

NIGHT IN A FOREST

A DEER THE FIRST CREATURE OBSERVER ENCOUNTERS.

Up Mountain Trail in the Darkness—A Porcupine Crosses the Path—A Company of Wild Boars Come Upon.

It was growing dusk by the time I reached a trout brook at the bottom of a little valley and took my seat on a twisted root by the side of the water. The sky above the hills to the west was still bright with a reddish tinge and lighted the woods to the eastward; those to the west were of course in shadow, and already dark, save in the immediate foreground. For about ten minutes I had been watching the red sky fade, when I was aware of a slight sound behind me. Very carefully I turned my head, but at first could not see a living thing. Then, against the brown hillside, between two groups of evergreens, a small white object moved quickly to the right and left, and I knew that it was the white border on the tail of a Virginia deer. The color of the animal so closely resembled that of the grass and weeds, that it was barely possible to follow its outline. It was a doe, and she stood facing me, her ears sticking straight out on each side of her head to catch the faintest sound which might come from my direction. But I made no sound, and she stood there for more than a minute, evidently puzzled and as still as any statue could possibly have been. Then I carefully drew out my pocket handkerchief, suddenly waved it back and forth and thrust it under my coat. Instantly the deer switched her tail, craned her neck and took two strides in my direction. Then she gave an explosive snort, wheeled and sprang back up the hill, the only part of her body then visible being the white, under side of her tail.

Now it was almost pitch dark, for the moon had not yet risen, but I started over the mountain on a trail which I knew almost by touch. For some time I could hear nothing but the sound of my own footsteps, and then something hurriedly crossed my path and scrambled away among the leaves.

A faint but peculiar odor told me that the creature was a porcupine, and a moment later there came the sound of his claws on the bark of a tree. I left the trail for a minute to look at him, and there on the branch of a maple he crouched, his tail hanging down, and the quills of his back erected and in silhouette against the sky. I felt about until I found a long stick and, raising the end of it, I touched his spiny coat. I was glad my hand was out of the way, when, with a vicious snarl, he struck the stick with his tail, and the next instant there came a pattering on the leaves as a number of loose quills, shaken by the effort, fell to the ground at my feet. Then came the sound of his chattering teeth, and feeling sorry for the old "porky," I moved along.

By and by the moon arose, and it was easy to see the way. The trail led through a wide open tract, covered with the dry blossoms of pearly everlasting, which in the moonlight looked like



THE SOUND OF HIS CHATTERING TEETH.

show. Just as I reached this place a deep grunt made me pause, and looking cautiously I saw the flower heads waving, as some creature passed among them. By the grunt I knew that it was a wild boar, and presently his back appeared above the tops of the flowers. He was busy rooting up the ground with his snout, and very soon it was evident that he was not alone, for several other backs appeared in different places and the grunting became general. The normal color of wild boars is very dark gray, but in most lights they appear black, and among the moonlit flowers these fellows were inky. There was practically no wind, and what there was was in my favor, so there was little danger of my presence being detected. If I made no noise, I took out my field glass, and with it I could see the nearest boar furling over the earth, and pushing the sods about with his snout. Now and then he would find what he was looking for, probably a root of some kind, and then he would stop to munch it, the sound he made being plain to hear. His search for food happened to bring him quite close to where I stood, and I had a clear view of him. He was a monster, and once, when he stopped to munch a root, I saw his head and felt glad that I stood close to a tree.

It was a few minutes after daybreak that I heard the crack of a rifle, and making my way in the direction of the sound, I found a guide in the act of dressing his kill. It was a young albino wild boar, with a few black patches on his skin. He had been shot before his time, because he was not true to color.

ERNEST HAROLD BAYNES.

Not Night Away. Prof. William Benjamin Smith, of New Orleans, predicts the utter extinction of the negro race in the United States.

Wall Street Axiom. One in bed with the lamb and rise up with the wool.—Life.



THEY SAVED THEIR SCALPS

Thrilling Experience of Capt. Benham and One of His Men at Hands of Indians.

Modern methods of locomotion offer many risks, but at least the traveler of to-day does not know what it is to journey in dread of the tomahawk. The danger of a misplaced switch cannot present itself with such insistent horror as did the ever-present possibility of the lurking enemy of the forest. The Magazine of American History gives an account of a thrilling experience which occurred in 1779.

In the fall of that year about 70 men, in two large boats, endeavored to make their way up the Mississippi from New Orleans toward Fort Pitt with stores of provisions. At the mouth of the Little Miami the Indians attacked them. The white men noiselessly landed and tried to elude the enemy, but the savages seemed to spring out of the very ground. Nearly all the party were killed, although a few escaped into the forest.

During the slaughter Capt. Benham, second in command, fell, pierced by a bullet. Although he felt confident his scalp was doomed, he lay perfectly still, putting off the evil moment as long as possible. In their eager pursuit the Indians passed him by. When he was sure they had gone, the captain painfully raised his head to see if he could better his hiding, for he knew the savages would be back for trophies. Near by was a newly fallen tree with unwithering foliage. With much anguish the wounded man managed to crawl into this shelter.

The next day, according to their custom, the Indians returned to strip and scalp their victims. The captain lay, expecting every moment to feel the cold edge of the tomahawk. The prospect of death by slow starvation did not seem half so terrible as that at the Indians' hands. When the savages had accomplished their task, they went off, leaving Benham undiscovered.

The captain's chance of life was poor. He had nothing to eat, nothing to drink, and the slightest movement caused him excruciating pain from his wound. On the evening of the second day he heard a slight movement in the tree near him. He managed to reach his gun and shoot a raccoon. But it was of no good to him; he could not even reach it.

Soon after this the captain heard a cry in the forest. He thought it must be an Indian device to discover his whereabouts, and lay still. But the call came nearer, and was unmistakably that of a white man. Capt. Benham answered it, and John Watson appeared, one of the company's men who had eluded the Indians. Both of Watson's arms were broken by bullets.

A partnership was immediately formed, one providing hands, the other feet. When game appeared the captain would load and fire, while Watson would secure the prize by kicking it to his comrade. The captain cooked the food and fed Watson. The greatest difficulty was to get water. At last Benham took his skin cap and placed it in Watson's teeth. The latter then walked into the river deep enough to fill the receptacle, and brought it back to the captain, who drank and held the cap for Watson to satisfy his thirst.

Thus the two wounded men helped each other until they were able to travel a little. They reached a fork in the river, where they built a little hut and waited for a possible boat. One whole month they waited, and then a flatboat appeared. At first the party in the boat would not respond to the frantic appeals of the men, because they feared some trick of the Indians. Finally they cautiously approached, and discovering the plight of the two almost helpless men, took them on board and cared for them.

Capt. Benham lived to a good age, and his granddaughter married George Prentice, the well-known writer and journalist.

RECOVERS LOST CANTEEN.

Indiana Man Gives Memento of Dead Brother by the Latter's Comrade.

To have the old and battered canteen which he gave to his brother in the last year of the war returned to him 49 years afterward, by a comrade who took the canteen from the dead body of the soldier, was the experience of J. H. Bock, of the Eighth Indiana Infantry, who attended the G. A. R. encampment at Denver, Col. During the last month of the war William Bock was sent with a detail and the elder brother, who is now alive, gave him his canteen. He never saw his brother again, and the canteen unexpectedly came to him recently, having been picked up by a comrade of the dead soldier.

New Coat Not Needed. Mrs. Nurich—You ought to get a coat-of-arms, dear. Nurich—Nonsense. I have more clothes now than I know what to do with.—Town Topics.

Nocturnal. "Does your new baby keep awake nights, Bobby?" "I should say so! It's a regular night hawk; why, it came in the night!"—Houston Post.

Always in the Way. Yeast—Oh, that fellow is all right in his way. Crimsonbeak—Yes, but the trouble is he won't keep out of my way.—Yonkers Statesman.

Especially If They Are Needed. "I see they're after the police again." "Well, they'll probably have to hunt a lot before they find them."—Town Topics.

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