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Continued

It happened that at first Highamson saw neither of us, so that the first intimation that he had of our presence was November's "Hello."

Down crashed the lantern, and its bearer started back with a quick, hoarse gasp.

"Who's there?" he cried. "Who?" "Them as is sent by Hal Lyon."

Never have I seen words produce so tremendous an effect.

Highamson gave a bellow of fury, and the next instant he and November were struggling together.

I sprang to my companion's aid, and even then it was no easy task for the two of us to master the powerful old man. As we held him down I caught my first sight of his ash gray face. His mouth grinned open, and there was a terrible intention in his staring eyes. But all changed as he recognized his visitor.

"November! November Joe!" cried he. "Get up!" And as Highamson rose to his feet, "Whatever for did you do it?" asked November in his quiet voice. But now his quietness carried a menace.

"Do what? I didn't!"—Highamson paused, and there was something unquestionably fine about the old man as he added: "No, I won't lie. It's true I shot Hal Lyon. And what's more if it was to do again I'd do it again. It's the best deed I ever done. Yes, I say that, though I know it's written in the book. 'Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'"

"Why did you do it?" repeated November. Highamson gave him a look.

"I'll tell you. I did it for my little Janey's sake. He was her husband. See here! I'll tell you why I shot Hal Lyon. Along of the first week of last month I went away back into the woods trapping muskrats. I was gone more'n the month, and the day I come back I went over to see Janey. Hal Lyon weren't there. If he had been I shouldn't never 'a' needed to travel so far to get even with him. But that's neither here nor there. He'd gone to his bear traps above Big Tree. But the night before he left he'd got in one of his quarrels with my Janey. Hit her, he did. There was one tooth gone where his fist fell."

Never have I seen such fury as burned in the old man's eyes as he groaned out the last words.

"Janey, that had the prettiest face for fifty miles around. She tried to hide it from me—she didn't want me to know. But there was her poor face all swole and black and blue and the gap among her white teeth. Bit by bit it all came out. It weren't the first time Lyon'd took his hands to her, nor the third nor the fourth. There on the spot as I looked at her I made up my mind I'd go after him, and I'd make him promise me, aye, swear to me on the Holy Book, never to lay hand on her again. If he wouldn't swear I'd put him where his hands couldn't reach her. I found him camped away up alongside a backwater near his traps, and I told him I'd seen Janey and that he must swear. He wouldn't. He said he'd learn her to tell on him. He'd smash her in the month again. Then he lay down and sleep. I wonder now he weren't afraid of me, but I suppose that was along of me being a quiet, God-fearing chap. Four by four I lay awake, and then I couldn't stand it no more, and I got up and pulled a bit of candle I had from my pack, fixed up a candlestick and looked in my Bible for guidance. And the words I lit on were 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.' That was the gun clear enough. Then I blew out the light, and I think I sleep, for I dreamed."

"Next morning Lyon was up early. He had two or three green skins that he'd took off the day before, and he said he was going straight home to smash Janey. I lay there, and I said nothing, black nor white. His judgment was set. I knew he couldn't make all the distance in one day, and I was pretty sure he'd camp at Big Tree. I arrived there just after him, as I could travel faster by canoe than him walking, and so kep' near him all day. It was nigh sunset, and I bent down under the bank so he couldn't see me. He went into the old shack. I called out his name. I heard him cursing at my voice, and when he showed his face I shot him dead. I never landed; I never left no tracks. I thought I was safe, sure. You've took me; yet only for Janey's sake I wouldn't care. I did right, but she won't like them to say her father's a murderer. That's all."

November sat on the edge of the table. His handsome face was grave. Nothing more was said for a good while. Then Highamson stood up.

"I'm ready, November, but you'll let me see Janey again before you give me over to the police."

November looked him in the eyes. "Expect you'll see a good deal of

Janey yet. She'll be lonesome over there now that her brute husband's gone. She'll want you to live with her," he said.

"D'ye mean?"

November nodded. "If the police can catch you for yourselves, let 'em, and you'd lessen the chance of that a wonderful deal if you was to burn them moose shank moccasins you're wearing. When did you kill your moose?"

"Tuesday's a week. And my moccasins was wore out, so I fixed 'em up woods fashion."

"I know. The hair on 'em is slipping. I found some of it in your tracks in the camp, away above Big Tree. That's how I knew you'd killed a moose. I found your candlestick too. Here it is." He took from his pocket the little piece of spruce stick, which had puzzled me so much, and turned toward me.

"This end's sharp to stick into the earth; that end's slit, and you fix the candle in with a bit o' birch bark. Now it can go into the stove along o' the moccasins." He opened the stove door and thrust in the articles.

"Only three know your secret, Highamson, and if I was you I wouldn't make it four, not even by adding a woman to it."

Highamson held out his hand.

"You always was a white man, Nov," said he.

Hours later, as we sat drinking a final cup of tea at the campfire, I said:

"After you examined Lyon's upper camp you told me seven things about the murderer. You've explained how you knew them, all but three."

"What are the three?"

"First, how did you know that Highamson had been a long time in the woods without visiting a settlement?"

"His moccasins was wore out and patched with raw moose hide. The tracks of them was plain," replied November.

I nodded. "And how could you tell that he was religious and spent the night in great trouble of mind?"

November paused in filling his pipe. "He couldn't sleep," said he, "and so he got up and cut that candlestick. What'd he want to light a candle for but to read by? And why should he want to read in the middle of the night if he was not in trouble? And if he was in trouble, what book would he want to read? Besides, not one trapper in a hundred carries any book but the Bible."

"I see. But how did you know it was in the middle of the night?"

"Did you notice where he cut his candlestick?"

"No," said I.

"I did, and he made two false cuts where his knife slipped in the dark. You're wonderful at questions."

"And you at answers."

November stirred the embers under the kettle, and the firelight lit up his fine face as he turned with a yawn.

"Mr." said he, "but I'm glad Highamson had his reasons. I'd 'a' hated to think of that old man shut in where he couldn't see the sun rise. Wouldn't you?"

CHAPTER IV.

The Seven Lumberjacks.

THE more I saw of Joe in the days which followed, the more I appreciated the man and the more I became convinced of his remarkable gifts. It was not long after our return from St. Amiel before Joe succeeded in getting me a fair shot at the large red deer buck of Widdeley pond, and it so happened that the killing of this buck brought us news of old Highamson, for we took the head down to him to set up.

Joe and I walked over and found him living with his daughter, Janey Lyon, for the police had never been successful in discovering the identity of the avenger of Big Tree portage. The two seemed very happy together, but I must acknowledge that I feared from what I saw that the beautiful Janey would not continue to bear the name of Lyon much longer. I said as much to November Joe as we were walking back.

"That's nature," said he. "Old Man Highamson told me that neither Baxter Gurd nor Miller don't give her no peace. Well, I guess a woman's better married anyway."

It was drawing on toward evening and had begun to rain when we turned from the woods into the mile long trail that led to November's shack. His quick glance fell at once upon the ground and, following his eye, I saw the impression of fresh tracks.

"What do they tell you?" I asked, for it was always a matter of interest to me to put November's skill to the little daily tests that came in my way.

"Try yourself," said he.

"A man in moccasins—probably an Indian—has passed along. Isn't that right?" I asked.

November Joe smiled grimly. "Not just quite. The man isn't an Indian; he's a white man, and he car-

ries big news and has not come very far."

"You're sure?" I said, stooping to examine the trail more closely, but with out result.

"Certain! The Indian moccasin has no raised heel. These here, He's no come far. He's traveling fast—see, he springs from the ball of the foot, and when a man finishes a journey on the run you may be sure he thinks he's got a good reason for getting to the end of it. This trail leads nowhere but to my shack, and we'll sure find our man there."

Ten minutes later, when we came in sight of November's home, we were aware of a big man sitting on a log smoking his pipe beside the door. He was middle aged, with a hard face, and there was more gray in his russet beard than his age warranted. As soon as we appeared he leaped up and came across the open to meet us.

"Blackmask is at it again!" he cried. I saw a gleam of anticipation, if not of pleasure, cross November's face. He turned to me.

"This is Mr. Close, manager of the River Star Pulp company's Camp C," he said. "I'd like to make you known to Mr. Quaritch, Mr. Close." This courtesy concluded, he added in his deliberate tones, "What's Blackmask done now?"

"He's at his old tricks! But this year we'll lay him by the heels, or my name's not Joshua Close." The speaker looked up, and, seeing my puzzled expression, addressed himself to me.

"Last year there were five separate robberies committed on the road between Camp C and the settlement," he explained. "Each time it was just a single lumberjack who got held up, and each time a man in a black mask was the robber. November here was away."

"Up in Wyoming with a Philadelphia lawyer after him," supplemented the tall young woodsman.

To Be Continued.

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"Do you suppose the stories are all true we hear of the aviators and their feats?"

"I guess some of them are just flying rumors."—Baltimore American.



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