

The Blizzard

By H. B. ALEXANDER

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Wolf-Eater was an old white-haired Indian. His broad dark face, seamed and wrinkled, was as calmly terrible as is the dread mask of the Sphinx, which the lances of generations of Arab vandals have failed to move. Wolf-Eater's cabin stood on a hill slope hardly a spear's throw from the site of the old Oto village on the Little Nemaha. On the top of the hill was a huge heap of bones—trophies of the gray wolves and coyotes which he had hunted out of the country for miles around.

One day I sat in front of the little cabin, watching the old man fashion the toy bows and pipes which he sold to the farmers for parlor ornaments.

"Wolf," I said (his name was so shortened by his white neighbors), "you have never told me why it was that when the government took your people to the reservation you stayed behind?"

For some moments Wolf-Eater did not speak. He dropped his work and gazed out over the prairies with that terrible, immutable Sphinx-like gaze that belongs to all eyes accustomed to peer across far plains. Finally he told his tale.

There was once a woman of the Otoes who was mother of twins. The girl she named Omona, the Rain-Wind, for to the mother she came as the fresh sweet wind that blows before a summer rain. And the boy also had a name, but it was changed before he left papoose straps.

The winter after the twins were born was a winter of many snows. One day Kah-i-nee—that was the woman's name—went over the hill from her village to cut willow twigs for baskets. The children were in the papoose hood on her shoulders. There was snow on the ground, but the day was sunny and clear.

By and by little gray clouds began to fly past through the sky, but Kah-i-nee did not notice them. She was busy with the willows. Then out of the north came the sudden blizzard wind. The light snow was swept from the ground and whirled about in a stinging, blinding cloud. Kah-i-nee dropped her willows and started for the village. She walked on and on, straining her eyes for the lights of the fires in the teepees, but she saw only the gray rushing snow. Soon she knew that she was lost, but she dared not stop walking lest she should freeze. She wrapped her blanket tighter about the twins and trudged on, always straining her eyes for the village fires.

It grew colder and colder. It was white-dark in the rush of the snow. She would have cried out, but the roar of the blizzard choked her voice. Suddenly she noticed a gray beast trotting by her side. She thought it was a village dog, and her heart leaped. Then it uttered its long wailing cry, and her heart stopped. There were many wolves that winter.

Kah-i-nee plunged on desperately through the storm, not daring to look around. When she did look there were two gray beasts trotting beside her. She tried to cry out, but the roar of the blizzard choked her voice. At times she heard the food-cry of the wolves beside her. She knew that there were three now. Soon there would be four, five—many! Soon they would feel strong as well as hungry.

A coyote snapped at her heels. With her stiffening fingers Kah-i-nee grasped the hatchet which she had brought to cut the willows, and struck one fierce blow. Then she ran on as fast as she could, stumbling against the wind. When she stopped for breath she was alone. She drifted on with the storm, still hoping to find the village. But almost immediately a gray wolf leaped

up out of the darkness. Then another and another and another. The taste of meat had strengthened their hearts. They tore her blanket and skirts with their teeth, sometimes biting through to her flesh. Again Kah-i-nee struck with her hatchet, but it flew from her frozen fingers. This time the wolves were many and they crowded close. The battle spirit was in them; they had tasted blood. With one hand Kah-i-nee drew the papoose hood to her breast, for her blanket was torn to shreds. With the other she seized her knife. She thrust it into the breast of a wolf that leaped up at her, but she could not draw it back. Then she knew that she must die. She tried to sing a death-song, but the yellow eyes and red throats of the wolves tied her tongue and the thought of Rain-Wind and the boy papoose choked down her words.

Then, suddenly, with one long moaning rumble the storm Wakanda swept away to the south. Kah-i-nee was on a hill within a spear's throw of the village. She could see the fires of the teepees shining through. The wolves had dragged her to her knees, but she tried to rise, fighting them off with her hand. Their teeth and the weight of the papoose hood held her down, for she was weak from exposure and wounds. Again Kah-i-nee saw that the Death Wakanda had doomed her, even in sight



"Again Kah-nee Struck with Her Hatchet."

of her village. It was then that the twin papooses began to cry. A terrible thought came to the mother, and her heart broke. She might save one! Once more she tried to beat off the wolves and tried to rise. This time the papoose hood lay on the ground and her arm guarded but one child. Kah-i-nee stood up; the wolves no longer rushed upon her. With a scream which was like laughter she flew down the hill into the village and fell down dead at the door of her teepee.

The warriors ran out and drove the wolves from the stained and trampled snow.

Wolf-Eater paused, and picking up his knife resumed his carving, a little unsteadily, I thought.

"That was many winters past," he added. "Up there is the spot where Rain-Wind was left to the wolves to save the boy papoose"—indicating the heap of glistening bones.

MARVELOUS WOOD SAW.

It makes the man who is interested in the salvation of the forests of the world gasp for breath when he enters a shop in Paris where the paving blocks for the city's streets are being made. Paris is a very large city, and it takes a great many blocks to keep the streets in good condition. A recently invented and established sawing machine turns out as many as 240,000 blocks a day. An endless chain receives the planks, which are already cut to a certain required length and thickness, and carries them on to a system of 17 saws, where they are quickly cut up into blocks of the right size for paving and are then turned out at the other end of the monster machine.

Strength

By Byron Williams



When all the weary grind is done
And all the problems brushed away—
Her face aglow with childish fun,
She meets me at the close of day!
And as I slip her willing kiss
I think, "Twas worth it all for this!"
When trouble comes and clings to me,
And only darkness looms ahead,
She gives my heart its ecstasy
As sunset paints the sky with red—
Ah! then I know the way is bright,
And worry flees from me by night!
For none could lose who fought for me
Who fastens on my shield for me,
And though the world my rival were,
Her faith would win the victory!
Ah, rosebud, when the clouds are by—
We stand triumphant, you and I!

JACK RABBITS A NUISANCE

California Ranchmen in Despair Over the Depredations of the Small Animals.

Jack rabbits are said to be so numerous in the Antelope valley of California that the ranchmen are in despair. The animals are becoming so fierce that they are actually breaking down the fences around the adjacent fields and eating crops down to the roots. Not content with this, they are swarming into the desert towns and invading the front yards of the dwellers. The citizens of Lancaster turned out recently and made a roundup. They put a fence across the road between fences surrounding fields on either side, and in a short time drove in and killed with clubs over 500 jack rabbits. The people of the valley are considering the advisability of inviting Los Angeles to join in a general slaughter. They think several hundred men and boys, on horseback, might be able to kill 40,000 of the pesky cottontails.

BLIND MIGRATORY FISH.

Few anglers are aware of the not inconsiderable number of sea trout and salmon that are totally blind, says a writer in The Field. It is no rare occurrence for the baillif when stepping into the coop box to find that all the fish do not frantically scatter about his feet. There are salmon and sea trout which lie perfectly quiet until touched. These when examined are found to have growing over their eyes a scaly covering like the shell of a pea that has been boiled.

There can be no doubt that the fish which have their eyes completely enveloped by this shell are totally blind. There are this season on the Cumberland Derwent a larger proportion than usual of fish so afflicted. Blindness in sea trout and salmon no doubt partly accounts for long sojourns in particular places.

FAMILIAR EXPRESSION.

The ferry across the Styx was crowded to suffocation.

"By jinks!" whispered a new arrival, "I believe at one time old Charon must have been a conductor on a street car."

"What gave you that idea?" asked another shade.

"Why, I just heard him say: 'Step lively, please, there is plenty of room up front!'"

A ROD IN PICKLE.

Bess—You met Miss Borem through Mr. Stringer, I believe. I didn't know he was a friend of yours.

Dick—He isn't.

Bess—Oh, I thought he was.

Dick—So did I.

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