

THE PINE TREE.

It may have been that Dan Bresford's health was poor, or it may have been that his memory was good—more likely the latter—but certain it is that in October he found it necessary to drop office work and take another run into the mountains for rest, as he had done early in the May before.

No doubt the failing health would have found any fresh air and out of door life beneficial, but memory and something else argued that the region of the South Park was the very best to be had, and that Tom Larkin's ranch accorded the finest accommodations of any in the mountains, without mentioning the sweet eyes, the winning voice, and the trim figure of pretty Bessie Larkin, old Tom's only daughter.

It may have been that Dan Bresford only remembered the glorious mornings, the perfect days, the tranquil evenings—that only the fresh breath of the pines and the companionship of the great peaks called him back to the little ranch in the South Park. But when he dropped, travel-stained and weary, from his saddle at the well-remembered door, and saw, dimly outlined in the flicker of the firelight within, a certain form that he had not forgotten all the summer long, the folly of further deceit was swept far from him, and in the glad beat of his heart he found all that he had come for—the full joy of being once again in the presence of the only woman whom he loved.

For he would not disguise it now—not even from the true-eyed maiden who gave him her hand with a little tremor and a glad blush, when her old father had greeted their returning guest and called her forward; and sweet Bessie saw in Bresford's face all that she had dreamed since he bade her good-bye five months before; so that, without a word, two hearts were happy in the mountain ranch that night.

Two hearts, and perhaps three, for old Tom had some fresh tobacco, and moreover he admired the "city chap" as one among a thousand, being capable and willing to endure a frontiersman's life without a murmur—but not the fourth. For there was a fourth.

Carl Desmond, old Tom's assistant, was not happy.

Carl was a new-comer, a man forty years of age, whose past was utterly unknown to the ranchers about the park, but who had proven himself a good huntsman and herdsman, and who had found a home in the cabin of Tom Larkin three months before.

Since his arrival little had been learned of him except that he came from "the river," and whether an outlaw or a murderer no one knew. It was enough to these rough hewn diamonds that the man was a good shot, brave and civil; they cared for little else, and so, although a comparative stranger, he had already made himself a place in the park.

And he had done more. He had fallen deeply in love with Bessie Larkin. The girl knew it, but even before Bresford's second visit the thought of any lover but one was distasteful to her, and little wonder is it that she had looked with more and more of coldness upon the gathering passion of this strange, half-German, half-Spanish suitor, until he had grown almost desperate at the girl's resistance.

Now that Bresford had appeared—now that the love light which he had striven in vain to awaken burned in Bessie's eyes—now that the lovers were together and knew each of the other's affection—Carl Desmond saw that his suit was doomed to certain failure.

And as the night grew over old Tom's ranch this man's heart was far from happy, but within it despair held sway, and later a fierce desire for revenge.

From the day that he came Bresford found Desmond an apparent friend, thoughtful, willing and silent, yet ever at his side, with a suggestion or information, if desired.

From the first he was pleased, but Bessie, knowing more of her lover than the man, doubted the intent of Desmond's acts; and so it happened, the glorious evening as Bresford and the girl were returning from a long canter along the plain, and rode close together in the golden, purpling twilight that fell from the great peaks overhead, that the maiden, filled with a vague dread of something terrible to come, told Dan the story of Desmond's love for her, of his passionate offer, his rejection, and, lastly, of her fear that he would seek revenge upon her one darling under the guise of friendship.

Bresford leaned from his saddle, and kissed the sweet face so close to his, and laughed joyously and low.

"Put away such terrors, my love. The man may hate me, but I can only pity him, knowing what he has lost. He will never do me harm."

"But you will be careful—you will watch him!" whispered Bessie, her pleading eyes upturned.

"Yes, sweetheart. I'll be careful for your sake," and the two rode contentedly on.

But neither saw the shadow that crept from among the bushes beside them and vanished in the gloaming.

And so Bresford was warned, but he smiled incredulously as he thought of the matter later. True, this man, Desmond might have loved Bessie—for how could he help it—but it was only sor-

row, not revenge, that filled his heart and eyes with sadness, and Dan felt far more of sympathy than of distrust for the man.

The days passed, the autumn looked toward winter. The pines upon the mountain side grew more and more sombre, and seemed daily to wrap their mantles of feathered branches more closely about them, as if preparing for the coming of snow.

The mountains themselves were tipped with white, and the park grew dun-colored and brown. Night became chill, and an open fire in the yawning chimney a necessity; the sun looked far away, and a thin shield of ice often covered the shallows in the river at the break of day. All nature was at rest, her year's work done, waiting hour by hour the coming of winter.

Bresford hunted, fished and rode, and with him almost constantly was his promised wife. For old Tom had been interviewed, and his consent to the union gained.

The neighbors about knew of the engagement, and it pleased them, for Bresford's friendly, unassuming ways had won him a place in the hearts of the ranchers, and the coming wedding was looked forward to with anticipations of pleasure by all the inhabitants of that portion of the park.

The first snow had come, when, one early morn, as Bresford stepped from the cabin door to look at the sky, and decide upon his plans for the day, he was met by Carl Desmond.

"Good-morning, sir!" said Carl. "Do you hunt to-day?"

"I was just debating the question," returned Dan. "I should like some fresh venison. If it could be had, but I fear the deer have all gone south."

"Most of them, have, sir; but yesterday I discovered the trail of seven elk in Horse Gulch, leading into the mountains. We might overtake the animals, if you cared to try. In fact, I am sure we could, for they travel slowly in the snow, and we ought to be able to bag a couple. It may take two days, though."

"I am with you, if it takes four days, if we can get some elk!" cried Bresford, with true hunter's spirit.

"Shall we start at once?"

"I can be ready in an hour," replied Desmond.

"And I also," said Dan.

And so they separated.

No thought of treachery had come to the younger man, as he agreed to the trip, which would make him the sole companion of his defeated rival for a full day or more, but when he told Bessie and stooped to kiss her good-bye, her face was like the dead.

"Oh, my love!" she whispered; "not with him—not with him!"

"Why, sweetheart?" said Bresford, soothingly. "You are wrong to suspect the man so. He does not hate me and I do not fear him. No harm can come to me."

"But—"

"But, darling," returned her lover, closing her lips with a kiss. "I have promised, and must go. Do not be foolish. Only a little time, and I shall be with you always. Good-bye, my pet—good-bye till to-morrow night."

And before the girl could cry out, Bresford was gone. It was a little before nine o'clock in the morning when the two huntersmen, each thoroughly armed, and furnished with rations for a two days' tramp, struck the trail of the elk. It was past four in the afternoon, and growing duskish, when they made their first halt, far among the beetling crags of mountains, twenty miles from the park, and half as far from the nearest ranch or road.

The men seated themselves upon a great boulder, looked at each other and laughed.

"What do you think?" queried Bresford. "I'm a tenderfoot, you know, but I'll obey your orders if I have to follow those long horns into New Mexico."

"Well, sir," said Desmond, deferentially, "if you are willing, I think we had better stick to it a bit longer. We cannot be far from the south branch of the Platte, and when we find that we will camp. If it does not snow we can follow the trail to-morrow and certainly overtake our game. If it does snow we can follow the river to the park and so home."

"All right!" replied Dan, tossing his rifle to his shoulder again. "Then let's be moving."

They started on. In less than an hour, and while yet light enough remained to note their surroundings they found the river, frozen from shore to shore, followed it far enough to enter a deep gorge, where at a certain point they found an airhole and open water, and there they paused and decided to camp.

They built their fire upon a narrow bit of beach, close beneath a monster pine tree that grew from the cliff side above and fairly overhung them. They ate their jerked venison, drank their river water, and smoked their pipes. Meanwhile time waned.

The night was still at first, but now and again from far above them fell the faint moan of some hurrying wind, and dark, ragged clouds drifted continually across the narrow ribbon of night-sky visible between the canyon walls.

As time passed this sound increased and little gusts of icy wind came sweeping up the narrow gorge with a hollow and lonesome sound.

At last, when they were preparing for rest, Desmond said:

"I fear a storm. If it comes, our hunt is up."

"Well," said Bresford, "then so it must be. We can at least reach home, for the river is our trail. Storm or no storm, however we must rest."

And so saying, he stretched himself upon the ground, between the fire and the rock wall, and, weary and worn, he was soon slumbering soundly. And as he slept, the night grew colder and the storm fell. Wild and fierce without the canyon, even there it sifted the drifting snow in great white clouds, and the angry wind shrieked and moaned, and shook the cliff trees with a mighty and invisible hand.

How long he slept Bresford never knew, but he was awakened roughly,

and, striving to rise, he fell again, and found himself bound hand and foot. A terrible chill ran through his blood, and a hand seem grasping his throat. He struggled for utterance and cried aloud:

"Desmond!"

A laugh, half-demonical, and altogether horrible rang low in his ear, and the reply:

"I am here!"

He turned his head. Desmond sat at his side, contemplating him with an expression of fiendish joy. Carl's eyes were wild and glaring, his face lit by the flickering, flaming fire with an unearthly light.

"I am here! Oh, you fool! You are mine now! See, I have marked your death spot over here!" And he touched Bresford's hunting jacket, where, with a dead coal, the man had drawn a black circle upon the back-skin. "Within that ring I shall send my bullet! Poor fool! Did you think Carl Desmond would lose the game so easily? Why, boy, I've killed men for lesser women than Bessie Larkin and should I let a stripling like you carry off the only girl I ever loved? For I do love her. Never! But let me tell you. I drove the elk all this way, two days ago, so that I might entice you to follow the trail to this spot. I sought this gorge, because here the water is deep and swift, and when you are dead, I shall cast you, rifle and all, down yonder airhole, and you will never be seen again! Listen! The grave is now calling for you!"

He raised his hand. The hollow sound of the rushing water struck chill upon the young man's ear. He shuddered.

"Come!" cried Carl. "I meant to let you sleep until later; but the storm has broken and I must hasten. I will tell them we were lost and separated in the snow. I reach home—you do not. I marry Bessie. See?"

The murderer smiled horribly, seized and propped Bresford against the wall of rock behind the fire in such a position that he could easily aim at the erect figure, then retired a little distance through the whirling snow, and raised his heavy rifle to his face.

"Pray, fool! I'll give you while I count twenty!" he said.

The fire leaped, and its light fell upon the face of Bresford as upon the features of a corpse. The wild wind swept shrieking through the canyon, and the mighty pine tree overhead writhed and groaned.

"Time's up! Good-bye! But wait. Another chance! Will you give the girl up? Go away and never return? Leave her forever, if I let you live?"

Bresford's eyes gathered fire, blood leaped to his cheeks.

"No!"

And the wind shrieked even more despairingly.

"Thea die!"

The desperado's arm was already raised; his deadly aim along its barrel, and there raged through the gorge the most terrible stormburst which the night had yet known, bringing with it a dense white cloud of snow, and even as it swept along about the camp fire, a sudden sharp, crackling and rending sound was heard, followed by a dull and ominous roar, and with a power immeasurable the great pine overhead was torn from its roots and hurled with deafening thunder into the canyon beneath.

And when the storm lightened Bresford still leaned against the rock wall; the camp fire still blazed and flickered before him, but beyond it lay the mighty mass of the fallen tree, splintered and torn, and Desmond was gone.

Slowly and with much pain the bound man writhed toward the embers of the fire, and rolling this way and that, succeeded in burning the withes that confined him, so that he broke them from his limbs.

Then he crouched all night before the still furious storm, and, in a half-delirium, awaited the morning.

When it came, pale and trembling, yet filled with a strange delight, as if born into a new world, Bresford hurriedly quitted the scene of the night's horror, followed the winding river to the plain, and so northwardly home again.

Three weeks later he was married. But there was one lacking among the wedding guests, and the neighbors said, "Poor Desmond!" for they supposed him lost in the snow.

But the groom knew where, crushed and buried beneath a mighty pine, his enemy lay, and in his heart he gave thanks for the great tree which had stricken down the murderer's hand and saved his life in the midnight and the storm.

THE SMALLEST ISLAND.

Rockall is perhaps the smallest island in the world. It is situated in the Atlantic over 300 miles west of Scotland, and is a mere rock about 60 feet high and 225 feet round, arising from a reef of sand. The rock is basalt and granite, very magnetic. It is haunted by seabirds, and the mackerel of the surrounding seas are very fine. Of course, it was never inhabited, and is very seldom visited, owing to the difficulty of landing on it.

HIS MATRIMONIAL PRIZE.

My husband tells all his friends that he drew a prize in the matrimonial lottery, she said proudly.

He probably refers to your bank account, returned her dearest friend.

THE DOCTOR'S WIT.

What are you doing, doctor? asked a man who entered as the physician was vaccinating a patient.

Scrapping an acquaintance, was the reply.

CRUEL.

Mrs. Skimpson—I think Mr. Smith must have liked the beefsteak pie. He had two helpings of it.

The Tactless Boarder—Perhaps he did it on a wager.

SHOT THE MANEATER DEAD

AN EXCITING LION HUNT IN AN AFRICAN JUNGLE.

A Fourteen-Year-Old Boy Stolen in the Night and the Experiences of the French Explorer Foa in Trailing the Animal and Killing Him—A Shot Well Pat.

The French explorer, M. Edouard Foa, the author of the volume "From the Cape to Lake Nyassa," is now publishing an account of his exploits as a lion and elephant hunter, which the French papers are printing conspicuously. The following is his story of a lion chase in Tehiromo:

"Two natives came to me, sent by the chief of a neighboring village. They told me that a lion had carried away an old woman and that he was still prowling around the neighborhood. We set out immediately and after a march of four hours we arrived at the village. Night was coming on and it was impossible to do anything in the darkness. The best plan was to wait for daylight. A little distance from this habitation there was another village, where the natives were dancing to the music of tam-tams. At half-past four in the morning I heard shrieks and cries in the little village, and just as I got out with my gun in hand, followed by my man, a weeping woman threw herself at my feet wringing her hands and explaining that a lion had carried away her son.

"By torchlights we found our way to the other village, and, on inquiring, we learned that the lion had carried away the boy just as he opened the door of the hut to fetch some firewood that was at the threshold. The cries uttered by the people in the village frightened the lion away, and, moreover, it was impossible to find any trace of him with its torchlights.

DAYLIGHT SOON APPEARED.

I told the natives not to come in any great crowd. So ten men only accompanied me in silence, according to orders. As soon as there was sufficient light to follow the trail we went to the hut from which the child had been carried away.

"We found the trail behind the house, which proved that the brute had gone around it. With the trail there were footmarks of the child. Evidently he had been seized by the upper part of the body. Then we found a few drops of blood. The animal passed through one of the streets—if we may call them streets—of the village, leading toward the river, going along with his burden in front of more than twenty huts. The inhabitants had not been aroused by the woman's cries until after the beast had passed. Still following the track, we reached the stream, where the animal halted and lit his prey beside him. This was proved by the presence of a little pool of blood. Then he crossed the river, which was only one foot deep, passing obliquely, almost descending the current, for four or five meters, then coming out and entering the reeds which line the stream.

"Before I sent Tambarika to watch the outer edge of the thick bushes and to find if there were any traces of the animal having passed through. A well-known whistle from him notified us that such was the case, so I took to the clearing in order to get to him as quickly as possible. After running for a short distance through the tall grass we came upon a new pool of blood which showed where the beast had stopped again. Then we found ourselves in a little open plain still on the trail of the nocturnal man-eater. After that we entered a wood, where we discovered clots of blood and the belt of pearls that the little fellow had worn around his loins. After that we found part of his scanty clothing, which was torn off by the bushes.

A POOL OF BLOOD

indicated where the brute began to tear up his victim.

"Finally, on the opposite edge of the wood we passed into the high grass, where a terrible growl brought us to a sudden halt. There we listened. We knew that the animal was there; but was he going to charge? We heard nothing more. I cocked my gun and kept within reach of my hand my six charges of buckshot cartridges. When all was ready I advanced in the grass, with my hand upon the trigger, watching closely and listening for the slightest sound. Ten metres before us we heard the rustling of the long grass and we saw the heads of it waving, but nothing more. We continued to advance slowly. To the right there was a tree. I made a sign to Kambombe, who climbed it like a monkey in a few jumps. Soon he was in the tree's fork and on the watch. 'The child is here,' he said, 'but there is no lion.' Then turning to the right he shouted: 'Here he is! Come this way!'

"Guided by his gesture I ran to the right. Then I signalled to the natives to follow us and with a movement of my arms I made them understand that they were to watch the grass to the left. I sent Rodzani to tell them to make a noise so as to frighten the lion toward me. Then I placed myself in a little opening and remained motionless, watching the bunch of bushes from which I expected every moment to see the brute emerge. Kambombe in the tree whispered: 'He's going away. No, he is coming back now. He stops and looks in the direction of the men. Now he's coming your way in a walk. Here he comes! Here he comes! Step back a little!'

"One may imagine the anxiety which I listened to these words. My men were behind me in case of necessity," said L. "The grass moved forward like a wave, and the lion came out at about eight metres from me, walking slowly and occasionally looking behind him. At last he saw me. He stopped, showed his teeth growled and advanced. At the same moment he lashed his tail, raised his ears and seemed about to charge. Having followed him with my gun, I aimed at the nape of the neck and pulled the trigger. His body bent as if they were rubber, and he

ROLLED OVER DEAD AS A LOG.

"He was an old fellow of ordinary size and extremely thin. The child, 14 years old and must have been dead the very moment he was seized. These felines never carry off their prey unless they are obliged to do so by a surprise. I carried back on an improvised stretcher the bodies of the two actors in the nocturnal drama. That of the lion showed deep wounds which had penetrated the neck and the right shoulder, and bare. As for the body of the child when it was brought to the village, carried by eight men, the whole population attempted to rush upon it. I saw the first one to touch the body before it was skinned would make acquaintance of my cane. All the population sat down in a circle, and Rodzani and Msiambiri finished the work. Then they rushed upon the body, filled it with projecting spears, perforated it with spear thrusts and dragged the remains through all the neighboring villages. Without fear and without a head it looked like an animal prepared by the butchers. Later, amidst the lamentations of the women, there was a funeral dance and noise. The body of the lion was burned up in an enormous fire. We were half way on the road to our camp, we could hear the noise of the tam-tams and see the red light of the fires, which proved to us that the natives were making sure that the lion was complete."

THEIR STRANGE FATE.

After Passing Through Dangers in the Meet Accident and Death at Home.

Young Lord Delamere apparently shares the strange fate of those who after passing through the most appalling dangers in the wilds of Africa and of Asia without sustaining injury, even to a hair of their heads, are suddenly stricken by the very moment that they return to civilization.

Three years ago he had hardly reached home after a lion and elephant expedition, lasting over twenty months in the totally unexplored portions of Somaliland, which is regarded as the most dangerous portion of the Dark Continent to white people, than he came to a terrible cropper while hunting in the neighbourhood of his country seat at Vale Royal. His spine was so badly injured that it was feared at one moment that he would be crippled for life.

But before many months were past he had recovered sufficiently to set off on another big game expedition to Africa. This time he crossed the entire continent from east to west, remaining absent so long that at the time the greatest fears were entertained for his safety. Three days after his return home he went out hunting, and was thrown with his horse at precisely the very same spot where he had met with his previous accident. Once again he is confined to his bed with an injured spine and concussion of the brain, and great anxiety is felt by his relatives concerning the chances of his recovery.

HOW THEY WERE KILLED.

It may be remembered that Pasha passed unhurt through every kind of danger in Africa, only to tumble out of a first-storey window and to break his neck at the foot of a banquet in his honour, given to him on his return to civilization.

In the same way Speke, who achieved such fame in connection with his discovery of the sources of the Nile, was killed through an accidental explosion of his gun while rabbit shooting after his return to England.

Analogous thereto was the end of Captain Cameron of the navy, who was one of the first to cross Africa from east to west, and at least a dozen other instances of the same kind could be mentioned.

FISH-EATING SPIDERS.

There are certain large sea spiders, two feet from toe to toe, collosum, gigas, that live in the water and feed entirely upon molluscs and worms. They are carnivorous wolf spiders, an amphibious inhabitant of the tropical regions of South America, is said to prey upon fish diet, though it is not averse to eating mice, young birds, and even snakes, resembling in this respect the theraphosidae, or bird-catching spider of India and Queensland, seen by Lessendeis is the most formidable specimen of the spider family, measuring six inches round the body and possessing 12 long, hairy legs, which it grips its finny prey.

It is several times larger than the self, and, after biting them through the back and stinging them, it disgorges itself by sucking the juices from the bodies of its victims.

HOUSEHOLD.

SHADE FOR SWEET PEAS.

It is now two years since I began experimenting with sweet peas, and with unusually good success. I write L. A. Whitney. At the outset I chose two sites with a view of ascertaining which was the better. One had a southern exposure, the lines extending east and west, entirely protected on north side, while upon the other the lines were planted to extend north and south, fronting the east and west on the west and north. The seeds were put in about the first week of April. Those planted on the south side came up first, and the vines grew tall and beautiful, while the others were comparatively slow in showing themselves above ground.

For the south side vines I had provided wire netting and for those on the east side used ordinary twine fastened to stakes set about three feet apart. I soon found the netting, although by far the more convenient, does not mean a good arrangement for the vines, for the wire, acting as a conductor of heat, withered and dried them so that by noon the stems hung limp and flabby, while the flowers had lost their brilliancy of color. I began to notice this almost as soon as blossoms appeared, and then watched to see if the same thing occurred with my east side vines. I found it did not, and also that the stems upon these grew much longer before the buds opened than upon the others. By the end of July my south side vines were gradually dying from the bottom upward, and practically done blossoming.

I consider this due principally to the location, for at no time during the day were they in shade, and I have found that afternoon shade indispensable to the healthy growth of sweet peas. The netting simply aided the drying-up process and should be considered objectionable, no matter what the location, because of furnishing undue heat to the vines.

My east side peas proved a complete success. They grew higher and greener each day and the stakes, which at first had been set leaving about six feet above ground, had to be pieced out and extended to eight feet. Some of the vines outran even this height and came near putting Mother Goose to shame by rivaling Jack's beanstalk. The stems were long and strong and the flowers, many of them, were as large as are represented by the pictures in the seed growers' catalogues which I had previously thought greatly exaggerated. These vines blossomed until the middle of October, being protected from frosts, and were still green and flourishing when pulled up in order to prepare the ground for another season.

The following year I planted only upon the eastern site, lines extending north and south, entirely protected on the west, using no wire for the runners, and the results were equally good. I should therefore say from my own experience that, other well known favorable conditions as to soil and moisture being present, this location is of primary importance in the successful cultivation of sweet peas.

PROBLEMS FOR MOTHERS.

"How can I possibly keep my child simple and unworldly, and at the same time give her the necessary stimulus which she undoubtedly needs in her education, by putting her either in a school or a class with the children of my friends?" asked a perplexed mother the other day. "To my surprise and, I must say also, to my consternation, she returned home the other day quite pettish. 'Mamma,' she said, 'where do you get my jackets?'

"Why, sometimes from one place and sometimes from another, Mollie, I answered, rather surprised at such a question from a mite of 10. I buy them wherever I find one that I think is pretty."

"Oh, because Carrie Midas looked at the mark inside and laughed, and Sally and Funtanner said to me afterward that Carrie wears lovely clothes, but that, of course, she only gets them at the best places, and then added that she herself wouldn't wear a jacket that didn't bear the mark of a fashionable place."

"Only fancy, children of that age as long as they are prettily and nicely dressed! But that is not the worst. I found Mollie that afternoon busily unbuttoning the stitches that fastened the mark in her jacket."

"What are you doing dear?" I asked her.

"Oh," she said, frankly, for so far, I conceal any of her actions. I am taking her from my best jacket, which came at the same place as Carrie's, and on Sundays or when I go only wear it on such occasions. But Mollie! I exclaimed, quite horrified, that is cheating. I am sure my little daughter never would act like this."

"The child grew red instantly, and her eyes filled with tears. 'Mamma,' she cried, 'I never thought of that. Fannie Sly told me to do it, and said she took a mark from her mother's cloak and sewed it into her jacket, and all the girls said what a nice one it was, just because it came from A—s.'"

"Now, what is one to do under such circumstances? I cannot have Mollie's simplicity and unworldliness spoiled, and yet she is getting on wonderfully with her lessons, and needs

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