



NOVEMBER JOE

The Detective of the Woods

by Hesketh Prichard.

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SYNOPSIS.

James Quartz engages November Joe as his guide. Joe and he go to Big Tree portage to investigate the murder of a trapper named Lyon.

Joe decides that the murderer followed Lyon to his camp and shot him from a canoe.

By studying woodland evidence and making clever deductions Joe discovers the murderer, Highamson. Lumberman Close reports that Blackmask, a highwayman, is robbing his men.

CHAPTER III.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron."

NO sooner were we away than I put my eager question, "What do you think of it?"

Joe shrugged his shoulders. "Do you know any of these men?"

"All of them."

"How about the fellow who is on bad terms with?"

November seized my arm. A man was approaching through the dusk. As he passed my companion hailed him.

"Hello, Baxter! Didn't know you'd come back. Where you been?"

"Right up on the headwaters."

"Fitz come down with you?"

"No; stayed on the line of traps. Did you want him, November?"

"Yes, but it can wait. See any moose?"

"Nary one; nothing but red deer."

"Good night."

"So long."

"That set's it," said November. "If he speaks the truth, as I believe he does, it wasn't either of the Gurd's shot Lyon."

"Why not?"

"Didn't you hear him say they hadn't seen any moose? And I told you that the man that shot Lyon had killed a moose quite recent. That leaves just Miller and Highamson—and it weren't Miller."

"You're sure of that?"

"Stark certain. One reason is that Miller's above six foot, and the man as camped with Lyon wasn't as tall as six inches. Another reason. You heard the storekeeper say how Miller and Lyon wasn't on speaking terms. Yet the man who shot Lyon camped with him—step' beside him—must 'a' talked to him. That weren't Miller."

His clear reasoning rang true.

"Highamson lives alone away up above Lyon's," continued November.

"He'll make back home soon."

"Unless he's guilty and has fled the country," I suggested.

"He won't 'a' done that. It 'ud be as good as a confession. No, he thinks he's done his work to rights and has nothing to fear. Like as not he's back home now."

The night had become both wild and blustering before we set out for Highamson's hut, and all along the forest path which led to it the sleet and snow of what November called "a real mean night" beat in our faces.

It was black dark or nearly so when at last a building loomed up in front of us, a faint light showing under the door.

"You there, Highamson?" called out November.

As there was no answer, my companion pushed it open, and we entered the small wooden room, where on a single table a lamp burned dimly. He turned it up and looked around. A pack lay on the floor unopened, and a gun leaned up in a corner.

"Just got in," commented November. "Hasn't loosed up his pack yet."

He turned it over. A hatchet was thrust through the wide thong which bound it. November drew it out.

"Put your thumb along that edge," he said. "Blunt? Yes? Yet he drove that old hatchet as deep in the wood as Lyon drove his sharp one. He's a strong man."

As he spoke he was busying himself with the pack, examining its contents with deft fingers. It held little save a few clothes, a little tea and salt and other fragments of provisions and a Bible. The finding of the last was, I could see, no surprise to November, though the reason why he should have suspected its presence remained hidden from me. But I had begun to realize that much was plain to him which to the ordinary man was invisible.

Having satisfied himself as to every article in the pack he rapidly replaced them and tied it up as he had found it, when I, glancing out of the small window, saw a light moving low among the trees, to which I called November Joe's attention.

"It's likely Highamson," he said, "coming home with a lantern. Get

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 mouth again. Then he lay down and slept. I wonder now he weren't afraid of me, but I suppose that was along of me being a quiet, God fearing chap. Hour by hour 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 slept 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 high 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'll 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 silt, 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. No," he said.

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.

"My," 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?"

(To be Continued)

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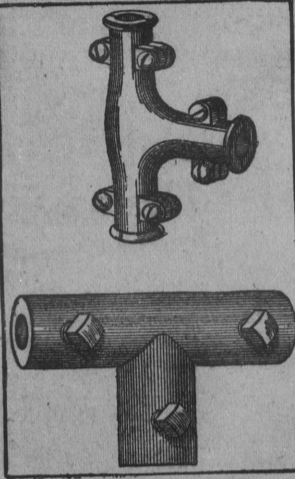
All Around The Farm

DO LIGHTNING RODS PROTECT?

How They Should Be Installed to Be of Practical Benefit. [Prepared by United States department of agriculture.]

Unquestionably lightning rods properly installed and properly grounded are very useful, but to insure absolute safety it would be necessary for one to surround his house with metal network. This is, of course, impossible in practice. On the other hand, a reasonably efficient and satisfactory system can be installed by any one with small expense and trouble.

For ordinary purposes good protection is afforded by a conductor running along the ridge of a building and extending to the earth, either at the middle of the sides or preferably at each of the four corners. The points



T CONNECTIONS FOR LIGHTNING RODS.

should rise above any prominent features of the building, such as chimneys, or, in the absence of these features, from the ridge of the roof at intervals of twenty-five feet or thereabouts.

Because of its availability and cheapness iron is one of the best materials for conductors. It must, however, be galvanized, and the rod should be of ample size, not less than a quarter of an inch in diameter. A cheap and convenient form for barns and small buildings is a two strand cable galvanized iron fence wire, of the same style as barbed wire, but without the barbs, which merely make it more difficult to handle without serving any useful purpose. Copper and aluminum are also in general use, but they are both more expensive than iron. On the other hand, they require less frequent inspection and repairs. If the first cost, therefore, is a matter of prime importance iron should be used; otherwise copper or aluminum may well be preferred.

No matter what material is selected, it is of the utmost importance that the rods should be thoroughly grounded in moist earth. An ungrounded lightning rod is a conductor instead of protection. The conductor should be carried down into the earth and away from the building in a trench or other excavation and end in permanently moist earth.

Sometimes it is possible to connect the lightning rod with water pipes or other metal work that is connected, in turn, with moist earth. Insulators are entirely unnecessary. Periodical inspection and careful maintenance are, however, indispensable.

From time to time various claims are made for special forms of lightning conductors and points. It is safe to say that the vast majority of these pretensions are unfounded on fact. A satisfactory conductor can be formed of a solid rod, a flat bar or band, a twisted cable, a woven stranded ribbon or a hollow, twisted cable. As for points, money spent on elaborate or fanciful construction is largely wasted. Stout, bluntly pointed iron rods three-eighths or one-half inch in diameter, rigidly and securely fastened so as to project one and one-half or two feet above the structure to which they are attached, will satisfy all requirements. Such substantial iron points, in combination with copper cables from five-sixteenths of an inch diameter for small farm buildings to one-half inch for large, important structures, form one of the best possible systems of conductors.

As far as possible, conductors should be put up in long, continuous pieces. When it becomes necessary to connect two rods this should be done by means of T connections. These connections like the rods themselves, should be galvanized in order to protect them from corrosive influences of the atmosphere. The wires or rods should be fastened to the building by galvanized iron staples about one inch long. Buildings with metal roofs are already partially protected. It is, however, desirable to see that there is an unbroken metal path from the ridge of the roof to the ground. In general it will be found most convenient to make this path by joining the waterspout to the ground. As in the case of all ground connections, however, this must be done with the greatest care.

A building with its rods properly placed, with iron conductors properly grounded, should, if struck, escape injury.

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