

November Joe

The Detective of the Woods

By HESKETH PRICHARD

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"I said we would get shot, not me alone. Three men can't get quiet where one can."

And so finally it was arranged, though not without a good deal of argument with Petersham.

"That's a fine fellow," remarked Petersham.

"The kind of fellow who fought with and bettered the Indians at their own game. I wonder what he will see at Butler's cabin?"

It was past midnight when Joe appeared again. Petersham and I both asked for his news.

November shook his head. "I've nothing to tell; nothing at all. I didn't see no one."

"Where were you?"

"Lying down on top of the cairn itself. There's good corners to it."

"You could see well round, then, and if any one had come you would not have failed to observe them."

"Couldn't be too sure. There was some dark times when the moon was shut in by clouds. They might come some times, though I don't think they did. But I'll know for certain soon unless it comes on heavy rain. There's a fine little lake they call Butler's pond up there. You take your fishpole, Mr. Quaritch, and we'll go over at sunrise and you try for some of them trout, while I take a scout round for tracks."

This we did, but search as Joe would he failed to discover any sign at all. He told me this when he joined me at breakfast time.

After I had caught a nice string of trout we walked back to Kalmacks, circling round the house before we entered it. The sand lay undisturbed by any strange footstep, but when we got in we found Mr. Petersham in a state of the greatest excitement.

"One of the blackmalters has had a long talk with Puttick," he told us.

"What?"

"Incredible as it sounds, it is so."

"But when was this?"

"Early this morning, some time after you and Joe started. This is how it happened. Puttick had just got up and gone down with a tin of rosin and some spare canvas and tin to mend that canoe we ripped on the rock yesterday. In fact, he had only just begun working when he was startled by a voice ordering him to hold up his hands."

"By Jove, what next?"

"Why, he held them up. He had no choice. And then a man stepped out from behind the big rock that's just above where the canoe lies."

"I hope Puttick recognized him."

"No. The fellow had a red handkerchief tied over his nose and mouth. Only his eyes showed under the brim of a hat that was pulled low down over them. He carried a rifle, that he kept full on Puttick's chest while they talked. But I'll call Puttick. He can finish the account of the affair himself. That's best."

Puttick answered to the call, and after running over the story, which was exactly similar to that we had just heard from Petersham, he continued:

"The tough had a red hanker tied over his ugly face, nothing but his eyes showing. He had me covered with his gun to rights all the time."

"What kind of a gun was it?"

"I didn't see; leastways I didn't notice."

"Well, had he anything to say?"

"He kept me that way a minute before he started speaking. 'You tell Petersham, says he, 'it's up to him to pay right away. Tell him unless he goes at once to Butler's cabin and takes the goods and leaves them there on the big flat stone by the rock he'll hear from us afore evening, and he'll hear in a way that'll make him sorry all his life. And as for you, Ben Puttick, you take a hint and advise old man Petersham to buy us off, and he can't be too quick about doing it either. If he tries to escape we'll get him on the road down to Priamville.' After he'd done talking he made me put my watch on the canoe—that I'd turned bottom up to get at that rent—and warned me not to move for half an hour. When the half hour was up I come right away and tell you."

"Tall or short was he?"

"Medium-like."

"Which way did he go when he left you?"

"West; right along the bank."

"You followed his trail after the half hour was over?"

Puttick opened his eyes. "He didn't leave none."

"Left no trail? How's that?" cried Petersham.

But Joe interposed. "You mean he kept to the stones in the bed of the brook all the time?"

"That's it. And anyway, if I'd got fooling lookin' for his tracks I'd 'a' got a bullet in me same as Bill Worke," ended the little man. "They're all watching for us."

CHAPTER XV.
The Man in the Black Hat.

WE were silent for a moment. Then Petersham turned to Puttick.

"What do you think of it, Ben? You have some experience of these squatters up here. Do you think they mean business?"

"There ain't much fooling about these mountain men," Puttick answered bitterly. "And now I says this to you, Mr. Petersham, and I can't never say nothing stronger. If you're minded to stay on here at this place, you must pay if you don't want Miss Petersham hurt or killed."

"My daughter?"

"That's how I read it. What else could he mean? He said you'd be sorry all your life."

"Good heavens! Even the most hardened ruffians would not hurt a woman. You don't think it possible?" Petersham turned to me.

"I think that Linda runs a very great risk by staying."

"Then she shall go."

But when Linda was called and the facts made clear to her she absolutely refused to leave Kalmacks.

"You will force me to pay the money, then," said Petersham, "though I am well aware that this demand will only be the first of many. Whenever these blackmalters want \$1,000, aye, or \$10,000, they know they will only have to ask me to supply them. But I can't risk you—I'll pay."

Joe turned to Petersham. "If you climb down now I'll be right sorry I ever come with you. I don't hold with backing down under a bluff."

I, who knew Joe, was surprised to hear him offer so definite an opinion in such strong terms, but Linda clapped her hands.

"It's all nonsense, isn't it? Why, if any one attempted to hurt me Joe would make him regret it, wouldn't you, Joe?" She flashed him a glance of her glorious eyes.

"I'd sure try to hard enough," replied November. "And now, Mr. Quaritch, I'll ask Ben here to show me just where the fella stood when he held him up this morning."

So Joe went down to the brook, and I went with him. We were soon beside the canoe which Puttick had been mending.

"Here's where I was, and there's where he stood," said Puttick, pointing to a small mass of rock close by. "And there's the place I set down my watch."

November glanced over the details and then followed the bank of the brook for some distance. Presently he returned.

"Did you strike his trail?" asked Puttick.

"No, the stones lead right away to the lake, and like as not he came in a canoe."

"Like as not," agreed Puttick and resumed his work on the canoe which had been so rudely interrupted earlier in the day.

We found Linda in the living room arranging some fishing tackle. She at once appealed to Joe.

"Oh, Joe, I want to try some of those English lures Mr. Quaritch gave me. I'm going to fish, and I want to use this yo' jointed pole. Will you fix it for me?"

"I'd like you to make me a promise, Miss Linda."

"What is it?"

"Not to go out at all today."

"You don't think I'm in danger?"

"You're in great danger, Miss Linda."

"Then you must go out with me, Joe. If you are with me they will not dare."

"Look here, Miss Linda, if you'll stay in the house just over today I wouldn't wonder but it might be quite safe for you to go out tomorrow—and ever after."

"Joe, you mean you have discovered—"

"No; I ain't discovered nothing, but if you stay in the way I ask maybe I shall." Joe took up his hat.

"Where are you going, November?" I asked.

"Over to Senlis lake, Mr. Quaritch. Will you see Ben Puttick and tell him I won't be back till lateish and will be cook the potatoes and the cornfurot cakes if I don't get back to time? Miss Linda, will you please tell every one, even your father, that you have a mighty painful head and that's why you're staying in."

"Yes, Joe," said Linda.

After Joe's departure I took a book and sat with it in the veranda, where I was joined in due course by Linda and Mr. Petersham.

"It's cool here, the only cool spot in the place today," remarked Petersham. "Yes, and don't the spruces smell sweet?" said Linda. "Joe cut them to give me shade."

She pointed to a row of tall saplings propped against the rail of the veranda so as to form a close screen.

"Joe always thinks of things for people," she added.

Petersham glanced from me to Linda. "If your headache is bad you had better lie down in the house," he said.

"It is ever so much better, but I'll fetch some smelling salts."

I was about to offer to bring them for her when I caught her father's eye behind her back and remained where I was. As soon as she had gone in Petersham stepped up to me and whispered:

"To give her shade," he repeated. I looked around and nodded.

"There is always shade here," he went on. "The sun can't get in through the pines on this side. The wood is thickest here."

"That's true," I agreed, looking at the close grown junipers that stood in front of us. "Joe stacked these saplings against the rail for some other reason."

"Of course. He knew that Linda

would very likely sit here, and he was afraid."

"Afraid? Of what?" said Linda suddenly from behind us. "No one could hurt me here. Why, I could call for help and you are both here. You could protect me."

"Not against a rifle bullet," said Petersham. "For my sake, go in, Linda."

As he said the words from far away came the sound of a shot. Distance robbed it of that acrimony with which the modern rifle speaks, and it struck a dull, even drowsy note upon the air of that languid afternoon of late spring.

"What can that be?" cried Linda.

As if in answer came the sullen far off sound three times repeated, and then, after an interval, a fourth.

"Shooting," cried Linda again, very white, her blue eyes wide with terror. "And it's from the direction of Senlis lake!"

"Ben! Ben Puttick!" roared Petersham.

But loud as was his voice, Linda's call rose higher.

"Here I am!" We heard Puttick's voice from inside the house, and he ran out a minute later.

"We heard five shots from Senlis lake," I said. "We must start at once, you and I. Mr. Petersham will stay with Miss Linda."

Puttick looked me in the eyes.

"Are you tired of your life?" he asked grimly.

"We have no time to think of that. Get ready!"

"There was five shots," Puttick said deliberately. "I heard 'em myself. That means Joe's dead, if it was him they shot at. If we go we'll soon be dead too."

"Oh, you coward!" cried Linda.

Puttick turned a dull red. "I'm no coward, Miss Linda, but I'm no fool. I'm a woodsman. I know."

"There is a good deal of sense in what Ben says," I put in. "I think his best place is here with you. He shall stay to help you in case of need. I'll go and find Joe. After all, it's as likely as not that he was firing or perhaps some one else was firing at a bear."

I hastened forward at the best pace I could attain until from a rising knoll I caught a glimpse of Senlis lake. The forest path here rose and fell in a series of short steep inclines. I labored up these little hills and ran down the slopes. Suddenly I came to a turn and was about to rush down a sharp dip when a voice, seemingly at my side, said:

"That you, Mr. Quaritch?"

"Joe! Where are you?"

"Here!"

I followed the voice and, parting some branches, saw Joe lying on the



Joe Leaned Against the Maple Tree and Looked Down on Him.

ground, where we quickly overpowered him, snarling and writhing.

Some hours later we sat round November Joe who was stretched upon the couch. Puttick had been tied up and imprisoned in the strongest room.

"No, Mr. Petersham," Joe was saying. "I don't think you'll have much more trouble. There was only three men in it. One's dead; one's locked up, and I dare say we'll find a way of dealing with No. 3."

"What I don't understand," said Linda, "is how you found out that Puttick was in it. When did you begin to suspect him?"

"Last night, when Mr. Petersham didn't go to Butler's cabin. The fellow who promised to meet him never put in there either. That was queer, wasn't it? Of course it could mean one thing—that some one had told 'em that Mr. Petersham weren't coming. There was only us three, and Puttick knew. So Puttick must 'a' been the one to tell."

(To Be Continued.)

DOCTOR DIXON WRITES
ON MEASLES.

Of the common ailments of childhood there are none which the greater number of people hold in contempt more than measles. Familiarity may be the blame for this for the fact that in the greater majority of cases the children recover from the acute attack to such a degree that the parents do not recognize the highly susceptible condition in which it leaves most of the organs of the body. Particularly the lungs are left in a condition which permits the germs of tuberculosis to live in them and causes an untold number of deaths yet this result is sufficiently removed from the acute attack for the laymen not recognize the relationship.

While far more children die from this cause than from scarlet fever the latter is universally feared and measles is looked upon as a necessary evil.

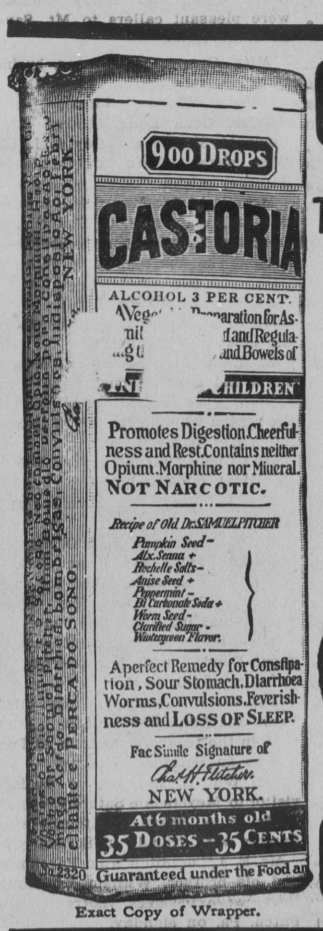
It is a common practice with many people of intelligence to permit children to be exposed to measles when it is prevalent. "They might as well get it over with," is the usual excuse that is offered for this dangerously ignorant practice.

The after effect of a severe case of measles may be quite as menacing as those which often follow scarlet fever. The weakening of the lungs with resulting bronchial pneumonia and susceptibility to tuberculosis follows in hundreds of cases.

Diseases of the ear are also a frequent result. Despite its universal prevalence there are many factors connected with the disease of which the medical profession is ignorant. It is certain, however, it is most readily transmitted by discharges from the nose and mouth of the patient in the early stages of the disease and for this reason children who have been exposed and who have developed coughs should not be allowed to associate with other children.

Owing to their ignorance of the serious nature of the disease, parents of ten endeavor to treat their children without calling in a physician. In view of the frequent serious complications which mean death, no risk can be taken. The loss of a little schooling and sociability cannot be considered by sane persons along side of death.

For eight years the death rate from this disease in this state has been higher than for scarlet fever and this is due largely to the ignorance and in



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difference of parents in permitting their own and other children to be exposed to measles which affects all of the internal organs and leaves the mucous membrane a good soil for tuberculosis.

That's Tomlinson," said Worke at once. "Them two brothers lives together. What have they been doing?"

"You'll know afore night," replied Joe. "What are their names?"

"Dandy is the one with the black beard, while the other calls Mopsy is a fox colored man."

"Thank you," said Joe. "Now, Bill, if you keep them names to yourself I'll come back in half an hour and tell you who it was shot you."

On Joe's appearance Linda started up and ran to him.

"You're wounded!" she cried.

"It's nothin' much, Miss Linda."

But as we laid him down on the couch he seemed to lose consciousness. Petersham brought brandy, and Linda, holding Joe's head upon her arm, put it to his lips. He swallowed some of it and then insisted upon sitting up.

"I must bind up your shoulder. We must stop the bleeding." Linda's distress and anxiety were very evident.

And Joe had to give way. With her capable and gentle hands Linda soon dressed the wound and afterward insisted on sending for Puttick to help him to his bunk.

"So you've got it?" Puttick said. "I warned you. Lucky you're not dead."

"Yes, ain't it?" returned Joe.

Well I knew that soft drawl, which November's voice never took except in moments of fercest tension.

"You'd best join your hands above your head, Ben Puttick. Lock the thumbs. That's right!"

Joe had picked my revolver from the table and held it pointed at Puttick's breast.

"He's mad!" screamed Puttick.

"Tie his hands, Mr. Quaritch. Miss Linda, will you please to go away?"

"No, Joe. Do you think I'm frightened?"

"Huh! I know you're brave, but a man acts free without the women looking on."

Without a word she turned and walked out of the room.

"Puttick's going to confess, Mr. Petersham," went on November.

"I've nothing to confess, you fool!"

"Not even that story you invented about the man with the red hanker across his face—the man who wasn't never there?"

"What's he ravin' about?" cried Puttick.

"Have you forgot them long hated Tomlinson brothers that—"

The effect of this speech on Puttick was instantaneous. Evidently he leaped to the conclusion that he had been betrayed, for he turned and dashed for the door. We flung ourselves upon him and by sheer weight bore him to

the ground, where we quickly overpowered him, snarling and writhing.

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