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NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA

SEEMED TO NEED MORE FIRE

Swan, Only Being Cooked for Two Days, Was Not Very Palatable Eating.

One of the most annoying things about swans is that they live to an extremely great age, and that it is impossible for the ordinary observer to guess what their years may be.

"All the boys," said Mr. Cleveland, thanked me politely for having remembered them, but none of them seemed to have much to say how they enjoyed the birds.

"Carlsle, I found, had his cooked on a night when he was dining out. Another, when I asked him, said he hoped I wouldn't mind, but he had sent his home to his old mother.

"Yes, sir, oh, yes, I got the swan all right, thank you, and he went over his desk and seemed very busy.

"Fine bird," I said.

"Yes, sir, fine bird," and he went on working.

"Enjoy eating him, Thurber?" "He waited a minute, and then he said, 'Well, sir, I guess they didn't cook him right at my house. They only cooked him two days, and he went on working without cracking a smile.'

A "Mite."

The difficulties experienced by our forefathers in trying to reckon money in very small proportions appear in the various values given to a "mite" in the sixteenth and seventeenth century books of commercial arithmetic.

The Jeweler's Diagnosis.

"Can you tell me what's the matter with this watch?" inquired the Average Looking Man anxiously.

"The jeweler stuck a dice box in his eye and glanced at the instrument's innards. Then he looked up.

"You find it necessary to shake it real hard every now and then to start it going, don't you?" he inquired.

"That's right."

"And you find that it gets dusty, don't you? Perhaps you don't blow hard enough on the works?"

"Oh, yes, I do—every day."

"Well, well! But are you careful to start the balance wheel going with a toothpick every hour or two?"

"Yes, I do that, too."

"And in spite of all your precautions, it needs about five dollars' worth of repairs. It's very strange."

For the jeweler possessed a dry and sarcastic wit.

A Bear Just Misses Revenge.

Herman Russell, a farmer of Hudson township, had a thrilling escape from a den of bears the other day, says a Boyer City (Mich.) dispatch to the Chicago Inter Ocean.

While driving along the road his watchdog scouted a cub and Herman, seeing the little fellow, decided that it would make a good pet.

He accordingly went over to the cub, but when he attempted to pick him up he was confronted by a big mother bear, who put up a fight.

Herman took to the first tree, which was a small sapling. Mrs. Bruin seized up the situation, then deliberately gnawed the sapling until it broke.

Russell was saved by falling into the branches of a larger tree.

Many Women Are Illiterate.

There are said to be between 70 and 80 per cent. of illiterate women in the provinces in Italy south of Rome. Above this line many intelligent women are engaged in professional work and are highly educated.

Peter Thom's Thistle.

Peter Thom of Barre has a Scotch thistle in his garden which has reached over eight feet in height. The seed from which the thistle was grown was obtained from thistles growing on the grave of Robert Burns.

Enormous Sum Spent on Roads.

Mr. John Burns stated in the parliamentary papers that the cost of maintaining and cleansing the public roads of London in the year 1907-'08 was £1,469,291.—London Mail

INTO THE PRIMITIVE

BY ROBERT AMES BENNET
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS
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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the shipwreck of the steamer on which Miss Leslie, an American heiress, Lord Winthrop, an Englishman, and Tom Blake, a bronco American, were passengers. The three were tossed upon an uninhabited island and were the only ones not drowned.

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

Blake picked a path along the edge of the hill, where the moist vegetation, though scorched, had refused to burn. After the first abrupt ledge, up which Blake had to drag his companions, the ascent was easy.

"Here's luck for you!" growled Blake. "Why couldn't the blamed old tree have grown on the other side? We might have found a way to climb it. Guess we'll have to smoke out another leopard. We're no nearer those birds' nests than we were yesterday."

"By Jove, look here!" exclaimed Winthrop. "This is our chance for antelope! Here by the spring are bamboo—real bamboo—and only half the thicket burned."

"What of them?" demanded Blake. "Dows—arrows—and did you not agree that they would make knives?"

"Umph—we'll see. What is it, Miss Jenny?"

"Isn't that a hole in the big tree?" "Looks like it. These baobabs are often hollow."

"Perhaps that is where the leopard had his den," added Winthrop. "Shouldn't wonder. We'll go and see."

"But, Mr. Blake," protested the girl, "may there not be other leopards?"

"Might have been; but I'll bet they lit out with the other. Look how the tree is scorched. Must have been stacks of dry brush around the hole, 'nough to smoke out a fireman. We'll look and see if they left any soup bones lying around. First, though, here's your drink, Miss Jenny."

As he spoke, Blake kicked aside some smouldering branches and led the way to the crevice whence the spring trickled from the rock into a shallow stone basin. When all had drunk their fill of the clear cool water Blake took up his club and walked straight across to the baobab.

Less than 30 steps brought him to the narrow opening in the trunk of the huge tree. At first he could make out nothing in the dimly lit interior; but the foid, catty odor was enough to convince him that he had found the leopards' den.

He caught the vague outlines of a long body, crouched five or six yards away, on the far side of the hollow. He sprang back, his club brandished to strike. But the expected attack did not follow.

Blake glanced about as though considering the advisability of a retreat. Winthrop and Miss Leslie were staring at him, white-faced. The sight of their terror seemed to spur him to dare-devil bravado; though his actions may rather have been due to the fact that he realized the futility of flight, and so rose to the requirements of the situation—the grim need to stand and face the danger.

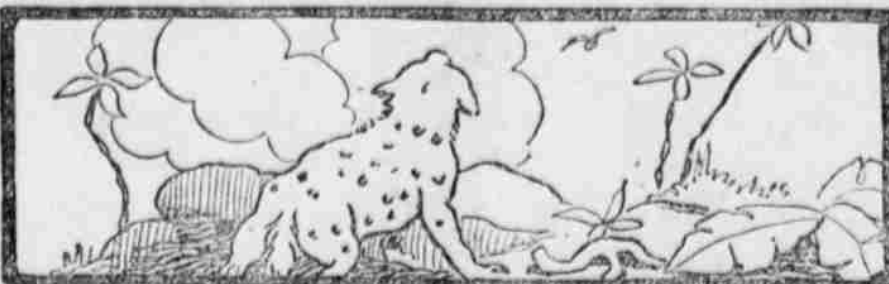
"Get behind the bamboo!" he called, and as they hurriedly obeyed, he caught up a stone and flung it in at the crouching beast.

He heard the missile strike with a soft thud that told him he had not missed his mark, and he swung up his club in both hands. Given half a chance he would smash the skull of the female as he had crushed her blinded mate. One moment after another passed, and he stood poised for the shock, tense and scowling. Not so much as a snarl came from within. The truth flashed upon him.

"Smothered!" he yelled.

The other saw him dart in through the hole. A moment later two limp grayish bodies were flung out into the open. Immediately after Blake reappeared, dragging the body of the mother leopard.

"It's all right; they're dead!" cried Winthrop, and he ran forward to look at the bodies.



One Moment After Another Passed, and He Stood Poised for the Shock.

Miss Leslie followed, hardly less curious. "Are they all dead, Mr. Blake?" she inquired.

"Wiped out—whole family. The old cat stayed by her kittens, and all smothered together—lucky for us! Get busy with those bamboos, Win. I'm going to have these skins, and the sooner we get the cub meat hung up and curing, the better for us."

"Leopard meat again!" rejoined Winthrop.

"Spring leopard, young and tender! What more could you ask? Get a move on you."

"Can I do anything, Mr. Blake?" asked Miss Leslie.

"Hunt a shady spot."

"But I really mean it."

"Well, if that's straight, you might go on along the gully, and see if there's any place to get to the top. You could pick up sticks on the way back, if any are left. We'll have to fumigate this tree hole before we adopt it for a residence."

"Will it be long before you finish with your—with the bodies?"

"Well, now, look here, Miss Jenny; it's going to be a mess, and I wouldn't mind hauling the carcasses clear down the gully, out of sight, if it was to be the only time. But it's not, and you have got to get used to it, sooner or later. So we'll start now."

"I suppose, if I must, Mr. Blake—Really, I wish to help."

"Good. That's something like! Think you can learn to cook?"

"Blake took the cord of cocoon fiber which she held out to him, and tested its strength.

"Well, I'll be blessed!" he said. "This is something like. If you don't look out, you'll make quite a campmate, Miss Jenny. But now, trot along. This is hardly arctic weather, and our abattoir don't include a cold-storage plant. The sooner these lambs are dressed, the better."

CHAPTER X.

Problems in Woodcraft.

IT WAS no pleasant sight that met Miss Leslie's gaze upon her return. The neatness of butchering can hardly be termed aesthetic; and Blake and Winthrop lacked both skill and tools.

Between the penknife and an improvised blade of bamboo, they had flayed the two cubs and haggled off the flesh. The ragged strips, spitted on bamboo rods, were already searing in the fierce sun-rays.

Miss Leslie would have slipped into the hollow of the baobab with her armful of fagots and brush; but Blake waved a bloody knife above the body of the mother leopard, and beckoned the girl to come nearer.

"Hold on a minute, please," he said. "What did you find out?"

Miss Leslie drew a few steps nearer, and forced herself to look at the revolting sight. She found it still more difficult to withstand the odor of the fresh blood. Winthrop was pale and nauseated.

The sight of his distress caused the girl to forget her own loathing. She drew a deep breath, and succeeded in countering Blake's expectant look with a half-smile.

"How well are you getting along!" she exclaimed.

"Didn't think you could stand it. But you've got grit all right, if you are a lady," Blake said admiringly. "Say, you'll make it yet! Now, how about the gully?"

"There is no place to climb up. It runs along like this, and then slopes down. But there is a cliff at the end, as high as these walls."

one, which grow nearest to the seaward side of the cleft.

"Here's our ladder," he said. "Get some firewood. Pound the bushes, though, before you go poking into them. May be snake hole."

"Snakes—oh!" cried Miss Leslie, and she stood shuddering at the danger she had already incurred.

The fire had burnt itself out on a bare ledge of rock between them and the baobab, and the clumps of dry brush left standing in this end of the cleft were very suggestive of snakes, now that Blake had called attention to the possibility of their presence.

He laughed at his hesitating companions. "Go on, go on! Don't squeal till you're bit. Most snakes hike out, if you give them half a chance. Take a stick each of you, and pound the bushes."

Thus urged, both started to work. But neither ventured into the thicker clumps. When they returned, with large armfuls of sticks and twigs, they found that Blake had used his glass to light a handful of dry bark, out in the sun, and was nursing it in, to a small fire at the base of the tree, on the side next the cliff.

"Now, Miss Jenny," he directed, "you're to keep this going—not too big a fire—understand? Same time you can keep on fetching brush to fumigate your cat hole. It needs it, all right."

"Will not that be rather too much for Miss Leslie?" asked Winthrop.

"Well, if she'd rather come and rub brains on the skins,—Indian tan, you know,—"

"How can you mention such things before a lady?" protested Winthrop.

"Beg your pardon, Miss Leslie; you see, I'm not much used to ladies' company. Anyway, you've got to see and hear about these things. And now I'll have to get the strings for Win's bamboo bows. Come on, Win. We've got that old tabby to peel, and a lot more besides."

Miss Leslie's first impulse was to protest against being left alone, when at any moment some awful venomous serpent might come darting at her out of the bushes or the crevices in the rocks. But her half-parted lips drew firmly together, and after a moment's hesitancy, she forced herself to the task which had been assigned her. The fire, once started, required little attention. She could give most of her time to gathering brush for the fumigation of the leopard den.

She had collected quite a heap of fuel at the entrance of the hollow, when she remembered that the place would first have to be cleared of its accumulation of bones. A glance at her companions showed that they were in the midst of tasks even more revolting. It was certainly disagreeable to do such things; yet, as Mr. Blake had said, others had to do them. It was now her time to learn. She could see him smile at her hesitation.

Stung by the thought of his half contemptuous pity, she caught up a forked stick, and forced herself to enter the tree-cave. The stench met her like a blow. It nauseated and all but overpowered her. She stood for several moments in the center of the cavity, sick and faint. Had it been even the previous day, she would have run out into the open air.

Presently she grew a little more accustomed to the stench, and began to rake over the soft, dry mold of the den floor with her forked stick. Bones—who had ever dreamed of such a mess of bones?—big bones and little bones and skulls; old bones, dry and almost buried; moldy bones; bones still half-covered with bits of flesh and gristle—the remnants of the leopard family's last meal.

At last all were scraped out and flung in a heap, three or four yards away from the entrance. Miss Leslie looked at the result of her labor with a satisfied glance, followed by a sigh of relief. Between the heat and her unworked exercise, she was greatly fatigued. She stepped around to a shaded spot to rest.

When she reached it there were only a few dying embers left. She snatched dead leaves and shreds of fibrous inner bark, and knelt beside the dull coals to blow them into life. She could not bear the thought of having to confess her carelessness to Blake.

"(TO BE CONTINUED.)"

Drudgery in the Kitchen.

The path of progress is clear. There is no more reason why the woman in modern civilization should scrub and cook and darn and dust than there is why these things should be done by men. The development of improved machinery and the growth of labor-saving devices of all kinds will finally obviate the necessity of doing these things each day in each home through the land. Co-operation, which we are slowly learning to greet as a friend, will overcome the drudgery and make the life of a woman as enjoyable and eventful as that of the man.—Nearing and Watson in "Economics."

Help us to remember that greater than any church or creed is kindness.

To Memory Dear.

"Since I've come back I find I'm forgotten by all my friends."

"Why didn't you borrow money of them before you went away?"—Stray Stories.

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