

# Winter Joys and Sorrows of a Trapper in the Great North Woods

**A**NNAPOLIS, N. S., March 21.—The old trapper, romantic figure, the joy of my youth, has never left my mind's eye—the tall, spare but sinewy frame, dressed in fringed buckskin and bearing lightly on his trusty and unerring Brown Bear, the clear blue eye flashing over the aquiline nose, the silver locks flowing profusely from under the coonskin cap. The picture is completed by the faithful hound, which invariably looks up into his master's face with an expression of devotion and "almost human intelligence."

At last I could bear it no longer. "Go to!" I said to myself. "I will also be the old trapper!" and straightway I consulted Uncle Ned Buckshaw.

The old fellow was sitting in front of his big cabin fireplace, upon which blazed a pile of four-foot maple logs, and greeted me with a nod and a hearty "Howdy?" with a jerk of the thumb toward a home-made rocking chair at his side. I at once plunged into the middle of things and explained what was in my heart.

The old man slowly took his corn-cob from his lips and turned a glinting eye upon me.

"Show! Goin' to stay down and see the snow fly, eh? Ever done any trappin'?" I explained that I had smared the savage cottontail and trapped an occasional Mephitis mephitis over on the black toles, long ago in old Massachusetts.

"Hm!" replied the ancient. "Pretty cold work. Real work, too, if you want to get any fur. Well, yes, the moose season will be on for a month or two, but you can't go on an odd day. You weren't thinkin' o' goin' off alone, you afoose? Wouldn't do that if I were you. Me? Well, I dunno! You see every trapper has his country that sort o' belongs to him, and when you have to divide up on the cabin—

"There won't be much dividin', Uncle Ned. I'll contribute four dozen brand new traps and leave you all the rest except one set of mink and anything in the moose line we may get."

The upshot of it was that, as his regular partner had decided to cook for a gang of lumbermen in another country, Uncle Ned concluded to take me in his place, no doubt reckoning on the cheap acquisition of those traps when we had finished our labors.

As we were to be gone a couple of months and to work over a rather wide territory, there was a good deal of duff and provisions, which we loaded in two canoes, one canvas covered and the other a birch bark. The flotilla set sail one morning in early November as the leaves were rustling to earth, for, as the Indians say, "When leaves fall, the woods are dead."

At the foot of the chain of Liverpool lakes, where the big river makes out, stands the comfortable log cabin belonging to Del Thomas, and of this we took possession as home camp. From here our trap lines were to stretch eastward to Frog and Bear lakes and north up the Gull lake branch, forming about a right angle with the cabin.

**The Trapper's Equipment.**

For footwear we had moccasins, besides which Uncle Ned wore his favorite moose shanks, while I aroused his envy with a pair of knee moccasins with double soles. These I found excellent for canoe work, as one has frequently to step out into shallow water. Not that they keep your feet dry for any length of time; no footwear yet invented will do that, nor any costume short of Captain Boynton's swimming suit. We feet are part of the game. During the last year, spent nearly all in the wilderness, I don't believe that I have had my feet more than a fourth of the time.

One doesn't mind it as long as soft and thick wool socks are worn. Cold seldom persecutes a man in the woods if he keeps moving, and there is the camp fire at the end. Uncle Ned and I wore three pairs of socks, or rather two pairs and a pair of long stockings at least, by the way, and were well tired with thought.

Sweaters and old coats completed our outside dress, while next the skin we wore wool. I boasted a yachting oilskin coat which saved me many a drenching and was not heavy.

For weapons we carried a shotgun and a rifle, the latter because we hoped to do a little still hunting for moose if occasion

presented itself. The shotgun was used to pick up anything in the line of bait, such as rabbits (varying hares), muskrats or squirrels, as well as black ducks and partridges (ruffed grouse) for our larder, or even a stray mink or otter, for the Nova Scotia trappers assert that shot holes do not lessen the value of the pest. The Indians use BB shot indiscriminately on anything larger than grouse, as they want to kill when they hit. It is the same with rifle, big calibers being the favorites, Winchester .45-70, .468 or .35.

**Traps and Bait.**

The old-fashioned backwoods trapper, with which species we mostly have to do in the Maritime Provinces, is generally not very well off in regard to steel traps. In his first place they are rather expensive and much heavier than the dead falls, which are made on the spot with hatchet and knife. Nevertheless it is recognized that the steel trap does its work more surely than the dead fall.

In the provinces there is one bait that is favorite over all others, the flesh of the muskrat, and for this reason we had done preliminary trapping and our haversacks were well filled with the strong smelling meat, as we had taken the trouble to ripure the scent bags. You could have smelled us a mile in the woods, no harm, and But that was not all. I was determined to take every chance offered by science and was therefore provided with vials of several varieties of scent, each guaranteed irresistible to all furry folk. If unappealable feidness had anything to do with it I have no doubt they would differ widely in their views as to the efficacy of scents, many eschewing them entirely.

My experience goes to indicate that they are not necessary if the bait is of the right kind, but are good to smear over poor bait. In any case, no harm can be done, and may help when rubbed on the trapper's moccasins, thus making a trail from trap to trap.

**For a Mink.**

On our way to the lakes a couple of dozen traps of different kinds were set. The first were for mink and was placed at the foot of a large spruce within a yard of the shore of a narrow run between two lakes.

Using the tree for a back, a pen eight inches wide was made by the resting pointed sticks about a foot long into the ground and covering the top with sheets of spruce bark and sticks. At the inner end of this pen the bait, usually a piece of muskrat flesh, a trout or sucker or a bird's head, well seasoned with dope, is placed, impaled upon a sharp stick.

A steel trap was placed at the entrance of the pen, so that the mink must step on the pan in going inside for the bait. The trap and chain are carefully but very lightly covered with chaff, dry moss, little sticks, pine needles, etc., and the chain ring fastened to a bush or the pin driven into a tree.

During this operation the trapper moves about as little as possible, wears gloves, in order not to leave human scent on the trap, and covers his footprints with moss and chaff. A few drops of dope are then sprinkled about the scene and the deadly steel left to do its cruel work.

**Snare for Wildcat and Otter.**

Next we came to a big log that connected the mainland with an island. In the middle of the log was a dead branch sticking up, and from this a noose of twisted brass wires, eight inches in diameter, was so suspended that a passing wildcat, which left across a little ledge into the lake beyond.

A few rods further on Uncle Ned brought the canoe to the bank, up which a kind of path seemed to lead, vague but yet distinct. We disembarked and followed this path, which led across a little ledge into the lake beyond.

"Get out two otter traps," said Uncle Ned, proceeding to cut and trim two steel poles about ten feet long and three or four inches thick at the big ends.

The ring of a trap chain was then passed over the top of the pole, which was split and wedged so that the ring could

not be pulled off. The pole was thrust lightly into the ground out of sight and the other end of the pole was fixed to the other trap and pole were placed.

These paths, which are habitually used by otters on their journeys from point to point, are always loosely called slides, but the real slide is a path running down a declivity and is actually used by the otter to slide down, probably in play, as they have been observed to repeat the slide time after time with no other apparent purpose. No bait is used with otter traps.

Next was observed on the bank a large hollow log and well inside this a mink trap was set, as Uncle Ned said a mink never missed passing through it if he came that way. At each end of the log a foot inside a small piece of bait was left.

**The Deadfall.**

The next morning after arriving at the home camp we took the tent and canoe and set out for Frog lake, in the vicinity of which we set some fifty traps of different kinds. Among them were a dozen deadfalls, the original trap of the wilderness, and a few nail and hole traps for the benefit of mink.

The deadfall as used for small animals consists of a pen, at the entrance to which two stout poles are laid at right angles, but parallel to each other and one on top of the other, being held in this position by a pair of stakes at each side of the entrance. The lower pole is fixed, while the upper one can move up and down between the stakes, and is that part of the trap designed to fall upon and kill the game.

This upper log is held in position, about seven or eight inches above the other, for path, by a vertical prop, slender but strong. This is wedged between the upper pole and the lower, but at this latter point a spindle, flattened slightly at the butt end, is interposed in such a manner that, though the upper pole is held securely enough if not tampered with, the slightest jarring of the spindle will work it loose,

with the result that the prop is knocked out and the upper pole falls on the back of the game.

The spindle extends into the pen about six or eight inches and the bait is fixed to the inside end, so that the victim must put its head and part of its body between the poles in order to get at it. The upper pole is then weighted heavily with rocks or logs and the trap is finished.

The deadfall is an excellent trap and has the very great merit of being humane, in that it kills practically instantly. There is no limit to the varieties of triggers used in deadfalls.

**A Cruel Plan.**

I well remember the first trap I visited near Frog lake, two or three days after setting. It was a steel trap set in a pen, and as the canoe neared the shore I saw at once, by the manner in which the ground was torn up, that there was something wrong.

The chain was stretched out to its fullest limit and in the trap itself, still faintly struggling, was a small-sized mink. It had evidently been caught soon after the trap was set and was dying a slow and cruel death.

I rapped it on the head, threw it into the canoe and reset the trap, but my natural feeling of elation at having bagged the first fur of the trip was very seriously alloyed by the cruelty of the man, Uncle Ned had once told me that at first he never set a steel trap without fastening it either to a twitcup or, better, to a long, slender pole thrust into the bottom of the stream or lake, so that, when caught, the animal, taking refuge invariably in the water, will immediately be drowned.

Familiarity breeds contempt and also callousness to the feelings of animals, and few trappers stop to consider them. It is a remarkable fact, and one not calculated to increase our respect for the hearts of mankind, that in not a single book on trapping that I can recall, and I own a great many of the best known, is the cruelty of steel

traps, when used without the sliding pole, even so much as commented on.

For myself, I denounce the method as worthy of the savagery of central Africa, and call on the "society with the long name" to take some steps to prevent it. If we are not to have furs without causing innocent animals to die lingering deaths by torture and starvation, it's high time we got on without them.

It is true that the limb caught in the cruel jaws is soon numbened, so that the

animal even occasionally gnaws it off below the steel, but the pain in the body must be terrible and the starvation remains to be apologized for. It is the loss to be cocooned, as the sliding pole may be used in most cases, and the deadfall can be chosen in place of the steel trap.

**Nail and Hole Trap Worse.**

Almost worse is the nail and hole trap described and recommended with unctious in many books of some renown. This trap consists of a hole bored in the trunk of a tree, a log or a block of wood, and three or four sharpened nails, which are hammered downward and diagonally into the wood so that the points will protrude for half an inch. A piece of bait is placed in the bottom of the hole.

When the mink endeavors to get the bait he pushes his head past the hole with care, but upon trying to withdraw it the cruel points hold him fast and he dies miserably with the nails alternately piercing his neck, and with his nose in the bait he coveted. How anybody with the slightest pretensions to sportsmanship can condone such a method is a mystery.

I rejoice to say that when I ventured to suggest this to good old Uncle Ned, he looked at me a moment and then gave me a hearty slap on the back.

"By gorry, youngster, you're just as right as you can be. I used to feel exactly that way, and I'll be darned if I don't yet! A fellow gets into the habit of doin' these cruel things, and he's obliged to you for stirrin' up my callous conscience. We won't set any more steel traps unless we

remember one trip up the Gull Lake branch as a chapter of accidents. It was quite a warm day when we started out, with not a breath of air stirring. A light mist lay over the placid waters and the sun promised soon to break through.

We therefore left our extra tarpaulin, used for a shelter tent in case of getting caught in a storm, at home, and prepared for an easy time. But hardly had we landed at the shore when a heavy squall was an unheralded but violent storm of sleet and hail blew up that costed everything with loss.

I had the canoe and I shall never forget that carry as long as I live. Part of it was over an unimbered hill, which was slippery as greased glass, and the wind did its very best to put both me and the canoe flat on the ground. How I yearned, in my smooth moccasins, for a good pair of hobnailed shoes.

Arriving at the other side of the carry we were both coated with freezing glass, and had to stamp on our mittens to render them flexible. In that condition we reset a dozen steel traps and deadfalls, but only after sore trials, for our fingers were stiff and almost senseless.

Neither of us let out a word of complaint, but at last, as a No. 24 spring on me for the fifth time, I ripped out an explosive of such lurid character that the very fog might have been melted with it. This was too much for the old man, who let out a guffaw that nearly drowned the shrieking wind.

"Great fun trappin', eh?" he said. "Well, never mind, the worst is yet to come for sure, 'cause this wind is goin' to be quite able bodied along in the afternoon and we ain't goin' to get home tonight, that's sure!"

I replied that it didn't matter much, as I didn't expect to live so long as that anyhow, and then asked about plans for the night. The upshot of it was that after looking after a few more traps in the vicinity, but without trying to cross the next lake on account of the high sea, we started down a side stream for a small pond where Uncle Ned knew of a dilapidated lumberman's cabin.

The water was high and the gale directly in our faces as we started to run the short but dangerous rapid, and luck wasn't with us at all. In trying to force the bow off a sharp rock my paddle got between two boulders and I was forced to let it go in order not to be left with the bare handle in my hands. This caused a careen of the canoe, and we struck another rock and were literally thrown up onto a flat reef on our side so that part of the duff, including a dozen traps, was cast into the stream.

Angry clean through, I jumped into the shallow part of the river and had the luck to retrieve the blankets, which, however, were soaked. The traps were found a week later. I will spare the reader a description of our sojourn in that leaky shack with wet blankets and clothes. It is not all of trapping to trap!

**Cold Storm in the Woods.**

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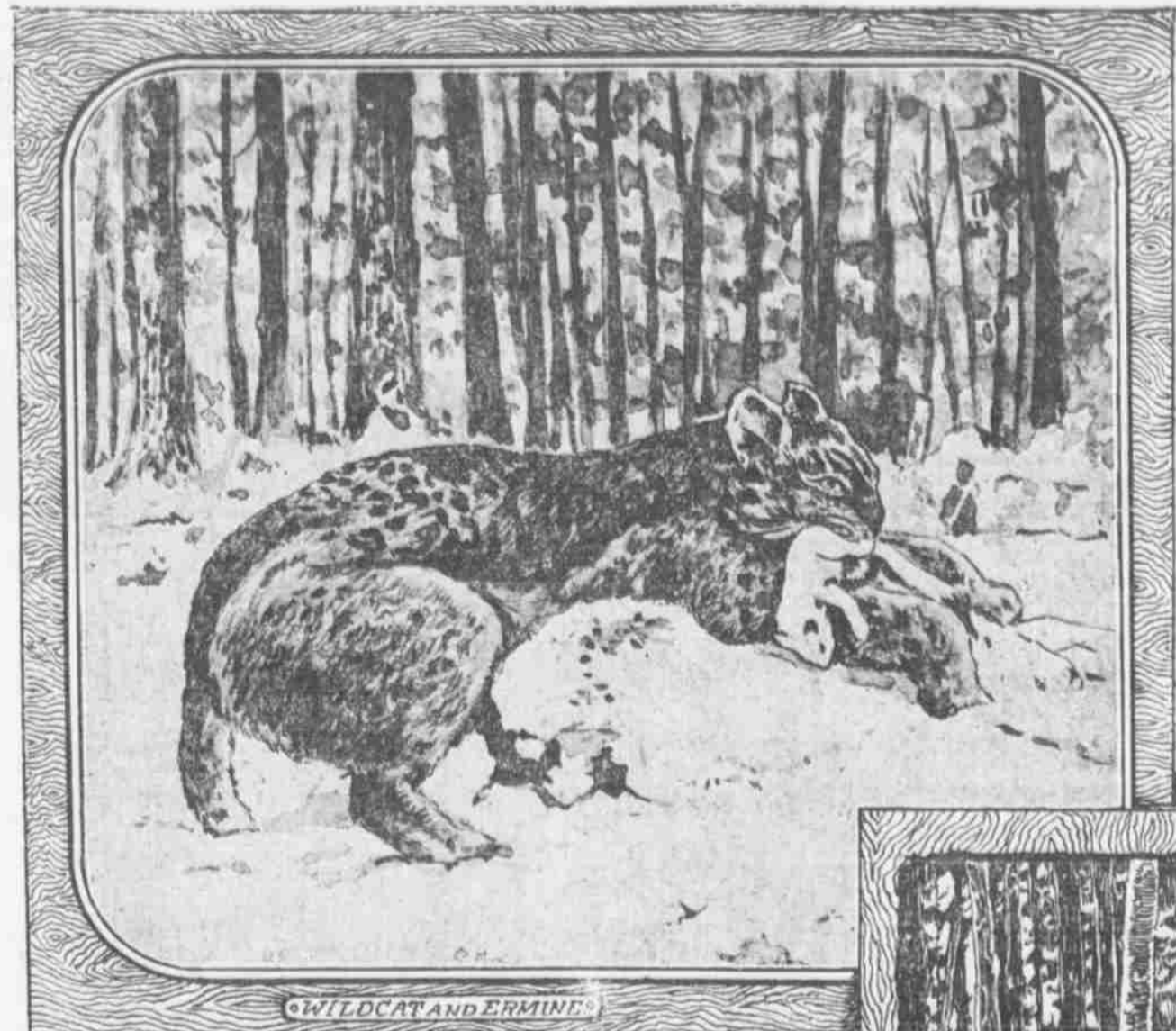
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**Lines to a Point.**

Poverty has taken many a hard fall out of ambition.

An easy mark by any other name would be just as foolish.

Women learn more as they grow older; it's different with men.



WILDCAT AND ERMINE



TRAPPER IN THE WOODS

## THE PRODUCT OF THE AILSCLIFFE GANG

### A Double Theft from a Broker's Safe and the Deductions of Cronkhite Therefrom.

**I**T IS a most infernal mix up!" groaned Austin Allis, the eminent broker.

Judge Marcellus looked over his notes and pursed his lips.

"Quite so," he said. "Let me proceed then to evolve order out of chaos, subject to your right to add or amend."

A year ago then, you, your widowed daughter, Mrs. Emily Grout, and your niece, Miss Pauline Frame, while traveling in Europe met a young man, a young gentleman of some fortune and much letters. Mrs. Grout and Brail became engaged with your consent.

"It was agreed that he should join you in this very month, when the marriage would take place. Meanwhile he turned over to you his fortune of \$100,000 for investment at your discretion."

"Reserving sufficient for his care and comfort during the year while he continued his art studies abroad," interposed Mr. Allis.

"Precisely. A week ago you received word that Brail would arrive on the Princeton which was yesterday. At your daughter's solicitation you sold out his securities and brought the cash proceeds, amounting to \$100,000 a neat profit that, Allis—to your country seat at Bredale."

"He is a disinterested sort of a chap," explained Allis apologetically, "ignorant of business, and it was Emily who persuaded him to entrust his affairs to me. Naturally she was anxious to give him a pleasant surprise in the most striking way."

"Of course it was his own fault, but you know, Judge, Emily's misfortune imposed a sacred duty on me to indulge her in every way. It has been such a comfort for me that a bright future is dawning for her and that the past is buried as deep."

"As that good for nothing rascal Jack Grout, her late husband, hey?" suggested the Judge. "It was very natural, at all events. Your house is wired, your library safe, impregnable. If you hadn't been so careless, Allis—"

"But it was a secret between Emily and me—"

"And consequently you felt that evildoers couldn't be tempted by what they didn't know. Nevertheless, you shouldn't have left the library even for a moment as you did this morning, the safe unlocked, the windows open—I trust our servants like members of the family."

"There must have been somebody around, since the package was taken."

"I tell you, Emily was there reading all

the time. Who would dream that a thief could be so soft and noiseless as to sneak in and out without attracting her notice?"

"When I discovered the loss I thought she would die. She is subject to heart failure, you know."

"And so, to quiet her, I promised to bring home tonight a like amount, so that Brail would never even know of the occurrence. Luckily his ship has been delayed by storms."

"You should have sounded an instant alarm."

"I didn't dare, Judge," again groaned Allis. "Talk about the devil and the deep sea—why, that would be an Elysium for me."

"My financing of the Ruthven Branch railroad is just on the edge; one evil rumor would send it into the pit. Let such a loss be known, and goodbye to the whole outfit."

"The world thinks I am a multimillionaire and yet I can no more raise that sum today than I can fly the moon. If I don't satisfy Mrs. Allis in hysteria, he will suspect something wrong sure."

"And worse than all, the thief, whoever he is, is getting off scot free, meanwhile, with his vitally important money. Don't you see, Judge, it is his absence and not its amount that is agitating me. I am perfectly sound, if I can only have a chance to turn myself."

"That is the point," said a somewhat stolid looking, middle-aged man, who had been sitting in the recess. "By replacing the money you remove sorrow from your home and risk from your office."

"That will satisfy Mrs. Grout, and close rumormongers' mouths. It will be two days or more, according to my reckoning, before the Princeton limps into port. If Mr. Allis will accept me as his guest for that period I think I can get back the money for him."

Marcellus had coached him for the part of Mr. Blount.

Cronkhite wished, however, that the Judge had been more comprehensive in his information when presently dinner was served. There he met Mr. Allis' niece, Pauline Frame, of a personality so slight and a disposition so retiring that it was no wonder the Judge had slighted her. Familiarity breeds contempt and also callousness to the feelings of animals, and few trappers stop to consider them. It is a remarkable fact, and one not calculated to increase our respect for the hearts of mankind, that in not a single book on trapping that I can recall, and I own a great many of the best known, is the cruelty of steel

When Mr. Allis, with his guest, Aligned at the little suburban station that night, a tall and elegant young woman, whose handsome face was feverishly lighted, sprang forward with hands extended.

"Oh, papa—!" she began.

"This is my friend, Mr. Rufus Blount, Emily, the chief engineer of the Ruthven system, of whom you have heard me speak," said Mr. Allis, somewhat reprovingly. "He is going to be so good as to put up with us for a few days."

"Oh, papa, did you bring it, have you got it?" Mrs. Grout ran on, unheeding, save for the shortest of nods.

"Of course, I did; you're the same impatient, impulsive child, Emily, that you were twenty—"

"Tut, tut, you mustn't mention ages, or you will make yourself an old man, papa, instead of the dearest of dears. And he is a dear, isn't he, Mr. Blount?—always doing the most wonderful of things as if they were the merest trifles."

"All things are trifles to limitless wealth, you must remember, Mrs. Grout," remarked the heavy Mr. Blount.

Whereupon the lady looked upon him with more favor, as if, perhaps, something of the complete relief her face and manner betrayed was due to his words.

A complete relief, indeed. With the casting aside of the mask of anxiety there appeared the sparkle of a sweet and simple nature, loving pleasure, yet loving it as innocently, as intuitively, as the birds love the air; loving it as her habit, her heritage, her kingdom.

And yet the shadows are never remote from the sunshine. With the deadly desire of the dull to be entertaining, Mr. Blount began to pros along about a curious Enoch Arden case which had lately come to light in his neighborhood—the return of a husband long believed to be dead and the distress arising from the premature marriage of his reputed widow.

Suddenly he stopped short and made some irrelevant reference to the weather, for the lady by his side was haggard and pale; while her father opposite was looking out of the carriage window as if selecting a soft spot on which to jump.

"That was a fool yarn of yours, Cronkhite, I must say," snapped Mr. Allis when he and his guest were alone in the library.

"Didn't the Judge tell you that my late uncles, confounded son-in-law, Jack Grout, was lost at sea?"

There must have been a mental reservation behind the detective's embarrassed plea of ignorance, for this had been one of the pertinent facts with which Judge

he found Mr. Allis' unconscious form in front of the open safe. One glance into the interior showed that the second package, placed there but an hour before, was missing.

III.

No time at first for the bitter reflection. It required all of Cronkhite's authority, as guest and friend in the guise of Mr. Blount, to prevent an alarm spreading with all its consequent imperilling of Mr. Allis' fortunes.

Luckily, Miss Frame expressed the utmost reliance in his judgment of what the stricken man would have done. Luckily, the physician discreet as he was skilled, declared that but a few hours rest would suffice for Mr. Allis' recovery from a blow numbing but not dangerous.

Luckily, too, this physician had at once acquiesced Mrs. Grout, prostrated and hysterical, in her cousin's charge, adding the physician's redoubt which he said would have their full effect by midnight. And so the servants, faithful in their fright, promised to keep the matter secret, and quiet, if not tranquilly, brooded over the house.

In the guest chamber Cronkhite reflected the better for his charge. It had seemed the better for hearing Mr. Allis' story to the Judge that Mrs. Grout must be the thief.

When the Judge had afterward told him how Jack Grout had innocently fled on a vessel never reported and officially declared lost he had reasoned that this dreaded husband might have returned to him on hearing Mr. Allis' story to the Judge that Mrs. Grout must be the thief.

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as unreal. But the second theft, linked with a brutality almost tragic, must have come as a confirmation, irreparable and changeless.

Who then was the thief? Grout, in the second instance?

It was the work of a man acquainted with the house, the family life, the family secrets. He knew that the money had been replaced; he knew that Allis would come during the dinner to open the safe; because the woman, who was his accomplice, had told him.

It was at this juncture in his reflections that Cronkhite, recalling that Miss Frame would be free to relinquish her watch over her cousin at midnight without its being thought strange by the nurse and servants also in attendance, put out his light, drew his shades and opened his window so as to give the appearance that he had retired, and then resumed his cogitations.

The woman who was his accomplice? Yes, Pauline Frame; no one else.

Who else could have called Mr. Allis out from the library in the first case but the one who had sent him in there by trick and device in the second? Who else could have crept to the safe in the first case so noiselessly as not to attract the attention of her reading cousin but the one whose shadowy glide was the most usual incident of the household?

Cronkhite's senses must have been unusually acute; for he suddenly sprang into the door. Yes, there was that same shadowy sweep, descending the stairs from the sick room, passing by his door—no, stopping there to listen—and then proceeding, somewhat more confidently, as if reassured.

Like another shade, Cronkhite was out and down the back stairs. In the basement hall, by the rear door, he confronted a woman, dressed for travel, her left arm hugging a package to her flattened bosom. It was Pauline Frame.

"Why didn't you hold her?" asked Mr. Allis, the next afternoon, as with bandaged head, but yet not very much the worse for hard usage, he talked with his guest, the stolid Mr. Blount.

Cronkhite laughed despite his plastered cheek.

"I told you that she whipped out a knife and flew at me like a wildcat," he answered.

"Yes, but a man like you wouldn't mind such a prick as that. Besides, you took the package of money from her. How could she have been waiting her opportunity to remove from the house. That was all I wanted to recoup your loss. As for her, I thought it more satisfactory to have her arrested in Jack Grout's company."

"Hush!" warned Allis hastily; yet too late.

For even with the sound the door opened and Emily Grout came wearily in, as if from the incision.

"Is it really so?" she asked in a monotone that was its own answer. "Oh, papa, think, dear, of my agonies of suspense, hopes, fears, doubts and rebellious denials of the

evidence of my senses I must have endured now to find relief in such a certainty?"

"It was a week ago, while walking in the garden, thinking, dreaming of Reginald, coming nearer and nearer, your brave plumes of the ocean, I caught a glimpse of a man, hiding among the trees. In an instant he was gone, and yet that instant was longer, more horrible, than the years of torture I endured with him."

"You must see Reginald when he arrives, papa, and tell him all. I am glad at least that his fortune hasn't also been taken from him."

She turned to go, apathetic; then, as following a smart rap, a solidly looking man entered the room and stood at salute she hesitatingly took a seat at one side.

"Ah, Magdon, is that you?" said Cronkhite.

"I thought it was about your apt time to appear on the scene. Mr. Allis, this is Capt. Magdon—won his bars as a volunteer in the civil war. Since his close he has been employed in the treasury secret service."

"With counterfeits as a specialty, sir," said the captain.

"Well, I fancy some of those well executed thousands of the Ailscliffe gang have come to the surface again," continued Cronkhite.

"Yes," replied Magdon, "since I got that tip from you yesterday I have been watching sharp."

"This morning one of the downtown banks telephoned that they had just broken one of them for a likely looking chap, so likely looking that they didn't suspect until he was gone. However, I had no trouble in tracing him."

"You never saw such a front when I accused him of passing the queer. You'd say he was fully as surprised as the bank teller had been."

"By the way, Allis, there was a young woman with this man Grout—that's his name, as his papers showed, Jack Grout. There was a young woman who said she was a connection of yours. There is no charge against her, but she was in such pitiable shape I left her in the matron's charge."

"I will see that she is cared for, now and always," said the broker, much affected.

"And Grout, what of him?"

"He's dead; didn't I say? Made a break to escape and I had to shoot—never have to twice."

"Emily was a low, horrid mean and she would have fallen as she passed out like one spent from a burden's weight had not a young man, somewhat travel worn, caught her in his arms. She looked intriguingly, doubtfully at him and the burden fell from her. 'Reginald, my Reginald!' she murmured.

Lines to a Point.

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He found Mr. Allis' unconscious form in front of the open safe. One glance into the interior showed that the second package, placed there but an hour before, was missing.

III.

No time at first for the bitter reflection. It required all of Cronkhite's authority, as guest and friend in the guise of Mr. Blount, to prevent an alarm spreading with all its consequent imperilling of Mr. Allis' fortunes.

Luckily, Miss Frame expressed the utmost reliance in his judgment of what the stricken man would have done. Luckily, the physician discreet as he was skilled, declared that but a few hours rest would suffice for Mr. Allis' recovery from a blow numbing but not dangerous.

Luckily, too, this physician had at once acquiesced Mrs. Grout, prostrated and hysterical, in her cousin's charge, adding the physician's redoubt which he said would have their full effect by midnight. And so the servants, faithful in their fright, promised to keep the matter secret, and quiet, if not tranquilly, brooded over the house.

In the guest chamber Cronkhite reflected the better for his charge. It had seemed the better for hearing Mr. Allis' story to the Judge that Mrs. Grout must be the thief.

When the Judge had afterward told him how Jack Grout had innocently fled on a vessel never reported and officially declared lost he had reasoned that this dreaded husband might have returned to him on hearing Mr. Allis' story to the Judge that Mrs. Grout must be the thief.

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as unreal. But the second theft, linked with a brutality almost tragic, must have come as a confirmation, irreparable and changeless.

Who then was the thief? Grout, in the second instance?

It was the work of a man acquainted with the house, the family life, the family secrets. He knew that the money had been replaced; he knew that Allis would come during the dinner to open the safe; because the woman, who was his accomplice, had told him.

It was at this juncture in his reflections that Cronkhite, recalling that Miss Frame would be free to relinquish her watch over her cousin at midnight without its being thought strange by the nurse and servants also in attendance, put out his light, drew his shades and opened his window so as to give the appearance that he had retired, and then resumed his cogitations.

The woman who was his accomplice? Yes, Pauline Frame; no one else.

Who else could have called Mr. Allis out from the library in the first case but the one who had sent him in there by trick and device in the second? Who else could have crept to the safe in the first case so noiselessly as not to attract the attention of her reading cousin but the one whose shadowy glide was the most usual incident of the household?

Cronkhite's senses must have been unusually acute; for he suddenly sprang into the door. Yes, there was that same shadowy sweep, descending the stairs from the sick room, passing by his door—no, stopping there to listen—and then proceeding, somewhat more confidently, as if reassured.

Like another shade, Cronkhite was out and down the back stairs. In the basement hall, by the rear door, he confronted a woman, dressed for travel, her left arm hugging a package to her flattened bosom. It was Pauline Frame.

"Why didn't you hold her?" asked Mr. Allis, the next afternoon, as with bandaged head, but yet not very much the worse for hard usage, he talked with his guest, the stolid Mr. Blount.

Cronkhite laughed despite his plastered cheek.

"I told you that she whipped out a knife and flew at me like a wildcat," he answered.

"Yes, but a man like you wouldn't mind such a prick as that. Besides, you took the package of money from her. How could she have been waiting her opportunity to remove from the house. That was all I wanted to recoup your loss. As for her, I thought it more satisfactory to have her arrested in Jack Grout's company."

"Hush!" warned Allis hastily; yet too late.

For even with the sound the door opened and Emily Grout came wearily in, as if from the incision.

"Is it really so?" she asked in a monotone that was its own answer. "Oh, papa, think, dear, of my agonies of suspense, hopes, fears, doubts and rebellious denials of the

evidence of my senses I must have endured now to find relief in such a certainty?"

"It was a week ago, while walking in the garden, thinking, dreaming of Reginald, coming nearer and nearer, your brave plumes of the ocean, I caught a glimpse of a man, hiding among the trees. In an instant he was gone, and yet that instant was longer, more horrible, than the years of torture I endured with him."

"You must see Reginald when he arrives, papa, and tell him all. I am glad at least that his fortune hasn't also been taken from him."

She turned to go, apathetic; then, as following a smart rap, a solidly looking man entered the room and stood at salute she hesitatingly took a seat at one side.

"Ah, Magdon, is that you?" said Cronkhite.

"I thought it was about your apt time to appear on the scene. Mr. Allis, this is Capt. Magdon—won his bars as a volunteer in the civil war. Since his close he has been employed in the treasury secret service."

"With counterfeits as a specialty, sir," said the captain.

"Well, I fancy some of those well executed thousands of the Ailscliffe gang have come to the surface again," continued Cronkhite.

"Yes," replied Magdon, "since I got that tip from you yesterday I have been watching sharp."

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