

THE UNWRITTEN LAW

By MARY MORRISON

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Wet were the leaves and few, and the rain, dripping through the almost bare branches of the trees, was growing colder. The skies were gray, and growing grayer every day. Soon it would be snow which would fall day by day, and the wind that wailed drearily now would shriek and rave wildly through the forest.

It had been a pleasant summer home for crows here on Bullhead pond. Frogs and snakes had been plenty, and Gaunt, the crow, had provided handsomely for his family, until they were all well grown and able to provide for themselves, but the frogs were all down in the deep mud of the lake now, and would not come up until spring, and the snakes had gone into winter quarters. His children had left for more prolific feeding grounds, and he mistrusted they had gone to join their fellows at the roost on Pohanock river. It was time. Last year he had not delayed until this time, but this year—he hopped dejectedly along a few steps and dragged one mangled, blood-dried wing helplessly over the wet leaves. He would never fly with the flock to the roosting place again. The rancid gnaw of imbedded bird shot ate deeper and deeper into his breast with each day, and each day he skulked farther and farther from the haunts of his brethren, like the coward he had grown, knowing that it must come—that sentence from the unwritten law of the wilderness which every crow knows, and which he knows is his sacred duty to carry out. He felt, instinctively, the horror of cold and hunger and suffering which awaited him, and which were setting over him with each passing day of the waning year, and yet he hid himself away with painful effort, sitting motionless under some overhanging shrub all day until driven out by hunger.

It was hard to find food. Yesterday he had come upon a mole burrowing along under the loose soil and had clawed him out hungrily. It had been a scanty meal for a maw as empty as his own, but he was grateful. To-day he had only been able to find a few dull slugs under the decaying bark of an old log. Soon even these would be locked fast in the grip of the frost. There was nothing so hard to bear as hunger, that he knew, and yet he skulked miserably from day to day and endured its pangs—why, he did not understand, for he could end it all so easily. One call of distress—that was all—and they would all flock to his assistance, his wild comrades. He could not understand the miserable tremor which shook him as he remembered this. Why, he had given the death blow himself, gladly and willingly, when his mate had been stricken blind by kingfishers as she was searching their nest for eggs!

He recalled the fact now, that she too had flown desperately hither and thither in a vain attempt to get away, but they were merciful and did not allow her, poor thing. Of all the terrible things that befell the wild creatures nothing is more to be dreaded than blindness. No crow could turn his back on a blind comrade, nor on one hopelessly disabled.

Nevertheless he had never cawed a note since the day the hunter's shot had found him. Crows do not lie, and his only safety lay in silence, a safety that was becoming more terrible day by day. If the shot had only found a vital part, as he had hoped those first sickening days, he could have borne it until the end, but now, with a body demanding food as strenuously as when he could wing his way to the top of the tallest tree, this hampering of a crippled wing was terrible. This was the fourteenth day of his suffering. The wound had grown stiff and dry and the shattered bone protrud-

ed through the flesh. He pecked at it viciously, but such an agonizing thrill shot through the upper part of his breast that he desisted and sat with drooping head under a leafless shrub of tag alder.

A familiar "Caw! Caw!" sent a shiver of dread to the tip of his bedraggled tail, and he huddled up a little closer under the protecting branches.

It was a cheerful note, and betokened a careless, happy-go-lucky comrade, who had dawdled about his summer home with a few careless mates like himself.

He alighted on the ground near by to peck at a snail shell which Gaunt could have told him was empty; then his roving eye caught the dull gleam of Gaunt's feathers, and he came nearer with peering, inquisitive gaze which Gaunt would not meet. He sat with closed eyes before this, that during all these days of suffering he had striven to escape.

The stranger flew to the top of a tree and sent forth a loud call. "Caw! Caw! Caw!" It was a command for the gathering of the clan, and presently answers were heard



The Wound Had Grown Stiff and Dry.

from north and south and east and west, for no crow might hear and disregard this summons.

One and two and three at a time they came and formed a circle about the ragged tag alder bush beneath which Gaunt sat motionless—awaiting that which came swiftly, suddenly with one sharp blow, the execution of the sentence from the unwritten law of the wild creatures.

"Well, I'll be blown if that wasn't worth seein'," old Silas Carter said, as he got stiffly up from the muddy bank a few yards distant, where he had been setting muskrat traps.

"I've heard tell that birds an' animals did sich things, but I never expected to see 'em with my own eyes. They made mighty short work of it 'n' no mistake. Well, I s'pose it's the best way, or it wouldn't have been so," he added, philosophically, as he turned Gaunt's limp body over with his foot.

CURING SLEEPLESSNESS.

A unique machine has just been put on the market which claims to cure sleeplessness. The machine resembles an instrument like an electric fan, the wings of the fan being studded with small round mirrors. It is based on the principle that most insomniacs can sleep at the window of an express train. The sight of the landscape rushing by them invariably brings on a refreshing nap. The machine with its whirl and glitter of revolving mirrors acts on the eye and brain in the same soothing manner, and sends the patient off into a deep slumber.

"Yes, mamma, when I graduate, I intend following a literary career—write for money!! you know."

"Why, Willie, my dear, you haven't done anything else since you've been at college."

VISITS WITH UNCLE BY

Vacation Time.



NCE more upon the waters and away, wrote Byron as he slipped the chain of home and sped abroad to Italy, there to be among new scenes, meet new people, gain new ideas. It is with pretty much this same buoyant spirit that every man starts on his vacation. For weeks he has anticipated it, as his body and his temper jointly chide him for overwork.

Travelling is tiresome work after the novelty is threadbare, and sightseeing, the way an American goes at it, hammer and tongs, is brain-racking. He has but two or three, or possibly four, weeks at his command, and he must positively "see everything," for "in all probability he will never revisit the places of interest he is now fortunately viewing." Day after day he hurries about, up late nights, losing sleep, eating here, drinking there—at last he



comes home so tired he works a month before he is "rested again."

Next year he resolves he will take a different sort of vacation; he will go to some quiet lake and fish temperately.

Another cycle rolls around and he leaves his office again for a sylvan retreat where lapping waves sing lullabies and drowsy winds blow hush-eech to the tired brain. He finds the place fully equal to his expectation and plans on a campaign of idleness. Alack! he is a fisherman and great strings of fins coming from the lake on the chains of ardent boarders, set his alarm clock for three next morning. He must fish early, for when it is hot the fish are dilatory. The "before breakfast catch" is excellent and a "big bite" is so promising that he puts in the entire day, burning his skin in the sun. At night there is a quiet little hop in the dining room or on the piazza, and he indulges with the others. There is the whist party, the concert, the trip to town, the cat-fishing expedition at night—and thus it goes, one gala round of pleasure. The mall brings him worry, the baby takes sick, and the deuce knows what. When he gets home he is tired again. Verily the average man's vacation is 'e hardest month of the entire year.

I bought the swiftest automobile the other night that ever whizzed down the boulevard, but just as I was turning a corner it broke down and my wife butted in and asked me what I was doing under the bed on my back. Gee, that was a funny bug, wasn't it?

Notice of Final Hearing on Certificate of Completion, Special Assessment No. 30.

Notice is hereby given to all persons interested that the Board of Local Improvements of the City of Highwood, Illinois, having let the contract for the construction of a lateral eight (8) inch sanitary sewer, with manholes, and necessary house connection slants in portions of North avenue and Palmer avenue, in the City of Highwood, Lake County, Illinois, in accordance with the ordinance passed by the City Council of the City of Highwood, January 3, 1908, and approved by Mayor on January 3, 1908, and the same having been completed and accepted by the Board on the 11th day of September, A. D., 1908, and the said Board of Local Improvements having filed in said County Court of Lake County, Illinois, a certificate showing that the said improvement conforms substantially to the requirements of the original ordinance for the construction of the same, the cost thereof, cost of making and collecting assessment therefor, the amount estimated by them to be required to pay the accruing interest on bonds and vouchers issued to anticipate collection of the assessment for said improvement. A hearing will be had on the said certificate, as to the truth of the facts stated therein, in the County Court of Lake County, at the Court House in the City of Waukegan, on the 26th day of October, A. D., 1908, at 10 o'clock a. m., or as soon thereafter as the business of the court will permit. All persons desiring may file objections in said court before said day, and may appear on the hearing and make their defense.

W. F. HOGAN,
JAS. M. REILLY,
J. H. SWANSON,

Board of Local Improvements.
Dated at Highwood, Illinois, this 6th day of October, A. D., 1908.

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