose through the murky air, looking like a red Chinese lantern, Captain Zachwell, glasses in hand and with Keith Batterson at his elbow, studied the "terrain" and realized that the victory was won. The forest was too recently acquired for regular lookouts to have been established, but thanks to a telephone message, to the spotting of trucks over rough roads, and to seven hours of stubborn, intensive fighting, Camp Kenton's first forest fire had been triumphantly stampeded out.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

A realistic advertisement currently on the billboards announces the price of a certain automobile as being P. O. B. Windsor, with standard equipment, including sales tax. This pessimistic view acknowledges that though budgets may come and budgets may go, the sales tax in some degree of severity is likely to stay with us. It is standard equipment. That term has meant during the course of the automobile's development an increasing number of things.

It is a fitting term, to apply to taxes. Decade by decade, taxes have meant an increasing number of things. Although not such pleasing additions to our economy as the self starter, the horn and the spare tire, new forms of taxes have been loaded through successive administrations upon that hard-driven vehicle, the taxpayer. The sales tax has proved itself to be, from the tax collector's standpoint, one of the least painful forms of taxation. Like the tremendously heavy, yet unseen burden of the atmosphere, the sales tax presses down everywhere upon a largely unaware populace. We have become economically stooped and round-shouldered without knowing what thing was aching us down. It injures no individual or group sufficiently at any particular time to incite to rebellion, yet its long term effect on the general business of the country is disastrous. We eat less, wear poorer clothes, have less fun, because of the sales tax. And a further gloomy thought is that advertisements are becoming so honest that this one is probably right—The Printed Word.

Can you say these sentences very quickly several times running? Try, to see how clever you are. Mrs. Minnie's Mouse's mouth muffer. Sell out on seven sets of chifton. A flunkie ignorant inky Indian. A wish-washy wizard's slipp.

JOIN THE "SALADA" STAMP CLUB

For ten cents and the label end, showing the teapot trademark, from any packet of SALADA TEA we will send you a Beginner's Outfit of 1-64 page Stamp Album, 8-100 all-different stamps, 3-Big list of thousands of stamps offered Free in exchange for SALADA labels. SALADA STAMP CLUB - 461 King St. W., Toronto

THAT'S DIFFERENT

Talkative Stranger—How would you feel if you had a head of hair that was rapidly turning grey? Man with His Hat On—I'd feel grand. Talkative Stranger—What! Are you mad? Man (taking his hat off)—No; I'm bald.

TONGUE-TWISTERS

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MISTAKEN IDENTITY

A public official was making a speech on some momentous question, and, in concluding, said: "In the words of Daniel Webster, who wrote the dictionary, 'Give me liberty or give me death!'" One of his colleagues pulled at his coat and whispered, "Daniel Webster did not write the dictionary; it was Noah."

THE REASON

"A naturalist says in this book that fish have no means of communication." "Huh! So that's why they never respond to the noise I drop them."

Large advertisement for Carroll's Canning products. Features include: Fruit Jars (85¢, 99¢), Pork & Beans (2 21-oz. tins 15¢), Campbell's Soup (2 tins 15¢), Macaroni or Spaghetti (3 lbs. 10¢), Wax Beans (2 No. 2 tins 13¢), Dandee Tea (1-lb. pkg. 37¢), Corn Flakes (2 pkgs. 15¢), Sani White Toilet Tissue (4 rolls 25¢), Surprise Soap (3 bars 14¢), LUX Flakes (1-lb. pkg. 23¢), Walnuts Shelled (1/2-lb. 15¢), Biscuits Assorted Sandwiches (2 lbs. 25¢), Tuna Flakes (2 6 1/2-oz. tins 25¢), All-Wheat (2 pkgs. 23¢), Old Dutch Cleanser (tin 9¢), Fresh White Celery Hearts (10c), Oranges - Medium (27c), Peas (2 17-oz. tins 27¢). Also includes 'Start Baby Right' with Aylmer's Strained Infants Foods and Aylmer's Chopped Foods for Juniors.

Advertisement for Council Standard Rib-Roll or Tite-Lap Roofing. Text: "Council Standard" Rib-Roll or Tite-Lap Roofing is being widely used for houses. It is permanent, fireproof, weather-proof—requires minimum upkeep. Write for our new free book, "House Tops". Eastern Steel Products MILL STREET

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