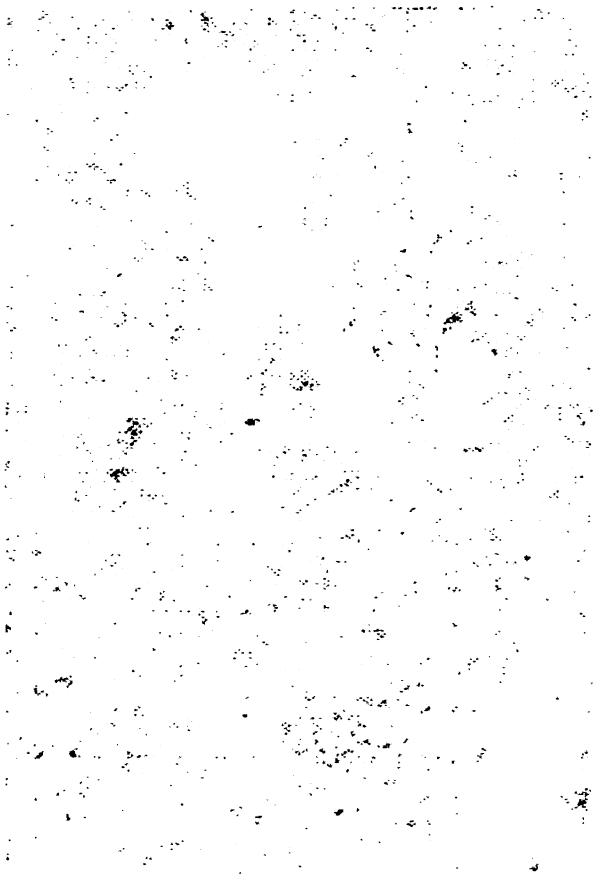
Camping out

"SCAT! YOU GREAT-HEADED WRETCH!"



CAMPING-OUT SERIES.

VOL. I.

CAMPING OUT;

AS RECORDED BY "KIT."

EDITED BY C. A. STEPHENS.

Illustrated.

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INTRODUCTION.

UNLIKE the rest of New England, the whole middle and north-west portions of the State of Maine are still unsettled, — a wilderness of lake, stream, and forest,

> "Where the bear roams,
> And the wild-cat prowls."

Our frontispiece is from a drawing of the night camp of a party of four boys who made a trip — an *expedition* they called it — up into these "wild lands" a short time since.

"Kit," one of the party, has written out an account of their adventures, which we give in his own words; merely remarking, that his style is sometimes a little off-hand: some of his opinions, too, are pretty strongly expressed; facts, not to say faults, which our boy-readers are not to adopt too largely. — ED.

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RAED AND WASH.

CAMPING OUT.

CHAPTER I.

How the Thing started.

I FIRST made the acquaintance of the two young fellows whose photographs adorn the opposite page at one of our peculiarly national "institutions," — a railroad smash-up. We were moving along at ordinary express-rate from Portland to Boston *viâ* a certain line which has since acquired a rather sanguinary reputation. The car was not a little crowded. I distinctly remember having the seat next the stove, at the extreme forward end. Fortunately there was no fire, — this being in June, — otherwise our narrative might never have been written; or, at least, come down a good deal singed. Well, every traveller of any considerable experience (an that we all are, or affect to be) knows how it comes. A truck had broken, it was said. The narrator's head made a very respectable dint in the zinc sheathing past the stove. At the same time, his heels were nearly cut off by the back of the seat whirling over and striking

down upon the backs of his ankles. As all the passengers seemed to have business at the forward end of the car just then, I was not alone: on the contrary, one fellow seemed to have taken it into his head to ride me much as Capt. Waterton is said to have ridden the cayman. He came over on the back of the seat, and had bestrided me in a twinkling, sitting down with no great gentleness on the "small" of my back. I could also, by a sidewise glance, discern another youngster in between the stovepipe and the side of the car, — a position he seemed to dislike exceedingly, judging from the thrashing about he made, his boot-heel occasionally coming down beside my cheek. Though a little giddy from my attempt at dinting the zinc, I still felt pretty tolerably certain that I had not been killed; but judged it best to keep quiet, especially since I could not do much else. There was a great uproar and shouting *overhead*. Some blockhead was battering at the car-door on the outside with an ax. Every stroke sent the glass from the broken window rattling about our ears. Presently the young Rarey who had mounted me squirmed a little, and then gave me a punch with his knuckles.

"Say! you dead?" he demanded.

"I — believe — not."

"Then I presume you would like to have me get off."

I suppose I replied to the effect, that, if it were convenient for him, it would be very gratifying to me.

"Just so. I'll see what can be done. *Wash*," addressing somebody, "for Heaven's sake do quit kicking me in the ribs!"

"Am I, though?" cried the chap behind the stove-pipe. "Beg your forgiveness. But what's a fellow to do? Here I'm wedged in."

"Can't you use the other foot?" suggested my rider.

"No, no! don't use that!" I exclaimed. "Your boot-heel's right in my ear now."

Just then the man with the axe knocked in the door, which flew back, mashing up a whole caucus of hats, and spatting one old gentleman flat in the face. The conductor crowded in side-foremost, and seeing "Wash" first of anybody, I suppose, pulled him out from behind the stove. "Rarey" crawled up off my back, and we all three got out at the door. The car had left the rails, turned half around, and headed down the bank. Nobody was killed outright. One man had a broken leg, and swore he would have handsome damages for the same.

There were several limpers.

One lady had the whole skirt of her dress torn off, and was carrying this in one hand, and a big dumpling-colored chignon in the other. There were also several others carrying chignons of various colors.

Everybody, save the broken-legged man, pleasantly concurred in the opinion that it was "quite a little bump!" — one of those small jolts to which life is unavoidably heir to, and which are to be borne as good-humoredly as possible.

It was about a mile and a half to the next station. Fifteen minutes after the "bump," the majority of the passengers were walking along the track in twos and threes.

Whoever doubts our claim to be ranked a nation of philosophers should witness our general deportment after a not-too-shocking railroad smash-up. I do not believe there was a person on the train who would have betrayed to his neighbor that he was not a world-wide traveller by any undue fluster; no, not to be nominated for president.

These "bumps," however, do have the effect to break up the reserve between fellow-passengers. In fact, one can't very well maintain his pet reserve toward a fellow who sits astride his back, or *vice versâ*. I dare say the two youths in the seat behind me would have ridden all day under ordinary circumstances, without, either by smile or look, seeming to be aware of my presence in the seat in front. I should not have presumed to address them. But, on getting out of the broken car, we somehow kept together as we walked on to the dépôt, and, after a few mutual endeavors, succeeded in starting a general conversation, in the course of which it was ascertained that they were returning from a certain well-reputed "fitting-school" in South-eastern New Hampshire; fitting for Harvard, — either the college or the scientific school; they hadn't quite decided which. Latterly they inclined to the scientific school.

Well, so did I.

"Science" was getting to be of more account than Greek and Latin.

Of course it was.

They were chums, and both lived in Boston.

I lived "way down Bangor way;" but I was going to Boston.

That was good.

'Twas rather queer that we should run into each other so.

Queer indeed! We were about to say *nice*, but thought that would be a little too much at present.

Another train was made up, and we went on to Boston in company. I recollect that we got on very comfortably in talk. Our general opinions seemed to tally agreeably, particularly on Latin and Greek. We were at peace in our politics too (as was learned after much delicate sounding). That was very favorable; and, on arriving quite late in the evening, we exchanged cards, they giving me a cordial invitation to "call round" the next day.

Thus far I had not learned their names, save that one was Wash, and the other "Red," to judge from the way Wash pronounced it. I therefore examined the cards with some curiosity. One bore the address of "G. W. Burleigh, No. —, Columbus Ave.;" the other, "J. Warren Raedway, No. —, Tremont St."

The first was probably Wash; for, after putting them in my pocket at the dépôt, I could not tell which from which. G. W. doubtless stood for George Washington: as a rule, all the G. W.'s in the United States stand for that. Then the other must be "Red;" and, come to look at it, the first syllable of the surname might very likely be pronounced "Red."

The next afternoon I called round on Raed. Wash happened to be there. In the evening they took me to hear the "big organ," there being a concert at Music Hall that night. The next morning we went over to

Charlestown to visit that most attractive of all localities for your young citizen of fifteen and seventeen, — the Navy Yard. Match it if you can, with its rows of heavy cannon and its wonderful pyramids of balls in the park; the dry-dock; the huge old receiving-ship "Ohio;" and, best of all, the rusty "monitors" with their shot-proof turrets, into which we climbed through the ports. Then we went on board the frigate "Franklin." As we stood on the quarter-deck in the fresh breeze, a smart little schooner came scudding along from the harbor.

"It's the commodore's yacht," said Wash. "Isn't she a beauty?"

"Oh, if we only had *that!*" exclaimed Raed to Wash.

"That isn't nearly so fast nor so clean built as some in the New-York Club, or even in the Eastern Club," replied Wash.

"Don't care for that," said Raed. "It's a stanch little craft. Just the thing for us to go out along the coast with this summer."

"Do you know Herb. Belcher has just bought a new yacht?"

"That so?"

"Yes: Jem Atwood told me last night. And Clat Maynard's having one built. 'Most done, too."

"Those fellows are just going in; ain't they?" exclaimed Wash. "Too bad we can't."

"Why can't you?" I asked, — rather injudiciously, I am afraid.

"Can't raise the wind," laughed Wash, a little discontentedly.

"Why, how much would it cost?" I inquired.

"Well, such a yacht as we should want would cost all the way from a thousand up to twenty-five hundred. Then there's the expense of running her, — two hundred dollars a month. Can't do it much less than that: hire a skipper, you know. It cost those New-York fellows four hundred, they say. Nice, if a fellow's rich."

"But I don't care so much for a yacht, to belong to a club, and race at regattas, as I do to go out in on my own hook, and even make quite long voyages along the coast," explained Raed. "What I should really like to do," he exclaimed, "would be to have a good strong yacht, and go off as far as Halifax, Newfoundland, and even up to Iceland, or across to England."

Wash laughed.

"Oh, it could be done easy enough!" exclaimed Raed. "What's to hinder? To tell the truth," he went on, "I'm not just satisfied with the way we're getting our education. Here we're cooped up in one little town to study year after year. All we can get is a mere book-knowledge. Come to go out into the world, we're as green and *greener* than before we went to college. I doubt if it be a good plan to stuff one's head with mere printed descriptions of things and places. A fellow ought to travel *as he studies*, I say. What I should want to do would be to pack my books aboard this yacht I spoke of, and so sail away to read up, and see the world as I read."

"That's the way to get an *education;* and that's the way it will be done before many years," concluded Raed, somewhat flushed by so long and so earnest a speech.

"The only trouble is, we haven't got the 'rocks' to

do it," remarked Wash. "That's one of the fine things that might be done if we only had plenty of money."

"You will have to come down to our county," said I, "and find the 'lost lode.'"

"The lost *lode!*" said Raed. "What's that?"

Thereupon I told them the favorite legend of my native neighborhood, — that a Penobscot Indian, while hunting moose near Mount Katahdin, had found, on one of the northern peaks or spurs of the ridge, a lode of lead, so pure that he had cut off quantities of it with his knife to run into bullets.

"But is there any truth in it?" asked Wash.

"A great many think there is," I replied.

"I should think you would hunt for it," said Raed. "If there's much of it, it would be valuable."

"I have had thoughts of hunting for it," said I. "You had better go down there this summer and help me find it. We'll go shares."

"Not a bad idea!" exclaimed Wash. "We're going out somewhere after it gets hot. Last summer we went up to Lake Winnipiseogee. No great shakes up there: too many round. I suppose you could show us some good fishing and shooting if we didn't find the lead?"

At that I dilated at large on the trout, partridges, caribou, and 'coons of my natal county; promising, moreover, to take them on a moose-hunt.

"But can we come as well as not?" asked Raed. "Can you *have us?*"

I assured them there would be no difficulty on that score, and guaranteed them a warm welcome from my grandfather, with whom I then resided.

"Then we will come, no mistake," said Wash.

So much for a friendship begun by a broken car-truck. I was in the city only a week; but I saw a good deal of them during that time: in fact, we talked the matter over nearly every day; and, after I went home, we wrote back and forth. I sent them a box of flying-squirrels, and one containing a black squirrel, by express.

The gist of our correspondence was their proposed visit, and the expedition we meant to make to find the *lead.*

One of these letters, which bears the date of June 29, contains the following paragraph, which I copy to show how we felt and talked at that time. It was from Raed, though Wash wrote fully as often. He thus concludes: —

"Look for us about the 25th of next month (July). We can get to come by that time, I think. You are sure it will be all right with your grandfather? We shall bring fish-hooks and all the 'fixin's.' But we want to learn something as well as have an out-and-out good time. Wash is reading up on natural history, and I am taking geology (about the earth and the rocks, you know). We're posting up. You ought to take something for your part. That's the way they do in regular scientific expeditions. Have one man for the natural history, another for the geology, and another for the botany. I've been looking at specimens of galena (lead) ore; also at specimens of gold-bearing rocks, and at gold in the ore. I shall know what it is if we come to it anywhere. Can't sell me out on copper pyrites, like what we read of the early Virginians.

"We're going to bring some big bottles to put snakes in. Can we get alcohol up your way? (to put the snakes in, of course.) We shall bring a rifle, and plenty of cartridges. You've got a good shot-gun, I believe you said: an army rifle bored out for shot, isn't it? We shall bring our last winter suits for camping out in Can you furnish some blankets? We will bring a lot of mosquito-netting, as you suggested. About the 25th, I hope; but you write, and we will write again before then.

"Very truly yours, &c.,

"J. W. RAEDWAY.

"P. S. — That black squirrel came all right. He's a beauty. We've had no end of fun with him. We have him in a cage; and he makes the wheel spin good. I guess you could get the fox through to us. Put him in a big box. We can stand the express-bill. Wash thinks you had best take mineralogy (the part about the various kinds of rock). Says he will send you a book on it, if you want one. We shall need to be well posted on geology and mineralogy, you know. Now write and tell us what other things you think we shall want. "J. W. R."

Eight days after, Wash writes, —

"Kit, I'm stuck. I've got a cousin here; just arrived in the city; came up from the South last week. I've kind of got him on my hands to amuse and put him round, you know. His father was a pretty big rebel in

the war: so my father says. Was one of those that went down to South America, Brazil. You know, a lot of those rebels did. Meant to found a slave empire in the Valley of the Amazon, — some such nonsense. Guess they never made out much; though old man Additon (that's the name) is down there yet. They say he's got a plantation started. But the Emperor of Brazil has rather gone back on them; talks of freeing all the slaves. Rough on those rebs who went down there to keep up slavery! Serves 'em right, though, I say. But I try to make Wade (his name's Wade Hampton Additon, — just think of that! Wade Hampton!) as comfortable as I can; and father's helped the family a good deal since the war. They lost about every thing. Aunt Additon and Wade never have been to Brazil: they've been staying at their old plantation in South Carolina. But what with Ku-Klux troubles, &c., things got so *nasty* there this spring, that aunt came on to Baltimore to live; and Wade came up here to us, to stay till they can hear from Capt. Additon, and find out what to do.

"So here I am with him sort of tied to me. I can't very well go off and leave him. He's a good fellow enough, and mighty smart in his way; but he's a dreadful rebel. 'Tell you, his eyes will snap when he gets to talking about the war. He fought against us, too, when Sherman marched down through there to Savannah. Was in two or three skirmishes. Only thirteen then. You know, the Southern boys 'most all bore arms at that time.

"Well, Wade's got wind of our expedition, and wants to go with us. But Raed says we ought not *to think*

of taking him out among Northern folks, — uninvited too. I thought I would just write you how it is, and then do as you think best.

"Yours,

"WASH BURLEIGH.

"P. S. — Wade has got one of the queerest dogs you ever saw. It's a 'Chinaman.' Wade bought him in New York; but he had just been brought through from San Francisco and China. Hasn't got a *hair on him!* Skin bare as your hand, but hard and tough like an elephant's; just about the color of an elephant too. Wade calls him *Ding-bat;* says that's his Chinese name. Barks about the *brogyest* you ever heard, — two yaps at once! All the other dogs here go for him the moment they set eyes on him, same's the paddies go for "John" at San Francisco. Wade says he's a lizard-hunter. Big lizards in China, I expect. Now, we shall rather need a dog, you know. What say for Ding-bat?

"I told you before, I believe, that we are going to bring a compass.

"Raed has got lead on the brain, sure. He talks of nothing save lead assay and shot-towers. Have to chuck him into an asylum to cool him off! Do you really suppose we shall find that *lode?* And what's this you wrote about an 'Indian devil'? (for I had said something concerning the Indian tradition that Pomoola guards the summit of Katahdin.) Tell me more about that. "G. W. B."

I wrote back to bring the Southerner by all means,

and Ding-bat; that we would all make allowance for his peculiar opinions; and that I hoped we should be able to *reconstruct* him. Reconstruction was the chief subject of talk at that time.

And yet another letter, received two days later from Raed, contains the following item: —

"This young Additon knows something of surveying and engineering. He studied a while under one of the military engineers of the confederate army. We can appoint him engineer to the expedition. He has with him an aneroid barometer, — to measure heights above the sea-level with. We rather need a theodolite to measure angles with; but they are somewhat expensive: besides, it is a heavy thing, — clumsy to carry. Additon has a semicircular pretractor and a pair of dividers. He says he can measure angles roughly with those instruments; and, as the engineering is not to be the most important department, I think we shall not try to take the theodolite.

"Hope you are getting on with the mineralogy. We are preparing note-books.

"Yours, "RAED."

CHAPTER II.

An Arrival at a Delicate Moment. — Mr. Wade Additon, ex-Rebel. — A Shooting-Match. — Programme of the Expedition. — Ding-bat the Chinaman.

I WELL remember their arrival. It was the morning of the 29th of July. We had not looked for them till night, by the afternoon stage; but they got through so as to come up on the morning stage, and were set down, with their baggage, at the "forks" of the road, about half a mile below my grandfather's farm.

We had just finished breakfast; and family prayers were in progress. (Grandfather always prayed in the good old orthodox fashion, — standing with his hands on the retroverted back of a kitchen-chair.) A sabbath stillness had settled over the house and yard, and was radiated out into the orchard. Thus was it ever at this hour of the morning; while the words of the dear old gentleman, giving thanks for past mercies and humbly asking blessings upon all, came drowsily to the ears of the tame old robins sitting fearlessly on their nests in the stout crotches of the apple-trees. All was as usual; when from my seat in the corner, happening to cast a look out past the inclined chair-back, I caught a glimpse of the wondering countenance of Wash, peering round

the lilac-bush with mouth agape and attentive ears. Prayer in that style is not much in vogue on Columbus Avenue, it is to be feared.

As grandfather had but just begun, and always prayed toward half an hour by the old clock, we all had some time to wait. After peeping a few moments, Wash seemed suddenly to form an opinion as to what was going on inside, and, looking over his shoulder, beckoned. Pretty quick, a darker face, with black hair and great black eyes, looked around the bush; looked and listened, cocking his ear and his eye alternately at the window. Presently it dawned upon him too. He and Wash looked at each other wondrous wise, and grinned: then both beckoned over their shoulders; and a moment later, lo! the familiar visage of Raed came into view from behind the green leaves. It took him less time to "make it out." They were all smiling, but suddenly sobered; then removed their hats, and, with eyes in the air, stood decently and patiently awaiting the *amen*.

Meanwhile the prayer was going on leisurely as it was wont. Five — ten — fifteen minutes passed. Wash stole a glance at the dark-faced boy, and put up a hand to his bare and closely-shingled head; then made a false and noiseless attempt at a sneeze. Taking *cold*, you see.

The dark-faced boy then got out a spurious issue of croup to match. Raed frowned diligently at both, and put out a warning hand. Wash persisted, however, in more counterfeit sneezing; when (as a judgment on him, no doubt) he was suddenly seized with the pangs of a *genuine* one; tried hard to squelch it, but was overpowered, and uttered a distressful bray. Instantly all three

dropped out of sight. There was a noise as of trousers-knees rubbing on the grass; then swift, skulking footsteps down the lawn.

The prayer went on some five minutes longer, and ended — as it was accustomed to do.

"Kit," said grandfather, replacing the chair, "I am afraid the calves have got out. I thought I heard them round the house. Better get them in again."

I went out to look up the *calves*, and, glancing hastily down the lawn into the road, espied them under the "butternut-tree," fanning. Their *colds* were better. With a peep into the sitting-room to see if Nell or Wealthy had seen them, I went down, and, on coming near the tree, gave them "Good-morning!" and "How are ye, old fellow?" as innocently as I could.

"How do you do?" from Wash, warmly, though a little suspiciously.

"How are you, Kit?" from Raed; both regarding me with a guilty keenness.

"Why didn't you come up to the house?" I exclaimed. "Old folks are expecting you. Ought to have come right up."

At that they all three looked greatly relieved. "We've only just this minute got here," said Wash. "Got a little sweaty walking up. Thought we would stop in the shade a moment to cool off."

This being in every way satisfactory, Wash turned to introduce his cousin, who had kept a little to the rear.

"Mr. Wade Additon, — ex-rebel," said he, adding the latter designation with a laugh and a wink. The dark faced boy came forward promptly, and gave me a warm

hand-grasp. "Yes," said he, "I was a *rebel*," looking me straight in the eye; "and, under the same circumstances, I should be one again."

Rather a disloyal sentiment, certainly. He was honest too: that was plain. Yet it may be better to be an honest rebel than an insincere patriot. "Honesty is worth *two in the bush*," as the late Col. James Fisk, jun., has told us; though I was sorry to hear so from such a source. There was grit and mettle about this young Southerner too, — qualities that come in next after honesty. That boy is especially to be prized whose brains generate a good lot of force, *spunk*, *grit*, or any other name you like to call it; a boy who never will spell out by his deeds that contemptible verb, *f-u-n-k*.

Additon was rather taller than either Wash or Raed, though possibly not so heavy. I had been afraid he would not have the *body* for the hard walking and climbing we should have to do; but there was *that* about him which relieved me of all further anxiety on that score.

"And now," resumed Wash, "allow me to make known to you the fifth member of our expedition, *Dingbat*. Here, you strange old Mongol! Where are you, sir?"

The "Chinaman" came running up, — an odd-looking dog indeed. The skin of his face was loose, and went through all sorts of puckers and wrinkles in keeping with his emotions. As Wash had written me, his hide was guiltless of a hair. His tail, even, was bare as a stick: in fact, it looked very much like a small green-hide. His general color was a purplish-clay tint: but the insides of his prick ears were pink; and his

eyes were very dark, and had a gentle, affectionate expression. Altogether the most peculiarly *got-up* dog it has ever been my luck to see. I think of him sorrowfully now. Poor Ding-bat! to come all the way from distant Shanghai to die a violent death among the barbarous wilds of Maine! On the woody shore of one of the most picturesque of the Penobscot lakes his bones rest, — in peace, we hope.

The wagon was sent down after their trunks; and we spent the remainder of the forenoon unpacking their out-rig and looking it over.

In the afternoon we went out with the girls for a sail on the "pond," which borders the farm on the east side, and extends back to the northward for four or five miles. I pass over these preliminaries as rapidly as possible, since my story is less of their visit than of our expedition.

After supper we had a "shooting-match" to test the guns. The rifle they had brought was one of the old Sharpe's rifles of border-ruffian notoriety. It was very handsomely mounted in silver, and had belonged to one of Wash's uncles, who had figured somewhat in early Kansas history as a Free-soiler. Wash informed us that it had "picked" one Missourian at five hundred yards: so his uncle had told him. Young Additon looked a little blank at that; his political sympathies evidently extending back to all past questions of this sort.

We set up the target (a six-inch ring) at a hundred and fifty yards; and were pretty sure of it with the rifle, when *rested* on the fence. We then placed it

at two hundred and fifty yards, and took a shot apiece. Raed hit within the ring; I hit on the black line around it; Wash missed it altogether; while Additon bored the plank five inches too low. I thought it a good sign that he did not *overshoot:* amateur marksmen are so apt to do so.

Just then Nell came out, and, after some coaxing and daring, made a shot (resting the piece on the fence) that actually struck the target almost on the "bull's eye;" better than Raed had done. Of course, the boys deemed this purely accidental. I did not think it worth while to tell them of her exploits shooting hawks with my shot-gun.

After this "fancy shot" by my fair cousin, we concluded to try the shot-gun. Bringing the target up to a hundred yards, we tried each our skill with twenty-five duck-shot to the charge; and all hit it, *more or less:* Wash embedded four; while Raed only lodged one in it; Additon and myself had two each. Dusk now put an end to the target practice; and we adjourned to the sitting-room to "organize the expedition." Lamps were lighted, and Raed drew up the following paper: —

"We, the undersigned, hereby agree to make an expedition to Mount Katahdin, in the State of Maine, with the objects and for the purpose below stated: —

"1st, To discover a certain lode or deposit of lead (galena), which, *from information now in our possession,* we believe to be located somewhere along the north or north-west side of this mountain.

"2d, To obtain a knowledge of the natural history, geology, and mineralogy of the region between this

place (the town of E——, Me.) and Mount Katahdin inclusive.

"Our purpose in the discovery of this lode of lead shall be to raise funds for the purchase and equipment of a *yacht* to be used *as a means of travel.* Our object in this is to render our education (now in progress) more complete and practical than can possibly result from a mere study of books during a continued residence in one place.

"With these objects and for this purpose we hereby pledge ourselves to prosecute this expedition with a diligence and perseverance that shall only stop short of impossibility of achievement.

"It is further agreed that G. W. Burleigh (Wash) shall act as zoölogist to the expedition; J. W. Raedway shall act as geologist; W. H. Additon shall act as topographical engineer; —— (the narrator) shall act as mineralogist.

"The position of botanist to the expedition is necessarily vacant. But, not to neglect that important branch of natural science, it is agreed that each of the other gentlemen shall devote so much of his attention to this topic as can be consistently spared from his other duties.

"The expenses of the expedition shall be borne equally by the members."

"I don't know that this is exactly ship-shape," said Raed, applying the blotter; "but it covers the ground, I think."

He then read it aloud. It did sound rather lofty, not to say *stiltified.* Still, it "covered the ground" exactly,

and was a very fair exposition of our general plan and way of thinking at that time. It must not be premised, however, that we accomplished all we marked out in the above paper.

"We shall rather need a leader, — some one to go ahead," remarked Wash when Raed had finished reading; "and I move that Mr. Raedway be elected captain to the expedition. Is that your minds, gentlemen? If so, please manifest it in the usual way."

It was our minds decidedly. Raed at first declined, after the manner of freshly-nominated candidates generally. Really, I do not think he coveted the position. But, finding we would hear nothing to his refusal, he thanked us, and promised to do the best he could for the expedition. We all shook him by the hand, and agreed to stand by him. This having been duly recorded on the paper, we all signed our names. The expedition was now declared to be organized.

The question of provisions (food) was next discussed. We expected to kill some game, — enough to supply us with meat by the way; also to catch fish. Whether to take flour and the appurtenances for bread-making was a question we had some difficulty in settling. After considerable debate, grandmother was called in to give her opinion. She advised us to take "Indian meal" (corn-meal) by all means. "For," quoth the old lady, "a 'hasty-pudding' is just the easiest and quickest thing to make in the world. Anybody can make a hasty-pudding. All you've got to do is to boil your water, put in a little salt, and stir in your meal. It's good too, and wholesome. I'll give you some maple-sugar, in cakes, to eat on it."

It was unanimously decided to take "Indian meal" in place of flour.

"Eggs are another good thing too," grandmother went on. "Nice to go with your meat (here the old lady fell to laughing) and your fish. Nice to boil too. But, dear me! what foolish boys you are to go 'way off into the woods so! Remember, you mustn't boil your eggs more'n five minutes."

"But how can we carry eggs?" Raed ventured to ask. "Will they not be apt to get broken?"

"Oh! you can pack 'em right in with your meal, just as if you were going to market. I'll let you have a couple of my light cedar buckets (with bails to 'em); and pack the eggs right in with the meal; then tie a cloth over the top. Can put the sugar-cakes down into the meal too. But I don't believe you'll be gone more'n *one night*. You can take cooked victuals enough to last a day or two, — as long as it will *keep*."

This seemed so much to the purpose, that we concluded to intrust the whole matter to grandmother.

Grandfather thought our best way would be to go up the pond in the boat to the "head" of it, and thence through the "thoroughfare" (channel) into the pond above. We would thus be able to make the first twelve or thirteen miles by water. "But I am afraid your tramp will be attended with more hardship than profit,' the old gentleman could not help adding. Of course we were ready to risk that.

It was now getting late; but, before going to bed, I remember that we had some music. The boys sang; and Nell played on the "parlor-organ" (a new thing then)

several pieces, — some of those beautiful ballads of the war. Then Wash sang alone, "Tenting To-night on the old Camp-Ground." We then asked young Additon for a song. He at once responded with "The Bonnie Blue Flag that bears the Single Star," and afterwards gave us "Dixie;" both full of melody and spirit. It seemed queer to have such an out-and-out *rebel* among us, — we who for the past seven years had so abhorred the word. Could it be possible that this pleasant, warm-hearted young fellow was a *rebel?* Nell asked him to take her place at the instrument: and I recollect that he made us all shed tears, and wept himself, with "Dear Memories of Departed Days;" for we knew that he was thinking of his deserted home in the sunny South, and of the pleasant days before the war, — the then terrible war that had so recently filled the whole land with anguish.

CHAPTER III.

Starting off.—The Outfit.—On the Pond.—The "Dead Growth."—A Lynx.—Hornets.—The "Thoroughfare."—On the Second Pond.—A Thunder-Gust among the Mountains.—A Race to escape a Ducking.—"A Mean Skunk."—The Camp on the "Big Rock."—Hasty-Pudding.

WE were up long before sunrise, dressing and getting ready. Grandmother and the girls were bustling about, preparing breakfast and putting up our provisions.

For the benefit of any of my young fellow-citizens who may desire to make a similar excursion (and they cannot do better if they have good health and enjoy wild scenery), I will state briefly what we wore for clothes, and also what necessaries we took along with us.

We wore our previous winter suits — pants, vest, and sack-coat — of good firm woollen goods. Sometimes these were rather uncomfortable toward the middle of the day; but this was more than overbalanced by the comfort they afforded at night, especially in wet weather. For shirts we had two apiece (one to wear and one to carry), of wool flannel, with quite broad, turn-over collars, under which we wore narrow silk neckties; thus dispensing with paper-collars altogether, though it did seem odd enough at first.

For hats we wore stiff, round-crowned, light-colored

wool hats, with broad black bands and widish brims, such as were then in fashion; and a very serviceable sort of hat we found them too. Our watches we carried with short guards of deer-skin, with the key knotted into the guard. We had two pairs of woollen socks apiece; and our boots were of thick calf-skin, with the soles wide, so as to protect the upper leather. We each of us carried a large, two-bladed jack-knife in our trousers-pockets. The boys had brought two hunting-knives to wear in sheaths: but, in view of their weight and unwieldiness, we decided to leave them behind; very wisely too, as I now think: our large jack-knives answered every purpose. It should be made a rule to take nothing that is not absolutely necessary. We all had a comb and tooth-brush, which we carried in our pockets; as also a large strong linen handkerchief apiece. I came near forgetting our fish-hooks, of which we had nearly a dozen of all sizes, attached to gimp. I had also purloined a small darning-needle from Nell's cushion, and a hank of coarse linen thread from Wealthy's work-box; and, while I was about it, I caught out a miscellaneous handful of buttons. All these articles proved useful in their time.

Then there were the guns, — the rifle and the shot-gun. The ammunition consisted of one pound of fine Curtis and Harvey powder, with two pounds of mixed shot, from bird-size up to buck-shot, together with a box of caps. We had also five dozen cartridges for the rifle. For the ammunition we had a small water-proof bag of rubber cloth. This bag we stowed in the bottom of a shallow iron kettle, which was to serve both as kettle and spider.

The compass, not much larger than an old-fashioned watch, was Raed's property: he took charge of it exclusively. The aneroid barometer and protractor belonged to Additon. The aneroid itself was about the size of the compass, which it much resembled. The "mosquito-bar," without which no party should start into the wilderness, was simply a small tent of mosquito-netting. When folded up, its weight was very insignificant. Nothing but the netting need be carried. The sticks on which to pitch it may be cut anywhere, and at any time. Wash had a small pocket spy-glass, which was always handy, and frequently of use. We had also two large woollen blankets, — "army blankets," as they were then called. To cut poles, hack off boughs, break up wood, &c., we had a medium-sized hatchet with a hammer head; which proved, on the whole, the most useful article of all. Each took a bunch of matches. These were stowed away, well wrapped up, in our vest-pockets. Parties who smoke would need to take more. As regards money, we had, if I remember correctly, somewhere from thirty to forty dollars apiece, but did not spend over half this sum. The provisions we carried with us from home were not intended to last over a week. In that time we expected to reach either the "head of Chesuncook," where the Penobscot lumbering-companies have a sort of supply-dépôt; or a certain clearing made for a hay-farm, which I had heard of on the west branch of the Penobscot River. After some talk, it was decided to forego the use of tea and coffee, thus to avoid carrying a coffee-pot. We repented of this afterwards. Our advice to all tourists is to carry coffee, somehow.

The sun of a bright July morning was just peeping over the eastward ridges as we started down to the boat. The grass and the tall milkweeds were drenched with dew. The very stones were in tears. But when the broad, bright disk shot up, a thousand jewels flashed. Raed led the way, with the shot-gun over his shoulder, and "the bundle" containing the blankets and mosquito-bar, together with our spare shirts, socks, &c., rolled up and tightly strapped; after him marched Wash, with the rifle and one of grandmother's white capped buckets chock-full of meal and eggs; Additon, or Wade as we soon came to call him, fell in behind with the other bucket; while number four brought up the rear, with the hatchet in one hand, and the old iron kettle of ammunition, &c., in the other.

The girls went down to the pond shore with us to carry a basket of cakes and cheese, and to see us off. What breeze there was that morning was almost directly from the north, — square against us. It was so light, and would require so much time in tacking to beat into it, that we did not try to use the sail, but took the oars. The cargo was soon shipped. Wash and I took the rower's thwart. Wade sat down in the bow. Raed stood in the stern.

"Good-by, girls!"

"Good-by!"

"Good-by, Nell!" from Wash.

"Adieu, fair shootist!" from Wade.

"Come aboard, Ding-bat!" to the Chinaman, who stood hesitating. In fact, he seemed to much prefer the society of the ladies on the shore. I thought, too, that

I detected Nell slyly encouraging him in his disobedience. Wade had to get out, take him by the forelegs, and drag him aboard.

"Give way!" shouted the captain. We bent to the oars; the boat shot out; and the expedition was begun.

The farther shore of the pond was wooded; and, as it was not more than half a mile, we decided to row across, in order to go up under the shade of the overarching forest. Looking back, we could see the girls in their white dresses going up through the pasture. They turned and waved their handkerchiefs as we neared the other side. It was a glorious morning. The nightingales and orioles were making the cool woods resound to their mellow, leaf-echoed warblings; while from an upland maple a robin (*Turdus migratorius*) was chanting the praises of his "two-legged skillet," — that famous old skillet.

Up around the Hardscrabble (hill) a flock of crows were hawing and cawing in a wrangle over something, — a dead woodchuck, perhaps; and we here and there caught a glimpse of one flapping silently about among the trees, robbing the nests of the smaller birds. Disreputable fellows, these crows!

In the shade the water looked very black and deep as we pulled along within four or five rods of the shore. Two loons (the Great Northern Diver) were sailing about far ahead. Presently their wild cry came quavering down to us. As we drew nearer, they dived, one after the other. Wash counted ninety-seven ere they rose to the surface far out toward the middle of the

pond. They often remain under water for fully two minutes.

We had already passed the limits of the "cleared lands." On both sides of the pond, and to the north and north-west, the whole country was covered with a heavy growth of dark spruce, the sombre green of which was here and there flecked with the lighter tints of maples and birches. An hour of steady tugging had taken us up within plain sight of the low alder-girt shores that skirt the head of the pond. Raed and Wade now took their turn at the oars. The boat shot ahead under their fresh strokes. A mile was soon gone over; and we were approaching the two low knolls between which the "thoroughfare" makes in from the upper pond. This channel was originally only a large brook; in short, the outlet of the second pond into the lower pond: but the dam of the lumbering company, at the foot of the lower pond, had raised the level of the water eight or ten feet, causing it to flow back into the brook, and even into the upper pond, the level of which is thereby considerably raised. What was once a brook has thus become what lumber-men call a *thoroughfare*, — a broad channel of slack-water leading from one pond or lake into another, along which logs may be driven down to the mills. Entering this channel, which was from twenty to thirty yards in width, with water extending back among the bushes on both sides, we made our way up toward the second pond, blue glimpses of which could, from time to time, be caught over the woods to the northward. These thoroughfares have an inexpressibly dreary appearance; for the water, flowing back

on each side, sometimes for a long distance, soon kills the forest, which stands sear and dead, rotting and falling. The death of the forest on so vast a scale gives the landscape a very unsightly aspect. One is unconsciously depressed, saddened.

"Gloomy!" exclaimed Wash. "No wonder they call it a '*dead growth;*'" for I had just been saying that these flowed tracts were thus designated by the lumber-men.

Half a mile farther on we were passing where a heavier growth had covered the banks of the brook. Huge trunks — two, three, and even four feet in diameter — rose like columns from the water. From mere curiosity we turned the boat out of the channel, and, entering this submerged forest, paddled about for some time. The water stood from five to six feet deep about the trees, and was covered with a red-blue scum, which had dried on in rings around the trunks at odd heights above the present level. A strong odor as from old wooden cisterns filled the air. Devil's-darning-needles skimmed and darted about our boat, and hordes of blue-green water-bugs scampered up the trunks as we bumped along between them.

For some rods back from the stream the growth had been quite thick, a border of elms and ashes; but, after making our way through these (not without considerable difficulty, for the brush had begun to fall from the tops), we entered what had been a grand interval bottom, studded with great bass-woods. Many of these had already leaned over and lodged upon each other. The tough fibrous bark hung in long shreds from the tops, and, gently waving in a breeze scarcely felt by us

in the boat, switched idly into the water. Much of it had fallen and sunk, where it lay on the bottom, looking like red flannel. Bits of limbs were dropping almost continually with dull splashes; and, on taking up the paddles for a moment, we could hear the steady, unremitting *cut* of thousands of "borers" inside the dead trunks, some of which, denuded of their bark, showed white as chalk.

Hundreds of woodpeckers were tapping all about us. I would earnestly recommend these flowed tracts to naturalists who may wish to study up on the Picidæ. We saw several of the golden-winged variety; and I remember counting four or five other kinds, attracted to the harvest of worms in the mouldering wood. Woodcocks now and then made the *flow* resound to their loud, swiftly-repeated note, and flew about in squads of three and four. Among the maples, a little farther back, we saw a number of their nest-holes high up the trunks. On thumping them at the bottom with the paddle, the faint call of the young birds could be heard.

Pushing on, a low growling, accompanied by sudden snarls, began to be heard. We listened a moment, then pulled hastily forward. It seemed to issue from a rick of maple-tops formed by several trees leaning over and lodging into a larger one. A *set-to* of some kind was going on; but the thick entangled mass of branches hid it from view. We worked the boat round to the right, keeping off pretty well.

"Ah, there he is!" whispered Wade, pointing into the tops.

A largish gray creature had climbed up one of the

leaning maples to where it lodged into the large one, and, with long retractile claws fastened into the rough bark, crouched *grabbing* into a big gnarl-hole in the larger trunk. Now he would get a hold and pull a moment, but as often draw suddenly back with a sharp snarl. Some animal was disputing the entrance with him. We got glimpses of a pointed nose and flashing eyes in the hole. So intent was the savage besieger on his prey, that he had not espied us.

"What is it?" whispered Wash.

"It's a Canada lynx, I think," said I. "Look at those tasselled ears and that stub tail! That one *in* the tree is a raccoon, I believe: nose looks like a 'coon's."

"Shove the boat along!" whispered Wash. "Get it past this tree a little. I'll fix him" (cocking the rifle). "Sh, Ding-bat!" for the Chinaman had begun to growl.

But there was brush under us; and, in endeavoring to push the boat ahead, it cracked slightly. Instantly the lynx faced about, and, catching sight of us, ran down the trunk, and jumped *splash* into the water. Wash fired: but the *cat* swam off; and, before we could get the boat round to give chase, it climbed out upon a fallen tree, and ran along to another and another, and thus escaped us.

That an animal of the cat kind should take to the water may seem a little singular. The Canada lynx, however, loves the water as well as a dog. They may frequently be seen swimming in the lakes, on a warm summer evening, of their own accord; and they are very rapid swimmers too. It is not often that they can be overtaken with a boat.

Finding that the game had given us the slip, and

seeing nothing more of the 'coon, we paddled off toward a clump of hackmatacks, easily distinguished by their mosses, which hung in pale-green curtains from the bare branches, trailing down ten and fifteen feet from the point of attachment. A great gray hornet's nest, fully as large as one of our buckets, hung from a small limb, fairly embowered in the moss. Raed threw up a club, which, striking into the nest with a soft thud, immediately drew out an angry multitude, filling the mossy boughs with their vengeful hum. One came darting down to the boat with hostile design evidently, which he was only prevented from carrying into execution after quite a sharp skirmish with our hats. We hastily pulled out from under them.

The limb from which the nest hung was small, — not much more than an inch in diameter.

"Hold on a bit!" said Wash. "I'll drop them off into the water."

He fired. A splinter flew up from the limb. It jogged sharply, but was not *cut* enough to break off. At the report, a large whitish-gray hawk, which had been sitting unobserved on a near tree, started up, gave a few quick flaps, then sailed noiselessly off.

"A bad shot," muttered Wash.

He put in another cartridge, and took a more careful aim. At the rifle *crack* the limb snapped off, and floated down with its sailing mosses. The nest touched into the water with a light *pat*, raising a circle of lazy ripples, over which hovered a blackening cloud of the mad insects. We sat watching them for some minutes.

"Half-past eleven," said Raed at length. "Almost

dinner-time. We will take a lunch from the basket to-day, I guess."

"Shall we dine aboard?" asked Wade.

"I begin to feel as if I should like to get out and stretch my legs," said Wash.

"Can't very well get out here," remarked Raed. "Let's get back into the channel, and so pull up along toward the pond. We may see a landing-place."

Making our way back into the thoroughfare, we paddled on for a mile or two till considerably past twelve, but without finding any spot fit to land on. The submerged "interval" continued on both sides of the stream. We had to lunch aboard. Fortunately grandmother had put in a bottle of cold milk, which stood us in good stead for drink; for the warm *dead*-water of the thoroughfare would have been utterly nauseous.

"I used to wonder why sailors need to die of thirst at sea," said Wade, taking a tip at the bottle; "but *this* (with a glance at the sluggish stream) helps me to an idea."

"Only in the case of the ocean the water holds salt and other mineral matter in solution, which render it, to a certain extent, poisonous," Raed remarked; "while here the water is simply dirty, — laden with decayed vegetable matter."

"I'm not sure," said Wash, with a glance of disgust at the purplish scum, "that *this* might not prove poisonous. Believe I should as lief take a drink of sea-water, and risk it."

About a mile farther on the thoroughfare opened into the second pond, — a fine roomy expanse nearly a mile

wide, and stretching away to the north-east for fully four miles. We changed hands at the oars, and pulled away toward the "head."

The pond was completely *locked* by forest-clad hills and mountains. On the east side the rocky face of an almost perpendicular precipice seems to overhang the water. For this reason the lumber-men call it the 'over-set pond.' Farther to the north-east and north the green woods enclose the sparkling waters, save at one point a little west of north, where we fancied we could detect a small clearing. A lazy blue smoke was just perceptible here, coiling faintly up, and then stretching out in a long snaky cloud on the tree-tops behind. On examining this spot with the glass, Wash thought he could make out a log-house or shanty with a newly-shingled roof. This was quite a suprise for me; for I knew of no human habitation on the upper pond.

Directly north, the pond basin seemed to bend back from the water for several miles, the ground rising gradually to the summit of a high, crescent-shaped ridge. Prominent along this ridge were two peaks, separated by a deep gorge opening back against the sky. This gorge Raed found to be almost exactly north by the compass; and, as this was very nearly the direction we wished to take, we judged that it would be well to make directly for it on landing, in order to pass up through it into the country beyond.

On the west and north-west side of the pond was a very large, massive-looking mountain. It rose abruptly from the water, and toward the top was clad with the usual dark evergreens of this region, which render all

our mountains so sombre and wild-looking. Through the black-green shrubbery peeped out the hoary faces of gray-white ledges. Altogether the mountain has an almost fearful seeming, it is so huge, and out of proportion with the rest of the landscape. This impression was heightened as we began to get off opposite it, while yet about two miles below the head of the pond.

It was one of those still, sultry days common to the first of August. There was not breeze enough to raise a ripple. The water was like glass; and the sun shone with a sickly, headachy glare. We had stopped rowing, and lay facing the mountain, longing for its stern old shadow. While we were looking, a bright, white cloud-head poked itself up over the summit. We thought at first that it was smoke, it shot up so rapidly; but, a moment later, discovered that it was a cloud. Dazzling white as a snow-drift it rose up, up, slender as a minaret. In a few minutes another showed itself farther along the mountain, then another and another; and presently a low sound, scarcely heard. Was it the suppressed hum of one of those hornets under some of our coats? or the distant *drum* of a partridge, indistinct and drowsy at mid-day?

"It's thunder!" exclaimed Wash.

"Those are thunder pillars," said Raed: "there's a shower coming!"

"Hurry up, then!" I exclaimed. "We must pull like blazes! It will blow like great guns!"

For, knowing the rapidity with which thunder-showers dash across this country, especially this most mountainous portion of it, I knew we had not a minute

to lose if we got over the two miles between us and the head of the pond. It would be no joke to be caught out on the pond in it; for if not capsized by the wind, which often blows a perfect tornado, we should have a very rough sea, besides getting thoroughly drenched. A month later we should have laughed at the idea of getting *drenched;* but, after a fellow has been living indoors a long time, he develops a horror of getting wet.

Wash and Raed seized the oars, and fell to tugging; while I took the steering-oar, and began to scull at the stern. On we went at a great rate, moving obliquely toward the shower, to gain the shore ere it burst over the mountain.

The great white cloud-heads were but peaks up into the sunshine from a black scowling mass which was now soaring swiftly up to the sun; and the far-cry rumble grew more distinct. Under the impulse of our united strength the boat forged ahead. I could hear the bow *cut.* Wade, too, had begun to paddle, using one of the thwarts. The water swirled past the stern. Altogether we left quite a foamy wake. The sudden exertion began to *tell,* however: I could hear Wash and Raed panting; and, by the time we had got over half a mile, they were so "blown," that we had to stop rowing a minute to change Wade into Wash's place and get breath.

Just then the sun was buried; the great wave of sunlight rolled back; a chilly gust shuddered in the air; the pond blackened; the sparkle and glitter of the ripples vanished. Sharp, bright flashes gleamed out from the cloud. The mountain seemed to tremble under the heavy explosions behind it. Away we sped, doing

our best now. *Timing* my oar with theirs, the boat fairly leaped beneath our combined stroke. We were running in under shadow of the mountain, as it were; and, glancing round for a moment, I saw that we were nearing the shore along the head of the pond. The freshly-shingled roof was now distinctly visible up in the clearing above the water. But we were getting fearfully tired; blisters were rising in our hands, and our lungs ached; while far out over us hung the cloud, showing jetty depths, with misty edges of a greenish-yellow tint. Zig-zag fire-bolts darted down to the mountain-top with sharp, short crashes. I saw an old pine-stub begin to smoke *white;* then a red blaze burst forth against the blackening cloud behind. As yet, not a breath of wind had reached us. The pond looked like a huge pool of ink: the lightning threw swift, blood-red *flushes* over it.

It darkened. Night seemed falling upon the little mountain-basin, — a night of blackness and flame. Still we pulled on. There came a quick, near flash. It seemed to glance from the oar-blades into our eyes. A hollow, rattling peal filled the air. The great electric battery was getting up overhead.

"These guns — puff — are liable — puff — puff — to draw *it!*" panted Wash.

"'Twon't draw — but — but fifty feet — radius!" gasped Raed.

This was scientific consolation indeed.

We were driving in upon the shore. I kept my eye on the mountain, which now towered above us. The rain-fall was just bursting over the summit with a deep, solemn roar which muffled the thunder-claps.

"Ease away!" shouted Raed.

But, despite this precaution, the boat came to the bank with a tremendous *pudge* into the mud, which pitched Wade out among the alders, and piled the rest of us up in the bow. We scrambled up, and, hastily chucking the buckets, kettle, and "bundle" into the boat's cuddy, seized the hatchet and guns, and pushed through the alders into the clearing. The shanty stood up fifteen or twenty rods from the shore. Stumbling among stumps and brush, we ran along beside a smutty log-fence, which enclosed a "burnt-land" potato-patch with rank green rows, between which lay dead coals and charred fagots. Great drops began to hit down here and there. A boy — a great lump of a boy — with a stub hoe was just climbing over the fence out of the potatoes as we came up. He had not seen us: his eyes were on the shower. "Hollo!" shouted Wash. "Hollo — hollo!" between puffs. The youngster turned, — saw us coming at him *with brandished weapons!* With a yell which a simultaneous crash of thunder couldn't quite drown, he bounded from the fence, and legged it for the shanty; looked over his shoulder for an instant as he turned in; then bobbed within the door, which was instantly slammed to. A moment more, and the shower struck, — a foaming drift of rain; and not only rain, but hail, the pellets as large as hen's eggs, striking and dancing along the ground. The dry, shingled roof of the shanty rattled like a snare-drum. We were nearly beaten down, getting some tremendous *raps*. A tornado of wind drove it; and, over all, the incessant flash and rattle of the thunderbolts. We turned in

perforce, and ran at the door full tilt with a great rattling of hatchet and guns. It was barred. A dog barked and growled. We shouted, and knocked ponderously for admittance. The front-window went up a crack; and, horrors! out came the great rusty muzzle of an old musket about a foot, and looked — big oaths! We jumped back from that door "in hot haste" to the middle of the yard, shouting and gesticulating. The shower fell in sheets, and poured a watery curtain from the eaves to the ground. The gun-barrel stuck out through it. The window, a four-pane concern, looked blank as zinc. We could see nothing of the gunner or gunners within; knew not what irresponsible idiot had hold of the trigger. He either couldn't or wouldn't hear, and kept the gun covering us point-blank.

All this in less than a minute; the shower increasing, if such a cataract could increase, every second. A still wilder gust now fairly whirled me around; and I saw dimly, a couple of rods off, a cow-shed, — saw it, and made for it, followed by Raed and the two other boys. Diving in, we drew breath; then turned to look at the belligerent window. The gun had been *swivelled* round to bear on the shed, and had us well in range.

"Well, by Jude!" exclaimed Wash. "The inhospitable wretch!"

"Let him shoot, if he wants to!" cried Wade with eyes aflame. "We'll try shooting!" pointing the rifle out between the slabs of the shed.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Raed: "not too fast! We scared the boy half to death. They're afraid of us. That's what's the matter. Don't you think so, Kit?"

I thought it looked more like that than any thing else.

"He no need to have been scared," said Wash.

"Of course not!" cried Wade.

"No use to tell what he no need to be," replied Raed. "He *was scared* fast enough. I don't think he will fire on us, though, if we keep back from the door. Wait till the shower slacks; then we will talk with him. Better not point the rifle at him."

The shower, indeed, had already begun to abate. It was one of those fierce, momentary gusts that soon expend their fury. The west was brightening. Five minutes later, the dark cloud-mass was rolling down the pond, with a grand bow spanning the waters. Beyond it, the angry lightning still darted in bright, glancing lines, and gruffly muttered the sullen peals. A great burst of sunshine soon set all the leaves a-glittering; and out on the edge of the clearing a woods-bird chirruped on a sudden, then thrilled all the fresh, moist air with its joyous song. The roof of the shanty steamed like a huge soup-platter; but there stuck the old musket, grim as fate. Drawing the rammer from the shot-gun, Raed put his handkerchief on the end of it; and we crept out of the still-dripping shed to hold a parley.

"Say, you man with the gun!" Raed began, advancing a few steps with his flag of truce. "What do you mean, anyway?"

"Yes, what do you mean by pointing your beastly old musket at us in that shape?" exclaimed Wash.

No answer; no movement of any kind.

"What are you afraid of?" demanded Raed. "Are you afraid of us? We won't hurt you."

"All we wanted was to get in out of the shower," said I. "Take in your gun now. We won't molest you."

No answer.

"Come, do say something!" exclaimed Wash. "Open your door now, like a man, and come out here where we can see you."

"We're only up here on a hunt, — a bear-hunt," said Wade, by way of simplifying it to his probable ideas. "Draw in your musket, and come to the door where we can talk with you. We will give" —

Here he was interrupted by a raw, untuned voice bawling out, —

"You g'long off, ole Sesashers! — you g'long off!"

'Twas so absurd, and withal the tone was so comically truculent, that we all burst out laughing, — all save Wade: he reddened, and began to look mad.

"Oh, we're not 'Sesashers'!" said Raed. "We are nothing of that sort. We're only up here on a hunt."

"Ye lie! 'Tain't the right time o' y'ar to hunt b'ars! G'long off, er I'll blow ye! I've gut *six fingers* in 'ere, an' tu slugs!"

"Well, by Jude!" cried Wash. "Did ever anybody hear the like of that?"

"Let's go for him!" exclaimed Wade. "Let's drag him out here and thrash him!"

"Oh, nonsense!" said Raed. "We don't want any thing of him now the shower's over. Best way is to leave him alone — in his glory."

"Yes, let's leave the fool!" said Wash.

"I should like to get hold of him!" muttered Wade. "The mean skunk!"

"It is a good deal the best way to let *skunks* alone," laughed Raed, putting up the unavailing flag of truce.

We went back to the boat, and, shoving off, paddled along the shore for nearly half a mile to where a large brook came in at the extreme northern end of the pond. Into the mouth of this brook we ran the boat, and, chaining it to a small black ash, put down several stakes to keep it from rubbing. This done, we got out our buckets, &c., and, disembarking, entered the woods, following up the right bank of the brook. The trees still dripped, from the shower; but, as there were few bushes amid the heavy old growth, we were not much troubled by wet brush. The forest was not dense. The trees were often ten and a dozen feet apart. We could see twenty rods ahead, sometimes fifty. Here and there a red squirrel chirred from a pine, or ran up the roughened ash-gray bark of a rock-maple. But, aside from these merry little gamins, the old wood was profoundly still. Our voices awoke hollow echoes. It is very hard to be jocose in such a forest valley. The brook gave forth a peculiar fishy odor, and gurgled hoarsely among great bowlders overgrown with thick, dank moss. Sombre spruces, often two feet in diameter, began to show among the maples and ashes. Their trunks were studded with great bolls and knobs of gum as large as one's fist. Some of these were clear as garnet, others black with the moss of years. We were not long providing ourselves with *quids*, which, under our tongues, speedily assumed that pale-purple tint so prized by all gum-

chewers. Seeing a squirrel sitting convenient, Wash dropped him off with the shot-gun. Wade then offered it to Ding-bat; but the Chinaman merely sniffed the carcass, and passed it by, — not yet hungry enough to eat raw squirrel.

Thus we went on for an hour or more. The valley led up — as we had supposed — into the ravine, between the two peaks we had seen from the pond, at an incline sufficient to render the brook quite rapid and brawling. Going on, great bowlders of gneiss and mica-schist began to appear, scattered about among the trees. It was now about half-past five o'clock.

"We must be getting up near the gorge," remarked Raed. "Is it best to push on through it?"

"I'm getting rather tired," said Wash. "We must have come four or five miles from the pond. These buckets *lug* a fellow prodigiously!"

As the gorge would probably give us some pretty difficult walking, I advised to camp at the foot of it, and so take it in the morning when we were fresh.

"Be on the lookout for a good spot to camp, then," said Raed.

A little farther on Wade pointed out a very remarkable bowlder, one of the largest we had any of us ever seen. It was on the very bank of the brook which foamed and dashed over a ledge a little above, forming quite a deep pool against the rock. Raed estimated its diameter to be fully a hundred and fifty feet. It rose sheer up from the brook for ten or twelve feet; and, on the other side, was not less than nine feet high. The top was nearly flat; and, in the lapse of centuries, a soil

had collected on it, and shrubs had sprung up. There were several small poplars, and half a score of shrubby hemlocks.

"What say to that for a place to camp?" Wade asked.

It at once struck us as a very pleasant, dry, and withal a very strong position. At one of the angles there stood a scrubby spruce. By hacking off a part of the boughs, and leaving three or four as steps, we were able to mount to the top with our buckets, kettle, &c.

"Has another advantage too," said Wade, going along to the farther side. "One can stand here, and fish in the brook. Let's try it, Wash."

Thereupon they got out some of the small hooks, and, baiting them with bits of cold meat from the lunch-basket, dropped into the pool under the rock.

Raed and I, meanwhile, began to collect firewood, dry knots, and slivers from an old pine-trunk, which we split open with the hatchet. Carrying this along, and tossing it up on the rock, we soon had a fire going. I then arranged a lug-pole over the fire, resting it into the scrubby hemlocks on opposite sides of the blaze. We hung on the kettle with water, and, unpacking one of the buckets, got out a dozen of eggs, which were put on to boil.

"Now, let's see," said Raed. "Five minutes, isn't it? But I suppose the old lady meant five minutes after the water had begun to boil."

It was highly probable that such was her meaning: so we took them out to wait for the boiling of the water.

Wash and Wade were having wonderful success fish-

ing, judging from the *jerks* they were making; though, come to inquire, we learned that they had only landed five. "Something was the matter with the bait." One of the five, however, was a "walloper" in size for a brook-trout. Wade (it was his catch) declared it would weigh a pound. After a great many "bites," two more were pulled out, — enough for breakfast, Wash thought.

All hands then stood round to assist at the making of the pudding, — the famous "hasty-pudding" that *anybody* could make. Some fresh water was dipped up, and the kettle boiled again.

"Let's see, now," says Raed. "What's the first step?"

"Why, shake in the meal," advised Wash.

"No; hold on!" exclaimed Wade. "That's not the first step. Something else comes first."

After some severe thought on the part of all, Raed suddenly exclaimed, —

"Salt!"

"That's it!"

Search was accordingly made for salt; and, on untying the other bucket, lo! there was one paper marked "*Pepper*," and another "*Salt*."

"Now, here's a grandmother worth having!" shouted Wash.

"How much salt?" was the next question.

"Three table-spoonfuls," replied Wash.

"Oh, ho! you've exposed *your* ignorance!" exclaimed Wade. "Three table-spoonfuls! Hear that! Make it salter than brine. Put him off the rock!"

"Some folks want their pudding salter than others,"

continued Wash. "You Southerners didn't have your victuals very salt *at one time*, from all accounts."

"I'll bet we didn't! Afterwards we had them salter. Meanwhile, I learned about how much a table-spoonful of salt would do; and I say a teaspoonful will be too much. Just a pinch will do."

"I yield to the gentleman's undoubted experience," said Wash. "I've no doubt he's correct on the salt question."

A *pinch* was stirred in.

"Now for the meal," said Raed. "There are only two ingredients, — salt and meal; and, as we've got in the salt, meal must come next."

Raed held the bucket over the kettle; and Wash clawed out the meal, — about a quart of it.

"Now stir it quick!" cried Wade. "Where's a spoon?"

But there was no spoon. There were salt, pepper, a tin plate, and a gill dipper, nicely packed in, but no spoons. (Grandmother had actually forgotten to put them in, — an oversight she is said to have discovered an hour after we had started, and lamented every day we were gone.)

"Well, get a stick!" shouted Raed when this lack became apparent.

A clean sliver was procured, and the stirring began.

"I can't seem to make it mix in!" complained Wash, who was engineering the sliver.

"Let me take it!" cried Wade. "It's of the utmost importance that it should be well stirred."

Wade seized the splinter, and bent over the kettle.

It was now boiling and blubbering at a great rate. Presently it *kicked*. A big bubble of hot meal and water flew up. Wade jumped back, and brushed frantically at his nose. A hot spatter had landed on that sensitive feature: several more had touched on the back of his hand.

"Gracious!" he ejaculated. "Never saw any thing so hot! Here, take your old splinter! I'm going down to the brook."

Raed took the splinter and dared up toward the now furious pudding, which kicked and puffed with amazing spitefulness.

"Needs a longer splinter," said Wash. "Here, take this big one," bringing a stick of the split pine, nearly three feet long.

By the use of this the pudding was stirred, till a pungent odor of burned meal warned us to catch it off. Just then, Wade came back with a very red spot on the end of his nose. While the pudding was cooling, we ate the eggs with salt and pepper from the tin plate. They were hard as shots almost. The old pitch-pine had made a ferocious fire. I then got out a cake of the maple-sugar, and, breaking it up, strewed it over the pudding. We formed a ring round the kettle, and, opening the large blades of our jack-knives, went in. Several mouthfuls were taken in silence.

"What do you think of it?" I asked.

"Very fair," remarked Raed.

"But what do you call *that?*" demanded Wade, poking out a hard lump about the size of a sparrow's egg.

PRESENTLY IT KICKED.

"It's full of 'em!"

"Oh! those are nothing but *blubs*," said Wash. "One of those things *what* exploded against your nose!"

"Confound blubs, I say, then!" cried Wade.

"Chew it up," I suggested.

Wade did so; then hastily spit it out.

"Full of dry, raw meal!" said he.

"I move we give the *blubs* to Ding-bat," said Wade, throwing him one.

The Chinaman grabbed it up, chewed at it, wobbled his mouth about, *gullucked* once or twice, but finally got it down. After that he swallowed them at once, without chewing, like sugar-coated pills. He liked the outside best.

"The trouble came," said Raed, "from putting in too much meal at once. Ought to be stirred in a little at a time."

The sun had set, and twilight was deepening. However brave and courageous a fellow may feel by daylight, the coming-on of night in the forest will give him some queerish sensations at first, till it gets to be an old story. He may not be actually afraid of bears or wolves or cats; yet there is something in a darkening wood that inspires loneliness and timidity. Of course, four together would not experience this sense of solitude like one alone; yet as the shades deepened, and the various wild sounds of the wilderness began to come to our ears, I think we all felt a little *strange*, and were glad we had chosen the top of the rock for our camp. There was hemlock

enough on the top to furnish "*sapin*" * for our bed. Raed hacked it off with the hatchet, while Wade and I arranged it a little back from the fire. Wade had climbed down to cut some slender poles of spotted maple for our musquito-bar; for these torturous little pests had come buzzing around as soon as it grew dusk. They are worst in June, but generally continue to torment the tourist more or less until September. We therefore set up our bar directly over our *sapin*. All that then remained was to crawl under and go to sleep.

"Now what think, fellows," said Raed: "shall we take turns *standing guard* nights? or shall we go to sleep and risk it?"

We were all sleepy; and yet it did not seem just right for all to go to sleep at once.

"What do you think, Kit?" Raed asked.

Parties of loggers, hunters, and explorers in these wilds do not generally trouble to set a watch nights. Usually, however, they build an extra fire, sometimes several, on each side of their camp, so that the blaze, as well as the odor of smoke, may frighten off any wild beast that may come round. This much I had frequently heard, and now advised that we should do the same.

"I don't imagine there can be much danger to us up here on the rock," remarked Raed.

"Besides, Ding-bat will keep watch, and bark if any thing comes round," added Wade.

Some brands were carried along to the lower side of the rock, and another fire started. The light shone down

* "Sapin,"—a name given to a bed of evergreen-boughs by the Canadian voyagers.

upon the dark rocks along the bed of the brook, and glanced from the swirling waters. A small animal, which I took to be a mink, was sitting on a bowlder under the bank, watching us. We could see the light in its small bead-like eyes. Wash stepped back to get the gun; but, as if aware of our intent, the wily little creature darted back out of sight.

The guns were freshly capped, and laid handy. We then crept under the "bar," and, spreading our blankets over us, lay down on our green bed. It was a long time before we could get to sleep, tired as we were; our surroundings were too novel and wild: but sleep came at last, as it always does.

About midnight, though, we were awakened by an owl hooting from a near tree, — attracted by the light of our fire, probably; for the pine-knots still blazed and flickered.

"Hoot! hoot! hoooooot!" — the most dismal sound of the forest.

Wash reached out for the shot-gun, and, raising this side of the bar a little, let drive at him. The report awoke long-reverberated echoes. The ill-omened bird departed with a single *flap*.

It was nearly an hour ere we could again get to sleep. A raccoon was uttering his plaintiff note farther up the valley: and once we heard a querulous screech off in the forest, and lay listening a long time; but it was not repeated.

Our second nap was undisturbed till dawn.

CHAPTER IV.

The Gorge. — A Bear-Path. — Another Pond. — Water-Snakes. — Hawks. — Wash as a Naturalist. — A Hawk's Nest. — The "Brulé." — Blueberries. — "Scat! you great-headed Wretch." — A Lynx-Hunt. — A Hedge-Hog. — *Mephitis mephitica.*

FOR breakfast we had another pudding, considerably improved on that of the preceding evening, and the remainder of the cakes and cheese in the lunch-basket. As we had no further use for the basket, we left it hanging in the spruce, to be carried back to the boat on our return. At quarter-past seven we clambered down from the "big rock," and went on. A hundred rods took us up into the throat of the gorge. The two peaks were now seen, towering six or seven hundred feet on each side. Their ledgy summits could scarcely have been more than five hundred yards apart. Judge, then, how steep must have been the sides of the ravine, and how narrow the rocky pass along its bed, down which poured the brook in a continuous cascade. Yet, doubling and threading along the bank, we were not a little surprised to find a small but well-worn path.

"Is it possible that parties going up through here have worn this?" Raed asked.

It seemed hardly probable.

"Then it must be bears, deer, or some other kind of wild animals," said Wash.

We concluded that it was mainly the track of bears.

"Oh! wouldn't here be a grand place to hunt them?" exclaimed Wade. "What say for stopping here a few days for a bear-hunt?"

"We've other and better business," replied Raed. "Besides, our friend back at the shanty says 'tain't the right time o' y'ar to hunt b'ars;' and I dare say he knows."

The gorge was here and there choked with drift-logs and brush. Huge bowlders had rolled down from the peaks, and lay piled in seemingly impassable barriers. But, following the path, it somehow found its way either around or under every thing. Indeed, it was very convenient for us; though we were in no little dread of coming upon a regular *tramper* at some of the numerous short turns. Thus we went on for fully three-fourths of a mile. Toward the top it grew still wilder and narrower. We could scarcely hear each other's voices for the roar of the torrent. Every bush and every rock seemed to wear a scared look, and to be listening, — listening for something above the noise of the waters. We walked on in silence, and involuntarily stepped quicker. Hurry and wildness were all about us. Quite unexpectedly, the path and the bed of the glen turned sharply to the right; and, presto! we were at the head of the gorge, looking out on a wide, calm pond. Taking a few steps forward, all the roar of the ravine behind was suddenly stilled, and all the wildness merged in a quiet landscape. 'Twas a marvellously rapid transition.

"I don't feel like the same fellow!" cried Wash, looking back to hearken. "What a den that was!"

"A den of waters," suggested Wade.

A little farther on we crossed the brook, the outlet of the pond, on a fallen bass-wood. Beneath the log the stream ran quiet as a sunbeam.

"Looks good-humored enough under there," said Raed. "Who would think it meant to set up such a howling?"

The mountain-ridges fold back on each side of the pond. After crossing the outlet, we went on up the eastern shore between the pond and the mountain, the craggy side of which rose steeply from the water. The pond itself was seemingly three or four miles long, running north-west by south-east nearly. Its shores were clothed down to the water with spruce mainly, with here and there a clump of hard-wood. A two-hours' tramp, with occasional "rests," took us up near the northern end. The water was low, and a long mud flat lay exposed. The hot August sun had baked and seamed it with a network of cracks. Several hawks were circling slowly over the flat. One was nearly white, with black-tipped tail and wings; and, as we passed along, it suddenly stooped, barely touched the mud with its talons, then rose straight up. Something was writhing and dangling from its claws.

"Looks like a piece of rope," said Wash.

"It's a water-snake," said I.

"That flat is doubtless alive with them," remarked Raed. "That's what those hawks are sailing round there for."

The hawk was having quite a struggle with its prey in the air. The snake proved refractory, and kept coiling around its captor's legs and body. As often as it got wound about too closely, the hawk would, with a few quick flaps, shake it off. Once it fell from its talons, but was caught up ere it struck the mud. At length it hung down long and limp; and not till then did the hawk sail off to its nest. With a few strong strokes the victor then rose up higher, and, passing directly over our heads, settled on the top of a large hemlock, a hundred feet up the side of the mountain.

"Nest in that hemlock," said Wash. "Shall we stop for it?"

As Wade had never seen one, we decided to do so, and, setting down our buckets, "bundle," and kettle, began clambering up among the rocks.

"What sort of a hawk did you say it was?" inquired Wade.

As the naturalist did not seem inclined to immediately answer to this, I replied that it was what country-boys call a hen-hawk.

"Ah, yes; *Circus cyanens!*" cried Wash. "That's it!"

Indeed there was something rather funny about Wash's knowledge of natural history. He knew scarcely any of our birds or animals by sight; though, as soon as I had told him the *common* name, he could give the scientific one. I knew them by sight, and he knew them by *science*. There seemed to be a little gap between him and the animal kingdom which he couldn't get across without help. And, now I think of it, I won-

der if there are not a great many young would-be naturalists in the same fix.

Laying hold of the bushes which grew among the rocks, we climbed up to the foot of the hemlock. The pond was now at our feet, with the dark shadow of the mountain thrown far out upon it.

"But how are we to get the nest?" asked Wade. "We've no ladder here."

"Have to climb the hemlock," said I. "Put your arms round it, and *shin* up, bear-fashion. Will you go up?"

"I guess you had better," said he. "I don't quite understand the process."

The trunk was fully as large as I could clasp: but, pulling off my coat, I *shinned* up to the branches; then climbed from limb to limb ladder-wise. The nest—a coarse structure of sticks and water-grass — was placed in a crotch formed by two branches with the trunk, near the top. The old hawk had risen from the tree, and was sailing silently around quite near, but did not venture to molest me. I raised myself to look into the nest; when the snake, which lay upon it, raised his head with an angry hiss: it had not yet been killed. I ducked my head in a hurry; for the water-snake has the reputation among all country-boys of being a poisonous biter, though Wash disputes it. Then, spying its tail hanging over the other side, I caught hold of that, and, with a quick jerk, sent the reptile down through the boughs to the ground, where Raed despatched it. Wash put his pocket-rule on it, and pronounced it nearly three feet long. That is about common size; though I

once cut one in two with an axe as it lay sunning on a log, which, on being *put together*, measured five feet and a half.

Loosening the nest from the crotch, I held it out as far as I could to clear the limbs, and dropped it down to the boys, the young ones — there were three of them — squalling like young crows. The skins and skeletons of no less than a dozen snakes were hanging to the twigs; and the whole tree-top had a highly-offensive odor. On getting down, I found the boys having considerable sport with the young hawks. They were savage, and struck with their tiny claws, and bit, if touched.

"But they're all of different sizes," said Wash. "Here's one half grown 'most, while this next one isn't more than half as large; and the last one looks as if just out of the shell. How's this?"

Hawks begin to lay their eggs and to set at the same time: so the first egg may often be hatched a fortnight before the last.

This bit of hawk-history was entirely new to Wash.

It may be added, that the same economy is observable at a crow's nest.

Hearing the cries of their young, both old birds — for the male had now made his appearance — began to swoop down, one after the other, each with a wrathful yellow eye bent unwinkingly upon us. Watching his chance, Wash fired at the mother-bird with the shot-gun. At the report she uttered a sharp squall, and sidled away through the air. Several feathers came fluttering downward. She was wounded, and, flapping painfully, came gradually down to the surface of the pond below.

"Will drown, sure," said Wade.

For some minutes the bird lay flat on the water, with its wings spread out; then began tripping and splashing, seeming to touch the water alternately with wings and feet, and never once stopping till it had reached the opposite shore. At the same time, the male bird rose high in the air, and sailed off.

Another circumstance struck Wade as very curious. He could scarcely believe that the largest of the hawks — the one Wash had fired at — was the female.

"Why, it's fully a third the largest," said he.

"I know that," replied Wash. "The female of hawks and eagles is always the largest."

"Are you sure?" and I fear he wasn't half convinced then.

Putting the chicks back into the shattered nest, we left them at the foot of the hemlock, and, making our way down to the pond-shore again, went on.

Above the pond the land rose gradually. We were passing through a growth of maple and ash interspersed with alder clumps; and, farther on, crossed a belt of hackmatack. Emerging from these, we came out into what seemed a vast bushy clearing. It was one of those tracts to which the Canadian woodsmen give the name of "brulé," — a region devastated by the terrific fires which sometimes sweep over hundreds of square miles, burning not only the heavy growth of wood, but also the ground itself so deeply that a score of years will elapse ere another growth of any size can take root. For miles and miles to the northward — farther than we could see — the fire had blasted and swept off the entire

growth. Immense pine-trunks, often four feet in diameter, lay prostrate and blackened, rotting slowly away. In some places these arboreal giants had fallen across each other till the rick was ten and fifteen feet in height. Millions of dollars could not replace the value of the pine-timber thus destroyed.* Thousands upon thousands of these trunks lie rotting where they fell. The amount of pine lumber — and that, too, of the very best quality — thus irretrievably lost is perfectly enormous. Here and there, tall black stubs, burned nearly off at the root, and looking as if a breath would cause them to totter and fall, rose sixty and seventy feet. Beneath the rank, breast-high growth of recent brakes, the ground was strewn with dead coal and charred fagots. The very stones looked fire-smitten, and crumbled under our feet. We were constantly running upon smutty stumps and rolling knots that lurked underneath the brakes. Nature was already at work, — not trying to restore the giant pines, but seeking, as it were, to conceal the havoc and nakedness of the region with a sprightly growth of dwarfish white birches, pigmy poplars, and wild red cherry and choke-cherry. Here and there a low pine-shrub shows its green tassels. In the more open places blueberry-bushes abound. In this latitude the blueberry does not ripen much before the first of August. But *such* blueberries! They were as large as red cranberries commonly grow. We dropped, each on his little knoll, and feasted. As if to vary the repast, the wild-cherry trees reached down their laden branches,

* It is said that many of these terrible fires have been wantonly set, out of spite toward the State government.

red with juicy fruit. There was also a kind of plum, commonly known among boys as "bird-pears" or "pear-plums," growing on shrubs slender and tree-like, but smaller than the cherry-trees. A stomach full of blueberries and cherries will not take the place of *dinner*, however. By one o'clock we began to feel the need of something more substantial. Following up a little "run" to where it was moistened by a spring under a mass of overhanging golden-rod not yet in bloom, we built a fire against an old log, and proceeded to boil eggs and make pudding, as usual. This time we flavored the pudding with blueberries strewn in with the meal. For dessert we had some very sweet "bird-pears."

Getting dinner and eating it took until after three o'clock. We then went on, keeping N. E. by N. for about three miles farther, threading our way with no little difficulty among the fallen pines; and at six o'clock encamped for the night in a clump of low firs clustered about the foot of a lofty, blackened stub. A couple of rods back from our fire lay the trunk of a truly enormous pine. Wash found it to be five feet seven inches in diameter. The low firs which grew about it were scarcely higher than the log.

A rill in a hollow, a few hundred yards to the west, furnished water for our kettle and to drink; though we longed for coffee. While the rest of us were preparing supper, Wade set the aneroid to ascertain the height above the sea-level. He announced it to be nearly thirteen hundred and seventy-five feet.

To such of our readers as may never have seen an aneroid barometer, I may describe it as a circular brass

box, with a ring-handle something like that of a watch. Into the top of it is set a dial, on which, under a crystal, moves an indicator, or hand. The box is air-tight; and, when the air is exhausted, the varying pressure of atmosphere upon the elastic top moves the hand (by means of mechanism best known to the inventors) around the graduated dial. The point at which the indicator stands at the sea-level being marked, the height of mountains, where the atmospheric pressure is of course less, can be calculated from the backward movement of the hand.

After supper, Wash, in his capacity of naturalist, reported relative to the habits of the hawks we had seen. He had also noticed that some of the cherry-trees were broken down, the branches showing as if the fruit had been stripped off. Many of the blueberry knolls showed similar marks. From certain big tracks he had discovered over in the hollow by the spring, he supposed this to be the work of bears, which, at this season, leave the swamps for the uplands, where they feed largely on berries and other wild fruits. Raed, as geologist, had noticed a ledge of shelly limestone; which he thought rather singular, since granite was the prevailing rock of this whole region. As mineralogist, I had found a bank of smooth dark-red pebbles of jasper on the pond-shore; also some pure white fragments of felspar where the fire had burned about a number of large rocks.

During the evening we sprigged off *sapin* from the firs, and pitched our "bar" over it on some willow-twigs from the hollow. About nine, Raed built a second fire a

little back of us. The guns were set at hand; and we lay down under our blankets much as we had done the previous evening, though in a far different place; Ding-bat being supposed to keep watch for the bears.

A few minutes after one (as was afterwards found) I was awakened by a sudden stir and scramble; and, starting up, heard Wade yell out, —

"Scat! you great-headed wretch!"

At the same instant a noise as of nails on the pine-log was heard, followed by a *pounce* down upon the ground and a scampering-off. Ding-bat then burst out, barking furiously.

"What was that?" cried Raed.

"Hollo!" shouted Wash, suddenly awaking: "what's the matter?"

Wade had jumped up and seized one of the guns.

"What is it?" said I.

"Some kind of a great cat!" he exclaimed. "Sat there on that big log, staring at us! Had a head as large as yours! And such eyes! — shone like fire! Ding-bat hadn't heard him; laid there asleep when I woke."

"The creature must have crept up still," said Raed. "What waked you?"

"I don't know hardly," replied Wade. "I think it was his eyes. I was dreaming, — something hideous. Opened my eyes all at once, and saw that big cat-head looking at me from the top of the log. Took me a moment to find out whether I was awake or not. Then I sang out '*Scat!*' The instant I stirred, he turned and scampered along the log; then jumped down and ran off."

"Did he have prick ears?" I asked.

"Yes."

"With tassels on them?"

"Yes."

"And a bob tail?"

"It looked like that when he turned to run."

"Then it was a lynx!" exclaimed Wash; "just like that one we saw down in the 'dead growth.'"

"Well, it may be," said Wade; "but this was certainly larger than that one. You've no idea what a *great head* he had."

"Do you suppose he would have jumped at us or at the dog?" Raed asked.

I thought it not likely that he would. It seemed more probable that the beast had been prowling about, and, smelling us, had crept up more from curiosity than from any ferocious design.

Yet we somehow found it impossible to go to sleep again, and lay talking till daybreak; when Raed got up, and, kindling a fire, began to get breakfast.

By this means we were able to get a pretty early start, and went on nearly a mile before sunrise; our plan being to travel during the cool of the morning, and thus have the more time to rest at noon.

Ding-bat had run on ahead, and presently began to bark so sharply, that Wade thought he must have started something sizable. Wash and I had the guns. Giving our luggage to Raed and Wade, we ran quietly along from one cluster of bushes to another for thirty or forty rods. The dog could now be heard, making a great din and yapping, seemingly not more than a hun-

dred yards ahead; but a leafy hazel-thicket intervened. Stepping very cautiously, we made our way among the hazels; and, on coming near the farther edge, parted the leaves, and looked out. Ding-bat was under a clump of thick young beeches some ten or a dozen rods away; and amid the leaves, up seven or eight feet, we had a glimpse of gray fur.

"What is it?" Wash whispered.

Although the position of the animal in the tree could be made out with considerable certainty, the leaves prevented us from getting a fair view of it. It might be either a wild-cat or a raccoon.

Whatever it was, the creature seemed to give itself very little uneasiness on account of Ding-bat. It lay along a limb, looking nonchalantly down at his noisy demonstrations.

"Try him with the rifle!" I whispered. "I'll stand ready with the shot-gun in case he jumps out and runs."

Wash took a careful aim, and pulled the trigger. A sharp, cat-like cry followed the report. The creature did not leap down, however. We stood watching it a moment. Then a little stream of blood began to drop and trickle down; at sight of which Ding-bat grew nearly beside himself.

"You've hit him," said I; "killed him, I guess."

"Hollo!" shouted Raed. He and Wade had just come up on the other side of the hazels.

They now came through where we were standing, and together we went along to the tree. The creature was hanging back down, clinging with its claws to the underside of the branch on which it had been crouching. It

made no movement as we approached. Wash reached up with the rifle, and gave it a poke; when it fell to the ground, dead, as we had supposed.

It was a lynx.

The slug had gone the whole length of its body, probably hitting the heart. Wash was not a little proud of that shot.

"Isn't it beautiful?" cried Wade, stroking the soft, bright fur. "Shall we skin it?"

If we skinned it, we should have the skin to carry with us many a weary mile.

"Guess we had best leave it as it lies," said Raed; "though it does seem too bad to lose it."

Its head was large and round, with erect, pointed ears, each tipped with a tuft of black hairs. The yellow eyes were partly unclosed, and had a fierce look even in death. Its body was nearly three feet in length, and its legs stout and powerful, with large feet, and long, curved claws. The back and sides were clad with fur of a beautiful stone-gray color; while the under parts of the body and breast were white, beautifully mottled with black spots. The tail was very short, — not more than four inches in length, — and also tipped with black. The broad, white breast, flecked with foam and blood, disclosed a gaping wound where the slug had come out. Its weight we judged to be somewhere from thirty to thirty-five pounds.

"Does it look like the *great-headed wretch* you saw last night, Wade?" asked Wash.

"Well, something like it: only it isn't nearly so large."

Wade has always insisted that the one he saw was as large as a full-grown hyena as we see them at menageries. Naturalists seem to concur in their opinions that the Canada lynx is very shy, always fleeing from the presence of man. Nevertheless, I have an authentic account of one that came boldly out into a logging-road, and attacked the driver of a sled, who had to fight for his life, and only by his utmost efforts succeeded in beating the creature off with a sled-stake.

Two or three miles farther on we entered a growth of large poplars, forming a pleasant grove about a spring at the foot of another limestone ledge. Three of the poplars standing near the spring were of remarkable size. Wash found one of them to be rising two feet in diameter, with a grand pale-green trunk straight as an arrow, and fully seventy-five feet in height. Though there was no perceptible breeze, the polished leaves seemed never to rest from their ceaseless shiver.

As so fine a spring is not always to be chanced upon, we decided to camp here for dinner, which was prepared after the usual programme.

While eating, we several times heard a harsh, low cry, which we had at first supposed to be a bird.

"Don't sound just like a bird, either," said Wash; "too gruff."

"But it seems to come from the tops of the poplars out there," said Wade, pointing off to the west of the spring.

"I think it's one of those large woodpeckers," remarked Raed, "such as we heard down at the *flow*."

The low shriek was repeated at intervals of from five to ten minutes. Finally Wash jumped up.

"I'm going to see what that is," he said, and walked off, peering attentively among the leafy tops.

Presently we heard him whistle sharply three or four times.

"He's calling us," said Wade. "Let's go out there."

We went quietly along, and soon caught sight of Wash standing behind the body of one of the poplars. He was beckoning with his hand to come quick and be *still*. We tiptoed up.

"There!" he whispered, pointing into the top of another poplar fifteen or twenty yards away. "What sort of a *bird* do you call that?"

Up about thirty-five feet from the ground, a brown animal, nearly as large as Ding-bat, was sitting in one of the stout crotches, looking uneasily toward us. Ding-bat ran along under the tree; when it again uttered the same harsh, low shriek; at which the Chinaman glanced quickly up, and began to bark.

"Keep your eye on him," exclaimed Wash, "while I run back for the shot-gun!"

"But just look at those branches," whispered Raed; "those above him! They're all peeled. See how red and dry they look!"

"Yes; and look at those poplars out farther!" said Wade; "those beyond the one the creature's in. They're dead, — all stripped of their bark."

Wash came creeping up with the gun. Pointing it by the tree, he fired. The creature seemed to roll off the branch, and fell all in a heap to the ground. Ding-bat made a dive at him, but suddenly drew back with a yelp. We ran along. The animal lay all rolled up in a

ball, his stiff brown-black hair standing out in all directions. Mixed with it were numerous white quills with black tips.

"It's a hedgehog!" I exclaimed.

"Ah, yes!" cried Wash, — "*Erethizon dorsatus*, the Canada porcupine. Strange I hadn't recognized it!"

Some of the quills were nearly four inches long, — those along its back.

"Its snout does look some like a pig's," said Raed.

It had wonderful little black feet with black nails. Its length was about thirty inches; and its weight not far from twenty-five pounds, we thought. It seemed strange that so clumsy an animal should climb so well. Ding-bat was clawing at his mouth.

"Come here!" said Wade. "What's the matter, sir?"

"Oh, look at the two quills in the poor *beast's* nose!" cried Wash.

Wade pulled them out. The dog seemed to know that the operation was for his good, and bore it very well; though it made the *tears* come in his eyes when they tore through the flesh.

These quills have tiny barbs like the beard of wheat-heads. Once in the flesh, they will keep working in farther and farther till they strike the bone.

Wash informed us that the porcupine feeds on the bark of trees and shrubs, especially that of the poplar. It was, therefore, fairly to be presumed that the dry poplars had been denuded, and had finally died from the gnawings of the porcupine.

At two o'clock, P.M., we started on again N. E. by N.,

and continued for four or five miles over ridge after ridge of the bushy "brulé." One who has never *cruised* on one of these burnt tracts can form no adequate idea of the tiresome nature of the walking, where fallen trunks have to be climbed over at every rod. Add to this a heavy bucket in one hand, and a gun in the other, and you have "such a getting up stairs" as soon sets a fellow's legs aching.

We encamped, weary enough, in the lee of a great rick of logs and rocks, a little up from a tiny runnel which moistened a fire-blackened gully between two of the ridges. Blackberry-bushes grew about the rick, and were now laden with berries. Some of them were an inch long, soft, and sweet as honey. They went well with our pudding and eggs. So abundant were they, that, as we sat around our pudding-kettle, we could reach back and pull them off by the handful.

Raed and Wade built a number of fires for the night at different points about our camp; while Wash and I brought *sapin* from some pine-shrubs a little way up the gully. From some cause, — atmospheric or providential, — there were no mosquitoes. We lay down in the shadow of the high blackberry-bushes to make up for last night's broken slumbers. But Ding-bat seemed to suspect something wrong about the rick. He kept trotting around it, poking his nose into odd chinks, and snuffing. Presently, as we lay talking drowsily, he ran round to the upper-side. We could hear him sniffing: then he barked sharply, once, twice; when there started out from our side, and within a few feet of our bed, a *very beautiful little animal*, such as we have all fre-

quently met in our afternoon walks, — started out, and, turning partially about, waved a fine, bushy, black-and-white tail, making all the while a queer, wheezy, hissing noise.

"A skunk!" shouted Raed.

"*Mephitis mephitica!*" from Wash.

We jumped up, and scrambled back *out of range* "in hot haste." Wade caught up an old knot.

"Hold! — don't! don't throw it!" exclaimed Raed.

But he spoke too late. Wade had already let fly. The missile struck little "enfant de diable" whack on the side, knocking him end over end: whereupon he jumped nimbly up, and whisked his bush. We all distinctly heard a *squirting* sound.

"Faugh!"

"Skunked!"

"You've done it now!" exclaimed Raed, holding his nose. "Come away, Ding-bat!"

Ding-bat came away willingly, with his tail between his legs.

"Whew!" cried Wade. "Struck ile, no mistake!"

"Might as well follow him up now," said Wash. "Get stones, and give it to him!"

A rapid fusilade commenced. Several throws missed him. At length, a big knot sent him heels over head again; and we kept throwing at him till he had gone *nilly-willy* down to the bed of the gully. Very fortunately, he had not *hit* the blankets; and the buckets and kettle had been set on the other side of the fire. As may readily be guessed, we lost no time in moving camp. Gathering up our luggage, we went along to

where Wash and I had got the *sapin* among the shrub-pines.

It was ten o'clock before we were again settled for repose. Raed complained considerably of nausea. The *awful* odor seemed to linger in our nostrils — even in our mouths — all night. To all wandering tourists permit me to exclaim, in the words of Wash, "Beware of *Mephitis mephitica!* Give him a wide berth!"

CHAPTER V.

Sunday on the "Brulé." — A "Work of Necessity." — Going Blueberrying. — Bears. — The Wrong Bear killed. — An Inexplicable Shot. — Bear-Steaks.

THE sun was up ere we had fairly waked.

"Let's see," muttered Raed drowsily: "Sunday, isn't it? Yesterday was Saturday."

It was the sabbath.

"Going to march to-day?" Wade asked.

"Not a march," said Raed. "It's better to rest one day in seven, anyhow, to say nothing of our duty as citizens of a Christian country."

So, following the example of many other citizens of this Christian country, we lay and rested till nearly nine o'clock. Breakfast was thereupon prepared and eaten. We then put our hands in our pockets, and strolled down to our camping-place of the previous evening. The inducements to stay *there* long were very small: so, after a look at the defunct *Mephitis mephitica* over in the gully, we strolled back, and sat in the sun a while; for the morning was very pleasant. Presently we bethought ourselves to change our shirts and socks, that being a sort of Sunday ceremony quite universal.

"The dirty ones ought to be washed," said Wade.

"We can't very well wash them on a regular marching day, either. I think this may fairly be called a work of necessity."

It did look so.

We took them down to the runnel, washed them out, and hung them on the blackberry-bushes to dry. We then sat in the sun a while longer.

"I suppose there can be no great harm in picking a few blueberries," said Wash at length.

There seemed no great sin in that, certainly.

We walked up toward the crest of the ridge above us, taking the guns as a matter of course. It was very cool and pleasant up there, with a fine breeze from the north-west. Beyond this ridge there was another, and over that another, of the same interminable "brulé," shrubby with cherry-trees, and carpeted with blueberry-bushes. While we sat leisurely picking for the "big ones," Ding-bat had scoured off into the *sag*, or hollow, beyond. Suddenly there came a queer sound, something like the single surprised "haw" of a crow, from that direction. It was repeated a moment later, — *haw!* Then came a gruff little yap from the Chinaman, followed by a sort of squeal, not greatly unlike the minor note of a scared pig. The dog now began to bark furiously.

"Game!" muttered Wash.

Sunday slipped out of sight altogether.

With a glance to the caps of the guns, we stole down into the hollow, which was filled with hazel and elder; and, guided by the barking, crossed to the other side.

"Still, now!" whispered Raed. "We're getting up pretty near."

A thick mass of alders, hung with wild vines, was before us. Getting down on our hands and knees, we crept under them, and came out on the other side, behind an old overblown root. Wash peeped round it, and looked earnestly for some seconds; then drew back.

"By Jude," he whispered, "there's a sight for a sportsman!"

I was next to him, and so took the next peep. Beside a big black stump all overrun with vines, not twenty yards off, stood just one of the biggest black bears I had ever seen, with its back humped up, and its face drawn round askew at Ding-bat, who was daring up within ten or fifteen feet, barking frantically; and on the other side of the old bear, a little back from the dog, were two half-grown cubs, staring frightenedly at him.

An artist should have seen them. If he could have sketched it fairly, his reputation would have been made. Wonder and fear were in the savage li'tle visages of the cubs; wonder, but a calm, bearish defiance, in the face of the rough old dam.

I drew noiselessly back. Raed and Wade then peeped, one after the other.

"Take the old one!" I whispered to Wash; for he had the rifle.

"Both together!" said he: "we shall be the more likely to fetch her!"

Very carefully we pointed the muzzles of both guns by the root.

"All ready now," Wash muttered: "one, two, three!"

We both fired, and all jumped up with an involuntary shout. One of the cubs had taken to his heels, and

was legging it off among the bushes, whimpering like a young lamb: the other lay kicking. The old bear had given a great growl, and was making a rush at Ding-bat; but, suddenly hearing and catching sight of us, whirled about, and ran off after the fugitive cub, without seeming to notice the one that lay keeled over. The Chinaman, who had discreetly retreated with considerable haste, now turned tail, and gave chase.

We went up to the wounded cub. He was nearly done for. The rifle-bullet had gone through him; and he seemed, too, to have received the most of the shot from my gun.

"I thought you both fired at the old bear!" exclaimed Wade.

We had.

Just how the cub came to get the contents of both guns has never been very clearly explained; more especially since the distance was not more than *fifty feet.* The ammunition was back at the camp; but, hearing Ding-bat burst out whining, we ran off down the hollow with empty guns. A hundred yards lower we met him coming *limping* back with a claw-mark torn into his flank.

"Charged up too near, didn't you, old fellow?" laughed Wade.

The old bear had probably turned upon him, and given him a cuff before he could get out of reach.

Not deeming it expedient to set off on a regular bear-hunt Sunday, we went back to where the cub lay; and, taking him up by the legs between us (one hold of each leg), we tugged him into camp. Raed thought the

carcass would weigh considerably over a hundred pounds. Wash set it as high as a hundred and fifty.

"Now for some bear-steaks!" said Wade. "Who'll skin him?"

"No need of skinning the whole of him," remarked Wash.

We skinned one of his hams, and cut out what we thought we should want. A fire was kindled, and several slices of it fried with our eggs for supper.

It was very fair meat, I suppose; though I cannot say that I much relished it. We did not think it worth while to take any of it along with us.

The night passed without event. We were up and off in the morning by seven o'clock. By eleven, forenoon, we had reached the highest ridge of the brulé. Far to the southward could be traced our weary route up from the pond for the last three days. Wade set the aneroid, and found the height indicated at seventeen hundred and ninety feet above the sea. To the northward the ridges fell off rapidly, and the small growth seemed gradually to thicken into forest.

CHAPTER VI.

The Camp among the Firs. — A Goose-Egg. — The Reports. — An Awful Screeching. — Standing Guard. — A Fresh Alarm. — A Night of broken Naps. — Was it a Catamount? — Wash discourses on Big Cats.

DURING the afternoon we descended to the basin of another small pond, — a very wild, woody sheet of water, set in a forest of firs, with a line of crags running along the eastern side. It was sunset before we came out upon the sandy shore. We began to look about for a place to camp at once. A smart breeze was blowing down from the west, raising quite a "sea." As this was not a comfortable place either to build a fire or spend the night, we followed along to the eastward, where the first of the craggy rocks showed over the firs, which were here low and shrubby. Finding a spot where the fir-thicket would keep off the wind, Raed started a fire against the trunk of a decayed pine, which had some time fallen down the crag; while I began to dress a very fat gray squirrel which Wash had shot about an hour before. Wade, meanwhile, was picking up dry wood and pine-knots for the fire, and Wash had gone down to the shore to fish for pond-trout. Presently he came back. It was too windy for the fish to bite. He reported some "big tracks with claws to 'em" in the sand on the shore; but

as big tracks had got to be "dog cheap" with us, as Raed expressed it, we paid little attention to this announcement. I supposed they were those of a "fisher" or a "lucivee," that would not molest us so long as we let him alone. Nor did Wash seem to give the matter a second thought.

We fried the goose-egg (grandmother had put in one goose-egg) with the squirrel rolled in meal. The egg itself had a rather oily taste, which Raed particularly abhorred; but the squirrel was nice. For dessert we had blueberries, gathered during the afternoon. Our water was poor. We were not able to find a spring; and had to drink pond-water, which was rather warm at that season. It was clear, however, and not unpleasant to the taste, save in its warmth. After supper we prepared our "shake-down" of fir-boughs, clipping them off with a hatchet.

Then came the reports — from the note-books.

Wash described a very pretty brown-and-white wood-mouse he had seen burrowing under the leaves, such as hunters call a "moose-mouse."

Wade informed us, that, by the aneroid, the ridge we had crossed in coming over to the pond-shore was twenty-one hundred and fifty feet above the sea.

Raed had observed a long windrow of stones and gravel such as geologists call a "horseback." He explained that these curious ridges are thought to have been formed by the action of ice-fields and glaciers many ages ago, when the continent was covered with ice as the northern parts of Greenland now are.

At the foot of one of the ledges we had crossed I had

picked up a large crystal of black tourmaline. It was four or five inches in length, and nearly three in diameter, — a nine-sided prism, weighing from two to three pounds. I left it lying on one of the large rocks near the pond-shore. It was too heavy to carry in my pocket.

"Is the mineral tourmaline always black?" asked Wade.

Wash said he had seen both a red and a green crystal at the Natural-history Rooms at Boston. Raed remarked that he had read of blue crystals of tourmaline being used to polarize light: and, on turning to my note-book, I read that there are black, green, blue, red, and brown tourmalines; furthermore, that the word *tourmaline* is from *tournamal* (ash-drawers), — a name given by the natives of Ceylon, because these stones, when laid among hot ashes, would gather the ashes about them. The tourmalines of Ceylon are green. Green and blue tourmalines are also brought from Brazil.

Wade asked Raed what was meant by polarizing light. Raed replied that he would repeat the definition he had read in Grove's "Essays on Light." It was this: "When light is reflected from the surface of water, glass, and many other media, it undergoes a change which disables it from being similarly reflected in a direction at right angles to that at which it has been originally reflected. Light so affected is said to be polarized."

Wash laughed, and asked Raed how he had managed to remember all that.

Raed replied that it had taxed him severely, and that he had been obliged to repeat it a dozen times before he had fixed it.

The mosquitoes began to buzz and bite. I got out the netting. Wade cut the sticks from a clump of small spotted maples standing near; and we got up the "bar" over our *sapin*, fastening the edges down at the bottom with small stones. Raed was fixing the fire, putting on the knots Wade had collected, and kindling another blaze by carrying brands off a few rods on the other side of our camp. Very few wild animals will come inside of a ring of fires, even after the blaze has gone out and the brands are smouldering. They do not like the odor of the smoke.

It had grown very dark: only a few stars peeped through the broken cloud-masses that were drifting across the moonless sky. The red flickering of the flaming knots gleamed on the dark firs, where here and there a drop of balsam glittered like a diamond; while the rocky crag, a few yards away, seemed to shudder in the unsteady light. We were tired out, and, creeping under the bar, spread the blankets over us, talked drowsily for a few minutes, and fell asleep: at least I did; though I indistinctly recollect Wade's rousing up to let in Ding-bat, who had been racing about, but now came back and whined for shelter from the all-tormenting mosquitoes. We had slept two hours, I presume, when something — a terrible shriek it seemed — awoke me. The first I knew, I was springing up under the blankets. We were all scrambling up together, and bumping against each other. Ding-bat was barking like a mad fury. In the hubbub we upset the bar completely, and, brushing it aside, jumped out in a perfect panic, all exclaiming, "What's that?"

"For Heaven's sake, what *was* that?"

Ding-bat was making every thing resound. I never heard such a din from a dog. He barked and growled and howled all at once.

Wash grabbed the rifle, and cocked it. Raed was trying to fumble out the shot-gun from among the fir-boughs, where he had laid it beside him. I caught up the hatchet from the log, where I had stuck it. Wade stood trying to listen, and bidding Ding-bat "Get out! Hark! Shut up your noise!"

It was not till he caught him by the throat, however, and fairly choked him off, that the Chinaman would hold his tongue.

Then we listened. The wind had gone down: every thing was silent as a November night. The fire had burned low; the blaze had gone out: only the red glow shone up. Blackness hovered over it.

"What did you hear? — what did you think you heard?" demanded Raed.

"Why, a mighty screech!" exclaimed Wash. "Wasn't that what you all heard?"

We had all heard something which fell under that description; but what it was, or from what direction it had come, was not so clear. The dog kept faced toward the crag. He was so excited, too, that he quivered like a lamb's tail; and his eyes showed green as old brass. Wade had to keep kicking him to make him be still.

"It might have been nothing but a wild-cat," said I. "They will often screech out pretty loud. Ding-bat never saw one, you know."

But Wash did not believe a wild-cat ever had made

such a cry as it seemed *that* had been. He declared that it had made his blood run cold. I presume he had been less soundly asleep than the rest of us.

"Let's start up the fire," said Raed.

Wade had prepared an armful of dry splinters for kindling up in the morning. He threw them upon the coals, and pushed up the brands. A brisk, crackling blaze sprang up, so bright as to quite dazzle our eyes, distended in the previous darkness. The instant the fire blazed up, there came another screech, — a perfect scream! It made the nerves thrill like a death-shriek; and it had a certain sudden awfulness and nearness to it that made us jump prodigiously. The rifle in Wash's hands went off, *snap* — BANG! It had been cocked; and, when he startled so sharply, his finger pressed back the trigger. It made a great flash of light; which was immediately followed by a scratching sound from the crag, as of claws on the rocks. Raed fancied he got a glimpse of some animal, and instantly discharged the shot-gun after it, the report of which awoke a thunderous echo all along the crags, and from the distant mountain-side to the northward. We thought we heard a growl; though Ding-bat was barking and growling so, it was hard telling one growl from another. Wash seized a brand, and threw it high up the side of the crag. It lodged among the rocks, and blazed up again; but nothing stirred. Whatever beast had been there, it had gone away at the report of the rifle. But we threw several more brands up the crag, and off among the firs on the other side, to frighten off any lurking prowler that might have his eye on us.

On looking at the watches, we found that it was a few minutes past twelve only.

"We can't afford to lose our sleep," said Raed: "but I think one of us had better stand guard; or we will take turns at it, — an hour apiece. I'll watch an hour, and then call Kit; and, when his hour is up, he can call one of the other boys."

We reloaded the guns, mended the fire, — both of the fires, — and set up the bar again. There was nothing to do further but creep inside of it, and get under the blankets. Raed took the rifle, and, seating himself on a stone near the fire, began his vigils, admonishing us inside to go to sleep, and make the most of our time.

But it is not so easy going to sleep immediately after such a rouse-up. We lay whispering, and thinking it over. Fully half an hour passed before Wash began to snore; and it was some time after that ere I lost myself. In fact, I had but just got to sleep when Raed waked me to take my turn; and, on looking at the watch, I found that he had let me lie fifteen minutes over time.

"All quiet," said he, giving the rifle into my hands. "I think we've seen and heard the last of the creature for to-night."

He crept inside the bar; and I resumed his place on the stone.

He had fixed up the fires before calling me. Within the little circle of our camp a cheerful glow and warmth dispelled the damps of the waning night. It was the one little bright spot, surrounded by savagery and darkness. The fragrant odor of the pitchy knots filled the place: the very smoke seemed to hover over, as loath to

depart into the damp air above. It had, at least, one good effect, — it kept off the sleepless mosquitoes. A great mist was rising from the pond high into the still air. In the dim light it seemed like a cold, gray shadow. I could fancy it to be the wraith of the ancient glacier that had once filled the pond-valley with its huge icy mass, as Raed had argued the previous evening. Off in the forest, to the left, the sharp, high note of a harassed hare broke the stillness, interrupted at frequent intervals. I could fancy the poor little creature dodging and doubling to avoid some great-eyed owl or relentless little marten. Presently the piteous cry burst out afresh, then ceased on a sudden. The struggle was over. The weaker had yielded to the stronger. One tiny life more had escaped like a bubble, to mingle with the vast vital ether that pervades the globe, — a life-tide that comes with sun-light and sun-heat, and departs with it.

And if the fierce animal that had broken our rest with its ominous shriek should pounce upon me as the marten had seized the hare, and the wild crags should echo to my death-cry, would not my life go out even as this poor little hare's had? — a bubble, to mingle with the same vast tide. Should I retain my mind to think, or my soul to feel? or would it mingle with the millions of living beings who have lived and died before, all in one tide, as the brooks and rivers run into the sea? Who can tell?

Curious how such thoughts will sometimes come to one, especially in the quiet and solitude of night and the wilderness, when those strange, instinctive influences which guide the lower animals seem to whisper

to us, by mistake perhaps, the secrets which Nature no longer reveals to men.

It was now toward three o'clock. Eastward a pale radiance began to show over the shadowy crag, — not of dawn, but of the late, or rather early, rising moon. I was about to rouse Wash, when a slight rattling, as if a pebble had rolled down the rocks, caused me to turn sharply. It was still too dark to see any thing distinctly; but, where the top of the crag was faintly outlined against the ashy light, I fancied, after looking a moment, that I could discern something moving stealthily along. I instantly cocked the rifle, and brought it to bear. The lock clicked; at which the *seeming* motion stopped. Still I thought I could make out a dark object; but I was far from certain: and, not liking to startle the boys by firing at what might really be nothing but a rock or a stump, I sat down the gun, and, taking up a smouldering brand from the fire, sent it whirling off against the side of the ledges. Ere it struck, I was sensible of a sudden scrambling, instantly followed by another screech, which made my blood tingle. Snatching up the rifle, I took a random aim, and discharged it. Ding-bat howled afresh. The boys were jumping up, and shouting, —

"What is it?"

"Did you see him?"

"Did he come back?"

I told them what I had heard.

"I shouldn't wonder if the animal has a lair or den somewhere about the crag," said Raed. "As soon as it gets light, we will hunt him out."

It was emphatically a night of broken naps. How-

ever, Wash took the rifle, and the rest of us crept under the bar again to wait for daylight. It was near sunrise when I next awoke. Wash and Wade were still asleep; but Raed was up, and had our kettle on, boiling a dozen turkey's eggs. He stood, watch in hand, timing them.

"Seen or heard any thing more of our last night's serenader?" said I, coming out from under the bar.

"Not a whisper," said Raed. "Guess he *vamosed* with that last shot you fired at him. Did you hit him, think?"

I thought it rather doubtful, since I was not even sure that I had seen the animal.

"But didn't those screeches sound *scarey*," continued Raed, "coming in the night and so sudden? Declare, it made me feel queerish. As quick as it came morning, though, that all left me. Daylight is mighty brave stuff. But, seriously, what do you suppose *that* was? Was it a catamount, think?"

"It screamed just as I've heard say catamounts do," said I. "Still it may have been a 'lucivee' (lynx). A lynx will often screech prodigiously."

"But there are catamounts or panthers in these forest-lands; aren't there?" asked Raed.

"That's what they say; though I never saw nor heard one. Lumber-men and trappers tell of hearing them, and of meeting with them. Two years ago an old fellow was killed by *something* which people thought was a catamount, near Umbagog Lake. He was up there trapping martens. Went out to visit his traps one morning, and failed to come back. The boy he had with him

waited till after noon, and then started out to look for him. He found him about a mile from their camp, dead, and frightfully torn and bitten. From the scratches and marks on a tree near, it was presumed to be a *panther.*"

"Glad you didn't tell that story last night!" exclaimed Wash, who had just crept from under the bar. "The caterwauling we had was bad enough without that."

"If there are catamounts in the wild lands of this State," continued Raed, "would they not be as likely to be met with here as anywhere?"

"I don't see why not," said Wash. "This is a wild region enough, I should think."

"What do you think?" said Raed, turning to me.

I thought that there was nothing improbable in a panther's being met with hereabouts; though I could not help mistrusting that this might have been merely a lynx.

After boiling the eggs, Raed next proceeded to make the "hasty-pudding," which had come to be a standard dish with us. This done, we waked Wade, bidding him "come to breakfast." The eggs (three apiece) we ate from the shell, with salt, using our knives to dig them out. The pudding we flavored with maple-sugar, breaking up several of the hard cakes to strew over it. But, jack-knives proving rather sharp for pudding, we each of us made a spoon (a shovel Wash called it) out of the dry pine of the old log, which answered our purpose exactly.

Breakfast over, we set out, as Raed had suggested, to

examine the crag, armed with rifle, shot-gun, and hatchet. Going round through the firs, we climbed up to the top of the ridge at a place where the ascent was not so steep and rocky, keeping a sharp lookout all the while. But nothing was now to be seen nor heard of the *panther*. On walking along the crest, however, opposite our camp, Wade espied the gnawed head and skull of some creature, — a fox as it turned out, — lying among the rocks ten or fifteen feet below; and, climbing down to it, we found a sort of sheltered cranny under one of the projecting rocks, where there were dry leaves, and the bones of many small animals, particularly those of the hare. Besides the fox's head, there was also the skull of another animal, which we presumed to be a raccoon. A strong odor of carrion pervaded the entire place. It was plain, as Raed had surmised, that the beast had had its lair here; possibly an old female with her whelps.

"Guess we shouldn't have camped and gone to sleep down there quite so nonchalantly if we had known there was a panther living under that rock," said Wash.

"The animal (whatever it was) was probably away when we came," remarked Raed, "and, coming back along in the night, saw our fire, and began to screech."

This seemed the most likely explanation.

"I've got a question for you, Mr. Naturalist," said Wade as we clambered down to our fire. "You speak of this animal as the *catamount*, *panther*, and *cougar*: which is the correct name?"

"Either name is correct," replied Wash. "The

name 'panther' is to be preferred, however, — panther, or North-American tiger. 'Catamount' (mountain-cat) is more of a local name, confined to a particular locality, you know. The same is true of the French name 'cougar.' The same animal is sometimes called the 'puma.' That is the Peruvian name."

"Then these are all names of the same creature?" said Wade.

"Yes; all one beast," said Wash; "and the scientific name is, let me see" (referring to his note-book), — "the scientific name is *Felis concolor*. *Felis* means cat, you know."

"What does *concolor* mean?" asked Wade.

"Well, that means many colors together, — gray."

"Can you explain to me the difference between the panther and the jaguar?" asked Raed.

"Yes, sir. The jaguar is the *Felis onca* of naturalists. It differs from the *Felis concolor* in size, color, and habitat."

"What do you mean by habitat?" inquired Wade.

"The place or geographical locality where an animal lives. As I was saying, the jaguar is not found north of Texas. It is larger than our North-American panther: and its color is brownish-yellow, mottled with dark rays, or stripes; while our northern animal is gray.

CHAPTER VII.

Mountain-Scenery. — A Midnight Illumination. — The Valley of the West Branch. — A Blasted Tree. — Skeletons. — A Moose-Yard. — Fishing in the West Branch. — Wash scouts ahead, and makes an Agreeable Discovery.

WE packed up our luggage, and, going round the head of the pond to the westward (to avoid the crags on the east side), went on during the forenoon past the pond.

For dinner we had another "hasty-pudding," with maple-sugar, and some exceedingly cold water from a spring at the foot of the mountain-ridge which formed the north-west side of the pond-basin.

During the afternoon we toiled up the side of this mountain through a mixed growth of beeches, maples, and birches. Toward the summit spruces began, low, shaggy, and black, as if dwarfed by bleak winds. The summit itself is a line of granite ledges, rising bare and gray above the dark evergreens. After some searching for crevices and cracks, we climbed up and stood on the crest fairly above the line of tree-tops. Wash had been a little ahead. Turning as he gained the top, he looked off, and gave an involuntary "Hurrah!" In a moment more I was beside him.

"Grand, isn't it?" he exclaimed.

Raed and Wade came clambering up; and we all stood enjoying the magnificent view. The whole country to the southward was spread out as in a picture. The pond we had passed was at our feet, though really four or five miles away. Far to the southward rose the two peaks, separated by the deep valley through which we had come up into the "brulé" three days before. Seven shining ponds were in sight. Over the whole landscape there rested, like a glorious tide, the bright, warm light of the waning sun. But not a trace of human habitation could be detected throughout the region. The wilderness enclosed us on all sides. The ponds sparkled, the streams glided onward, and the breezes rustled through the moving tree-tops; but man was absent.

"And yet the world existed for millions of years before human eyes ever saw it," said Raed; "a wilderness just like this, with nothing save the forests and the wild beasts. This is how the world looked before man with his axe and his fire had come into it. Panthers and bears were then the rulers of this continent, and held all the lower animals under the despotism of their bloody appetites."

"I wish it had never been worse governed since!" exclaimed Wade sententiously.

Raed looked blank at that. Wash laughed, and suggested that we should go across the ledges and see what we could discover on the north side. A walk of twenty rods over a bare, rough ledge brought us to the brink of a "fall-off" of twenty or thirty feet, down to where the tops of the spruces showed over the rocks. The view on this side was wilder and grander than the other; but it lacked the sunny beauty of the southward landscape, as all north-

ward views must. Below us was a great valley; and it needed not Mount Katahdin towering in sombre grandeur twenty miles to the north-east, nor an occasional silvery gleam half hidden by the forest, to make us recognize it as the Valley of the West Branch.

The silvery glimpses along the sink of the valley led off to a broad sheet of water, half hidden in distant haze, which we identified as Lake Chesuncook, through which the West Branch flows.

The appearance of Mount Katahdin from this point was rugged and forbidding. It was not a single peak, but an assemblage of peaks — four at least — resting on one broad, block-like base. Even at this distance it seemed to tower above us with a certain imposing vastness. There were patches, or spots, entirely nude of trees, and looking gray and bare. Our little pocket-glass revealed them as precipices and cliffs, which, compared with the known dimensions of the mountain, must have been many hundred feet in height.

"Ho for old Katahdin!" shouted Wash, "the home of the Indian Devil, where Pomoola reigns in scowling majesty!"

"And where our future fortunes lie — in lead!" added Raed. "We must never forget the legendary lead."

"Looks as if there might be a nice place for shot-towers," said Wade, with the glass still directed toward one of the gray precipices.

"But where's the hay-farm?" said Raed, turning to me; "the clearing on the river that you told us of?"

This clearing had been described to me as near the

West Branch, not many miles below the foot of Lake Chesuncook. As very much depended on our being able to reach this place, we scanned the whole valley along the river with some little anxiety; but no signs of a clearing were discernible from where we stood.

Meanwhile the sinking sun bade us prepare for night. Going along the ridge to a place where the ledges were less steep, we made our way down a little from the summit to a clump of very thick, shaggy spruces standing at the foot of the moist rocks. About the trunk of one of the largest of these Wash kindled a fire; Wade began to gather wood; Raed was unpacking eggs and getting the kettle ready; while I followed along at the roots of the ledges to find a spring, — that *sine qua non* of all wildwood voyagers, young or old. Trickling out of a mossy crevice, I soon espied it with its silvery tinkling, and cool, moist breath. Hail, daughter of the rocks! I run forward to make its acquaintance by means of the gill dipper, and carefully taste the water to see that no noxious oxides had tainted its pure bounty.

Four eggs apiece and another "pudding" made up our supper.

From Wade's observation by means of the aneroid, the spot where we were encamped was twenty-five hundred and ninety feet above the sea-level, — about that. Wade always added the "*about that*," to have us bear in mind that the aneroid might not be absolutely correct.

I had found nothing of importance in the mineralogical line, unless I mention a very beautiful fragment of

rose quartz which I had picked up at the foot of the ledges on the other side; and Wash's remark concerning it, that he should like to have a house with the walls built of *rose quartz* in the place of brick or brown stone.

Raed spoke of the huge granite ledges which formed the crest of the mountain.

"Why is it," said Wade, "that this granite is on the very summit of the mountain, while the lower parts of the same mountain are of a different kind of rock, — a kind you call sandstone?"

"To understand that," replied Raed, "you must bear in mind two things: first, that sandstone is a rock formed by the action of water; second, that granite is a rock formed by the action of fire, or, as some geologists think, of fire and steam together. Many ages ago, the continent is thought to have been under water, — under the ocean. It was then that the sandstone which forms the sides of this mountain was formed — *laid down* as it is termed — on the bottom of the sea. The rivers, you know, are constantly bearing mud and earth into the sea, which settles to the bottom, layer after layer, and finally, by its own weight, consolidates into stone. But, after many ages, the continent of America gradually rose above the waters, — very much, perhaps, as the Scandinavian peninsula is now rising gradually higher and higher each century. Besides these slow changes of level, there have also been more sudden and violent changes, — upheavals they are called, — by the sudden action of which mountains and long mountain-chains are thrown up. This mountain was doubtless formed in

this way: The sandstone beds swelled up like a bubble, from some internal pressure; and, breaking apart at the top here, a mass of granite gushed out from within, either in a molten or a liquid state. Granite, you know, is composed of quartz and felspar and mica mingled together. Internal heat from *some source* had melted or dissolved this quartz, felspar, and mica, and mingled them together to form granite."

"You speak of internal heat from 'some source:' why, the whole interior of the earth is a mass of fire and lava; is it not?" demanded Wash.

"That was long believed; but the idea is now pretty thoroughly exploded," said Raed. "Indeed, some of the best geologists have always doubted it."

"Why, I thought everybody believed that the inside of the earth was in a molten state," said Wade.

"The best geologists now reject the idea wholly," replied Raed, "for reasons I will try to explain at some other time. It is getting rather late now."

"I say, Raed," cried Wade, "did you post up on all this geology this last spring?"

"Mostly," said Raed, laughing. "I knew little or nothing about it before we planned this expedition for the yacht. That set me to studying, you know. All a fellow needs is a *stimulus*. But let's 'turn in,' and get rested for to-morrow."

There were no mosquitoes here; too high up for them. I hacked off the spruce-boughs for our bed; Wade put more wood on the fire, piling it around the trunk of the spruce, which stood over the blaze like a huge umbrella, with its wide, drooping boughs, pendent mosses, and

knobs of gum, that fried with the rising heat; while Raed and Wash carried off flaming brands to kindle a second fire a few rods away to warn off prowlers. There was some talk of "standing guard;" but we were all pretty sleepy, and concluded to risk it. It was very cosey under the blankets, with our feet to the fire, and the thick evergreen tops to keep off the dews. The last thing I remember was watching the blaze leaping up against the trunk of the spruce; . . . then came dreams, . . . from which I was awakened by a prodigious shake, accompanied by shouts and a loud crackling roar. Leaping up, a bright glare blinded my eyes. I pitched against somebody, and was pulled and hustled away by Raed. All this in an instant, when I saw the great spruce under which we were sleeping wrapped in flames from top to bottom. Our fire about the roots of it had run up on the scorched bark, and caught into the top. Trailing mosses, gum, and the mass of dry twigs and foliage, blazed like a huge scintillating firework, with a noise like the snapping of a thousand gun-caps. Raed had been the first to wake. Ding-bat was barking. We all scrambled out together to escape the shower of burning twigs and the scorching heat.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Wade.

"I-gad-e-o!" from Wash, his very nearest approach to profanity.

"Rush in, fellows, and save the things!" shouted Raed.

All our buckets, guns, ammunition, kettle, &c., which had been set only a few feet from the fire, together with our blankets, were right under the blazing mass.

"Rush in! grab one thing at a time! — like this!" and Raed darted under the fiery umbrella and dragged out the blankets, smoking and smelling pretty strong, but with only a few little holes burned in them.

Wade, following his example, brought out one of the buckets; Wash got the other considerably scorched on one side; I secured the kettle and the shot-gun; and Raed, making another dive, brought out the rifle and hatchet.

"There!" exclaimed he, puffing. "Let her blaze! Didn't break those eggs, did you, Wash?"

Thanks to the meal, the remaining eggs were all right. We carried the things back a few rods, and sat down on the rocks to get breath. The flames streamed up through the spruce top to the height of forty or fifty feet. It was, in very truth, a pillar of fire. The rough gray ledges above reflected the ruddy glare, and all the darkened forest below started out into view. A few minutes sufficed to burn out the twigs and gum. But, meanwhile, the blaze had communicated to the adjoining spruces. The whole clump was speedily enveloped in flames; though the first had burned to the bare branches, and stood like a blackened skeleton.

"There's a bonfire for you," exclaimed Wash, "such as these wild crags never saw before, I guess!"

As many as a dozen spruces and firs — in fact, the whole clump in which we were encamped — were now afire. A tremendous crackling, and the roaring rush of the air drawn in by the conflagration, resounded from the rocks. Quite a number of small birds, disturbed from their roosts or their nests, darted out of

the thick tops, and flew round and round the blaze: we thought we saw several drop into it. Two or three larger birds (owls or hawks) started out from the crag above, and went flapping off into the darkness. Once we heard the sharp *yap* of a fox from the top of the ledges, — a querulous note, half way between a howl and a dog-bark. We could imagine little Reynard staring with picked nose and round suspicious eye from the top of the rocks, till surprise and wonder had elicited this ejaculatory *yap*. Ding-bat instantly responded in the best of Chinese doggerel. But, though a foreign tongue, I think Reynard understood. He said no more. The barking, however, received an answer from another quarter. Far down the mountain-side to the westward there arose a distant, far-borne howl. Wash pronounced it the howl of a gray wolf; and it certainly sounded as much like a wolf as any thing.

The fire soon burned out. The night, banished for a time, began to close in upon us again. On looking to the watch, it was found to be but a few minutes past eleven. We crept back to our fire, which still smouldered at the roots of the denuded spruce; and shaking up our bed of green boughs, which had not burned, we moved it a little back out of the smut, and went to bed again.

"No need of standing guard," remarked Raed. "We've had fire enough to warn off all the big cats, I reckon."

We were soon asleep; and the sunlight was glinting aslant the rocks when I next awoke. The blackened spruces still smoked lazily, bearing witness to last night's illumination.

While Wash and Raed were boiling the remaining twelve eggs, Wade and I climbed to the top of the ledges again to see if it were possible to discover any indication of the "hay-farm" by means of a morning smoke, which might be supposed to be rising at about this time. But the whole river-valley was filled with a vast tide of fog, which rose almost to our feet. As well seek to descry a sunken wreck on the bed of the Atlantic.

We ate our breakfast of eggs and a single cooky with more anxiety than we had previously felt since starting. There was just meal and sugar enough left for one pudding. Unless we could reach the hay-farm by night-fall, we should have to depend on whatever we might shoot, or catch from the river, for our supper.

In an hour we were on our way, going due north down the side of the mountain. It was decided to make a "bee-line" for the river, then follow up in search of the clearing.

By nine o'clock the fog had lifted, and the sun shone down brightly through the lofty tree-tops. We were passing through a growth of great beauty and size. Basswoods, fully three feet in diameter, rose, like tall columns, fifty and sixty feet without a branch. Mixed with these forest monarchs were hemlocks and white-pines, with their roughly-furrowed bark of dark weathered red. One of these great hemlocks drew our attention from having a small splintery groove running down the trunk. Glancing up to the top, we saw that it was dead, — gray and sear. The tree was what lumber-men call "winding." The groove, we had observed,

followed the grain of the wood, and passed clean around the trunk ere reaching the ground. I was just saying that the tree had been struck by lightning, and that such instances were very common in the woods; when Wash exclaimed, —

"See there, fellows!" pointing to the ground near the foot of the hemlock. "Look at that!"

"Bones!" said Raed.

"Skeletons!" cried Wade.

Partially covered with twigs and leaves lay the undisturbed skeletons of three animals. At first we had fancied they were *human;* and a terrible vision of murder or starvation rose in imagination. But, on clearing away the rubbish, it was evident that they were caribou-deer. One was considerably larger and more massive than the others, suggesting the idea that it was a buck and two does, or perhaps an old female with two half-grown fawns: we were uncertain which was most probable. Taking into account their nearness to the blasted hemlock, Raed was of the opinion that they had been killed by the same stroke of lightning; though how the carcasses should have been left undisturbed by the many carnivorous prowlers, that could hardly fail to nose them out, was not so easily explained, unless we believe the theory of certain old woodsmen who say that "no critter will ever tech another that's been struck by lightnin'." But that either the gray wolf or the glutton (*Gulo luscus*) should respect the seal of the electric death-stroke seems rather *nice* for them, especially after what we saw of the latter animal on the coast of Labrador.*

* See second volume of this series.

The character of the forest gradually changed as we proceeded. Maples, ashes, and balsam-firs began to take the place of the loftier trees. Clumps of alders showed here and there; and about eleven o'clock a cool breeze, rustling among the hitherto-motionless boughs, announced our approach to the river. Ten minutes more, and through the opening forest our eyes were gladened by the broad blue channel of the West Branch. The water was low; at least, we judged so from the marks on the banks. The stream was perhaps twenty rods wide, — as wide as the Merrimack at Concord, or the Androscoggin at Lewiston. At the place where we struck it, the current, though not swift, was yet far from sluggish, moving forward with a calm, steady sweep, that, contrasted with the forest-set shores, had a certain grand seeming. Half a mile above, however, as we followed up the bank, we came to what might with tolerable propriety be termed rapids, the passage of which with a canoe would have been attended with some danger. Piles of driftwood were strewn along the bank. Great trees washed out by the roots hung stranded upon the black ledges that here and there rose above the water. There was quite a perceptible roar from the current where it fretted on the bowlders that showed out in the channel. Patches of yellow-white foam had gathered in the lee of the rocks.

Building a fire, we dipped up water from the river, and, suspending our kettle, soon had the pudding bubbling. There was barely enough to satisfy four of us, hungry as we were. Ding-bat looked on very wistfully.

We gave him the scrapings of the kettle, which he ate at one mouthful, dog-fashion.

"There is one advantage in being out of provisions," remarked Wash as we took up our empty buckets. "We don't have it to lug."

But this was rather poor consolation: we thought so, at least, as we trailed on up the river with but a rather hazy prospect of reaching the hay-farm, the very existence of which we had come to doubt.

About four o'clock we passed a tract where the bark had been gnawed from all the trees and bushes. For a space of a quarter of a mile along the hillside, which sloped down to the river, nearly all the shrubbery was dead from this cause, looking as if blasted by fire. I had heard of such spots; and it only needed the excrement which covered the ground to convince me that it was an old "moose-yard," — a place where a herd of moose had spent several months during the past winter, after the snow had got too deep for them to range about. In confirmation of this conclusion, Wade stumbled upon the discarded antlers of a stag lying partially under the leaves. These had probably been shed during the winter; perhaps not till as late as February, though they are commonly dropped during December or January. Having an idea that moose-horn was valuable, Wash made a rather boyish attempt to shoulder them, and so take them along with him to the hay-farm; but, as the weight could not have been less than fifty or sixty pounds, he soon dropped them.

Raed was bidding us notice that nearly all the stones and bowlders were of granite, — "stray fragments from Mount Katahdin," he said.

Instinctively we turned our eyes northward, where the grand old mountain towered in massive grandeur, its gray crags and beetling precipices looming high over the forest on the other bank. Farther on, the shore was heaped with water-worn pebbles as large as a goose-egg, and from that up to the size of a big pumpkin. These were once rough fragments of granite broken from the ledges. For ages the current has washed and rolled them over each other, till at last they have grown round and smooth as marbles.

"They've been rounding off and smoothing a thousand years, perhaps," remarked Wade.

"Yes, a hundred thousand!" said Raed. "These pebbles (tossing one in the air) are older than the Pyramids; older than Adam; older than the pretended records of Babylon, or the genealogy of the Turkish sultans."

"They're very much like those used to pave the streets with," said Wash; "like those they bring from the beach at Nahant."

"Yes; and worn and smoothed by the same great agent, — water" (plunging the pebble into the river).

The sun was getting low; and still no signs of the clearing. As we should be obliged to fish for our supper, Raed gave the order to halt, build a fire, and get out our fish-hooks. A red squirrel was *barking* from the bough of a black-ash. Wash *dropped* him off with the shot-gun for bait. While Wade was building a fire (that was generally his business), the rest of us cut some alder fishing-poles, and, stringing our hooks, baited them, and dropped into the river where the foam had collected above a rick of drift logs. Instantly I felt a *tug*, and

threw out a fine, heavy trout, his speckled sides flashing in the sun. Raed had out another ere I had got mine off the hook. Wash, meanwhile, had gone farther up the bank. Half an hour soon passes when one is busy pulling out trout. We had thirty-seven, weighing from one to three pounds, wriggling and hopping on the bank, when the sun, going behind the trees, admonished us to draw in our lines. Wade had stood looking on.

"Where's Wash?" asked Raed.

We looked round.

"He went up the stream," said I. "Up there fishing, I guess."

"Wash!" shouted Raed.

"Wash!"

"*Hollo!*"

"HOLLO!" making the forest resound.

No answer.

"Can't be he's fallen into the river, can it," demanded Raed, hastily untying his line, "or that any thing has pounced upon him?"

"We must look him up!" exclaimed Wade, running to fetch the guns.

"You are sure you saw him going up the bank," said Raed.

I was tolerably sure of it. We hurried on up the stream, looking carefully to the water, and with sharp glances off among the trees, — twenty, thirty, forty rods. Not a trace nor a track.

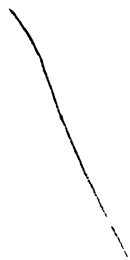
"Strange!" muttered Raed apprehensively. "Let's go on, though."

On we went nearly as much farther; when we suddenly espied Wash running down the bank toward us, hat in hand.

"Where have you been?" cried Raed. "What do you mean by going off without letting us know?"

"I've found it!" shouted Wash. "I've found the hay-farm! It's all right; not more'n half a mile farther. I thought I'd scout ahead a little while you were fishing. I came out into the clearing."

"Hurrah!" shouted Wade. "Let's hurry back and get the things!"



CHAPTER VIII.

The Old Log-Shanty. — Nobody at Home. — Rummaging for Supper. — The Hay Shake-Downs. — A Nocturnal Scare and Scrimmage. — A Wild-cat Hunt.

THIS was good news indeed. "I don't believe there's anybody there, though," remarked Wash to me as we gathered up the trout into the buckets. "There's no smoke, anyway; looks all silent and deserted like."

Wash ran ahead with the guns: the rest of us followed with the buckets, &c. A trudge of fifteen minutes brought us out into an opening a little back from the river, — a stumpy clearing of eight or ten acres. Seven or eight large conical hay-stacks loomed amidst the stubs and stumps; and, on the side next the river, there was a fair-sized log and pole shanty. The whole establishment had a very rough, rude look, as all man's first encroachments on Nature are apt to have. Huge smutty logs lay about, — the carcasses of the fallen forest monarchs.

Twilight was deepening. We hurried on toward the shanty. As Wash had hinted, there was no smoke. The proprietor was evidently absent. The door — three planks cleated together — was closed, and fastened with

a prodigious button, — a foot long, certainly. Wash knocked with the rifle-but. There was no response: we had not expected any. Raed then turned the button; and, after a cautious glance, we walked in. The interior had a very smoky odor; and immediately quite a scrabbling and scuffling began overhead, where a sort of chamber or loft had been made by laying loose rails across the log-beams. There was a trap-door hole up through this floor, where a ladder had probably been used in the place of stairs.

"Nothing but rats," said Raed. "There's nobody here."

A stone fire-place and chimney occupied one end of the shanty. Across the other there extended a table, or shelf, made of half a large basswood log split in the middle, with the *split* side up. A quantity of old knots and birch-bark lay on one side. Wash threw some of these into the fire-place, and, striking a match, soon had the hovel lighted. On the other side there were two barrels, one very damp and mouldy. This we found to be half full of brine, in which there were floating several pieces of meat, — beef, Wash thought. The other was about a third full of "Indian meal." On it there was set a box of salt. Several other boxes were ranged along the shelf, or table. A kettle, a spider, and a very dissipated-looking old coffee-pot, hung on pegs driven into crevices between the logs. This latter utensil set us to searching; and, hurrah! in one of the boxes we unearthed about a pint of coffee in the bean, and not yet roasted.

On going out to pick up more wood for fire, Wade discovered, off a little to the left, a small patch of potatoes

and turnips. He came racing in greatly elated. We all went out to investigate. There was, perhaps, a quarter of an acre of them. The turnips, at this season, were not much larger than one's fist, and the potatoes about the size of English walnuts. The tops were very dark green and rank. Wash pulled up half a dozen hills. Raed brought out a bucket, and we dug out enough for a stew.

"Guess we can make ourselves comfortable," said Wade. "Wonder what the old chap who owns this ranch would say, though, if he could see us."

I mentioned that it was the custom all through the wild lands for every one to make himself at home, and take whatever he could find at any of the "clearings," whether the owner was at home or not. Raed said he should think, that, considering the labor it took to bring supplies up here, whoever used them ought to pay for them at a fair price.

"And I move," he continued, "that we keep an account of what we use, and leave enough money to make the proprietor, whoever he is, whole."

This seemed but fair.

We then fell to work to prepare supper.

Our bill of fare that night consisted of fried trout, boiled potatoes, turnips, corn-cake, and coffee. For the coffee we had neither cream nor sugar: had to take it raw, or, as Wash expressed it, *bald-headed.*

It was nearly nine o'clock before supper was ready, and it must have been ten by the time it was over.

"Now the question is," said Raed after we had cast out the fragments of the feast, "where does this man bunk? where's his sleeping apparatus?"

There were a few wisps of hay on the side where the wood was.

"Possibly he lay on a shake-down of hay," said I.

"Well, if he can, we can!" exclaimed Wash. "But let's have a good soft one. There's hay enough in the stacks."

All four of us sallied out; and, making for the nearest stack, each pulled out what he could *lug*, and went back to the shanty. It made a prodigious heap, come to get it inside; and was soft as a feather-bed. Several times during the evening we had heard the *rats* up in the loft. As often as they would scramble, Ding-bat would look up and growl. Once they even made the dirt and dust fall down into our eyes. It seemed odd, too, that rats should exist so far from civilization; but we did not give the matter much thought.

Wade put on a few knots to keep the fire alive. Raed pushed the door into place, and fastened it with a piece of board set slant-wise. There were no windows to close; nothing in the shape of windows, save a hole about a foot square on one side, up five or six feet from the ground. As soon as the door was shut, Ding-bat began to whine to get out: he didn't seem to like inside. Wade got up and let him out, to lodge outside the door. We then lay down in the hay, and, tired as we had become, were soon asleep. Along in the night (pretty late, for the fire had gone out), something waked me, — something moving in the hay at my feet. I felt a pulling, as of nails hooking into my stocking. (I had taken off my boots.) Still half asleep, I had a vague idea that it was the dog. The rustling continued. Pres-

ently I was aware of a sharp prick through my trousers. That roused me disagreeably; and, still thinking it was Ding-bat, I gave a sleepy kick that hit something. Instantly there was a spit and a snarl. Jumping up on my elbow, I saw two pale bright spots, that glowed like match-streaks in the darkness. Horrors! how such a thing will startle a fellow! I knew it was some sort of a cat, and thought it was just on the point of jumping at me. The moment that popped into my head, I leaped to get away; and making a sort of tumble and roll over Wash and Wade, who were in the middle, came down wallop on Raed, who lay on the farther side. Up jumped Raed with an ejaculation. Wash and Wade began to scramble too.

"Whist-s-s-sh!" I whispered. "Hold on!"

"What is it?" exclaimed Raed.

"What's up?" from Wash.

"What's the matter?" from Wade.

"Hold on! keep quiet!" I kept saying. "There's some sort of a creature — some kind of a cat — in here, — in the shanty here."

"Where's the guns?" demanded Raed.

"I set 'em both right up here by our heads," muttered Wash, fumbling. "Here's one of them. Where'bouts is he?"

"On the side next to the table-shelf," said I; "under it, I guess. There! don't you hear him?" as a slight rustling came to our ears. "There! don't you see his eyes shine?"

"I'll fix him!" muttered Wash.

We heard the lock click as he cocked the gun. Then

came a deafening explosion, with a great flush of light that lit up the shanty, showing an animal rather larger than Ding-bat, with its back drawn up and head askew under the table. A sharp snarl followed the report. We jumped to our feet. I heard the creature go scratching over the barrels, knocking off the salt-box. Then it seemed to jump up toward the trap-door hole in the loft floor; at least, we heard the rails rattle up there: but it fell back into the hay at our feet. We all kicked frantically. Wash struck with the gun. Raed, having got hold of the other gun, cocked it, and, hearing a scrabbling over the boxes on the table-shelf, fired *slam-bang*. We caught another glimpse of the beast trying to run up the side of the shanty, and the next moment heard its claws scratch as it jumped and went through the hole into the loft.

"Strike a match!" cried Wash. "Light a roll of that bark!"

Wade had the matches, and, after some scraping, got one to burn, and with it lighted a coil of bark. The shanty was full of powder-smoke: we could scarcely see across it. Ding-bat was barking like mad outside, trying to get in. Raed let him in, and pushed the door to again.

"I don't think the creature will come down of his own accord," said he, keeping a wary eye to the trap-door hole. "Where's the powder and shot and the cartridges? — Get out, you noisy cur!" (to Ding-bat.) — "Load quick, now! We'll pop him through the cracks!"

The kettle with the ammunition was found, and the guns were hastily recharged.

"How the brute got in here is more than I can cipher," said Wash, capping the rifle. "He couldn't possibly have got in through that little hole," — pointing to the window aperture.

"Of course not," said Raed. "He was up in the loft; been up there all night."

"That's what we took for rats, then," said Wash.

"I expect so," replied Raed with a queer look.

"When we got all quiet and asleep, he came down to see if we were fit for eating."

"It looks so."

"The dickens!" exclaimed Wash. "Wouldn't have caught me going to sleep if I had mistrusted what was up there, you bet! Been glaring down at us ever since we came; all the time we were getting supper — and eating it. Wonder he hadn't *dropped* on to some of us!"

"Looks as if he didn't care to attack us," said Raed; "but we will attack him now with a vengeance. Let's go to work right, though. Wade, you get another roll of that bark ready to light. Now hold up the torch, so we can see what we're about. Kit, you take that old fish-pole over the shelf, and poke up through the rails with it: make him stir, so we can tell where he is. Wash and I will stand ready to shoot."

I began prodding up through the cracks, first in one corner, then in another. Presently there was a sudden *ha-pih*, a leap, and a rattle, as the creature went to the other side; and, on running the pole up near where he seemed to have stopped, it was snapped at, and nearly wrenched out of my hands. Raed instantly pushed the

muzzle of the rifle up through the rails, and fired. The beast yawled, and went skurrying round the loft, making a tremendous racket, and growling all the while.

"Confound it!" muttered Raed. "Never touched him! That's the third shot too!"

"Stick the torch on the end of the fish-pole," cried Wash, "and run it up through the trap-door hole, so we can see into the loft!"

Wade fastened the closely-curling bark to the pole, and I thrust it up through the aperture. The instant the torch rose through the hole, the creature spit, and began to yawl afresh. I then commenced to wave it; when, with a perfect string of spits, the cat jumped (to get down past it, I think), hit against the pole, knocking off the torch, and down came torch and cat together into the hay! Wash had held the gun ready, and fired the instant the creature leaped. Tell you, reader, there was a scrambling then! We all paid on with what we had, — guns and pole, whackety-whack.

"Hit him!"

"Knock him!"

"Squelch him!"

"Take him, Ding-bat!"

Fairly frantic, the creature whirled, and jumped blindly at Raed, who poked it headlong with the point of the rifle. We all struck again; but the agile brute was up in a second, and went like a dart at Wade, who had the hatchet. He gave a desperate lick; but what with the hay tangled round his feet, and the beast striking plump against his stomach, over he went, rolling and kicking. Raed jumped to the rescue, and, grabbing

the cat by the hind-legs, *slat* him off. Ding-bat sprang upon him. They clinched. We heard *claws rip*. The Chinaman burst out *ti-yi-ing* piteously. Wade, who had regained his legs, pulled the dog away by the tail; and the rest of us aimed our best strokes at the *varmint*. But another little circumstance had forced itself upon our attention. The torch had fallen into the hay, which caught like tinder. The whole floor was blazing. Fierce gusts of hot air and smoke flew in our faces.

"Out of this!" yelled Wash. "Open the door, Kit! We shall smother!"

I tore open the door. We all dived out into fresh air; Ding-bat ahead, howling like a wolf. The cat made a plunge to get out with us; but Raed slammed the door too quick.

"Look out for the window-hole!" he shouted. "Don't let him crawl out!"

We ran round, and saw the creature's head and paws in the hole. He was trying to wriggle out through it. Such a screech as the brute gave when we rushed up to strike him! Wash got a fair clip at him with the shot-gun; Wade threw the hatchet tomahawk-fashion; and I gave a sweeping cut with the pole. But, despite these drawbacks, the beast wriggled through, and, giving a long leap and a *scoot*, got past us.

"After him, take him, Ding-bat!" shouted Wade.

"No use!" exclaimed Raed. "Let him rip! We must put out the fire."

Pushing open the door, a stifling gush of smoke flew out. The blaze had mostly subsided. As soon as the shanty had cleared somewhat, we entered it. The

buckets and blankets had got another scorching; and, worse still, a spark had got down on to the mosquito-net, folded up in the bottom of one of the buckets, and burned though half a dozen thicknesses of it. It took Raed all the next evening to mend it. The powder was in the same bucket. In the hurry of loading, Wash had left the flask unstopped. It is a wonder it had not blown up. Very lucky, we thought.

Low in the east, a pale, dim belt had begun to show.

"Daybreak," said Raed.

It was half-past three. The shanty was rather too smoky and smutty to go to bed in again.

"Let's build a fire and have some coffee," proposed Wash. "I'm dry. These cat-scrapes will knock the bottom clean out of my nervous system yet. Some of that bald-headed coffee, I say, strong as lye."

"Yes; and some of that beef boiled, with potatoes and turnips," said Raed; "in short, a 'boiled dish.'"

"And some fried trout," added Wade.

We got our coffee ready in half an hour; but it was not till long after sunrise that the beef and vegetables were done enough to eat.

On the whole, we were not much the worse for our tussle. Wade had a small rent in the front of his coat, supposed to have been made by the creature's claws when he was upset in the hay: Ding-bat was the only one that had suffered flesh-wounds. The poor Chinaman had a long rake across one side of his *corpus*, looking as if made by all four of the animal's nails at one *dig*. There had swollen up ridges as big as one's little finger where each claw had torn through his *bare hide*. By way of consol-

ing him, we gave him all the boiled beef (a part of which turned out to be pork) and potato he could eat. After that he was as good as new, and presently ran sniffing off on the trail of the cat.

"Yes, hunt him out!" cried Wade. "Find him, and pin him!"

The dog ran off, and we began to get out our fish-hooks and lines to go to the river for more trout. By and by we heard the Chinaman barking out in the woods, — barking as if fixed at one spot. All at once, he broke out into a *ti-yi.* Then the barking was resumed.

"Got something treed or holed, I guess," said Wash.

"Maybe the big cat," remarked Wade.

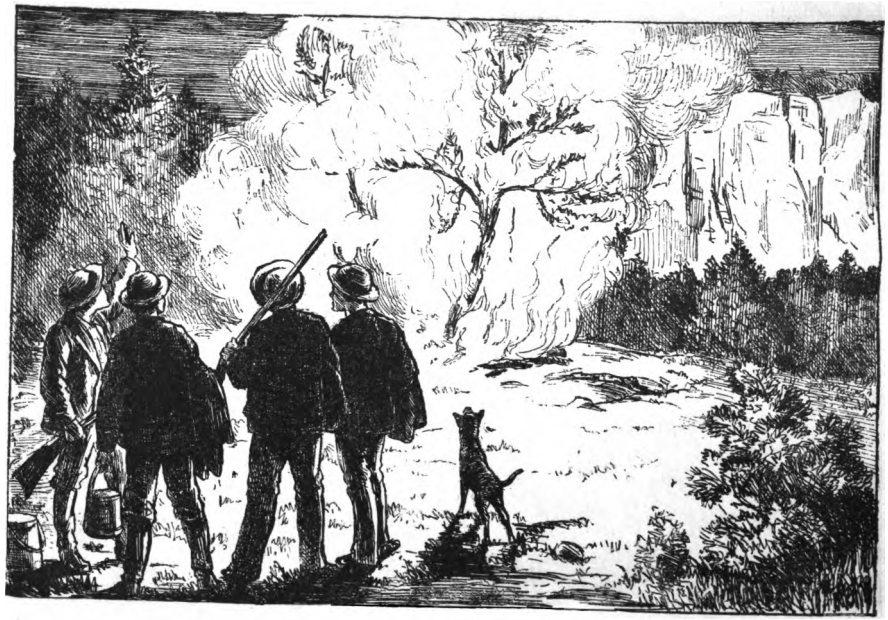
"That's so," said Raed. "Who knows but we may get him yet."

The guns were charged in considerable haste, and we hurried out toward the barking. Hearing us coming, Ding-bat ran back to meet us, greatly excited. He had a bleeding scratch on his nose, and looked as if he had been weeping. Following the dog, we came to a large fallen maple, the but-end of which showed a black hollow running up toward the top. Into this the dog dived, so that his tail only was in sight, and began barking again.

"Inside the log," said Wash.

Wade seized hold of the dog's tail, and pulled him out. Wash then looked cautiously in.

"Pretty dark up in there," he remarked. "But seems to me I can see *eyes.* Kit, you go knock on the outside of the log with the hatchet-back, about a dozen feet from the end here. Raed and I will stand ready to shoot if he starts. Wade can keep Ding-bat off."



"THERE'S A BONFIRE FOR YOU!"

I pounded on the trunk; but the creature would not budge.

"Hack through the outside," suggested Wade, who stood holding the Chinaman by the nape of the neck. "Hack a hole. He will *get* when he sees the blade of the hatchet coming through."

"Yes, cut in right over where he seems to be," said Raed.

The log was a mere old shell. After a few minutes hacking, the hatchet went through. There was a sudden scratch.

"He's going out!" shouted Wade.

The next instant the beast emerged in a cloud of dirt and dust.

Crack!

Bang went both guns! The creature uttered a wild *yawl*, — a series of them, — and flew round and round in a most wonderful manner: now bounding three or four feet from the ground; now whirling and rolling over and over, tearing up the dry leaves; then, tumbling between a stone and an old stump, it lay convulsed and throbbing.

"Do put the brute out of its agony!" exclaimed Wash. "Kit, give him a *coup de grace;* do!"

A smart blow from the hatchet-head, and our nocturnal disturber was at rest. Ding-bat rushed up, but merely sniffed; then went back a step, barked once, and gave a look at our faces, as much as to say, "His job's done. No occasion for my services."

"It would be interesting to know just what a dog's ideas of death are as expressed in that wistful look

and bark," said Raed thoughtfully, patting the China-man.

"I suspect they are rather indistinct," laughed Wade.

"I'm not sure he doesn't know as much about it as I do," replied Raed, still patting the dog's head.

"Better drop a subject you know so little about, then," said Wash, "and come back to the subject before us," — pointing to the carcass of the cat. "Can any of you tell what sort of a beast that is? It is not a Canada lynx, you see; no tassels on its ears; fur not so good; mottled differently: nor is it so large as the one we killed last week, nor yet so heavy (raising the body by one leg) by a dozen pounds certain. What do you call it, Kit? I'm a little stuck on it."

I thought it was a common wild-cat.

"Wild-cat?" said Wash. "That's the Bay lynx. Well, I guess you're right" (taking out his memoranda-book). "*Felis rufous*, — color reddish-gray; irregularly marked; under surface of body yellowish-white; chin and throat dull white; from point of nose to roots of tail thirty-two inches; length of tail six inches; weight about twenty-three pounds."

"Yes: that tallies with this."

Taking up the dead *Felis rufous*, we went back to the shanty, where we hung up the carcass on a wooden hook just outside the door. Then, after a "swig" of cold coffee, we went off to the river to fish for dinner.

CHAPTER IX.

A Tough Old Citizen. — "Beelly." — A Voice of Wail. — A Hard Case. — Money won't heal it. — Suthin in a Green Bottle.

IN a couple of hours we had caught both buckets full of trout; but, on coming up out of the bushes which fringed the bank into the clearing, we were not a little surprised to see a blithe smoke pouring out of the chimney of the shanty.

"Hollo!" exclaimed Wade. "What does that mean? I put the fire out before we started."

"Tell you, fellows, the proprietor's got back!" exclaimed Raed. "Now we must just apologize our prettiest for upsetting things so. Come on! I'll make him a speech soon as ever I get my eye on him.

"But if he undertakes to thrash me," continued Raed, laughing, — "why, you must stand by me; that's all."

"Go ahead, captain!" said Wade. "We'll back you!"

There was nobody in sight as we made our way across the stumpy space; but, on turning the corner of the shanty, lo! there stood the *gentleman* in the doorway, — a very odd-looking personage indeed. It was a thick-set, rather short man, in an old gray coat, with

loose trousers made from the hide of some animal, with the hair turned in. He wore a black skin cap, with the hair *out*, — the skin of a fisher, probably. His own hair, which straggled long from under the cap, was a weathered gray. This rather grim-seeming personage seemed not in the least surprised at our sudden appearance: on the contrary, when I first espied him, he was regarding us with a very stolid stare, wherein there seemed to lurk unbounded reproach and possible wrath.

"I am very sorry, sir," began Raed, taking his cue from the old fellow's lugubrious countenance, "that necessity compelled us to trespass on your property: but we'll pay you, sir; we want to pay you for all we've had. You see, we're making a trip through here. Our supplies fell short. We had to put in here and help ourselves to keep from starving."

Here Raed pulled up to see, as he afterward said, if the old chap understood English.

"Oh! sich things is all weel anough," began the unknown in a strange, creaky, husky voice (as if his whole vocal machinery was rusty from long disuse, and needed oiling), — "sich things is all weel anough, an' to be expected in a coontry like this. An' I wouldn't 'a' cared an' ye mout ha' took every thing 'ere, an' welcome, ef — only — ye — hadn't a — keelled — Beelly," with a gesture so solemn that we were appalled.

"Killed Billy!" exclaimed Raed in horror.

"Ef — only — ye — hadn't a — keelled — Beelly," repeated the singular being, pointing reproachfully to the carcass of the wild-cat, hanging from the hook.

"Is that Billy?" inquired Wade, while we all strove

hard to keep down a grin at this unexpected upshot of our cat-hunt.

"That 'ar," continued the old man, very sorrowfully too, — "that 'ar *war* — Beelly — wunst!"

"By Jude!" exclaimed Wash, turning round to me to keep his countenance shaded, "if we haven't been and gone and killed the old man's cat!"

Raed, meanwhile, was trying to explain it, assuring him that it was a mistake, — one we all deeply regretted. The old man heard him in grieved silence.

"I thought like anough that mout 'a' ben the way on't," he replied, after Raed had said every thing of a pacifying nature he could think of.

"I thought like anough that mout 'a' ben the way on't," he repeated several times. "'Twas nartral anough, him bein' a *bob-cat*, so. But, oh!" (in a deep bass whine like a camel's,) "to come 'ome 'ere — arter bein' gone amost a fotnit — an' see Beelly hung up thar" (pointing to the hook) — "dade — dade — dade — da-a-de!"

Every one of these words, *dead*, sounded like a sob.

"Him as I left 'ere a-purrin' in the sun, an' a-rubbin' agin my laigs," the old man went on, "weeth a nice leettle nest up in the loft, an' plenty o' bones to suck teel I gut back — to find him — dade!"

The old man was tenderly lifting the carcass from the hook. We could do nothing, save look on in chagrin and wondering pity. The animal's legs had already stiffened, and the eyes were glazed and hideous; but he gathered it up as if it had been a sick child, and, sitting down in the door-way, rested the big cat-head on his rough sleeve.

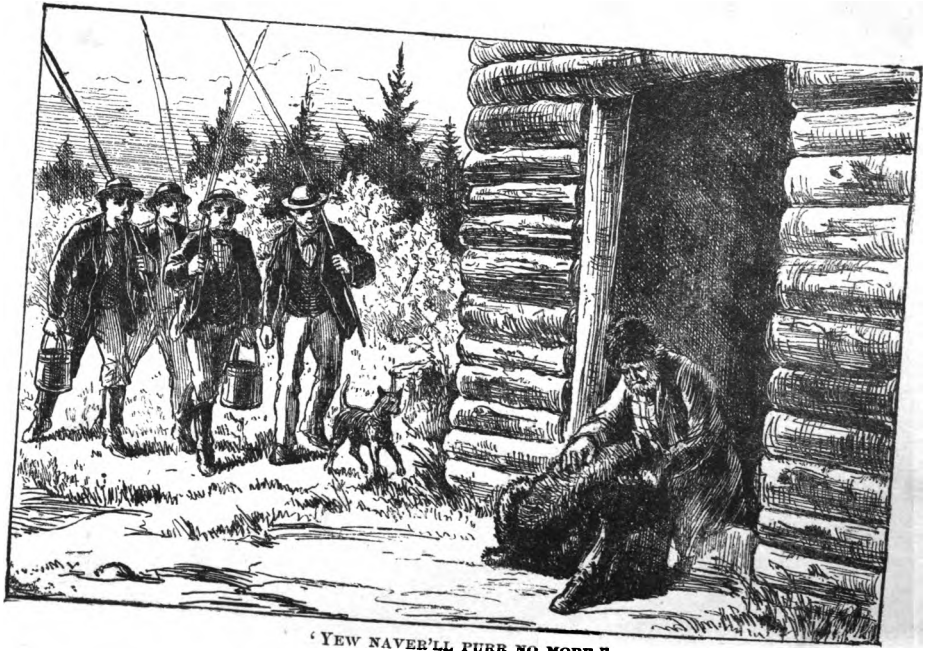
"It's three year ago, goin' on," he continued, stroking back the stiff, wiry whiskers beneath the creature's nostrils, "sence I fust picked him up out in the woods. Nothin' but a keetten then; 'adn't gut his eyes open; gut lost away from the old 'un, I s'pose. I picked 'im up, and fetched 'im in 'ere. Dreffful hungry the leettle feller was. I fed 'im on bits o' meat; an' then he toddled along, — you've minded 'ow leettle keettens'll walk, — he toddled along, and poked his leettle wet nose inter my 'and, jess as 'ow he wanted to nuss. I s'pose he did.

"That kinder made me take to 'im. An' he's lived 'ere weeth me ever sence;" still stroking the rumpled fur.

"I make no doubt he spit an' snarled at *you*, bein' strangers so; an' I make no doubt he took at yer dog: an' that's about the quarest-looking dog I ever set my eye on; looks as 'ow he'd ben skulped all over. But ef it 'ad been me as come instead of you, then you'd oughter seen 'im tare round an' purred an' rubbed agin' my laigs, an' 'opped up onter my shoulders, an' sharpened his nails in my trousis-knees. He'd 'a' been so teekled, he'd 'a' fairly screeched for j'y at the sight o' me, — lookin' as I do."

To get any idea of the miserable pathos of the scene, the reader would need to have seen the unkempt old man sitting there, sprawlingly as he did, stroking that carcass, with tears standing in his hard old eyes, and now and then trickling down his leathery and not over-clean face.

"Fer the last two seasons," said the old man, "he's allus ben weeth me when I'd go ter look ter my traps;



'YEW NAVER'LL PURR NO MORE."

follered me closer'n a dog 'ud 'a' done. Hardly ever strayed off inter the woods. Soon's ever he'd happen to luse sight on me fer a minit, he'd begin ter *mawl*, — 'Per-mowh, per-mowh!' An' all I'd hev ter do was ter say 'Pure Ruin,' like this, — 'P-ew-er R-ew-in,' — an' in a jiffy I'd hear 'im a-comin', his soft feet goin' *pat, pat, pat,* on the dead leaves.

"He'd ketch fatties too (hares), an' squirrels; an' wunst he fetched in a 'saple.' A *saple,* mind ye, 's no slimpsy critter ter ketch. An' nights he'd stretch 'im-self out jess like a man on the hay, side o' me; an' I do s'pose that his purrin', when he was goin' ter sleep, was about the sweetest mewsic I'll ever hear. Meny an' meny's the night he's purred me ter sleep. An' now — poor leettle Beelly (fondling the body), yew naver'll purr no more, — yew naver'll —purr — no — m-o-r-e!"

'Twas pitiful! 'Twas the most piteous, and perhaps the most ridiculous, scene I ever witnessed. I never felt so bad in my life. I could have *cried* right out. We did'nt know what to say, nor how to say it. Here we had come blundering in, and killed the only living thing this lonely old man cared for in the world. Murder in the first degree could hardly have seemed worse. Suddenly Raed whisked the tears from his eyes, and began to fumble in his inside pocket: at that we all began to fumble. Raed took out his wallet: we all took out our wallets.

"Make it five dollars apiece, fellows!" exclaimed Raed, taking off his hat to pass round.

We each threw in a V.

"Here, old man!" cried Raed. "I'm mighty sorry for

this! Here's twenty dollars, if that will help it any."

The old fellow had sat *pooring* his dead pet. I don't think he had noticed what we were about. But, when Raed held out the money, he looked up, — looked first at the bills, then at Raed, — and cried, —

"Show!"

"Take it!" said Raed. "It's the best we can do now. We can't bring him back to life, or we would, quick enough."

"Why, show!" exclaimed the old man, laying down the carcass in the doorway behind him; doing it with a touching gentleness, despite his amazement. "Why, I don't blame ye for't. 'Twas nartral anough. I make no doubt you're good-hearted yonkers as ever was.

"But I couldn't tech the money," he continued, as Raed was about to renew the proffer; "'twould seem like sellin' Beelly;" and his eyes wandered back to the body in the door.

Seeing there was danger of setting him off into another panegyric, Raed quietly put up the money, and proposed that we should bury "Billy" with military honors.

When this proposal was explained to the old man, he concurred with us that Billy ought to be buried befittingly.

Wash was accordingly set to dig a grave with the hoe under a sweet-elder-bush a few rods in front of the shanty. The rest of us performed the office of undertakers. Billy was got into an old soap-box, that, by some strange vicissitude of fortune, had found its way up into

this remote corner of the universe; and about one o'clock, P.M., the remains were committed to the earth to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." We preserved due decorum, however; for there was one sincere mourner. After the interment, we fired a salute of five guns over the grave. To Wade was intrusted the task of erecting a "head-board," with a suitable inscription; it being doubtful whether the old man's educational qualifications would admit of this office. Wade procured the side of a salt-box, which he planted at the head of the grave; and for some minutes I saw him patiently engraving with his jack-knife. Taking occasion to pass the spot about an hour afterwards, I saw that the inscription consisted of the one touching and significant word, —

"BEELLY;"

over which was, very well cut, a *wild-cat* rampant.

On calling the old man, he expressed his entire satisfaction, and even admiration, of the performance. I doubt if the orthographical deviation ever occurred to him: if it did, he was too considerate of Wade's feelings to point it out.

Dinner that afternoon at five o'clock; the bill of fare consisting of boiled beef, potatoes, and turnips, fried trout, and coffee with sugar.

During the convivialities we told the old man our names, and made bold to ask his. He told us that he was generally known in that section as "Old Cluey," but that his surname was Robbins. We forthwith proceeded to address him as Cluey, which he assured us

would suit him if it suited us. He had been out to the settlement of Mattawamkeag after powder, tobacco, sugar, and "suthin in a green bottle," the precise nature of which we forbore to pry into; though Raed afterwards remarked that it was barely possible that this same green bottle had, wholly or in part, furnished the inspiration for "Billy's" panegyric, at which we had all grown lachrymose. I hope not. I should be sorry to have shed tears for any thing inside of a "green bottle."

CHAPTER X.

"Old Cluey" and his Strange Tale of the Pomoola.

DURING the evening we explained to Cluey the object of our expedition. He had heard the "lead story."

"Were you ever on Mount Katahdin?" asked Raed.

"I never clomb to the tip-top," said Cluey; "but I've tramped all round it after moose and caribou."

"We would like to have you go with us," said Raed. "We will give you two dollars per day to go with us as hunter and help carry the luggage."

Cluey said he would take till morning to consider the matter.

"Do you ever see any thing of the Indian devil here?" Wash asked.

"The Ingin dav'l!" exclaimed Cluey. "Where'd ever ye hear any thing about the Ingin dav'l, yonker?"

"Oh! I've heard that he lives in this vicinity," said Wash, laughing.

Old Cluey shook his head.

"We've often heard stories of the Indian devil," said I. "Can't you give us one?"

"Do ye know what the Ingins say about the tip-top

of Mount Katahdin, yonker?" demanded Cluey, suddenly turning to me.

"Oh, yes! they say that Pomoola will destroy every one who seeks to reach the summit. But that does not apply to white men."

"'Ow do you know that ar?"

"Dr. Jackson ascended it without any inconvenience in 1838; so did Mr. Bowditch; and so also did Dr. Holmes and party."

"Be ye sartin that they went to the tip-top? Thar ar' three or four different peeks."

"They reached the highest point on the Katahdin ridge, if we may believe their statement; and there is no reason why we should not," I added, seeing that Cluey still looked a little doubtful.

"What made you shake your head when I asked you about the Indian devil?" queried Wash. "Do you believe in it?"

"Wal," said Cluey, fairly cornered, "I don't myself; but thar's plenty as do. An' they do tell some cur'us yarns about it, — mighty cur'us."

"But did ever you see any thing of the sort yourself, — any thing that looked *diabolical?*" persisted Wash, determined to *pin* at least one of these singular tales.

"Wal," began the old man, after hesitating considerably, "I did see suthin ruther cur'us wunst. I did, no mistake."

"Ah, you did!" exclaimed Wash. "Tell us about it, please."

"Yes, tell us about that," we all put in.

Thus brought to book, Cluey related the following

incident. Wash has straightened out his English, and fixed it up fit for perusal. The story is Cluey's in Wash's words, as recorded at the time in his note-book, from which I extract it. Wash entitled it, —

Old Cluey's Indian-Devil Story.

"'Twas years ago," said old Cluey Robbins. "I was nothing but a youngster then. My brother Zeke and I used to hunt in company with an old woodsman named Hughy Watson. This was either our first or second trip with him up to the lakes. After a tramp of five days through the woods from Norridgewock, our native town, we had come out on the shore of a wild-looking sheet of water, now called 'Ragged Pond.' Its notched, scraggy, and craggy shores might well have suggested the name. Near us a noisy brook came rattling down into it; and, not more than a quarter of a mile farther on, the outlet comes out in a parallel direction with equal noise and foam. Some idea may be obtained, from this circumstance, of the rough surface of the country about us.

"'It ought to be a clever place for mink,' said Hughy; 'and we may find a family of beaver up this brook. I never was on these waters before.'

"We made up an open camp, Indian fashion, under some large spruces; and just at dusk we had the good fortune to see and shoot a caribou. It was cloudy, and came on very dark. I never, before nor since, heard such a serenade from owls as our fire drew around us. Screeches and the most dismal hoots blended in horrible concert. Round and round us they glided in noiseless circles.

There were scores of them. It was utterly impossible to sleep; and the frequent discharge of our guns failed to disperse them. But in the morning the merry notes of the king-fisher told us there were plenty of trout in the stream we were on; and, where there are trout, there are always mink: so we fell to lining the banks with 'figure-four' traps, which occupied us during the whole of the following day. There were no indications that the stream had ever been trapped before; and we anticipated a full pack of fur.

"'This is what I call freedom,' said Hughey as we sat round our fire that night. 'Every thing just as old Mother Nature made it; and she made it pretty rough and wild too,' continued the old fellow, gazing off at the black spruce-clad peaks of Katahdin far to the eastward, where the 'hunter's moon' was looming up over that desolate ridge. 'Like enough we are the first white folks ever in here. The lumber-men wouldn't come into such a region as this. We crossed their old trail ten miles below.'

"Likely enough we were; at least, we had no reason to complain of the trapping-ground we had thus stumbled upon. We began to reap a fine harvest of fur ere the first three days had passed; and for boys of sixteen, like Zeke and I, no better entertainment could have been got up.

"But, as days passed, we began to notice that Hughy seemed uneasy and watchful.

"'What can ail the old man?' asked Zeke as we were making the round of the traps one day. 'He don't act at all as he did the first few days we were in here. Haven't you noticed it?'

"Yes, I had noticed it; and we agreed to rally the old chap a little when we got back. Well, after supper that night, seeing Hughy looking sulky and absent, I asked all at once, —

"'What is it, Hughy? Aren't things going on right here?'

"The old man turned and looked at us a moment, as if not certain what he should answer. Then he said, —

"'I never like to be laughed at, especially by boys. I thought, at first, we'd struck a fine stream: and perhaps it's all fancy; for I haven't seen or heard a single thing wrong yet. But I've been feeling for several days just as if there was something, either man or beast, hanging round us here. It may be a catamount; or it may be some mean thief of a river-driver, sneaking about for a chance to steal our fur; or some Indian who hunts here, and would be glad to be rid of us. Can't tell. And perhaps it's all my notion; but I can't get rid of it. I remember, once when I was up at the Telos Lake, I felt just so several days; and finally one night I hid in a clump of hemlocks a little ways from my camp, and didn't go to it at all. Along in the night I heard a noise about it, and saw what I took for men there. I didn't speak, or fire on them. Things were upset round the next morning; but I had moved my fur the day before. And, another time, I was up beyond Katahdin; and, several days before I had seen any signs, I began to feel that something was watching me. A night or two after, I waked up, and saw a catamount glaring at me from a tree-top. I suppose he had been prowling round, but had kept out of sight. And I think we shall

find that there's something unusual lurking round us now.'

"Old Hughy's presentiments served to keep us wakeful and vigilant; but several days passed without the least sign of any one's being near us, and we were beginning to forget it, when one evening I saw what certainly justified Hughy's suspicions. I had left the fire to bring some water from the brook, which was within a few rods of us. I had stooped to dip it up, when, as I rose, I caught a glimpse of what I took to be a man, standing at a little distance. In an instant it vanished behind a shrubby fir. I felt quite positive; yet it was so dark, and whatever I had seen was out of sight so quick, that I knew I was very liable to have been mistaken. Checking my first impulse to run to the camp and give an alarm, I decided to say nothing at present, but watch.

"The evening passed. By nine o'clock, Hughy and Zeke were both asleep. I lay down, but kept awake.

"Hour after hour went by. At length, the moon rose. It was one of those still, late autumn nights when frogs are silent, and birds and insects are gone; when only the larger beasts of prey are abroad. There were no owls that night. The leaves had fallen, and covered the ground with a dry and rustling carpet.

"After a while I began to distinguish footsteps among them at a distance. They were faint and stealthy; and I was somewhat in doubt whether it were not my fancy, till the sharp snap of a twig convinced me. It might easily have been a 'lucivee,' or a 'fisher,' or a bear; but somehow I at once connected it with what I had seen in the evening.

"I listened breathlessly.

"The steps were coming nearer. But it was very dark under the thick spruce-boughs. Suddenly the steps ceased, and for a few moments all was still. Then I saw a dark shadow pass a narrow vista where the moonlight fell through the black tree-tops. It had the shape of a man. The steps went on as if the creature, or whatever it was, were passing around us, keeping at about the same distance. Gradually it came around to the point where I had first heard it. There was another pause; and again I saw it cross the moonlit line, to continue its walk around our camp. I wasn't much scared; but its movements gave me a strange sort of feeling. I remember thinking it was no use to wake Zeke, or Hughy, who was snoring away at a great rate. So, cocking my gun, I crept noiselessly down the path we had beaten to the brook, to get nearer the place where I had seen the shadow in the moonlight. Creeping up within two or three rods, I crouched at the root of a fallen tree, and waited. The footsteps were again approaching in their circuit. There was the same pause as before; and again the form stepped into the moonlight a moment, and was again in the shadow. But the moon was pouring down brightly; and I distinctly saw its shape, — the figure of a man, looking *brown and naked, save where a hairy outline showed against the light.* A feeling of sickness or of horror came over me. The idea of using my gun did not even present itself. I crept back as silently as I came down. I heard the steps come round again; then they grew fainter and fainter as the walker moved off into the forest.

"It was getting toward morning. I sat down to think the matter over. Presently Hughy woke.

"'You up?' said he. Whereupon I told him what I had seen. He listened without a word, till I was describing how it looked as I last saw it; when he exclaimed, —

"'It's an Indian devil! It's old Pomoola! That's just as I've heard the Oldtown Indians describe it a hundred times; but I always thought it was all a lie. They always left a place as soon as they'd seen one of *these things;* and I reckon we'd better.'

"But we didn't leave; and our good luck with our traps continued, despite Hughy's hints at Indian superstitions. We were pretty cautious, however, and kept together a good deal. It was not that we were particularly afraid of it as a beast; but its singular movements had given us a sort of dread of it.

"Nothing further was seen for some time. We had begun to fish in the lake for trout. It was alive with them too, — splendid fellows. We frequently caught them as heavy as ten pounds; and one day Zeke caught a *togue* which must have weighed twenty or twenty-five pounds. He fairly drew our canoe after him when he was hooked, and it took all our skill to land him.

"I remember we were up near the head of the lake that afternoon. Our camp was at the foot, or lower end. It was getting dusk as we paddled back along. There were several islands in the lake, nearly all of them craggy and high. Just as we were passing the lower one we heard a curious noise, — a sort of 'Waugh, waugh!' and, looking round to the island, we saw a

strange, manlike creature standing upright on a rock overlooking the water. We were not more than eight rods off, and it was not so dark but that we could see it plainly enough. As we stopped paddling, it uttered the same sound again, — a noise between a grunt and a bark.

"I knew at once it was the same creature I had seen before, and told them so. It must have swum half a mile to get up on the island. If we hadn't been fools we should have gone up, and found out then and there what it was, and so solved the mystery; for the island was small, and we should have had it completely penned up, and at our mercy. But we were boys then, with our heads full of Hughy's big stories; and as for Hughy himself, all the fur in Maine wouldn't have hired him to go a stroke nearer. Zeke hallooed at it: whereupon it raised its fore-paws, or arms, and swung them about like a drunken man, making the same noise as before. It was growing dark; and we came off and left it.

"The next day we went down round the island; but it wasn't there. It had gone away during the night.

"It was now November; and one morning we woke up to find the ground white and a smart snow coming. Towards night it cleared up cold and wintry. Our open camp wasn't very comfortable that night. We waked up shivering. Hughy was wincing under twinges of his old foe the 'rheumatiz.'

"'We must get out of this, boys,' said he. 'Winter's coming.'

"During the day we took up our traps, and prepared for our long tramp southward. We packed our fur in

bundles; for we had to *back* it out for the first forty miles. It was to be our last night there; and we sat about our fire talking over home-matters, and thinking of what might have happened since we left. All at once, Hughy remembered our canoe.

"'We may come here again,' said he; 'and it's some work to make one. You go down, Cluey, and pull it up out of the lake, and hide it in that little clump of cedars close to the water. It'll keep sound there two or three years.'

"So I ran down to the lake. It wasn't more than a hundred rods. Drawing the canoe out of the water, I stowed it away, bottom up, among the cedars at the foot of a low crag which overhung the lake.

"I was just coming away, when I heard behind me the same queer sound we had heard at the island, and, looking up, saw the beast-man again, standing at the top of the crag. He wasn't more than a hundred feet off: so I had a pretty good view of him as he stood out against the clear sunset sky. It was the same form and shape as before, fully as tall as a man; and I could now see his face. Perhaps it was partly fear; but I did think it had a *devilish* look. There was a tuft of thick hair on the head, which lent a frightful expression to the face.

"If this was what the Indians used to see, I don't wonder they thought it was the Devil. I had my gun, and slowly raised it as if to take aim. The creature raised its arm in the same way. But I had no thoughts of firing; I didn't dare to: and, when I lowered my gun, the creature dropped its arm with another 'Waugh, waugh!'

"I know I was frightened; yet I saw it plainly enough, and could have sworn to its identity anywhere.

"I don't know how long we stood staring at each other: but I saw it was growing darker; and, stepping backward till I was out of sight behind a cedar, I went into camp about as fast as my legs would carry me.

"Zeke was for going down all together, and shooting at it; but Hughy wouldn't hear of it. He was pretty strongly tinged with the old Indian whims concerning Pomoola, the demon of the mountain near us.

"'We'd no business with it,' he said; 'and he'd have nothing to do with it whatever, unless he was obliged to.'

"The next day we started for the settlements. That was the last we saw of it. Of course, Zeke and I told our story after getting home; and I presume it never increased our reputation for veracity among our neighbors. Hughy showed an old hunter's wisdom by keeping still about it. When persons who had heard us asked him, he merely said that we did see something rather queer; and that was all they could get out of him. Zeke and I pitched into him once for not substantiating our account better.

"'No use, no use at all,' said the old man; 'and I ain't going to get laughed at for nothing.'

"I've thought about it a great deal since; but I never could satisfy myself what it was we saw. I've heard of wild men, of children carried off and reared by wild beasts; and the Indians were always telling of Pomoola: but I never could settle it in my mind. I know there are a great many things in the Northern

wilderness which the 'scientific men' would laugh at a person for seeing or trying to describe.

"But here's my story. You can take it for what it is worth; and so must the reader. But we record it as a very fair specimen of hundreds of similar 'yarns,' common among the lumber-men and Indians, concerning the fabulous being or demon of the Katahdin region. My opinion is that it is all pure bosh, not only this story of Cluey's, but the whole batch of them."

I heartily concur with Wash; though it does seem strange that there should be so many stories with no foundation whatever in fact.

CHAPTER XI.

Katahdin ho! — The Shadow of a Tragedy. — A Ghastly Omen. — Mr. Bowditch's Spotted Path. — Up the "Great Slide." — Grand Scenery. — A Cowberry-Fire. — On to the Main Peak. — The Chimney. — Perennial Snow.

I WAKED quite early the next morning, — before sunrise considerably. Cluey was up, however; so was Raed. They were talking. Cluey was telling him that we should find the ascent of Katahdin a very difficult task, a great undertaking, and all that sort of thing. In short, he thought it was too much for us, and was advising Raed to give it up, — not *to think of it.*

Of course such advice was all thrown away on Raed. I heard him tell Cluey that he would be on the summit in four days if he lived and the weather was pleasant. The old man said no more.

"Shall you take up with our offer to go with us?" Raed asked.

I expected he was going to refuse. Considerably to my surprise, he said, —

"Wal, yer offer is a good 'un anough. I've gut mer hay all cut an' stecked: an' ef yer bound ter go, — why, I'll go with ye, pay or no pay; fer I ruther expect you'll need me."

"Good on your old head!" exclaimed Raed. "You

shall have your pay, not only for your time, but for all your *grub* that we are eating up here."

He said this so loud, that it waked Wash and Wade.

Somehow Cluey seemed much more of a man this morning than he had the previous evening, — a circumstance which again recalled Raed's suspicion concerning the "green bottle." Another circumstance struck me as rather confirmatory of the same suspicion. The green bottle, as it stood on the table-shelf, seemed to be wholly or nearly empty. It was hardly probable that Cluey had brought an empty glass-bottle all the way from Mattawamkeag: he was no such a man.

Cluey got breakfast.

Raed thought we had best set out immediately.

We paid Cluey five dollars for what we had eaten and destroyed. He did not ask it; but Raed gave it to him. We also purchased of him, from his supplies, thirty-five pounds of corn-meal, — as nearly as we could guess at it, — three pounds of coffee, four of sugar, and twenty of beef; all for five dollars. Raed also paid him for fifteen days in advance, — in all, forty dollars; which he concealed, for safe keeping during his absence, in an old stump a few rods from the shanty. His reason for not leaving it in the shanty was, "Sumbuddy mout cum along ter stay all night, an' git the old thing afire." We appreciated that.

As we had two guns, Cluey did not think it best to take his own, — a very heavy rifle of the old stamp. He merely took his knife, — a large, sharp jack-knife, serviceable as a butcher-knife, a bowie-knife, or a dirk. We also engaged the services of his veteran coffee-pot.

By nine o'clock we were ready for a start; and, turning the button on the shanty-door, filed off toward the river-bank. Cluey carried the meal in a bag he had furnished for it; Raed came next, with the meat in one of the buckets; Wash next, with the coffee and sugar in the other bucket; after him Wade, with the guns, hatchet, and blankets; and finally the *narrator*, closing the file, with the old kettle, mosquito-bar, ammunition, coffee-pot, &c.

Cluey had come up the river in a small *bateau* he owned, — a flat-bottomed skiff about fifteen feet by three and a half. In this we embarked, and proceeded to pole across to the opposite bank.

The current of the West Branch is too swift to admit of the use of paddles in ascending the stream. Boatmen use poles altogether in going up. In coming down, however, the paddle is used to guide the canoe, as well as the wooden *bateaux*. Coming down is an easy job, provided the steersman possesses sufficient skill to shoot the rapids in safety.

At the point where we were crossing the channel was not more than twelve or fifteen rods wide. Running the boat in upon the pebbles on the bank, we jumped out and unloaded our cargo.

"Will you leave the *bateau* here?" asked Raed.

"I don't jest like ter du that," said Cluey. "A gang o' tham river-driver fellars may cum along an' tuk it off with 'um: we ken pull it up among that ar clump uv alders, though," pointing to where these bushes fringed the bank a few rods below.

So, getting in again, we let the boat drop down op-

posite the bushes, then poled it in under them. It was at a place where the current, or a part of it, from the main channel, set in strongly toward the shore, and gouged under the bank. The water was deep up to the very roots of the alders. Tiny whirlpools were forming; and a drift of yellow-white froth had lodged against the shore, mingled with which were chunks of driftwood. The bank shook as we jumped out upon it, making the froth wave back. Cluey took hold of the nose of the *bateau* to draw it up: the rest of us stood ready to catch hold on each side as soon as he had drawn it out of the water. Suddenly Wade started back.

"Good God!" he exclaimed; "see there!"—pointing to the foam which had parted a little from the bank.

It was a ghastly spectacle. Bobbing up with the wavelets was the face of a man!* — a corpse floating on its back! The foam clung round the pallid face, and wreathed the streaming hair; and, horrible! where the body had lain against the black earth of the bank, a host of slimy snails had fastened to the cheek and clothes. The drenched garments still held around the body, though rent and torn to tatters, which, streaming up, mingled with the froth and floating dirt. Cluey let go the canoe. We all stared, and grew sick at the sight.

"Drowndid!" exclaimed the old man solemnly,—"drowndid, an' washed ashore!"

"Pull up the boat," said Raed in a low voice. "Let's pull the boat up; then we must try to get the body out."

The *bateau* was drawn back among the bushes. Raed

* A full account of this melancholy incident was published in the Bangor papers shortly after.

then took a stick, and gently drew the corpse up to the bank.

"Come, boys," said he; for we shrank back despite ourselves. "It's our duty. We should any of us wish the same thing done for us if we had been thus unfortunate; and we may be."

With averted faces we lifted the dripping corpse out upon the bank, and then, getting the board-seats out of the boat, laid it across them, and carried it back through the alders to a dry knoll. Wash brought water in an old tin bumper, which Cluey kept in the *bateau* to bail it with; and we rinsed the foam and dirt from the face of the dead. The body had evidently been lying in the water for some time. The skin was worn off in many places. One boot was gone. The coat and pants were in rags. Yet it seemed to have been a young man. The hair had quite recently been "shingled," and the beard shaven; all save the mustache, which was of a light-brown color. On the left little finger was a small seal-ring. There were no marks of violence, unless a bruise on the head could be thus construed. Raed, at first, thought this looked as if there had been foul play; but Cluey thought it might full as likely have been received in coming over the rapids above from striking against the rocks. On the whole, this appeared most probable, especially as, on examining the inner vest-pocket, we found a pocket-book containing forty-seven dollars in greenbacks. The fragment of a watch-guard hung from a button-hole of the vest. The watch itself had probably dropped from the pocket, and broken away. In the coat were several bits of wet paper: one, the

envelope of a letter, had borne a direction and address; but the water had dissolved it out save the post-mark, — Portland, June 3. This was all the clew there remained on the body to establish its identity.

"This ere's a very sad affa'r," muttered Cluey. "Poor yonker! Went up by way o' Moosehead proberly. Undertuk ter cum down the West Branch 'ere in er cunno. Gut oversot an' drowndid."

"The question now arises," said Raed, "what ought we to do?"

"At home," replied Wash, "the way would be to notify the authorities, so as to have a coroner's inquest."

"Yes; but, in order to notify the authorities here, we should have to go forty or fifty miles," said Raed. "Ought we to do it?"

"No," said Wade.

"No," said Wash.

"It wud luke like axin a leettle tu much," remarked Cluey, "we bein' mere strairngers tu 'im."

"But think of the anxiety of his friends!" said Raed.

"How do you know he had any?" asked Wade. "Besides, we can't be expected to assume such responsibilities."

"Well, we can at least bury him," said Raed.

"It would be unchristian not to do that," said Wash.

"Must barry 'im uv coorse," put in Cluey.

"But where shall we bury him?" I asked.

"We might take him over to your clearing, Mr. Robbins," said Raed.

Cluey looked a little disconcerted.

"I don't b'l'eve in ghosts or any think o' that sort,"

he began: "still, 'twouldn't be jest cheery ter hev a dead corpse barrid thar, me livin' alone so."

"Then why not bury him here?" asked Wade. "One place is as good as another, I suppose."

We carried him along the bank to a place where it was dry and sandy. Wash sharpened off the two boards at the ends, and chamfered them down so as roughly to resemble shovels. With these we dug a grave in the sand about three feet in depth. Raed had cut off a quantity of hemlock-boughs from the low shrubs standing near. With these we lined the grave. Cluey and Wade then laid in the body, and we all stood round it with uncovered heads for a space of fully five minutes. Raed then laid in more boughs, entirely covering the body with them. This done, Wash and I filled in the sand, and Wade drove down the boards with the hatchet, — one at the head, the other at the foot, of the rude grave.

"Is not this a rather ghastly omen for us, — just setting out into the same wilds, — to have this corpse coming floating down to meet us?" said Wash, with a certain seriousness in his tones.

"I hope you are not foolish enough to suppose this *accident* has any thing to do with our affairs," replied Raed.

"What's to be done with this money?" asked Wade, pointing to the pocket-book with its little roll of drenched bills, which had been laid down on the sand, together with the ring.

"It must be kept for his friends," replied Raed, "if they can be ascertained. We shall be obliged to take them with us, I suppose, for the present."

"That might be awkward in the event of much public suspicion relative to this affair," remarked Wade.

"What do you mean?" asked Raed.

"Why, our having this money and this ring in our possession," replied Wade. "Persons have been convicted of murder on no better evidence."

"That's so!" exclaimed Wash.

Raed seemed a little staggered.

"Tell ye what, yonkers," said Cluey, "I've ben a-thinkin' as 'ow it mout be a good plan ter put up a notiss on a pole 'ere. It's orfen done. Parties of loggers is goin' up an' down the river 'ere ev'ry few weeks. Put up a notiss on a conspikerous pole, statin' jest 'ow it war; also 'ow much money war found on the buddy, an' whar the frens uv the dizeased ken h'ar on't."

"That's the idea exactly!" exclaimed Raed. "Cut a pole, Kit: I'll write a statement."

I cut and trimmed a long alder-pole, and made a cleft in the top end, in which Raed inserted the following statement, written on a small sheet of paper from his diary: —

"AUGUST, 186–.

"The body of an unknown man, apparently about twenty-five years old, was this day found in the river at this place, and buried in the sand ten feet back of this pole, by the following persons (here Raed gave all our names in full).

"There were found on the body one small seal-ring, worn on the left little finger, and the sum of forty-seven dollars in greenbacks, which may be applied for after the first day of October next, at No. —, Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

"Will the finder of this slip please forward it, with particulars, to either the Bangor or Boston papers?"

The pole was then set up in the sand, and a strip from Raed's handkerchief tied just below the paper as an additional signal.

(It may here be added, that, up to November of the same year, no application had been made for the ring or the money; though a party of lumber-men saw the notice, and carried it down to Bangor, where it was published in several papers, and copied into many others.)

I have often reflected concerning this mysterious incident since, and wondered whether we did the right thing under the circumstances. It seems to me that it was all I could have expected a similar party to have done by my own body, if found in the same way; and then again, when I think of some fond mother or anxious father watching and waiting for the return of the one who fills that shallow grave in the wildwood sands, I fear we have not made sufficient effort to set the fact of his death before the public. Raed has written to ask whether it would not be advisable to spend the whole sum found on the body in advertisements, which may possibly reach the eye of some relative of the unfortunate young man, who may, at least, be able to claim the ring.

It was afternoon before we had finished these miserable rites and were ready to go on. Cluey asked if we should have dinner before starting. But none of us could have eaten there. We took up our luggage, and started off over the rising ground toward Katahdin. The event had cast a damper on us. Despite Raed's sarcastic remark, I could not help thinking, with Wash, that it was "a rather ghastly omen."

Katahdin, looming grandly to the north-east, invited us on. For about two miles from the West Branch the land is open, having at some not long past time been burned over. There were many grassy patches. Blueberry-bushes abound, and, at this season, were loaded with their tempting fruit. There were also plenty of choke-cherries, pear-plums, and wild red cherries. This open belt is succeeded by a growth of young evergreens. Here, under Cluey's pilotage, we were so fortunate as to strike the path *spotted* by Mr. Bowditch on his tour to the mountains a number of years ago. It was lucky that we did so: it facilitates the course very much. Parties ascending the mountain will do well to look for this path.

A tramp of three hours and a half from the river took us to the foot of the "Great Slide," a distance of about six miles.

The "Great Slide," as it is called, is one of those bare faces of the mountain where all the trees have been swept off by an avalanche of bowlders and earth from the top. The angle of elevation is, we thought, not far from forty degrees. It can only be climbed by a determined effort. The whole incline is strewn, from top to bottom, with bowlders often a dozen feet square. It had, at first sight, a very disheartening, perilous aspect, coming as near our ideal of "Jacob's ladder" as we ever expect to realize in this world.

It was now toward four o'clock. As we had not yet eaten dinner, and were in poor plight to attempt the slide, Raed decided to camp here for the night. We accordingly built our fire among the low firs which grew

along the foot of the slide, just at the point where the mass of loose rocks and broken wood marks the base of the steep mountain-wall. Wade set the aneroid, and reported the height at twenty-three hundred and seventy feet above the sea. We had forgotten to take the elevation at the West Branch * on starting in the morning, as had been intended. After finding the body, it had slipped our minds. The height of the *foot* of the slide, above the West Branch, will therefore have to be left to some future and more careful explorers.

Cluey set up a lug-pole on two crotched stakes over the fire, and proceeded to boil meat, make a pudding, and get up a "dish of coffee." It was rather nice to sit resting ourselves while this was going on.

We were already up high enough to look off over the forest below. The view, even from the foot of the slide, is fine.

Though six miles distant, the West Branch can be distinctly seen threading its silvery path through the woods down from the foot of Lake Chesuncook, the lower end of which could be discerned past the side of the ridge. During the evening we heard the cry of martens from the rocks above us, and for a long time sat watching the stars of the slowly-wheeling Dipper, four of which were visible over the dark brow of the slide: the other three were hidden behind it. Just as we were going to sleep, a hare gave us something of a fright. I think the little creature must have been pursued; for it came leaping up to our very feet, making a great stamping for so small an animal. We had lain

* Eight hundred and fifty feet.

down; but, hearing the tramping, jumped hastily up; at which the timid creature went leaping off.

"Nothin' but a *fatty*," said Cluey.

Ding-bat gave chase; and, for several minutes, the rocks resounded to his best vocal efforts: but he soon came back lolling.

"Wal, ye didn't ketch 'im, did ye?" cried Cluey derisively. "Haf ter buy a razer an' latherin'-box, an' shave a while, afore ye ken ketch Yankee animuls."

Wash complained of bad dreams; but the rest of us slept well all night. One ought to sleep well in this clear mountain-air.

By seven o'clock we had breakfast out of the way, and were ready for a start.

"Now, thar air two ways o' gittin' up on ter this 'ere mountin," explained Cluey. "One is ter climb right straight up this slide 'ere: t'other is ter foller along the 'spotted line' ter the foot of the wast spur, an' then climb up thar whar 'tain't ser steep. Ye ken take yer chice uv um."

"Which is farthest?" asked Wash.

"Oh! it's furderest out round the spur. It's 'bout two mile too, or two an' a harf, out ter the foot of the spur. Then frum thar ter the top it's nigh on ter five mile. But, ter go right straight up this 'ere slide, 'tain't more'n three an' a half or four mile ter the top."

"Do you think it is safe going up the slide?" Raed asked.

"Wal," replied the old man, "that's all the arger-

munt thar is fer goin' out round by the spur. It's pasky steep, ye see; an' now an' then a big rock comes tumblin' down, 'spashally in the spring o' the year, when the frost is comin' out. The stuns is apt ter guv way under yer foot, lyin' luse as they du. Haf ter be keerful whar yer a-steppin'. Ye ken see jest 'ow it looks, all raggid and luse like. Still I ain't afeerd ter resk it; an' I shudn't s'pose thar need ter be any great dairnger fer active yonkers like you. I shudn't advise ter try it in the spring o' the year, p'r'aps; but, ser late as 'tis now. I don't think thar'll be any diffikilty. Yer ken du as yer 'a' mind to, though."

"What do you say, fellows?" asked Raed, turning to us.

We all thought best to try the slide.

"Up the slide it is, then," said Raed.

"Forward, all!" cried Wade.

Cluey threw the meal-bag over his shoulder, and, climbing up over the rick of stones and logs, began the ascent. The rest of us followed, each with his portion of the luggage. It did not take long to start the sweat. Climbing up an incline of loose stones and broken shrubs as steep as a medium staircase with a heavy bucket in one's hand is very much like work. On went Cluey, never once looking behind him. He had secured a start of thirty or forty yards; and kept it, despite our efforts to close up. These thirty or forty yards amounted to some twenty or thirty feet dead height over our heads. He climbed very gingerly, however; and was continually dropping down advice to us.

"Now luke out fer this 'ere ticklish un;" indicating, with hand or foot, the rock he deemed treacherous.

And, a moment later, —

"Tuk keer o' that ar rotten log."

"Mind 'ow ye step inter this luse dirt: 'twon't 'old yer foot."

"Steer cl'ar o' this 'ere hole 'tween these 'ere raggid stuns: bad place fer yer laigs in thar."

And so on, upward, for four or five hundred feet. We were all thoroughly out of breath when the old man finally faced about on the upper side of a huge bowlder of red granite, and removed his fur cap to wipe his brow. We toiled up beside him, and, panting, turned to look down. The view from where we stood would be apt to make a nervous person feel skittish. It had a right-up-and-down seeming, that made me grow giddy for a moment. Our footing on the steep side appeared altogether too slight for safety against the clutch of gravitation: this, at least, was the first impression given.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Wash, glancing apprehensively down, and then up. "This is rather scarey, isn't it? Makes a fellow feel as if he was going to topple over and roll down."

"Not a very nice place to roll, either," remarked Wade, fixing his feet a little more firmly.

"Might illustrate it," said Raed, going a little way along the side, and giving a loose stone a push with his foot. The fragment, which was about the size of one of the buckets, rolled off, and then went tearing downward, throwing up jets of dust, and setting other stones in motion, till it plunged among the evergreens at the base of the slide.

These four or five hundred feet had greatly enlarged

and heightened the prospect. Moosehead Lake, thirty miles to the south-west, was already beginning to come into view over the wooded hills. Chesuncook and little Ripogenus *had come up* much nearer.

"Wal," said Cluey (he always prefixed all important remarks with this preliminary "wal"), "wot say fer anuther hitch-up?"

"Go ahead!" replied Wash.

"I would suggest that we climb a little more moderately," said Raed. "You gave us something of a sweat this first time."

"Did I, though?" said Cluey very innocently, and as if such a thing had been farthest from his intention. "Wal, slower then."

Cluey entertained but a very slight opinion of city-bred muscle. It always gave him a sort of mischievous delight to see Raed and Wash pant well in an attempt to keep up with his sturdy trudge.

During this next "hitch" we got up four or five hundred feet higher, the view opening grandly. As the hills and mountain-ridges to the southward and south-westward *sank*, the ponds and streams in the valleys *rose* to sight. From our second resting-place Wade counted seventeen ponds and lakes. There was very little haze; and the sun shone brightly. It was not uncomfortably warm, however: on the contrary, the air seemed rather cool; a fact we attributed to the increasing elevation. Just as we were starting for a third hitch, Wash had the ill luck to upset the sugar-bucket. The paper containing the precious "white sand" fell out, and, striking on a rock, burst. Before we could jump to the

rescue, nearly half the contents ran out, and sifted down among the stones. It is always aggravating to lose sugar. One can view the spilling of salt, or even meal, with tolerable calmness; but to see sugar spilled upsets all a fellow's forbearance. We all jawed him.

The slide is no steeper toward the top than at the foot, if so steep. The climbing, too, is less difficult. There are fewer loose stones and bowlders. The foothold is less uncertain. We accomplished the last seven hundred feet with much less fatigue and perspiration than we had feared at our first halt. Nor did we feel as giddy on looking down from any of the upper stages as at the first downward glance, when not more than five hundred feet from the base: so much depends on getting used to a thing.

But the incline proved longer, considerably, than it had looked to be from the bottom. The line of ledges at the top had receded as we climbed toward them. It was not till half-past ten that Cluey gave the welcome assurance that "one hitch more'd fetch it." A pretty long hitch it turned out; but we made it, and, at five minutes before eleven, sprang upon the brink of the slide, which here drops down from a sort of table-land that from this place stretches off toward the high peak of the Katahdin ridge. We threw ourselves on the mossy rocks, and lay for a long time, resting.

The view is wonderfully grand. Of itself it is sufficient to reward all the hard toil of the ascent. The whole country is at your feet. All the hills and mountains have sunk into a mighty plain, stretching off into distant haze. It looks as if one might fall into the West

Branch by merely jumping over the crest. The valley wears a soft bluish tint. The forest seems like a grass-plat. Moosehead has come up much nearer. Far beyond it there are mountain-peaks, which, I presume, are those of the boundary range between Maine and Canada.

We sat for over an hour — one of the most pleasurable of my life — drinking in the great scene; and even then it seemed too bad of Raed to sing out, —

"Well, fellows, what say for dinner?"

Though, come to think of it, we were hungry as bears.

"Where's the wood to come from?" inquired Wade, looking back over the table-land.

This seemed likely to be a pretty difficult question.

On the elevated plateau none but the hardiest plants were to be seen. The trailing alpine bearberry here and there clothed the bare ledges, and mossy lichens filled the hollows. Farther down, toward the crest of the west spur, there were small patches of cowberry-shrubs. Cluey had told us that he knew of a spring at some distance across the table-land. Unpacking one of the buckets, he now started off to find it. Raed began to construct an arch of stones wherein to set the kettle; while Wash and Wade and myself went off down the plateau to gather cowberry-twigs. They were none of them larger than a pipe-stem. Rather small fuel, certainly! We broke off and pulled up each an armful, and got back just as Cluey, with about half a bucket of water, was coming in from the opposite direction.

"'Twas all the thing'd *give*," said the old man. "I

squeezed it dry. But I've cl'ar'd it out. Gass it'll guv some more by night."

What there was of the water was rather rily. It was tolerably cool, however.

After considerable "fussin'," owing to the scantiness of the fuel, a pudding was made, and coffee boiled. Not a very sumptuous repast: it needed only the relish of a good appetite, though, — a relish we always had with us while on the Katahdin ridge.

After dinner, Wade set the aneroid several times at different points along the plateau. The height, as nearly as we could average it, was forty-seven hundred and thirty feet. The known height of the mountain, as calculated by the State survey, is fifty-three hundred and eighty-five feet. This would make our position at the top of the slide six hundred and fifty-five feet below the main peak. I may as well add here, however, that, on ascending the peak (which we did next day), our aneroid persisted in giving the altitude at fifty-four hundred and ninety feet, — about that. So that, making a corresponding deduction, our camp near the top of the slide was only about forty-six hundred and thirty feet above the sea.

As we were very tired, we decided to camp here for the night. The sun shone brightly all the afternoon; but at no time was it uncomfortably warm, and, by five o'clock, had grown so chilly, that we were glad to "try races" to keep from shivering. This was the 8th of August, it must be borne in mind. On the 9th of September we saw, from Lake Chesuncook, these same peaks white with snow. There was nothing of incident

in our night spent on this hoary, lichen-clad ledge: yet I recall it more distinctly than any other of our sojourn in this wild region; it seemed so high up, — so far above the world we had thus far dwelt in. We were, therefore, not a little astonished, on waking in the morning, to find ourselves enveloped in what appeared to be a thick fog. The blankets which we had snuggled around us were dampened as by a dense mist. It soon passed off, however, seeming to drift away over the great valley to the southward. I think it was a cloud. When the sun came up, the whole plateau glittered as if drenched with dew. The mist passed in time to allow us to see the sun rise. The point on the horizon above which the sun's disk first made its appearance could hardly have been less than seventy-five miles distant. We were surprised to see how far-off this caused the sun to seem at its rising, when viewed beyond so great an extent of country.

Building a fire — enough to cook a breakfast — out of damp cowberry-bushes was decidedly a work of time, and patience to boot. I regret to record that Cluey did not retain the latter virtue (*vartew* as he would have said) in excess on this occasion. Wade remarked, that, if Cluey had been a Catholic, his priest would have had a big job on hand after this cowberry-fire.

It was nine o'clock before we were ready to start on. An hour and a half brought us to the summit of the main peak. The prospect from the highest rocks at this point was grander, I suppose, in that it was loftier, than from any other. Still, to my mind, it lacked the beauty and clearness of the view from the brink of the

slide. Taken together, the prospect from Katahdin is superior to that from Mount Washington, both in beauty and general impressiveness. There are no neighboring mountains of any thing like equal size. The landscape is consequently less roughened and wild than that to be seen from the Tip-top House. A view so grand and sombre as this can hardly fail to attract tourists as soon as a road to the mountain shall be built. I wonder that some enterprising Yankee with plenty of money has not yet *guessed* that a hotel on the West Branch, with a road leading up thither, would prove a "paying investment."

Seen from the top of the main peak, the mountain-ridge seems to form the arc of a circle, with its concave side fronting to the south-east nearly. The west and north-west sides are not nearly so steep.

Descending from the highest point, we made our way laboriously along the ridge toward the north-east. For a considerable distance this ridge was very narrow, and difficult to follow. At one place we were glad to get on our hands and knees, and creep very cautiously and humbly, lest a single misstep should send us headlong over the precipices on either side. About half a mile beyond we came to an almost vertical descent of seventy or eighty feet, which Cluey called the "chimney." We had to lower each other from rock to rock, and use the greatest caution lest our provision-buckets should be upset or let fall over the ledges. Cluey told us that the vast hollow embraced by the southern concave side is locally known as the "basin." Some idea of the scenery from the ridge at this point may be gained, perhaps

when I state that the side of this basin falls off three thousand feet over precipices far too steep to be descended in safety. The sight is awe-inspiring. We instinctively shrank back from the brink of so vast a gulf. I do not believe that it can be matched east of the Sierra Nevadas. There is nothing about Mount Washington worthy to be compared with it in point of abrupt depth and grandeur. Directly under the place where we were standing at the foot of the "chimney," there is a small pond in the basin, called Chimney Pond. It seemed possible to throw a stone into this pond three thousand feet below. We threw several; but, owing to the great depth, it was impossible to tell where they struck. Far down under the shadow of the ridge we espied a snow-drift, which, Cluey informed us, remained there all the year round.

It struck us as a rather curious fact, that while the granite along the "slides" and lower parts of the mountain is of a light-gray color, sometimes even approaching whiteness, that at the summit and along the top of the ridge should be red. Yet thus curiously has Nature crested the head of Katahdin. The savages believed that the rocks took this red and flinty hue beneath the feet of Pomoola, in his restless pacings to and fro along the mountain's sullen brow. A little farther on, the descent is less precipitous; and, at a depth of four or five hundred feet, small black spruces appear along the shelf of the ledges.

It was now after two o'clock. We decided to descend far enough to procure fuel, and encamp for the remainder of the day. But even here it required caution to make our way down to where the evergreens began.

Spruce, however, is a great improvement on cowberry for culinary purposes: so, at least, Cluey found it. He contrived to cook beef, make "pudding," and boil coffee: so that, by seven, P.M., we dined in savage profusion. I should hardly dare to call to mind, much less inform the public, how many gill dipperfuls of very strong, very sweet coffee we drank apiece that evening. We apologized for each other by continually calling to mind that it takes *four gills* to make a *pint*.

Our bed was on a little shelf along the top of a ledge; and I recollect that we had some doubts as to the safety of going to sleep, lest we should roll off, and bring up on the rocks some hundred feet below. But, taking the precaution to put Wash in the middle (he being "the man what gets up in his sleep"), we concluded to risk it; and slept very soundly. Climbing over ledges all day will make anybody sleep. Many persons — especially those who kick about on their spring mattresses — are apt to think that they never could close their eyes or get a wink of sleep if obliged to camp out and lie on a "shake-down" of boughs. All a mistake. Get them up into this exhilarating mountain-air, and race them about all day over the rough rocks and ridges, and they will sleep like tops, with nothing save a blanket on a mossy ledge; nor will they feel the stiffer, nor much the older, for it.

CHAPTER XII.

The North-east Peak. — The Beginning of a Long Search. — A Meteor, with a Calculation concerning it. — A New Theory of the Earth by a Daring Speculator.

CLUEY had boiled meat enough to last cold for several meals. We had, therefore, to make *the pudding* and coffee for breakfast. This was soon disposed of. We climbed back to the top of the ridge, whence we had descended the evening before, and during the forenoon made our way along to the north-east peak, which, according to Wade's measurement, does not lack fifty feet of being as high as the one we had ascended the day before. It is broader, however; and perhaps seems lower on that account.

In ascending Katahdin, the tourist should not slight this north-east peak. The view toward the north and east is very fine, — much better than from any other point on the ridge. The whole of the vast county of Aroostook, and even a considerable portion of North-west New Brunswick, is within the field of view, and, with a good glass, might be quite correctly made out. Even with our little pocket-glass we could follow the course of the Aroostook River down into the Valley of the St. John's; and, farther north, the Eagle Lakes could be seen, shining on the horizon.

After a lunch of cold meat and pudding, we went down the north-east side of the ridge, descending from the peak seven hundred feet by the aneroid, and selected the site for a permanent camp for a week, amid a clump of large, low beeches. This north-east peak we had decided to examine thoroughly. It *might be* the one where the Indian had found the lead. Beginning at this extreme north-east point, we resolved to search along the whole northern side of the mountain, which presents a long ridge running north-east by south-west nearly. This north side is not as steep, nor yet as craggy, as the south side; but it has a vast number of spurs and ledgy faces standing out amid the black spruce growth, which clings to the granite flanks of the ridge like a sable vesture.

During the next fortnight our route was along this ridge, following it down toward the south-west in the direction of Lake Chesuncook, searching every crag and spur and ledge. Out West such a search is turned "prospecting," I believe. It is *grim* work, call it by whatever name you may. Should this little narrative fall under the eye of a geologist, I have no doubt he will laugh heartily at our undertaking; and yet he will know something of the toil and infinite patience it takes to look over twenty square miles of craggy mountain-side *thoroughly*. It was *fun* for the first half-day; but it soon degenerated into about the toughest work I ever engaged in. Only a veteran geologist can know the perseverance and grit which it takes, as day after day of disappointment accumulates on a fellow, to keep at it.

I cannot expect the reader to sympathize greatly with

us in this our rather *boyish*, and withal doughty undertaking; and shall, therefore, confine my account to the more lively incidents of our stay in this wild region.

Below the beeches the mountain sloped off into a deep hollow, along the bed of which there were several small ponds.

As we expected to remain here some days, we constructed, under Cluey's oversight, a "half-shelter" of stakes and poles, which we thatched with hemlock-boughs. We had found the nights rather chilly at this elevation. The shelter would make us warmer, and, in case of rain, would add greatly to our comfort.

Cluey then got supper. Henceforth his business was to be hunting and cooking; for, with our rather scanty stores of meal and meat, a good supply of partridges and caribou-meat would be quite necessary to our lengthened search. We did not believe the old man's geological qualifications sufficient to make him of much use to us in our hunt for the *lode;* though I dare say he could have *told* lead, when he saw it, as well as we: but that was our conceit at the time.

By the time we had finished supper it was sunset.

After camping for several nights on high ground, it is always unpleasant to go down to a lower level. One cannot go to sleep comfortably in a hollow after sleeping on the hill above the night before. I do not pretend to explain it. Perhaps it is because human nature has an upward tendency naturally: to go down is, therefore, disagreeable, repugnant. As a matter of fact, we did not feel just like lying down for the night at our camp at the foot of the ridge.

"Seems kind of sunken and stived up here," Wash had remarked.

"Close too," said Wade; for it was really a warm evening.

The mosquitoes in small squads began to gather around.

"Tell you, fellows," said Raed, "let's take our blankets and go up to the top again to sleep. Quite a climb, I know; but it will be out of the way of the mosquitoes."

A climb of six or seven hundred feet is not generally popular at the end of a day's tramp; but to-night we all liked the project, — all save Cluey: so, voting the old man the use of the mosquito-bar, we went up to the summit. The mosquito-bar, it should be remarked, had at first struck Cluey as "a mighty flimpsy consarn" anyway. His method of keeping off the mosquitoes was to build "a smudge," — a smoke from a smouldering fire of punk, or any thing which will yield a great deal of disagreeable smoke. After raising his *smudge*, the voyager has only to lie down in the lee of it, and let the *vapor* drift over him. It will keep off the mosquitoes. They can't stand it; and if he *can*, — why, he's all right. But it is apt to recall the old adage of the remedy being worse than the disease. On our first setting up the bar, Cluey did not believe but that "the pasky varmin wad crawl through;" but, finding they did not he yielded the point, and accepted the "gawzy muzzlin consarn" without further comment. I wish all our old fogies would take to modern improvements with half as good a grace.

Gaining the top of the ledges, we spread our blankets on the thick lichen and moss, and sat down to get breath and enjoy the cool breeze that played across the crest of the mountain. The rocks were still quite warm from the hot sun-rays of the afternoon: but the air was rapidly cooling; for, in the west, a faint belt of twilight marked the course of the departing sun, while down the east and south-east the dark line of the earth's black shadow was moving up toward the zenith. The twilight faded, and evening darkened, as we sat there talking. Suddenly, against the dusk background of the south-east, a bright point flashed out, and sailed slowly eastward, leaving a long pale-bright trail stretching far behind. I say, it moved slowly; for, as nearly as we could judge, it was in sight four or five seconds.

"Hollo!" cried Wade. "D'ye see that?"

"A meteor!" exclaimed Wash. "Wasn't it a bright one?"

"I never saw one remain in sight so long," said I. "Generally they flash out, and are gone in a second. Those I saw last evening did" (for, while lying with my face upturned, I had observed several).

"This was probably a larger one," said Raed. "We saw it at a greater distance. That's the reason it seemed to move more slowly."

"How far off do you suppose it was?" said Wade.

"Oh! I don't know," replied Raed. "It would be of no use to guess at it. We might make a sort of rough calculation, though, like this: The average speed of meteors and shooting-stars is said to be about forty miles per second. Now, how long was this one in sight?"

"Four seconds," said Wade.

"Five," said Wash.

"Call it four and a half," said Raed.

"Now, how many miles did it pass over while we saw it?"

"A hundred and eighty," replied Wade.

"Now, the next question is, How great an arc of the horizon did it pass over?" continued Raed.

"Forty degrees," I hazarded. "That would be one-ninth of the entire zodiac."

"Not any more than that," remarked Wade.

Wash thought it was less.

"Call it one-ninth," said Raed. "If a hundred and eighty miles is one-ninth, the whole circumference of the circle would have been — let me see" —

"Sixteen hundred and twenty miles," replied Wade.

"Now, if this meteor was moving around us in a circle sixteen hundred and twenty miles in circumference, how far off was it from us at the centre? In other words, what's the radius of the circle?"

"About one-sixth of the circumference," said Wash.

"Two hundred and seventy miles," said Wade.

"Roughly, then," said Raed, "we have, for the distance of this meteor, two hundred and seventy miles."

"Do you really believe that it was so far off?" I asked.

"I have no doubt of it," said Raed: "indeed, I should not be surprised if it were much farther off. That was a large meteor."

"How large do you suppose it was?" asked Wade. "Was it larger than a two-hundred-and-fifty-pound shell?"

"Humph!" Wash exclaimed: "'twas nearer the size of this ledge. Do you think we could see a two-hundred-and-fifty-pound shell *two hundred and seventy miles?*"

"But a Drummond light no bigger than your hand can be seen seventy-five miles," retorted Wade.

"Yes; and an electric light of the same small size can be discerned a hundred miles," said Raed. "Very much depends on the intensity of the light; and it is fair to suppose that a blazing meteor would give as intense a flame as would *calcium* in the Drummond light."

"I don't know about it's being fair to suppose that," Wash continued.

"It would depend on what the meteor was composed of," said I.

"They are found to contain nickel, iron, arsenic, cobalt, tin, and even phosphorus and carbon," replied Raed. "More nickel and iron than any thing else, though."

"Yes; and, when the meteor comes plunging down into the atmosphere of the earth, it is so heated by friction, that the nickel and iron are burned and turned to gas, as we saw it in the trail of this one to-night," said Wade. "Now, I don't see why it should not give as bright a light as the *calcium*, or the carbon atoms, in the electric light. Therefore I argue that a lump of iron or nickel as large as a two-fifty shell would, in burning, give as much light as we saw from this meteor to-night."

"I don't see it!" exclaimed Wash. "If this meteor was really two hundred and seventy miles away, its trail must have been a hundred miles long. How could you

get gas and cinders enough out of a ball fifteen inches in diameter to make a trail *a hundred miles long?*"

"In turning to gas, iron expands a thousand-fold," replied Wade.

"A thousand-fold!" exclaimed Wash, following up his advantage. "This trail was a hundred miles long; and, judging from its proportions, it must have been ten or a dozen miles in diameter. Your fifteen-inch iron sphere would have to expand a *million-fold* to make such a cloud of gas as we saw!"

"I think you have greatly overestimated the proportions of the trail!" cried Wade. "Hasn't he, Raed?"

"I should think he had given the diameter rather large," laughed Raed. "But you will have to admit that he has made a strong point against you, even then. For my own part, I don't doubt that this meteor was at least twenty feet in diameter."

"Twenty feet!" cried Wash. "I don't believe it was an inch less than two hundred, till I see the figures."

"Then, of course, there's no use arguing further *with you*," said Wade; "for it will probably be some time before any of us see *the figures*."

There is nothing improbable in my estimate," resumed Wash. "In the year 1819, a meteor was seen to move across New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. It looked as bright as the sun, and was thought to be twenty-five miles high, and *half a mile* in diameter."

"That didn't fall to the earth," said Wade; "at least, it is not known to have fallen."

"Neither is this one we saw to-night *known* to have fallen," replied Wash. "But whether it fell or not

makes no difference. There are two fragments of a meteor in Iceland, — Iceland or Greenland, — one of which contains upwards of forty thousand square feet, the other over twenty thousand. These show that big meteors do exist, and that they sometimes burst, and fall to the earth. What do you think, Raed: would a meteor two hundred feet in diameter be any thing unusual?"

"Rather unusual, certainly," replied Raed.

"But would you deem it impossible?"

"Oh, no! not impossible. There have been meteors larger than that seen. In 1783 a very large meteor was seen the same evening in Ireland, Scotland, England, France, Germany, and at Rome, at a probable height of from seventy to a hundred miles, and moving at the rate of a thousand miles per minute. The diameter of this one was thought to be two thousand feet or upwards."

"I should call that a small planet," said Wade.

"So are all meteors small planets," rejoined Wash. "All the difference between a planet and a meteor is in the size. Both move around the sun in orbits, obeying the same law of gravitation. Meteors only become 'shooting-stars' and 'aerolites' when they come so near the earth as to be drawn out of their own orbits by the earth's superior strength of attraction. Then they come tumbling down through the air, and are either fused by friction and burned up, or else explode, and fall in a shower of stones like the stone-fall at Weston, Conn."

"See!" exclaimed Wade. "There's another! That was a little one, I suppose: it flashed out, and was gone in a second."

A few minutes later we saw another.

"They are seen pretty *thick* about this time of year," remarked Raed, — "from the 9th to the 11th of August. April is another month when a good many fall. But November is the great month for them, — from the 12th to the 15th of November. That's the time when the famous star-showers happen."

"Why is it that they come at just about such a time every year?" Wade asked.

"It is thought that these bodies move in irregular rings, or belts, about the sun: and in April, August, and November, the earth in its orbit cuts through these belts; consequently, more are drawn in at those times."

"What vast numbers of them must fall!" said I. "Almost any night of the year, one can count half a dozen in an hour, — there! see that one! — and they're falling all over the earth, by day as well as night."

"Prof. Newton says that there are probably seven million five hundred thousand shooting-stars and meteors, large enough to be seen, falling every twenty-four hours," said Wash. "Then there are a host of smaller ones, too minute to be seen by the naked eye, such as only the telescope can discern. Put them all together, he thinks the whole number, little and great, would foot up four hundred million per day."

"Where did you get hold of so much science?" demanded Wade.

"An extract from Prof. Newton's article on meteors was published in the papers," Wash explained.

"Those four hundred million must make quite a heap, lump them all together," said Wade. "Wonder how much they would weigh apiece, on an average."

"Prof. Harkness thinks the average weight may be about one grain," replied Raed. "You can now reckon up the weight of the whole heap."

"Too dark to make figures," said Wash. "We can do it in the morning, though. We shall want to get up early to see the sun rise."

"Dont forget it then," said Raed. "I should like to see how much it will foot up."

The blankets were arranged. We talked a little longer, and fell asleep. Dawn was just whitening the eastern horizon when Wash waked me to see it. The other two boys were both asleep.

There is something sublime in this distant coming of the sun; the pale brightness seems so remote, and day is seen coming from afar.

"No wonder the old Persians worshipped the sun," said Wash. "'Twas the best thing for a god that could be chosen in the whole universe. What a flood of brightness comes with it! Which makes me think that a German doctor — Meyer, I believe his name is — argues that the flames of the sun are kept up by millions of meteors striking down on to it. Striking down so hard, you know, and so many of them, they make a vast amount of heat, which makes sunshine. Gravitation pulls about twenty-seven times as hard at the sun as it does on the earth. The meteors would pound down harder on that account. But a great many don't believe a word of his theory. I think it looks likely enough, though."

"Let's stir Raed and Wade. We've got some ciphering to do this morning, you know. We can use blank-leaves in our note-books."

The boys were *stirred* up accordingly; and, after the usual yawns and gapes, we proceeded to business, stopping from time to time to gaze at the reddening east, which now blazed apace.

"400,000,000 meteors at an average weight of one grain apiece," said Wade. "How many pounds?"

"Hold on!" cried Raed. "There are 400,000,000 of them on any ordinary night of the year. But, during April, August, and November, there are more, — sometimes vast showers like that of 1833: so, reckoning in these months, the average would be more than 400,000,000 per diem. Question arises, how much more?"

"As much again," said Wash; "800,000,000 on an average."

"One-half more," said Wade; "600,000,000 on an average."

"Split the difference!" cried Raed; "call it 700,000,000. Now how many pounds at one grain each?"

"Let's see," said Wade. "How many grains in a pound avoirdupois?"

"7,000," said Wash. "Now we have it, then, — 100,000 pounds of meteors fall to the earth daily."

"How much in a year?" demanded Raed.

"365 times 100,000," repeated Wade; "36,500,000 pounds per year."

"How much per century?"

"3,650,000,000 pounds!" cried Wash.

"How many tons would that be? Divide by 2,000."

"1,825,000 tons!" exclaimed Wade.

"No geologist of any note would think of setting the age of the earth at less than 10,000,000 centuries," said

Raed. "How many tons of meteors *may have* fallen during that time?"

"1,825,000,000,000,000 tons," replied Wash a moment later.

"Why, that would make quite a large planet of itself!" exclaimed Wade.

"I supposed the earth had got its growth long ago," said I: "but, according to this, it is growing yet; gains 100,000 pounds per day."

"Yes," said Raed: "a thousand centuries hence it will have grown considerably larger."

"Then, a thousand centuries ago, it must have been considerably smaller," remarked Wade.

"Well, if the earth is growing, and has been growing in this way, why is it not fair to suppose that it was once very small, — no bigger than one's fist?" said Wash.

"I don't see why *that* is not a fair supposition," said Wade.

"Nor I!" exclaimed Wash; "and, what's more, I believe that *was* the way the world was formed, — out of meteors slowly collected through millions of years."

"Here's a new theory of the creation!" cried Raed; "a new genesis!"

"I don't care," said Wash, "if it *is* a new theory. It's fully as reasonable to me as the nebular hypothesis you explained the other night."

"So I think!" exclaimed Wade.

"Some time I mean to write it out and publish it," said Wash.

"You were going to tell us why the existence of a

central fire inside the earth was doubted," said I to Raed. "Now is a good time for it."

"Well, as to that," replied the geologist, "I cannot, of course, enter into an elaborate argument: I don't understand it well enough. But many scientists argue, that if the whole interior of the earth were a mass of liquid lava, as has been supposed, the rotation of the earth on its axis would flatten it at the poles into a lentiform shape; whereas the polar diameter is now almost as great as the equatorial diameter. They think too, that, if the outside crust were no more than fifty or a hundred miles thick, it would be broken up and shattered continually. Still another objection is in the fact, that volcanoes, even those located near each other, do not seem to be *outlets* from the *same* fiery gulf below, as has formerly been argued. The irruption of one often has no effect on another situated quite near."

"But where *does* the lava come from?" asked Wade.

"It is thought to come from chemical action going on under ground; chiefly from the sea-water finding its way down amid the strata of different kinds of rock."

"I don't think you've made out much of a case," said Wash. "However, I am inclined to believe it; for it just fits into my new theory of the way the earth was formed. My theory doesn't require any 'central fire:' therefore I'm against all central fires. I'll stump any man to prove 'em."

The first red beam of the sun's upper limb, peeping over the far horizon, interrupted the daring speculator; and we turned to gaze on what I should be called tiresome for describing, simply because the subject is so

pen-worn: but it was still glorious to look upon. It seems to me that one sunrise like that should well repay all the ill luck of life. Can it be that the bright sun's vast fires shall pale, smoulder low, and go out in their ashes? But, long ere that cold day, the sons of men will have ceased to climb Katahdin.

We went down to camp.

"Ben havin' a cawkus up thar?" demanded Cluey. "Heerd ye a-argerfyin' away fer more'n an hour."

It is wonderful how far, and how distinctly, sound can be heard in that clear air.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Long Storm. — What Day is it ? — Fishing for Trout. — The Devil's Dinner-Pot.

AFTER breakfast the search began in earnest, and was continued, during that day and the next, about the north-east peak. It consisted simply of climbing from one crag to another, glancing into crevices and under overhanging rocks, with an eye for *lead.*

The next day it came on to rain heavily, with the wind from the north-east. The peak sheltered us somewhat from its fury. Cluey had foreseen the storm, and thatched our shelter so thickly that we kept dry. It continued raining during the following day and the day after. That was a dull time. Cluey's whole stock of stories, and all our resources of talk and joke, got dreadfully low. The storm came in showers: first it would pour for twenty minutes, then slacken up for half an hour. During these lulls we would make short gunning-excursions out into the dripping woods. On two occasions, Wash secured a gray squirrel; and Wade and I, each, shot a hare apiece. These Cluey dressed, and roasted quarter by quarter on sharp sticks before the fire after the Indian method. There is a sort of barbarous pleasure in running out to

secure a dainty bit of game, and then coming back to roast and eat it.

On the third day of the storm we had quite a dispute as to what *day it was.*

Wash thought it was Friday. Wade thought it was Saturday. The rest of us were far from positive. It is curious how hazy one's dates will get while off in the woods. Finally, after a great deal of dubious reference, it was settled to be Saturday, Aug. 15.

After that we agreed to mark each day with an especial entry in our note-books.

The next day being Sunday, we *kept it* very strictly; more especially since our last Sabbath on the "table-land" of Katahdin had not been so well kept. (The absence of fuel on the plateau had made it necessary to go on.)

Monday, Aug. 17. — A foggy, lowery morning. Wind south-east. Mosquitoes rabidly hungry: put their bills in deeper than usual.

"Trout 'ud bite well this morning," said Cluey while getting breakfast. "'Twouldn't be a bard plan to fish a leettle, nuther. Cubbard's gittin ruther bar. Wouldn't wonder ef this leettle bruke down in the valley below us war chuck full o' trout. Strikes me I wunst fished thar, — in a mighty curi's hole. B'l'eve that war the place."

So, acting on Cluey's suggestion, we concluded to take the forenoon to fish; and after breakfast, cutting some hazel-rods, and taking a bit of hare-meat for bait, we started down to the brook. It was a smallish stream, not more than ten or twelve feet wide. The course was very

rapid, however, and foamed over the rocks with a loud brawling. The volume of water, even at this season, was nearly or quite enough to turn a small mill. Wash and I jumped across, and fished up the left bank. Cluey and the other two boys kept on the right bank.

The trout bit. They were little fellows, though; the largest not being over half a pound weight. The mosquitoes bit too. When a fellow is coaxing a trout to bite, it is absolutely necessary to hold the pole tolerably quiescent, and keep his body in a state of becoming repose: especially must he avoid sudden movements. The mosquitoes, therefore, make the trout-fisher his favorite game. During those ecstatic moments, while a fine speckled-sided chap is coquetting with the bait, half a dozen big, famished mosquitoes will be silently tapping the backs of the fisher's hands. Cotton gloves are no protection; nor will kids keep them entirely aloof. Either they will seek out some pin-hole at the seams, or else boldly bore through at the thin spots; their exquisite scent of blood telling them just where to bite. One can muffle up his neck with his coat-collar and handkerchief, and, by dint of grimacing and facial jerks, manage to keep the little torments out of his face; but, under ordinary circumstances, he must reckon on getting his hands bitten profusely. Whiskey, applied externally, is said to keep them off; but, as we did not have it with us, I cannot speak from experience. Cluey used to smear his face with fat of any sort, — a remedy liable to much the same objections as his "smudge."

About a mile above where we had begun to fish, the brook comes down through a gorge with very steep,

ledgy sides; and presently, as we climbed along the bank from "hole" to "hole," a dull roar began to be heard from above. The noise of plunging waters grew louder as we got farther up the gorge; till at length we came to a place where the brook foamed out from under a high ledge, seething up from some hidden orifice beneath the rocks. In front of us the ledge rose abruptly twenty or twenty-five feet in height. The roaring noise seemed to come either through it or from under it. Wash I and were a little ahead of the party on the other side, and, reaching this rocky barrier, waited for them to come up.

"We've found the end of the brook!" shouted Wash as Cluey came climbing along the rocks on the other side.

"Not quite," said the old man. "Jest ye come over an' climb up round 'ere with me. I'll show ye suthin I call singler."

After some hard clambering we got up the side of the ravine, and followed the old man for some rods along the rocks on the top of the ledge. The roaring sounded louder as we proceeded; till, turning the corner of a big bowlder, Cluey stepped aside, and demanded, —

"Wot d'ye think o' that ar'?"

We were standing on the brink of a huge hole fifteen or twenty feet in diameter, and from thirty to thirty-five feet in depth. It was nearly circular. The sides were smooth, as if polished with sand-paper. On the upper side the brook came dashing down in a white cascade, and leaped with a vast, hollow plunge down to the bottom of the hole, where the water boiled and foamed. It

at once suggested the idea of a huge boiling pot. It would seem that the water made its way out through a hole at the bottom, and, passing under the ledge, re-appeared in the gorge below. There were marks on the rocks, as if, in times of freshets, the waters had overflown the hole, and fallen down the ledge on the outside; but now there was not more than seven or eight feet of water at the bottom.

"I've seen pot-holes afore," said Cluey. "Pot-holes is common anough all along our swift brukes; but this 'ere is 'bout the biggest an' most ragerler 'un I ever come acrost. An' I've named it tu," he continued, with a twinkle in his queer old eye.

"What do you call it?" asked Raed.

"Wal, thar's a story 'ow the fust hunter as ever come along 'ere saw an Injin dav'l standin' up on the rocks thar, an' fishin' in the pot-hole with a split pole. So farst as he'd ketch um, he'd draw um up an' chaw um down, bones an' all, at one mouthful. The hunter — his name war Flagg, I b'l'eve — staid 'ere behind this rock till he saw 'im ketch an' eat forty-seven; then he crep' off down the ledge, an' left the old chap fishin'. An' so," continued Cluey, with a shrug and a grin, "I've named it the *Dav'l's Dinner-pot.*"

We concurred with Cluey that it was a very appropriate, and withal a very significant name.

"If Pomoola had such good success fishing here, I see no reason why we should not," said Raed. "Let's try it anyway."

Tying several lines together, we dropped into the

"dinner-pot," and in a few minutes had caught out thirteen, one weighing nearly a pound.

Having now as many as we could conveniently carry, we went back to prepare a dinner of fried trout rolled in meal.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Caribou. — Awful Sick, but not unto Death. — The Deceitful Nymph among the Sumachs.

AUG. 20. — While we were up at the ledges this forenoon, Cluey went out hunting, and was lucky enough to shoot a fine doe-caribou on the shore of one of the little ponds below us. It was too heavy for him to bring into camp alone; yet he was so anxious for us to see it *whole*, that he had not cut it up, but left it where he had shot it.

In the afternoon we went down with him to see it and help bring it up.

It was of a pale fawn-color, and would have weighed two hundred and fifty pounds, we thought. Cluey pronounced it fat.

After we had looked it over, he had us help him hang it up to a birch; when he stripped off the skin, and cut it into quarters, which we carried up to the camp.

That night we had caribou-steaks fried in our flat kettle.

Wash pronounced it much like veal. Raed thought it much more like mutton.

Aug. 22. — This afternoon we moved our camp along the foot of the mountain-ridge about three miles to a

point near the base of a precipitous spur jutting out from the main ridge. This spur Raed intended to examine thoroughly, in view of its prominent position on the ridge, and also from the number and size of its exposed ledges and crags.

A cluster of second-growth oaks near the foot of the spur offered a tolerable situation for our camp; though this particular site was chosen more especially from the presence of a remarkably fine spring in a clump of sumach-shrubs a few rods below the oaks. It was sunset before we had our lug-pole up, fire built, and wood gathered.

"Some on ye git a bucket o' water," said Cluey; and I had taken one of the *cedars* and run down to the spring.

The water gushed up from a circular pool two or three feet deep, and as large round as the top of a hogshead, in volume sufficient to form quite a sizable rill. Indeed, the entire pool throbbed like a boiling pot, so profuse was the gush. But what struck me as more peculiar was the vast number of bubbles which rose from the bottom in perfect swarms, each pure, bright, white, and sparkling like diamonds as they wabbled upward from the black mud, and reached the surface with a simultaneous *put-put-put-put-put.* I thought it about the liveliest, friskiest spring I had ever got acquainted with. Its waters had a certain nerve, elasticity, and frolic, to them, that was quite enchanting. In short, it was a most bewitching spring; and I stood listening to the jabber of its merry bubbles, till Cluey shouted, —

"Whar'n thunder hev ye gone with that ar bucket?"

Hurriedly dipping up what I could carry, I went hastily back.

Cluey then made coffee, and the usual pudding to go with our roast meat.

After supper the old man was telling us of some very remarkable doings, which no one could ever account for, that occurred at a logging-camp where he was at work one winter when he was a young man, — something of that sort. I did not pay very good attention. I did not feel just right. My throat *would* keep swallowing of its own accord. I thought I was thirsty, and drank several times from the bucket; but that did not seem to satisfy me. My head began to ache. I felt afraid I was going to be sick, and presently awoke to the fact that I was sick — to my stomach. There was a fearful burning behind my eye-balls, which seemed to tighten in their sockets. I looked anxiously around to test them. Raed was watching me; and I noticed that he was very pale. Wade, who lay stretched on the ground, had turned over on his face. Cluey went on narrating. All at once Wash got up, made a bogus attempt to whistle a bar of "Capt. Jenks," then strolled off. A moment later we heard him "throwing up Jonah" at a great rate, though in a suppressed tone. He had probably intended to get farther off; but his distressed stomach had got the better of him while yet within six or eight rods. Cluey stopped — to listen.

"Show!" he exclaimed: "*pukin'*, ain't he?" Then, listening attentively while Wash's "ur-r-r-r-ps" came thick and fast, "That's pukin', sartin's ye live. Poor boy! Declar' for't! — why, I feel squawmish myself!"

I presume the old leather-stomach would have gone on with his yarn, and never found it out, if he had not been interrupted. By this time I had grown so sick, that I fairly shuddered all over. Raed was eying me.

"You are sick too," he said.

"Sicker than a horse!" I groaned.

"I pity you if you feel worse than I do," he replied. "I wonder how it is with Wade. Wade, look up here!"

Wade, thus adjured, turned up a very white face, and smiled a "ghastly smile."

"I think I'll go and find Wash," said he, getting up dizzily like a man with several extra bricks in his hat.

"I'm afraid I shall have to help you find him," said Raed.

"I know just where he is!" exclaimed I, staggering after them.

We all started to find Wash. Cluey sat *tasting hard* to keep down *the woodchuck*, and staring doubtfully after us.

"Show!" I heard him mutter. "Now, this ere's cur'us!"

Reader, with your merciful permission, I will draw a veil over the events of the next fifteen minutes. We found Wash.

Some half an hour afterwards, four very haggard youngsters might have been seen straggling giddily in from as many different directions. Cluey still sat tasting. But, as may readily be inferred, we were in no humor to enjoy a joke. Faint, and utterly exhausted, we

spread out the blankets with shaking hands, and threw ourselves down on them. For an hour or two my head throbbed dreadfully, till it throbbed itself to sleep.

When I awoke, it was day again. Cluey still sat on the stone where I had last seen him; but he had stopped tasting, and had in a chew of tobacco. I argued from this that he had probably not sat there all night. He was rolling the quid, and looking at us with much solicitude. Wash and Raed and Wade lay sprawled out, breathing heavily. It was really startling to see how shrunken and cadaverous their visages had become. It doesn't take long with some diseases to make a fellow look *corpsey*.

But they were now profoundly asleep. Cluey probably knew that sleep was the medicine we most needed; and, so long as we slept, he had forborne to waken us. But, seeing me rouse up, he at once shifted the quid, and, coming along with commiseration written in every lineament of his tough old countenance, reached down a fatherly hand to help me up. I got up, feeling decidedly *old*.

"I dunno — I dunno 'ow ter 'count for't!" exclaimed the old man, leading me along like a young colt to a seat on the stone near the fire; for the morning was a little damp. "I'm onsartin whuther ter git brakfust or not. This ere attackt" (Cluey meant to put it mild) "must 'a' ben fetched on by suthin you've eat or drunk. Must 'a' ben so; fer we's all attackted ter wunst. I didn't say much. I didn't hev it nothin' ter what you yonkers did; but I did feel pooty squawmish fer an hour or tu. An' I can't seem ter 'count for't," continued the old fel-

low, looking very puzzled indeed. "The pervizhuns is jest wot we ben eatin' for a week back. I don't think the meat's hurt. I smelt on't: smells sweet enough."

I sat hearing all this in a very hazy, headachy mood, with what seemed a double-sized, super-sucked, Torricellian vacuum in the place of a stomach. I looked round for the water-bucket; when suddenly it flashed into my mind about the friskiness of the spring, and the rather *flat* taste of the sparkling water. In an instant — so curiously does a person's internal condition influence his mind — I seemed to loathe it as if it had been some squaw-chewed *pulque*.

"It's the water!" I exclaimed.

"Wal, I shouldn't wonder much ef it war," said Cluey with the air of a man suddenly convinced of a thing.

"I *know* it!" said I, getting up. "Just you come down here and look at it!"

We went down through the sumachs to where the rollicking quack of a fountain still sparkled and effervesced. Cluey squatted to examine it, bending over the pool with a very sinister expression; and, as if mocking his scrutiny, the facetious spring cast up hideous, distorted caricatures of his own homely face. Paying no attention to these insults, however, the old man broke a sumach-stalk, and, thrusting it down deep into the bottom, proceeded to stir it up. A great discharge of indignant bubbles followed this rude treatment; and I immediately perceived a faint acrid odor. Volumes of black mud gushed up. The spring scowled darkly.

"It's sum sort o' pizen garse," remarked Cluey, still

prodding, "frum way down in the bowels of the 'arth. Narsty stuff! Glad I didn't make ony more coffee out on't. I du s'pose," continued he reflectively, "that, ef they 'ad this 'ere at Saratogy or Newput, 'twould be wuth a small forchewn. 'Ow tham city folks 'ud swizzle it down, an' swing thar canes over it, sip it, an' hang round it, jest like a parcel of horned critters will whar ye've turned down a lot uv salt pot-licker! Need suthin o' this sort ter reckterfy 'em, I s'pose."

Raed and Wade and Wash came trailing down where we were, looking very wretched, and, withal, a little sheepish. They gazed apathetically at the recusant spring; and the spring seemed instantly to clear itself to mimic their woe-begone faces, tossing off glittering bubbles, like so many jokes, at their demoralized condition. I told them our suspicions.

"A deceitful nymph!" said Wash in weakened accents, looking round as if for a place to sit down.

"Wal, wal, boys," said Cluey compassionately, "this ere's tu bad! But don't drink no more on't. Go right back ter the fire. I'll take the buckit an' go find anuther spring, an' make ye sum coffee jest as quick as I ken."

We walked back and sat down, gaping miserably. In ten minutes Cluey came in with water from a new spring about a hundred rods farther on. Coffee was soon made. It refreshed us considerably; and breakfast, about an hour later, made us quite ourselves again.

We did not climb the spur, however, that morning: Raed thought we had best take the day to recuperate. Toward night we moved camp along to the other spring,

and took up our temporary abode beneath a great white-pine, and in the lee of a large bowlder of mica-schist.

We had nothing further to do with the deceitful nymph among the sumachs.

As we had no means of testing the water analytically, I can give the reader no chemical statement regarding it, further than in its effect on our stomachs. I noticed that the bits of stick and twigs in the rill below were slightly coated with a fine white grit.

CHAPTER XV.

Washing-Day. — A Strange Noise. — Cluey takes us on a Moose-Hunt, and discloses a Novel Method of hunting the Animal.

AUG. 24. — This forenoon we had a general "washing" of shirts and socks. The latter had got very *holey*, and needed darning. My darning-needle now came into play; and, as we had no yarn, we ravelled down the tops a few inches, "where it could be spared as well as not," as Wash suggested, and so repaired the foot part.

Cluey was not troubled with socks; wore his moccasons on his bare feet like a true woodsman.

Washing and mending took us most of the day.

Just at night we went out after partridges; but saw none, and came back in the twilight. It had grown dusk. Suddenly, as we were tending the fire, getting out the kettle, and clipping off *sapin*, a rather singular noise — something like the low grumbling note of a bull when heard at a distance — came borne on the still air.

"Hark!" said Wash, rising to listen. "Was that thunder?"

We had all heard it.

"What was that noise, Cluey?" asked Wade of the

old man, who was busy preparing slices of meat for the coals.

"That ar? Why, that ar's a moose. They're just beginnin' ter beller. I heerd un larst night arter the rest on ye'd gone ter sleep. Hadn't heerd un afore this season. 'Bout time fer um to begin, though: allus do 'bout the fust o' September."

"Why do they bellow at that time?" asked Raed.

"Wal, that's ruther a hard question, I reckon," said Cluey, laying the slices on the coals. "This 'ere's the time they're gittin' out o' the swamps up on ter the high lands, an' pairin' up, ye know. The stags fight like all persessed 'bout this time."

"Fight?" queried Wade.

"Ye-us; fight with one 'nuther fer the *cows*."

"Cows? Is that what you call the female moose?" asked Raed.

"That's what we call um. The stags, ye see, fight over 'um to see which'll git the pootyist un, I s'pose," added the old fellow, looking covertly at us. "Oh! they're vary much like all other critters, these 'ere stags air. They're great on dooels; mighty high notions uv onor these 'ere stags hev; an' they're no cowards nuther. Oh! dooels is common anough, I tell ye," Cluey kept on, seeing that we were all on the broad grin at the rather suggestive parallel he was running. "Dooels is as common as ever they used to be at Wash'n'ton when ole Tippycanoe was presydint, an' the hot-bludded, cotton-headed, fire-an'-tow Calhown men war there in all their glory."

"Well, well," interrupted Wade, reddening at this

unexpected turn of the old man's loquacity. "You were telling us of moose, I believe. Do these fights ever result fatally? Do the stags ever kill each other?"

"Wal, full as often as is giner'ly the case in dooels, I reckon," replied Cluey naïvely. "I remamber wunst hearin' a tormented bellerin' one night when I was campin' up on the Telos Lake. The next mornin' I went out towards whar I'd heerd it, an' cum upon two moose-stags dead, with their horns locked together ser tight that I couldn't git um apart, pullin' with all my might. An' another time I cum upon one dead, with his in'ards all strung out, an' a prong of a horn broke off in his buddy. The ground all about was tore up an' trampled full o' huff-holes; an' the bushes — some on um big's my arm — all broke down an' twisted off. Tell ye, there'd ben an orful tussel thar!"

Raed had been making a pudding; and by this time the meat was steaked. We sat down to supper, — in the usual fashion. While we were eating, another of those low, ominous bellowings came to our ears.

"He's challengin'," said Cluey, — "challengin', or else threatenin' an' bullyin'. The pair are prob'bly together now; an' the stag's warnin' others off. He'll keep that up all night, an' p'r'aps fer a fotnit to cum."

"How far off should you judge them to be?" asked Wash.

"Wal, nigh on ter two mile. The sound'll travel a good ways this still night; an' then it's er tremendus noise too. Wait till ye hear it close to wunst, an' you'd say so, I guess."

"If they should hear us, or smell our smoke, would it frighten them off?" asked Raed.

"Wal, it might; an' then, agin, it mightn't. Moose act quar at this time o' year. A couple o' months ago, we'd had pooty hard work to git near un; but now the stags don't mind a man much. Ef we war to go out thar whar that un's bellerin', they might both carnter off; but like's not the stag'd take at us full tilt. Ef he happened to feel *ruxious*, he would. An' then, I tell ye, we'd hev ter scamper pooty tall ter git out o' his way. Half a dozen balls, fired hasty, might not stop him. An' then, gar! ef he war to git at un uv us with them big huffs an' broad horns, it would be all day with him. Only way'd be ter drop gun, an' up a tree quicker'n lightnin'.

"Raaly," continued the old man, scraping out the pudding-kettle, "a hunter's in more actooal danger from moose at this time o' year than from all the b'ars and catermouts that ever war. Why, I naver had a b'ar nor a catermout come straight at me, when I hadn't pervoked um to't, in the wureld; but I've 'ad a stag-moose do it time'n agin. I mind one time I's goin' through the woods not fur from the Ambejijis Lake,—goin' along onconsarned like (jest about this time o' year too); when all ter wunst un uv tham paskey critters rushed out uv a little clump o' alders with a snort an' a grunt an' a beller, an' come straight fer me. Ef it hadn't 'a' ben fer a big hemlock standin' thar that I dodged behind, he'd 'a' smashed my brain-pan sure's the gospil. As 'twas, he tuk the bark off'n both sides o' that thar tree, with me croochin' on t'other side."

"Do you mean to tell us that we are, and shall for the next month be, in constant danger of attack from moose?" asked Wash.

"I mean ter say as 'ow we're in more danger from moose than from ony other critter," said Cluey. "Oh, no! I don't s'pose a moose'll tuk at us 'ere in camp. But then it wouldn't be so vary oncommon ef one should. Fer ef a pair should come along by 'ere, near whar we're settin', like's not the stag'd make a plunge at us. He might. They're jest that savage sometimes."

While Cluey was talking, we several times heard the distant bellow. It rather resembled thunder, low and hoarse, behind some towering mountain-ridge, than any sound I ever heard from the throat of a living creature. Coming at intervals, it gave one the sensations of signal-cannon, or the fearful voice of the sea beneath some icy floe.

Cluey was smoking.

Presently, finishing his pipe, he carefully knocked out the ashes on a stone.

"Are ye vary tired, yonkers?" he asked.

We were not unusually fatigued.

"I s'pose we might *nab* that ar bellerer out thar," he continued. "I s'pose I could show ye a trick in moose-huntin' as per'aps ye naver heered on. 'Twouldn't be a bad plan, nuther. Meat would come pooty acceptable: we're runnin' a leetle short."

"Of course, of course!" exclaimed Raed. "We're in for it! Go ahead!"

"Wal, in the fust place, while I see ter the fire, you see ter the guns. Put in a fresh cartridge slug an'

three buck-shot inter the shot-gun: that's the way ter load a smooth-bore for moose."

"I believe," remarked Raed to Wade as we were about this duty, "that Cluey's idea of loading a gun corresponds with those of one of your distinguished generals during the late unpleasantness, — 'Load with three buck-shot and a ball.' Was'nt that his order to his men on a certain memorable battle-field?"

"Yes, sir," said Wade, a little stiffly; "and the result of that battle showed the wisdom of the order."

"Undoubtedly," replied Raed, laughing. "Three buck-shot and a ball would be pretty sure to hit something, I should say."

"All ready!" exclaimed Wash, capping the rifle.

"Not too farst!" said Cluey; then, turning to Wade, "Ye must tie up that dorg, — that ar ha'rless purp o' yourn. We don't want him nohow. Git a with, an' hitch 'im up: make 'im farst, so he won't git luse an' come sneakin' arter."

A with was cut from a yellow birch standing near, and Ding-bat was "made farst" to a sapling "hornbeam" a few yards from the fire. Seeing us about to depart, he set up a howl.

"Shet up!" growled Cluey, giving him a sly kick.

A dog without "har" violated all his sense of natural propriety.

"Now step light, an' foller close," advised the old man.

We filed off from the fire into the silent forest, taking the direction whence the bellowings had seemed to proceed.

It was a hazy evening. The early-rising moon was already half way up the heavens. Its dim light fell in through the thick tree-tops, faintly relieving the deep shadows. Here and there, a hare, startled at our approach, scudded away. Once a brood of Canada grouse started from under a bush, and scattered in all directions, peeping, quitting, and fluttering; and, as we walked rapidly forward, a larger animal, a bear perhaps, sprang out from behind an upturned root, and bounded hastily off through the cracking brush.

Coming presently to a large white birch, which stood like some arboreal ghost among its darker-clad brethren, Cluey stopped to strip off a *cut* of the bark, having first given the tree a long slash, and then turned up the edges with his knife.

"What are you peeling bark for now?" asked Wash.

"Oh! you'll see," chuckled the old man, who always enjoyed mystifying us a little.

We went on again, and gradually climbed the side of a broad, heavily-wooded ridge. For some minutes Cluey had been admonishing us to tread lightly. Frequently he would stop to listen. Once only, since starting, had the bellowing been repeated.

"We must be gittin' pooty close on um," muttered the old fellow. "Be ready to dodge behind a tree. The stag may make a rush at us ony 'minit now. 'Twouldn't be at all strairnge ef he should 'appen ter hear us.

"Can't be fur from 'ere," he continued as we came out on what seemed the summit of the ridge. "Jest

about the sort er place fer um tu. We'll try fer um 'ere, ony rate," rolling up the piece of bark into a trumpet shape. "You two fellers" (indicating Raed and myself) "clamber up inter this low beech. Do it stiller'n mice, now. Take the rifle with ye. Git placed up among the limbs so ye ken look down round an' fire when ye hear the moose. Me an' these two other younkers'll climb up inter anuther tree. But be keerful ye don't shute inter our tree," he turned to say, "even if ye shud think ye *heered* a moose up thar."

The branches of the beech were within reach from the ground. Catching hold, I swung up. Raed handed up the rifle, and climbed up after me. We then made our way up some fifteen or twenty feet, and perched as comfortably as possible where the broad-spreading branches joined the trunk. Cluey and the other boys were, meanwhile, climbing another beech two or three rods off. The growth on the crest of the ridge consisted mainly of these beeches, shrubby and low from their exposed situation. The moonlight fell in between them; for they stood sparsely here. From where we sat, we could see Wash and Wade perched eight or ten feet over Cluey's head, who was not up more than ten feet from the ground.

But just then a singular sound began to be heard, which at once attracted our attention.

"What, for pity sake, is that noise?" whispered Raed.

I had never heard any thing like it. It was a sort of cluck, and seemed to come from along the ridge to the westward. "Chock-chock-chock-chock-chock-chock-chock!" It kept being repeated at intervals of about a second.

"What is that, Cluey?" demanded Raed in a loud whisper.

"That ar's the stag, *choppin'*."

"Chopping? How does he do it?"

"With his teeth, — whackin' his jaws together.

"How far off is he?" asked Raed.

"Wal, nigh onter a quarter uv a mile, I reckon. Now be on the lookout: I'm agwine ter call 'im."

I saw Cluey raise the bark-roll to his mouth. Instantly the forest resounded to a hideous cry, almost an exact counterpart of the bellowing of the stag we had heard during the evening. Raed, who had not seen Cluey's movement, started so violently as to come near tumbling from his seat.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed. "Was that Cluey?"

We heard Wash and Wade laughing with suppressed shakes, and the old man uttering a warning "Sh!" to them.

Then we all listened intently; but there was no response. Only an owl far down in the valley beyond sent up his dismal bass-solo.

After about five minutes, Cluey again uttered his *challenge*. How he contrived (having, as I suppose, human lungs) with the aid of this simple bark-trumpet to create such a sound entirely passes my comprehension. We boys afterwards made many attempts, but could not even approximate it. It may fairly be termed the *moose-hunter's secret;* and, as such, might, I judge, make a very tolerable subject for a popular novelette.

Still there was no response from the moose. Raed and I began to exchange sceptical whispers. Cluey

waited five or ten minutes longer; then gave another call, — a very loud and long-drawn one. Scarcely had the echoes rebounded from the opposite ridge ere a terrific roar burst forth from the woods higher up, followed by a distant crashing sound.

"Git yer gun ready!" muttered Cluey excitedly. "He's comin'!"

Raed cocked the rifle; and, at the same instant, I heard a similar click from the other tree. Then came another bellow from Cluey's trumpet. It was fiercely answered, nearer than before. The air seemed fairly to shudder to the awful note: at least, it made me shudder; for there was something fear-inspiring in the sound. The crashing noise came louder, nearer. Cluey again roared defiance. It was replied to appallingly not ten rods off. I saw Cluey drop his trumpet, and grasp the shot-gun. There was a sudden smash of dead limbs; the small growth above swayed violently; the very ground jarred beneath the hoofs of the monster; and I heard a loud, hoarse panting, as with a snort, and another unearthly bellow of rage, there rushed out of the shadows a huge black animal with lofty antlers, which seemed borne on a level with our feet.

Crack went the rifle from our tree, with a blaze of flame out into the dim scene!

Bang went the shot-gun!

I caught a glimpse of the excited faces of Wash and Wade with the momentary flash.

The moose gave a loud grunt, and reared up; then, lowering its antlers, butted heavily against Cluey's tree, making a strange, crunching sound. We heard Cluey

rattling with the ramrod, and bethought ourselves to reload our own piece. I got out a fresh cartridge, which Raed put in. But, before we could get on a cap, Cluey fired again. The moose staggered back from the tree with a cry not much unlike that of a wounded steed. Raed aimed and fired. His shot was followed by another fearful shriek. The animal continued to back off, rearing, and slatting its antlers, making all the time the same crunching noise. Before we could again reload, it had got off several rods among the trees; but we could still hear it threshing about.

"Stay whar ye ar!" shouted Cluey to us. "Load yer rifle, but keep in yer tree!"

We could see him getting down with the gun. Dropping to the ground, he stole cautiously along, holding the gun ready to fire.

But, feeling a great desire to be in at the death, Raed and I began to get down. Ere we had dropped from the lower limbs, however, Cluey fired, and we paused to listen; and it was well we did. Cluey was running back, with the moose after him. The sight of its enemy had been sufficient to rouse it to this last effort.

"Shute 'im! shute 'im!" shouted the old man, running under our tree, and thence dodging to the other.

The stag rushed after him, knocking its ponderous antlers against the very branches on which we stood. Raed could not immediately fire. The infuriated creature plunged after Cluey, who was compelled to dodge to another tree; thence to another; from which he doubled back to ours again, the moose still close upon him. Raed now fired full at the animal's breast at not

more than three yards; Cluey, meanwhile, darting to cover of another tree-trunk. The moose seemed to reel back from the flash of the rifle, and stood motionless a moment. Then, like a staggering horse, it began to sway, and, falling on its haunches, rolled over with deep groans. Nevertheless, Cluey did not immediately approach, but still peered warily from behind his tree.

"Not tu farst!" said he. "That critter may git up agin."

The moose kicked heavily once or twice more.

"I reckon he's done fer," remarked the old man at length. "You can ventur' to git down."

We swung down, and approached where it lay. Cluey had taken off his cap, and was wiping his leathery brow.

"Give me quite a sweat, dodgin' thar, I declar' for't! That war a pooty good shot o' yourn, though, — that larst un. Gut a match, any on ye?" he continued, picking up his bark-trumpet. "Let's take a look at 'im."

A match was produced, and the bark lighted. We cautiously bent over the still-throbbing carcass. The eyes were already glazing. The blood, almost black by the light, gushed in quick jets from one of its wounds; while close beside it there was another bullet-hole, which seemed scarcely to have oozed a drop. There were two other wounds, bleeding slowly, — one in the neck, and the other back of the right shoulder.

"Yer see, now," remarked Cluey, "that it takes more'n one ball to stop un o' these old stags. Sposin' one man 'ad undertuk this job alone. Ten to one he'd gut wusted. He'd stud a rum chance on't. Sposin' ye

hadn't stud ready ter shute this un 'ere when he's arter me: he'd a *roused* me about frum tree ter tree, no knowin' how long; an' ef I'd 'a' 'appened ter trip in the brush, or stumble, he'd 'a' sune trod the life outen my carkis. Talk 'bout catermout-huntin' or lion-huntin' or tiger-huntin': I tell ye thar's more real actooal resk in a moose-hunt than in all yer over-the-water tiger-scrapes yer hear ser much uv."

"How much should you judge this stag would have weighed alive?" asked Wash.

"Wal, somewhar frum thirteen ter fifteen hunderd. Carrid his head ten or 'leven feet frum the ground. Look at that ar fore-laig tu! Thar's a long laig fer ye! — five foot ef it's an inch. Tell ye, yonkers, yer don't find much bigger game'n that ar chap onywhars, 'ceptin' elefunts an' rinoserosis, an' sech over-the-water critters."

Cluey was evidently not a little proud of the noble game once so abundant in our native State, but which now grows lamentably scarce.

We built a fire; and Cluey proceeded to strip off the hide from the haunch and sirloin, preparatory to cutting out the choicest portions of the meat.

"Is the moose really a deer?" Wade asked as we lay on the ground watching Cluey.

He directed the question to the *naturalist.*

"More properly an elk," replied Wash; "though it is frequently called the moose-deer. Deer and moose both belong to the same great order of animals, of course; but, when it comes down to species, the moose should be ranked with the elk of Europe and the famous

fossil elk found in Ireland. The larger animals of the order are called elks; the smaller, deer."

"Wish we could save tham antlers," said Cluey as he was cutting off the muffle (the pendent upper lip, which is much larger in the moose than in the horse: hunters consider it a very choice bit). "That's a splanded set as ever I see."

But, as they would certainly have weighed sixty or seventy pounds, none of us cared to undertake their carriage, especially in addition to the load of meat Cluey had prepared. The old man had carved so greedily, that we each of us had from thirty-five to fifty pounds to tug back to camp.

Tired enough we were, too, when Ding-bat's barks, and a faint glimmer of coals shining through the bushes, announced our approach to the fire, which we had nearly missed in the darkness. It was past one o'clock. We threw ourselves on the *sapin*, and fell asleep almost instantly.

Cluey was broiling steaks when I awoke. To lie there half awake, with the delicious odor of the frying meat in one's nose, was a luxury not to be described adequately. One by one, the other boys woke; and we got up to breakfast. Oh! one needs to get off into the wilderness to relish a breakfast of moose-steaks, coffee, and corn-cake.

After putting up a lunch, we started off to examine the ledges, leaving Cluey to cure the meat, which, as he afterwards told us, he did by smoking it over a cedar smudge.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Marten. — A Fine View. — The Logger-Hut on the Pond-Shore. — Old Cluey's Smelling-Bottle. — Fleas. — A *Wooden* Chimney. — "Stand from under!" — A Close Shave. — The Disappearance of the Shot-Gun. — Breaking of "the Oil-Jug." — "Coarks air allus Handy."

AUG. 25. — To-day we shot a marten in a spruce-thicket near the summit of the range. It was a beautiful little creature, about the size of a small cat, but slimmer, and much more delicate. Its fur resembles that of a young fox, — a dusky, pale yellow. It had been chasing a red squirrel about the thicket so eagerly, that it had not noticed our approach.

Aug. 26. — The forenoon was pleasant and bright. The view to the north-west, as we climbed toward the summit of the ridge, was beautiful, grand, unrivalled. Chesuncook, Telos, Matagamon, Cancomgomac, — all in sight, shining like silver plates; and, exactly north-west by the compass, the whole Allaguash chain of lakes, — Chamberlain, Woolagasquigwam, Pomgokwahem, Allaguash, — names weird with savage legends, — stretching off in a glass-bright zone over the horizon toward Quebec. A wilderness of Nature's own planting. Almost at our feet, in the heavy growth skirting a small pond, Wash espied — something; and, on examining it with the glass, it took the shape of a logger's

hut. Even here the keen-eyed Penobscot lumber-man had penetrated; and these long taper trunks of huge spruce and symmetrical pine are floated off with the spring freshets to bear the surge of canvas in many a fast-sailing clipper clearing for Liverpool, or lift the weight of ledges in groaning derricks.

Toward noon, however, the panorama paled; the sunlight lost its zeal. A murky haze, high up in the sky, thickened and darkened, till the heavens looked wet.

"We're going to have a storm," said Wash as we sat eating our lunch.

"Another three-days' soaker, I'll bet!" exclaimed Wade. "Sky looks just as it did before that other came on a fortnight ago."

"We must get down to camp earlier to-night," said Raed, "to make a shelter, and prepare for it."

"We might go to that logger's camp," suggested Wash.

"So we could!" exclaimed Wade.

"Perhaps," said Raed. "We will see what Cluey says."

About three o'clock we went down to our camping-place. The sky was now thoroughly overcast and lowering. Loons, with their wild, troubled note, were flying in twos and threes from the smaller ponds above off toward the broad sheet of Chesuncook. Crows were *hawing* along the range, and wheeling about a ledgy peak high over our camp. Tree-toads called to each other from bush to bush. Mosquitoes came out, and hummed with wonderful distinctness. Cluey, too, had

"felt it in his bones," as he used to say, and was busy building a shed of bark and hemlock, stopping momentarily to "brash a skeeter." Raed told him of the shanty we had discovered down on the pond-shore, and asked if we had not better move our camp there during the coming storm.

"Wal," said the old man, "if the ruff's 'tight, 'twouldn't be a bard plan, sartin."

As there were no means of finding out whether the roof was tight or not save by making an examination, we packed up, and set off.

It was farther down to the pond than we expected; in fact, it could not have been less than three or four miles. But we came out on the shore at last, and made our way along to the shanty about a quarter of a mile from where we struck the water. It was a rough log structure, eighteen feet by twenty, or thereabouts, with a stone fire-place, and a very novel chimney; it being nothing less than a hollow log set up endwise on the top of the fire-place. How the occupants had ever been able to *run* such a chimney without its taking fire was not so clear; at least, we found considerable difficulty in doing so. Perhaps the original tenants had used it while it was green. The roof was thatched with hemlock-boughs, now pretty well dried up and "shed off;" but beneath the thatch there were shingles of hemlock-bark in broad cuts, overlapping each other. These had been held in place, and prevented from curling up, by laying on large flat stones from the pond-shore.

"Gass it'll tarn water," said Cluey, inspecting it with

an experienced eye. "May drop through a leettle in spots; but that's no great conserquance. We'll try it. Now let's spunk round an' git in a lort o' wood afore the rain comes on."

There were plenty of chips, limbs, and other dry stuff, lying about. In ten or fifteen minutes we had in enough to last a week. For water we had only to go to the pond. Raed and I kindled a fire, while Cluey and the other boys went to cut *sapin* for bedding.

By dusk we had made ourselves quite comfortable, and sat down to a supper of fried meat and hasty-pudding, with sugar and coffee. But our chimney kept us in a state of continual jeopardy. The lower end persisted in taking fire every few minutes, requiring a constant use of the gill dipper and water-bucket to ward off a general conflagration. In my humble opinion, the man who puts up a wooden chimney does a very foolish thing. In one of these "fire-alarms," Wash, while turning water on the back-side, discovered a sort of cranny, or cupboard, between the back of the fire-place and the wall of the hut. It was partially covered over, and barricaded with chunks of wood. On removing these, however, Wash handed out, one after the other, an old spider, a tin baker of the old style, a rusty kettle, a battered coffee-pot, several pewter spoons, a broken butcher-knife, and, finally, a huge stone jug, holding at least four gallons. Cluey had sat watching the taking-out of the articles rather indifferently; but, at the sight of the jug, his countenance suddenly brightened. He leaned forward from the log, on which he sat smoking, with a wistful look that was not to be mistaken. In fact, the old jug,

like a toper's nose, had *whiskey* standing out all over it.

"Oil-jug, I guess," said Raed, with a wink to the rest of us.

"That's plain enough," replied Wash, shaking it.

But no delicious *swish-swash* resounded from within. Cluey's countenance fell. Wash set down the jug to rummage farther. There was nothing more, however. Just then, the chimney took fire again. While we were putting it out, I saw Cluey sidle along on the log to where the jug sat, and presently heard a hollow *plung*, which followed the removal of the big cork. The fire had got considerable hold; and Wash threw on water so plentifully, that, in extinguishing the chimney, he entirely put out the fire below; and, as we had no candle, we were left in great darkness. It was some minutes before another blaze could be coaxed. Several times, while we were breaking up splinters and scraping matches, I had seemed to hear profound sniffs, which echoed from the bottom of the jug, and, taking advantage of the first gleam of light, glanced curiously toward it, just in time to see Cluey's nose take a lingering leave of the jug-nozzle. Before the fire had fairly blazed, however, he had replaced the cork dexterous as a *juggler*, and sidled back to his former position. Nothing was said. If the other fellows had noticed it, they kept quiet. After what Raed had said at the time we found the body in the West Branch (for he had intimated that liquor might have had something to do with it), the old man had always expressed himself in favor of strict temperance in the matter of intoxicants: indeed, I do

not think he mistrusted that we suspected him of any undue fondness for the bottle.

The loons from out on the pond *soloed* us to sleep on our bed of boughs. But, before midnight, we were all broad awake, fighting fleas. The old hut proved fairly alive with them. I had noticed a sharp bite just ere going to sleep, but supposed it to be a wood-tick. They had not immediately commenced operations: the green boughs had perhaps kept them down for a while. I was awakened by a general stir and conflict, and found Wash and Wade *cracking* away right and left. Cluey was still asleep: so was Raed; though he waked a moment later. Ding-bat was grabbing and *champing*, first at one side of his back, then on the other. The sharp-biting little vermin were jumping about, hungry as Turks at the close of the Ramadan. The shanty would seem to have been empty for some years. They had had ample time to get up an appetite. And here I would venture to give a word of caution to any party of tourists who may stray into these regions: Beware of these old loggers' huts: they are almost always *fleay*.

Cluey presently roused up, growled a little, and *cracked* once or twice in a highly scientific manner; but he soon rolled over and fell asleep again. I do not think the fleas bit him, save occasionally from mistake; but they *went for* us with a relish. After making as good a fight as possible for half an hour, Wade got up and built a fire. There was some queer talk, I remember, as we sat there on the boughs, watching with upraised palms.

It had begun to rain; and, as Cluey had predicted, the

water dripped through the roof in several places. One of these began directly over the old man's upturned countenance, patting leisurely into his face for some minutes ere he deemed it of sufficient consequence to rouse up and turn over. Altogether, we passed a wretched night; for it was not till toward daybreak that we grew recklessly weary enough to go to sleep and "let 'em bite."

Cluey was busily getting breakfast when I finally woke, with the dull light of a rainy morning falling in at the open door. He had a good fire built, with the meat frying, coffee boiling, and the gill dipper set ready to put out the *chimney*. The great stone jug still sat by the log. Cluey had been turning the meat. Finishing this necessary operation, he glanced furtively toward where we lay. Wash and Raed and Wade were still snoring. I perfidiously closed my eyes; till, hearing the same cavernous *plung*, I ventured to unclose them a crack. Cluey was bending affectionately over the jug, holding the big cork in one hand, and sniffing lovingly, his hairy old nostril well down into the great nose. I suppose it smelled good. He continued sniffing deeply for some seconds; till, chancing to glance around, and detecting my amused eye full upon him, he jumped up, looking very silly.

"Curi's wot this 'ere's 'ad in't," he stammered. "B'ar's-ile, I reckon," hastily replacing the cork, and turning to shake the coffee-pot.

This struck me as a rather good thing from the old man: so after breakfast, taking advantage of his being out, I told the boys of it.

"CURI'S WOT THIS 'ERE'S 'AD IN'T."

"Keep it up!" exclaimed Wash. "Make him think *we think* it's an oil-jug. See what he will do."

And ever after that — during the three rainy days that succeeded — we always spoke of it as the "oil-jug;" neither by word nor wink allowing a suspicion to arise with Cluey that we mistrusted his secret. In fact, keeping up this little deception, and watching the old fellow at his stolen sniffs when he thought our backs were turned, coupled with the pleasing employment of fighting fleas, and putting out the chimney every few hours, was about all the "excitement" we had from the 26th to the 29th. A "rainy spell" in town is dreary; but ten times drearier is a rainy spell in the woods.

We were glad to see the sunlight once more sparkling on the little wooded pond; and, during the afternoon of the 29th, prepared to retrace our steps to our former camping-place, preferring to endure out-door dampness to again braving the fleas. We had each taken up our parts of the luggage, and were standing in front of the shanty, waiting for Cluey. But somehow it seemed to take the old man a good while to adjust his pack. It then occurred to us that he might possibly wish to take a parting sniff at the old jug. With a wink to the rest of us, Raed started off; and we followed leisurely, looking back from time to time. Presently Cluey came out with his pack of meal and meat on his bended shoulders, and (we could scarcely refrain from shouting) the old stone jug in his hand. Whether he had meant to take the jug away with him all along, or had at the very last moment found it impossible to separate from it, I am wholly unable to guess.

Turning to conceal our glee, we went on for some minutes ere allowing him to come up; which, indeed, he seemed in no great hurry to do. Presently, however, Raed looked around, and, as if greatly astonished, exclaimed, —

"Hollo, Cluey! what in the world are you going to do with that old oil-jug?"

"I've ben a-thinkin'," said Cluey, and now doing his very poor best to play the arch hypocrite, — "I've ben a thinkin' as 'ow I'd best take it along with us to keep our water in. Best thing in the world to keep water in, these ere stun jugs. Keeps it ser cool! Ye know, it will get warm in the buckit, — dirt gets in't; tastes narsty, — sickish. I ken rense the ile out o' this ere, an' so keep our water in't, — all stopped up, an' clean as er whistle."

It would have been a sin not to accept so entirely reasonable an explanation.

"A good idea!" said Wash.

"Just the thing!" exclaimed Wade.

"The only objection to it is, the jug isn't ours," said Raed.

"Wal," replied the old man, closing brazenly up now, "I've considered that ere thing: that's what I's stopping to do. I considered it like this: To be sure, this 'ere jug ain't ourn; but, as it ain't likely it ever'll be called fer at that ar desurted shanty, I've made bold ter take it along."

This was not very conclusive. We did not deem the matter of sufficient consequence, however, to object.

Getting back to our old camp, we got supper, and put

up a half-shelter of boughs; for the evening was rather damp and chilly. A flock of Canada partridges came whirring up from the hollow, startled by some prowling raccoon or fox. Two of them alighted in the top of a birch five or six rods up the side of the ridge; and Wash was so fortunate as to bring them both down at one shot. Last-spring chicks they were, but plump, and nearly full-grown. Their plumage was considerably darker than that of our common birch partridges. Cluey dressed them, and put them in the kettle to parboil for next day.

If ever the old man made a perfectly *bizarre* picture, it was while sitting on a log that evening, smoking, with the great jug standing about a yard beyond him.

"Have you rinsed the oil out of the old jug yet?" Raed asked.

"I declar' for't," exclaimed Cluey, "ef that ar' didn't slip my mind! Ben ser bizzy all the evenin', I naver thought on't. Gass I'll go right an' du it now;" taking out his pipe, and starting down toward the spring with the jug.

He was gone some time; but by and by came back, bringing the jug, — rinsed and full of water, it was to be supposed. Wade, if none of the rest of us, had his doubts, however; and the next morning, while Cluey was out gathering firewood, he took the opportunity to uncork it.

"Not a drop of water in it," he whispered to me. "Smells strong enough of whiskey to knock you down! He never rinsed it! Couldn't hire him to!"

Wash was for pestering the old man a little about

it; but Raed thought the best way would be to never take any further notice of the jug, but let him enjoy it all he could. It would only hurt his feelings, he argued, and perhaps injure his good-will toward us.

Aug. 30. — This evening we moved camp about a mile along the range towards the west, halting just at dusk in a growth of aspen, at the foot of a crag nearly or quite a hundred feet in height. There had seemingly been an avalanche or slide down the ridge above this precipice; for a vast rick of stones, earth, and dead, dry spruces torn out by the roots, had slid over the crag like snow from the eaves of a house, and lay piled in a heap at the bottom. Quantities, too, of the branches, and whole trees even, were lodged or clinging among the rocks high up toward the top.

We built our camp-fire of the dry stuff at the bottom, and Cluey prepared supper as usual. While we were eating, the fire caught among the rick of spruces, and, running along the rocks, was soon blazing at a great rate. We made no effort to put it out. It seemed of no great consequence; not so much as the supper, at least. Presently the blaze caught up into some of the rubbish among the rocks along the face of the crag; and this, burning, carried the fire up higher, till, in less than half an hour, the whole side of the precipice was ablaze. We were glad to step back among the aspen to avoid the heat and cinders that kept falling down. It burned for nearly an hour; then gradually went out. We went back, and, collecting more wood, rekindled our fire for the night. Raed then took the hatchet, and started off to cut *sapin* boughs. He soon came in with a big armful.

"Just come out here with me, fellows," he said. "See what you think of this."

We followed him back to the clump of hemlocks where he had been hacking.

"There!" said he, turning to face the crag: "what do you make of that?"

Beyond the top of the crag, a pale, faint belt of light glimmered against the darkened sky. It looked, for all the world, like daybreak.

"It's the moon rising," said Wash.

"No; can't be," said Cluey, who always kept posted on the moon.

"Then it must be fire," remarked Wade. "Possible that is caused by our fire?"

"That's what I think," said Raed. "I think that our fire here has run up beyond the top of the crag, and is extending off toward the summit of the ridge. The whole track of the slide above the crag is probably strewn with dry spruces; and that's what's burning, and shining up on the sky."

"Duz luke like that," said Cluey.

"Hope it won't kindle a great fire," remarked Wash.

"I am not sure we ought not to make an effort to stop it," said Raed.

"It may burn over the top o' the mountain," replied Cluey; "but I don't think as 'ow it'll sprad inter the timber-land much. No great matter ef it do burn up tham black spruces an' fars. Wuthlis stuff, the whole on't."

Adopting Cluey's view, we sprigged off more hemlock, and went back. There were no mosquitoes that night.

We spread out our blankets on the hemlock, and lay down in peace. I had nearly gone to sleep, when a low jarring noise as of distant thunder aroused me. It seemed to come from the ground beneath my ear. In a moment it was followed by another heavy earth-bump. This time I distinctly felt the earth tremble.

"What was that?" demanded Wade, starting up a little.

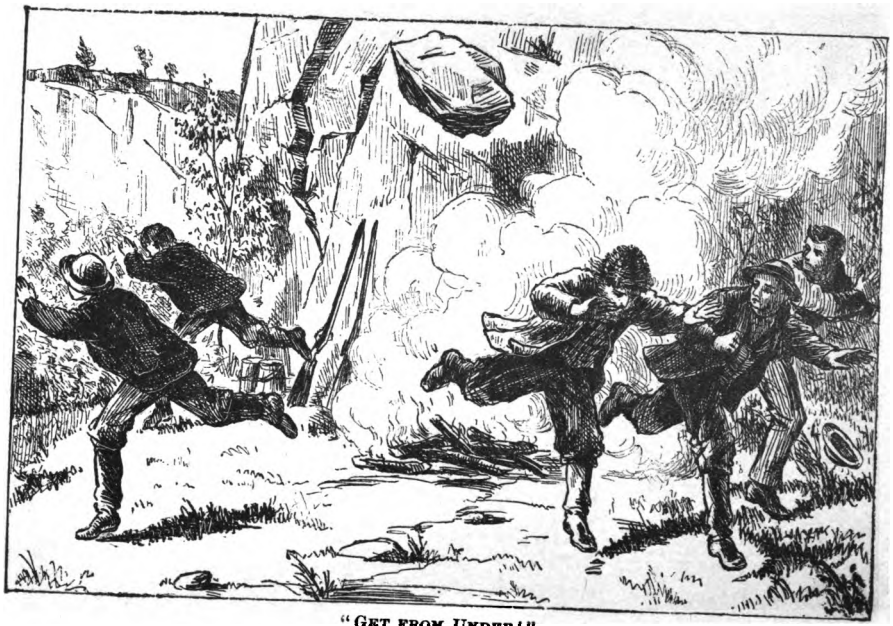
Ere the words were out, a long, rumbling sound began, interrupted by bursts of thunder, like the sudden explosion of heavy blasts of powder. We all bounded to our feet. The noise clearly came from the crag. I thought it was bursting asunder.

"It's an earthquake!" exclaimed Wash.

The earth was indeed *quaking;* but the strange, grinding, bumping noise seemed to come from over the brow of the precipice. It came nearer, louder. A dozen thunder-peals all jangling at once could scarcely have made a greater racket. The very air seemed to rumble and roar. We stood still, not knowing what to do, nor where to betake ourselves.

"Look out!" shouted Raed suddenly. "Jump! Get from under!"

I had an indistinct glimpse of something huge, roaring, crashing, plunging down from the lofty brow of the crag. Cluey uttered a tremendous whoop. We all sprang away like cats; but, ere we had got a rod, a heavy thud into the earth sounded from behind. The ground shook. A shower of dirt and stones flew against us. One big sod sent Wash sprawling forward on his hands and knees. But the noise had ceased. We turned to see what had happened.



"GET FROM UNDER!"

Where our camp-fire had been there was now a great fragment of rock as large — I was about to say — as an average-sized village lawyer's office. Without exaggeration, I think it would have weighed a hundred tons.

"Loddy mighty!" cried Cluey. "Show!"

"By Jude!" exclaimed Wash, picking himself up, and rubbing his knees, with a casual glance round to his dirty back, "that's a sockdolager! Should like to know what that big soft thing was that hit me in the back," feeling carefully round.

"You need to be mighty thankful it was *soft!*" exclaimed Raed. "It's more than ordinary luck that we weren't mashed, the whole of us."

"That ar's so, sartin!" said Cluey. "Whar, fer massy sake, did that ar come frum?"

"That's one of your big meteors, Wash!" cried Wade. "Struck on the mountain, and rolled down."

"Oh, hush! Here, brush my back. I'm all dirt."

"Wal," said Cluey, recovering gradually from his amazement, "our fire's under that ar big stun."

"I'm afraid that is not the only thing that is under it," said Raed. "Where are the buckets?"

"Here's one of them rolling round out here," replied Wade.

"Here's one of the blankets, the one we had over us when we jumped up," said I.

"But the guns!" exclaimed Wash. "Where are they?"

"Let's build a fire first," said Raed, "so we can see; then look for the things."

Cluey gathered some loose stuff, and, striking a match,

CHAPTER XVII.

Wade goes on a "'Coon-Hunt." — A Cry for Help. — A Rush to the Rescue. — "Is that You, Fellows?" — "A Big Bull-Moose." — "Hit him in the Brisket!"

SEPT. 3. — Wade had an adventure this evening; a rather dangerous one, he thought.

While we were at supper, a raccoon passed along the hollow below our camp, uttering, from minute to minute, its lonely quavering cry. Next to the clear alto-call of the loon, the cry of a raccoon is one of the most impressive of forest-sounds, especially when heard at evening in the darkening woodland.

Wade had never seen a raccoon, though we had heard them a dozen times since entering the wilderness. The peculiar note had been exciting his curiosity, I presume; for, after listening a few moments, he asked Cluey whether he supposed he could get sight of it by going down there.

"Wal," said Cluey, "yer might p'r'aps; but yer haf ter be pooty sly 'bout it. Cunnin' critters; a'most as shy as a fox. Difficulter than a fox ter ketch. Can't hiper off ser farst; but then they kin climb, an' git inter holler trees, which a fox can't du."

Wade took up the shot-gun, and started quietly off.

Cluey watched him till he had gone out of sight among the firs; then said, —

"Gone ter hunt that ar 'cune, sure's ye live. Wal, he'll larn a thing or two 'bout 'cunes ef he goes till he ketches 'im."

Raed had found a very fine specimen of iron pyrites; also a beautiful crystal of purple quartz (amethyst), and some chunks of cream-white felspar. He was showing them to Wash and myself. I remember we talked some time, planning to make a mineralogical collection of specimens which we might find during future trips. We decided to make a company concern of it; all of us to deposit, or send to some central place for us, as at Boston. If we carried out our present plans of exploration and travel, we thought we might, in time, make a collection of specimens worthy of a place in some university when we were done with it. I say, *we thought so.* The idea was really Raed's; though, after he had once spoken of it, Wash and I concurred with him, and pledged ourselves to it.

"It would be a good work," Raed added; "something to remember us by after we've gone back into the earth. It's a shame to live in the world fifty or sixty years, and die without leaving something behind us to tell the people of the next century of our dead selves. We never shall see the great improvements, the grand times, and the highly-cultured people, of the year 2000 A.D., of course. But perhaps the next best thing would be to leave some good honest work like this collection, — something to help the world on, if ever so little. Such a thing will be prized more then than now, probably; and the ones who labored

to make it will be honorably remembered and spoken of. That will be something, even if a fellow is dead, and his life gone to warm up other dust. And, if we run our *yacht* along as many coasts as I hope to, there's nothing to hinder our making a respectable collection, — a world-wide one."

"Of course, if we undertake it, we must make a good one," said Wash. "I despise these mediocre things."

"That's the idea!" exclaimed Raed. "The best, or none at all."

We were so engaged discussing this project, that we nearly forgot Wade, till Cluey interrupted us with, —

"Seems ter me that yonker's gone a plaguy long spell. I'gin ter be worrid 'bout 'im. 'Fraid he's gut lost or suthin."

"Wade *is* gone, isn't he?" exclaimed Raed. "Went after that 'coon, didn't he?"

"Ben gone as much as 'alf an hour," said Cluey. "I didn't much like the idee of his goin'; but I didn't s'pose he'd be gone five minutes."

Twilight had just begun when he started; but now it was getting quite dark. The fire shone brightly.

"Oh! I guess he is all right," said Wash. "He will be back shortly."

"He ought not to stay away long," remarked Raed. "There's always some danger after nightfall."

"Wal, thar is now," said Cluey. "I don't 'prove er gittin' fur off frum the fire arter dark up round 'ere, an' at this time o' year."

"Here, Ding-bat!" cried Raed.

The Chinaman lay asleep on the leaves near the fire: he had not gone with Wade.

"Here, you lazy fellow! Go find your master!"

The dog yawned, and got up, whining.

"See here, sir!" cried Raed, pointing off in the direction Wade had taken, and then to the ground. "See here! Now go find him!"

Ding-bat looked round, then sniffed intelligently, and trotted off.

"Wal, he does know suthin," said Cluey, who had always been a little sceptical on that point.

"He will find him," Wash was saying; when suddenly we heard the report of the shot-gun.

"There he is!" exclaimed Raed. "Fired at the raccoon, probably."

"Some ways off," muttered Cluey. "That ar war over on the side-hill yender; t'other side the holler; 'alf, or three quarters uv a mile."

"He will be here soon," said Wash.

Five minutes passed; perhaps more. All at once Dingbat came racing back, his tongue looking as if he had had a hard run. We supposed that Wade was only a few steps behind, and were expecting every moment to see him come through the firs; when a distant hollo came faintly from the forest.

"Hark! Wasn't that Wade?" exclaimed I.

"It war him!" cried Cluey, jumping up excitedly. "He's got lost or suthin! That ar dorg," shaking his fist at the cringing Chinaman, "naver found 'im. Didn't s'pose he knew anough. Fire the rifle! The yonker's lost."

Wash seized the rifle, and discharged it over his head.

Another faint hollo responded to the report.

"Load her up, an' fire agin!" shouted Cluey.

I got out the cartridges; but, before Wash could put in one, there came another hollo.

Wash immediately fired a second shot; and, a moment later, there was another far-borne shout, several together, as if a number of words were called. Cluey had stood with his hand to his ear to catch the sound.

"He says '*Help!*'" exclaimed he. "He's more'n lost! Suthin's afoul uv 'im! Hark!"

Again the distant cry came wafted on the still, damp air.

It was help!

"Help, help, help!"

"Load up that rifle quicker'n lightnin'!" yelled the old man, tearing round like a fettered gorilla.

"Hollo, hollo, hollo!" he shouted with a voice like a veteran pilot. "Climb — a — tree-e-e-e! We're cumin'!

"Here," he continued to us, "grab that hatchet! Down with that little maple! Off with er couple o' good clubs! That's the talk! Gi'me that rifle, Wash! Keep the hatchet, Kit! Grab a club apiece, you Wash and Raed! Out'er my way, ye little harless, good-fer-nothin' satun!" stumbling over Ding-bat, and giving him a kick that sent poor Chinaman end over end.

"Come on!" plunging away among the firs.

We followed him as fast as we could run.

"Help, help!" came wafted to our ears as we ran on.

Down into the hollow we sped, stumbling over logs, and tripping amid the thick ground-hemlock. Reaching the brook, we jumped across, and went smashing

through the dead alders on the other bank, and hurrying on up the side of the opposite ridge; Cluey several rods ahead, in spite of our utmost efforts. Presently a much nearer shout from Wade told us we were getting in his vicinity. Cluey stopped so short, that we nearly ran over him in the dusk.

"Hold on!" he whispered. "We'd better find out what's the trouble before we go ony nearer. You call ter him, Wash. Du it as shrill an' kinder bird-like as yo ken."

"Wade!" sang out Wash as *bird-like* as he could.

"I say, Wade!"

"Hollo! is that you, fellows?" replied Wade, seemingly about twenty rods off.

"Yes," chirruped Wash. "What's the matter, anyway? What's got you?"

"A big bull-moose!" shouted Wade. "I'm treed. Be careful, fellows! He's awful rantankerous! Is Cluey there?"

"Jest as I 'xspected!" chuckled the old man. "But, ef he's up a tree, he's all right. We're the ones as has gut ter look out! Tell 'im I'm 'ere, an' ter keep whar he is, an' ter mad the moose all he ken. Tell 'im ter switch at 'im with er stick, so he needn't mind us."

"Yes; Cluey's here," carolled Wash. "He says you must keep the moose's attention all you can. Strike down at him with a switch. Don't let him notice us. We'll creep up and shoot him."

"All right!" shouted Wade. "But, if you are going to shoot him, shoot low. I ain't up more'n twelve or

fifteen feet. Aim low, now. Hit him in the brisket: there's where his heart is."

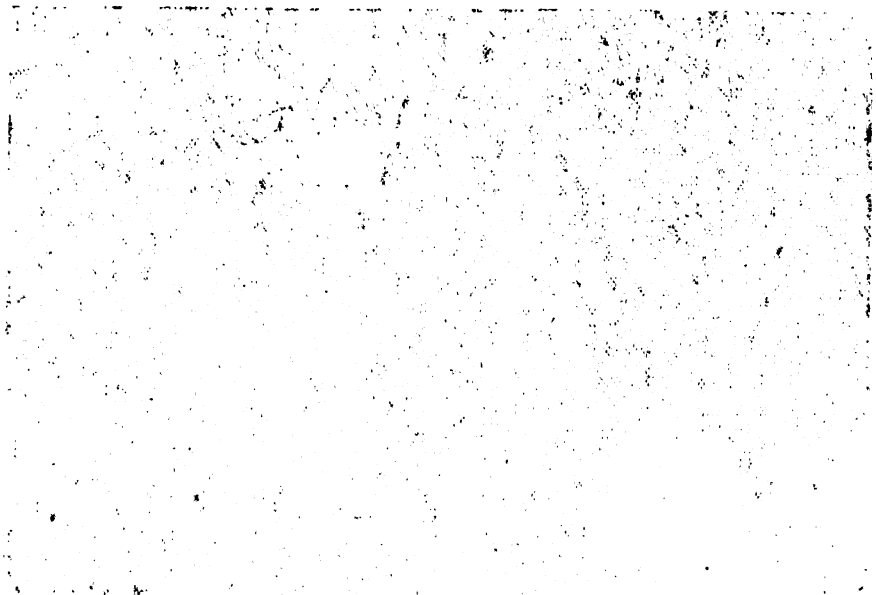
We crept along as still as possible, Cluey in advance. The moon (rising later to-night) was just beginning to peep up, lightening the forest considerably. On getting within ten or a dozen rods, we could hear Wade *talking to him.*

"Ah, aha, you old bruiser! You old wall-eyed abolitionist! Don't ye wish ye *could,* now?—don't ye wish ye *could?* Oh, grit your old teeth; grind your old stubs, now; slat your horns; grunt, push, now! You'll have hard work to push this tree over. Stamp! No, ye don't: ye can't reach! Have a segaw? Take *that* on your old long snout, and *that,* and *that,* and *that!* If I just had that gun up here, I never would have hollered murder for you. Wiggle your old stub tail; wiggle!"

Wade then got up a variation by barking at him like a dog; then he yawled and spit as we had heard "Beelly" do on a former occasion. The moose, too, could now plainly be heard, stamping, grinding its tushes, and butting heavily against something, which we presumed to be the trunk of the tree. Keeping in a clump of shrubby hemlocks which grew along the side of the ridge, we worked carefully up to within six or seven rods.

"Now the rest on ye climb up inter ony o' these 'ere 'emlocks!" whispered Cluey. "Climb up jest high enough to be out o' reach uv 'im ef he shud make a dive this way. I'll try ter git a shot at 'im."

We three boys drew ourselves as quietly as possible up into one of the thick evergreens, one after the other.



"HIT HIM IN THE BRISKET!"

I suppose we must have made a slight rustling; for Wade asked, —

"Are you coming, fellows?"

Cluey was creeping along on the ground.

"Aim low, now," advised Wade. "I'm up *here;* and the moose's down *there,* — right under me. Don't overshoot him. Hit him in the brisket."

His advice was interrupted by the crack of the rifle and a squeal from the stag, followed instantly by a great trampling and rushing. Cluey came scudding back into the hemlock-thicket, and after him the moose, panting, and uttering a hideous, whining noise. We held our breath in horror. Cluey disappeared among the boughs somewhere, and the stag went crashing through the thicket. Then, turning, the black monster came dashing back with a prodigious crushing of the branches.

"He didn't have time to climb up!" whispered Raed excitedly. "I'm afraid the moose *went over him!*"

After beating about among the hemlocks for some minutes, the moose stalked back to the foot of Wade's tree.

"Cluey!"

"Cluey!" we all began to whisper, anxiously enough too.

"Cluey, Cluey!" louder still.

"Anybody hurt?" cried Wade from his tree. "He didn't catch the old man, did he?"

Just then the hemlock began to stir in one particular spot; and presently, as we stared, the old black fur cap was poked cautiously out.

"You aren't dead yet, are you, Cluey?" exclaimed Wash.

We began to laugh.

"'As 'e gone?" demanded the old man in a hurried whisper.

"Yes; gone back to Wade," we all whispered.

Cluey crept out, and came along toward us, keeping our hemlock between him and the moose.

"Thar!" he exclaimed, holding up the rifle. "I'm the biggest old fool that ever trud Gud's fut-stool! I cum off an' naver thought to tuk an extry load! Thar! I cud chaw my heart-strings!"

"Don't do it," laughed Raed. "Here's the very thing you want, I guess."

More thoughtful than any of us, Raed had caught up a handful of the cartridges and the cap-box ere he had run off after Cluey.

"Yer don't say! Show! Yonker, yer a thoughtful un! Yer ort ter be cap'n uv a vassel."

He had put in the cartridge, and was opening the cap-box, when the bough on which Wash was perched gave way with a creaky snap, obliging that young worthy to make a sudden grab and scramble to keep from tumbling out. In a jiffy the moose turned, and, uttering a loud bellow, came straight for the hemlocks again.

"Look out!" shouted Wade. "He's coming! Scatter! mizzle!"

Cluey *mizzled* among the thick hemlock *instanter;* and we all three hitched up a little higher as the ugly brute came tearing along like a locomotive, and, passing under us, again beat through the thicket. But as it plunged amid the swaying, cracking boughs, a bright, sudden flash blazed from beneath. It was followed by

another squeal. The moose fell, I thought, — fell, and floundered for a moment; but immediately regained its legs, and, with another squeal, ran off through the thicket and down the side of the ridge at a great pace. We could hear the brush cracking far down in the hollow. Cluey came out from his hiding-place.

"He's bolted," said the old man. "They'll do that sometimes, all uv a suddin. Shudn't wonder ef that larst shot teekled his ribs a leetle tu much fer his cumfut.

"It's cur'us," continued Cluey, "'ow a moose'll act. Fust they'll be saviger than the *Dav'l;* then tuk fright like a hoss, an' bolt, as this un jest did. Oh! they're freaky critters."

Wade had got down, and now came along.

"Hollo, old boy!" exclaimed Wash, shaking him by the hand. "Behold the rescooed 'coon-hunter!"

"And the *rescooed* is duly thankful," replied Wade. "I tell you, fellows, you've got me out of a tough scrape. I'll try to remember it too."

"Of course you'll remember it to the day of your *post mortem!*" laughed Wash. "Don't go to making a thanksgiving-speech, though."

"Whar's yer 'cune?" demanded Cluey.

"The last I saw of him, he was just whipping in between a couple of big rocks out there beyond the tree I've been roosting in. I fired at him."

"Then that was the 'coon you fired at," said Raed.

"Yes: I got a glimpse of him down there in the hollow. He scampered off up the side of the ridge; and I ran after him, and kept on, hoping to get a snap at him, clean up here. Just as he was dodging in between those

rocks yonder, I let fly at him; but, before I had time to even wink twice, the moose came tearing out of this hemlock-thicket, stamping and squealing, and grinding his teeth. I had just time to drop the gun and shin up that hornbeam, and — well, you know the rest of the story.

"I supposed he had trod the gun all to pieces," continued Wade, examining it. "But I reckon he hasn't hurt the barrel any," sighting across it. "Scarred the stock a little with his hoofs; that's all."

After an unsuccessful search for the 'coon about the rocks, we started back toward the camp.

Just as we had crossed the brook, Cluey stopped short all at once.

"What is it?" demanded Raed.

"I dunno," peeking ahead. "Suthin thar', I b'l'eve. Looks like a critter's eyes. One uv tham pasky lucivees, I guess. Gi' me anuther uv tham catridges."

We could plainly see the eyes of some animal glowing in the darkness two or three rods ahead. But, while Cluey was loading, a low whine began.

"It's Ding-bat!" exclaimed Wash. "Come here, doggy! Come here, good fellow!"

The poor disgraced Chinaman came racing to us, tickled half to death.

"Leetle more, sur," muttered Cluey, not very thankfully either, — "leetle more, sur, an' you'd 'a' lost yer leetle, wuthlis, good-fer-nuthin' life, sure's ye live."

It was after eleven before we got to *bed* that night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Out of Coffee. — Cluey goes on a Long Tramp. — A Dismal Cry. — A Midnight Prowler. — The Death of Ding-bat.

SEPT. 5. — This morning we used the last of our coffee; and even that was taken sugarless, the sugar — what remained after the accident to the bucket among the rocks of the "slide" — having given out the preceding day.

Affairs looked dubious. We had not yet found the slightest indication of *lead*. I am afraid, that, if the future of the expedition had been up for decision by a *pro* and *con* vote that morning, there would have been four votes out of five, or, including Ding-bat, five out of six, in favor of making a bee-line for the East Branch, and thence down to Mattawamkeag. But Raed would not even notice, much less consider, this state of feeling among the rest of us.

"Raed," said Wade, "the coffee's followed the sugar. The sugar went up yesterday."

"Coffee gone?" said Raed.

"Coffee an' sugar ar' both gone," replied Cluey.

We were all looking at Raed, thinking that now, at least, he would have to give in, and allow a retreat. He seemed to reflect a moment; then, turning to Cluey, he

asked him pleasantly how far he supposed it was out to the little settlement at the head of Lake Chesuncook, — the same we had seen while on the summit of Katahdin.

"Wal, it must be nigh on ter twenty-five mile," replied Cluey.

"There are, as I understand it, no impassable streams between here and there," said Raed.

"Nothin' bigger'n the Sourdnahunk. Any one can wade across that this time o' year; wade it, or jump across on the rocks."

"And this 'head of Chesuncook' is, I believe you told me, a sort of supply-dépôt for the lumbering camps, is it not?" continued Raed.

"Wal, the lumberin' companies most allers have stuff on hand thar, I b'l'eve."

"Mr. Robbins," Raed began, speaking in a grave, business-like tone, "I am obliged to ask you to make a trip out there in behalf of the party."

Cluey looked a little blank at that.

"I presume you did not expect to be asked to take so long a tramp when you engaged with us. Indeed, I am sorry to ask you: if it could possibly be helped, I wouldn't ask you. But it *can't* be helped," added Raed, with considerable emphasis on the negative. "However, in addition to your regular pay of two dollars per day, I will give you five dollars extra for this trip, out of my own pocket."

Cluey's chin rose just a little at this last offer; for though far from being of a mercenary disposition, yet I suppose he thought, that, if he must go, the extra *fiver* would help it a little.

"Wal," said he, "ef it's nacessary, I'll go. Yer a pooty true-blue yonker. I'd take yer head-work quicker'n I wud the most uv older men's, an' resk it."

"Thank you for the compliment," said Raed. "I think you had best start this morning."

"Yas; but I can't make the trip in one day."

"Of course not; but I would like to have you back by to-morrow night."

"That I ken do easy anough."

"Here are five dollars to buy coffee and sugar with, and a pound of tea if you can find it. I will pay you your extra five *now* if you want it," continued Raed. "But perhaps it will be as well not to take it out there with you. For look here, Cluey" (speaking low): "excuse me if I am impudent; but I would not invest in any *liquids;* might interfere with your wading across the Sourdnahunk, or possibly mix up the points of the compass. I'm a temperance man, you know" (giving the old man a slap on the back). "Better give me your word not to *indulge* while you are out there."

Cluey had begun to look very foolish.

"Wal, I declar' for't!" he exclaimed; "yer a cur'us boy! I did think likely I might jest rense the dust out o' my throat."

"Do it with water," urged Raed, smiling.

"Wal, I declar'! I dunno: so I will. Here's my hand on't."

'Twas a funny sight to see them shaking hands; though the rest of us were not supposed to have heard the compact.

The simple but good-hearted old man set off, and was

soon out of sight, going along the foot of the ridge to the westward.

That day we again ascended to the summit of the range, carefully examining all the ledges and crags along a belt or strip about forty rods wide in going up, and a similar strip coming down in the afternoon. There was plenty of iron pyrites, quartz-crystals, mica, garnets, &c., and even iron ore in small quantities, but no *lead:* indeed, it is about the last place I should now think of searching for lead ore. But at that time we did not understand the subject nearly so well. Like De Soto, we were hunting down a legend.

Getting down to camp tired enough too, we missed the hot coffee and smoking supper Cluey was wont to have ready for us. It took fully an hour to prepare a meal; and, although Raed did his best at broiling the meat, it somehow lacked the flavor of Cluey's handiwork. The absence of coffee, too, was a severe privation; how severe, none save those who have encountered the rough life of a jaunt in the wilderness can know. It made us gloomy. The sky, too, was gloomy; the woods were gloomier; and gloomiest of all was the ever-deepening shadow of ill success which had hung over us for the past month.

Raed told us of Dr. Kane (a favorite hero of his), and then tried to get up a debate on the chances of the north pole being reached within the next ten years: but it failed miserably, — all for the want of a little coffee, I honestly believe; though it seems whimsical enough to say so. But coffee (as well as some other more objectionable articles) is a great promoter of cheeri-

ness. No voyagers into the wild woods should go without it, in my humble opinion. It is truly a wonderful antidote for that strange, depressing effect which the wilderness always exerts, even on persons of the most buoyant disposition.

We lay down silent, dreary, and homesick; and, as if to add dismal to dismals, a wolf began to howl over on the ridge beyond the ravine below us. Not that this was the first time we had heard it; but somehow to-night it was ten times more lonely and hideous.

Ow-ooo-ooo-ooo-ooo-ooh!

Ow-ooo-ooo-ooo-ooo-ooh!

Ow-ooo-ooo-ooo-ooo-ooh!

All the wretchedness, starving misery, and gaunt savagery, of earth's primal ages of ancient barbarism seemed to echo to this hated note. Raed got up to build a couple of extra fires off on either side of where we lay. We were not much afraid of the wolf. Cluey had said that there was little chance of a pack collecting at this season. This was a mere cowardly straggler.

After starting the fires, Raed came back and lay down again. Ding-bat sat at our feet, looking gravely off.

"Keep watch, sir," said Wade, rising up to pat him, "keep watch, and tell us if the wolf comes round."

We went to sleep soon afterward.

Ding-bat kept watch *probably* for an hour or two. Later we were awakened by his barking violently. Rousing up, I saw him standing near one of the fires which Raed had kindled, *laying down the rules* to something with ears erect, and a particularly savage curl on his tail.

About three rods from where he stood, Cluey had hung up a quarter of the smoked moose-meat in a small oak; suspending it from a limb up eight or nine feet from the ground to keep it out of the way of the foxes that used to come round the camp nearly every night, attracted by the smell of the meat. The little picked-nosed fellows would sly up, and stand sniffing at us out of the darkness at a distance of four or five rods; till, seeing some suspicious motion, they would dart off. A moment later we would hear their sharp cur-like bark, or perhaps catch another glimpse of the same one round on the other side. Very curious the little rogues appeared, especially where fresh meat was concerned; and, what at first seemed to us quite singular, they appeared to pay very little attention to Ding-bat, not having the hereditary fear of the hound which characterizes our cleared-land foxes.

Ding-bat was facing the meat. Every bark was a growl, and every growl was a bark.

"What does he see, I wonder?" demanded Wash in a whisper.

"Nothing but a fox, I guess," said I.

Just then we heard a movement out under the oak, as if the fox had jumped up to grab at the meat.

"It's a fox," I continued, "trying to reach that meat."

I had entirely forgotten about the wolf; so had the other boys, I think.

"Take him, Ding-bat!" exclaimed Wade. "S-st! take him!"

The dog looked round to us.

"Take him!" cried Wash. "What you waiting for? Take him! Drive him off!"

Thus bidden, the Chinaman made a gallant rush. Instantly from out the obscurity there came a noise as of a sudden clinch, a suppressed bark and a growl, followed immediately by a sharp cry from the dog. We sprang up, knowing too well now that it was no fox.

"Get the rifle!" shouted Raed.

Wash had it already. Wade caught up the hatchet, and we all ran to the rescue. A large gray beast was struggling with Ding-bat; both rolling and writhing among the dry leaves, making a frightful outcry. Wash presented the gun within a yard of the creature's neck and shoulder, and fired; Raed struck it at nearly the same instant with a long stick of firewood; and Wade dealt it a cut on the head with the hatchet. But the beast tore away, and ran howling off, despite these wounds. We chased after it for several rods, but immediately lost sight of it in the brush and darkness.

"It's the wolf!" exclaimed Raed, panting.

None of us had ever seen a gray wolf alive; yet there could be no doubt about it. We could hear it howling, too, as it coursed away down the valley, — howling for pain. After standing some minutes to listen, we turned back.

"Where did Ding-bat go to?" said Wash.

"I'm afraid the wolf hurt him pretty bad," remarked Raed.

"There he is," said Wade, "crouching under the tree there, watching the meat. — Come here, poor fellow!"

The dog did not get up, but sat looking toward us;

and, on stooping over him, we could hear a distressful, wheezing sound every time he breathed.

"He is hurt!" exclaimed Wash; "hurt bad!"

We took him up without his making any resistance, and carried him along to the fire. Raed threw on some dry sticks, which blazed up brightly. In a moment we perceived that he was bleeding profusely, and dabbled with blood all over.

"It's in his neck," said Wash, moving the drooped head a little aside.

The poor dog's throat was torn dreadfully; and there were several deep holes, looking as if made by the wolf's fangs, from one of which the blood gushed with every breath.

"He's a dead dog!" exclaimed Wade. "It's no use, poor doggy! That cursed wolf has *done for you!*"

We placed his head so that he might breath as easily as possible while he did live. Wash brought the water-bucket, and we washed his neck; but nothing could stop the gush of blood from the lacerated vein. Seeing the water, he seemed to want to drink. We let him try; but he only strangled himself. All this time he had neither yelled nor whined; and now lay still, save from the motion and gurgling of the blood in his throat, with his eyes fixed expressively on our faces. By the fire-light they seemed wonderfully dark and large; and the look in them was touchingly piteous and patient.

We had never considered him a very noble nor a particularly brave dog; though his attack on the wolf certainly bespoke no little courage. His lack of hair had rather raised a prejudice against him (a very foolish one,

I am afraid). His face wasn't just like a Yankee dog's; but perhaps it was equally good in its way. We had come to like him better, however, the longer we knew him; and I, for one, felt very sad to see him lie there dying.

I suppose that very many of our dislikes and prejudices are found either in a partial or total ignorance of the objects against which they are directed, and that these prejudices will melt away as we come to understand matters better. So, at least, it had been in Ding-bat's case.

Presently, as we watched him, the almost human look in his appealing eyes grew dull; a low gurgling, then a little spasm. The poor Chinaman was gone! All the life, the fierce, sharp strength and fire, that had grappled so savagely with the wolf a few minutes before, had run out with the little dark pool that now dabbled the leaves. Where had it gone? What was it now?

We laid him tenderly on the boughs, and threw over him one of the well-worn blankets, — a part of the charge he had so often watched over.

It was only half-past two o'clock. Wade fixed up the fire, and we lay down again; but somehow none of us felt like going to sleep, nor yet like talking much. Death — even the death of a dog — is a hard, sad thing. To forever leave the bright light of the glorious sun is a fearful departure; and life, miserably as some abuse the gift, has something inexpressibly sad in its forfeiture.

As soon as it got light enough, Raed got up and began to get breakfast, taking Cluey's duties without comment. We ate at sunrise.

"What shall we do with Ding-bat?" asked Wash, folding up the blankets.

"Well, we must dig a hole and bury him, I suppose," replied Raed.

Wade suggested that we should make his grave under a beech a few yards up the side-hill. Sharpening off some stakes with the hatchet, we dug a hole about two feet deep, put in the body, and, filling in the dirt, rolled on some heavy stones to keep out hungry plunderers. As on a former occasion, Wade with his jack-knife performed the office of engraver, cutting in the smooth, dull-azure bark (the parent of all printing-type) the words, —

"DING-BAT.
Sept. 6, 186–."

"I suppose, by good rights," said he, coming down where we were getting ready to ascend the ridge, "we ought to send the body back to China. No good Chinaman, it is said, can rest content in a grave outside the Celestial Empire. You know, the Chinese in California send all their dead home."

"It is unfortunate, truly," said Raed, putting up cold meat and pudding for lunch; "but, considering the distance and the time, I fear he will have to sleep as soundly as he can where he is."

Cluey did not get back till after we had come down to camp at sunset. He had succeeded in getting some coffee and sugar, but no tea. We said nothing about Ding-bat, waiting to see if he would miss him.

Several times that evening I thought he appeared to miss something; but, as he had a great many things to

tell us, he did not seem to find out what it was till the next morning. Then he asked all at once "whar that ar leper of a dorg had gone to."

Raed pointed silently to the mound of stones under the beech. The old man looked, started, and, giving a quick deprecatory glance at our rather sober faces, exclaimed, —

"Show!"

It seemed to give him quite a shock too. He never said another word about it till evening; when he asked, rather repentantly I thought, how it had happened. And ever after that he was always praising Ding-bat, and speaking of his "good points." He evidently thought some reparation was due him; and, really, I think the old man missed him most of any of us.

CHAPTER XIX.

Weary of the Expedition. — A Chance Discovery which promises well. — Breaking it to Raed. — The Expedition not a Failure. — Air-Castles. — "Heigh, Betty Martin!" — Going Home To-morrow.

SEPT. 8. — We went to the ledges with a greater effort than ever this morning. Wade *growled* a little, audibly. Wash and I merely said we felt home-sick. Raed tried to inspire us by an historic reference to Robert Bruce and the spider; but it was no go. Wade remarked that he thought that "spider-story" was about played out.

About half way to the top of the ridge we separated, according to our custom; Raed and Wade going to the summit, while Wash and I searched along the side a few hundred yards below.

It was warm and uncomfortable. Climbing down the edge, we saw a place where the quartzose rocks jutted out, overhanging a substratum of coarse, rusty granite. It looked shady and cool under there. We went along, and sat down to rest. In fact, we had come to feel that our labor *searching* was all thrown away; and that, when we could do so without giving offence to Raed, it was just about as well to *sit still and rest* as to search after a — myth.

"Kit," said Wash, grinding the nails in his well-worn boot-heel on the rock, "Raed is a good fellow, a persevering fellow, — a very persevering fellow."

"Yes, he is all that," I assented.

"There's not a chap in the world I like better," Wash continued, taking off his hat to brush back the hair from his sweaty forehead. "But don't you think this lead expedition is getting a little *thin?*"

"I've been of that opinion more than a week."

"I am disappointed somewhat."

"Well, so am I."

"I did hope to find it."

"Well, I did."

"I'm sorry for Raed, — more for him than for myself. He is one of that sort, that, when he has set his mind on a thing like this, it is hard turning him from it. It hurts his feelings to let go. He has set his heart on finding this lead to get money for a yacht. That's been his grand object, — to get a yacht, and go off to see and study the world for himself; and he meant to take us too. If ever there was a good, true, big-hearted fellow in the world, it is Raed."

"That's so," I indorsed.

"He knows just how hopeless it's getting to look," Wash resumed. "I've watched him. He feels bad; he feels awfully: though he don't lisp a word, and makes believe he has all confidence. I suppose he would be offended if I were to say a word. He can't bear to give it up; but he has got to."

"Yes: that's pretty plain."

"This lead-story is all a hoax. We might hunt here

seven years, and never find lead enough to make one rifle-slug. It's a wild-goose chase; and the sooner we can get out of it, without hurting Raed's feelings, the better."

"That's it exactly. But how are we to do it? How can we get Raed to give in?"

"Well, that's the question; a tough one too," replied Wash, resting back on one elbow, and turning to pick up bits of stone to send rattling down the ledge.

It *was* a tough question; and I betook myself to a similar employment by way of aiding my wits to solve it. We lay there for some time rattling bits of rock down the ledge. Presently Wash turned toward me. I thought he was going to suggest some plan of influencing the inexorable Raed; but, instead, he simply asked, —

"What sort of stuff is that, Kit?"

I turned to look. He was holding a bit of some black substance in his fingers about as big as the end of my thumb.

"I don't know," said I almost impatiently.

"It's kind of funny stuff," he remarked, holding it toward me. "You look at it."

I took it with very little interest, however. One gets sick of fingering bits of rock after a while, unless he is a born geologist; and then he might occasionally. It was very uninteresting *stuff*, — a mere crumbling, dull-black fragment.

"Looks as much like dried muck as any thing," said I, rubbing it in the palm of my hand; when I suddenly noticed that it left a blue-black, metallic mark. I rubbed it again, and then drew it across the back of my hand.

It left a clear, well-defined trace. Wash was looking on, and, as if struck by a sudden idea, pulled out his note-book.

"Let me take it," said he.

Turning to a blank page, he drew the bit of stone sharply across it. A clear black line followed the fragment. We looked at it attentively, and then into each other's well-tanned faces. Wash's eye had grown very bright. It flashed upon me.

"Black-lead!" he exclaimed.

"Graphite!" I echoed.

We jumped up; then as quickly got down again to search amid the gritty fragments for more; and then our eager eyes instinctively glanced back to the coarse, yellow-stained, and overhanging rocks whence these gritty bits must have crumbled and fallen. 'Twas a sight I shall never forget, since it was perhaps the most gratifying I have ever beheld. All along where the whitish, quartzose rock overlaid the coarse granitic ledge, there were veins and layers of the graphite outcropping in fine, black knobs; some of them looking almost as pure and steely as the tiny, refined bars we use in our pencils. Some of these veins were as thick as one's wrist. One was all of five inches in diameter, a pure blue-black, running back under the superincumbent rocks. Then there were thin layers half and a quarter of an inch in thickness, and several feet broad. These extended along the crag for a distance of four or five rods, then gradually thinned out on both sides.

"Hurrah!" shouted Wash, swinging his hat as we completed our hasty survey. "I don't fully know about

the value of this stuff; but I reckon we've struck it rich. It must be worth something by the way we pay for our pencils; and here's any quantity of it. Isn't it the same thing as plumbago?"

"Yes: graphite and plumbago are all the same, I believe."

"And it's not like common lead?"

"No: graphite is of carbon, like the diamond and like coal. That's what the chemistry says. It must be worth more than galena" (common lead).

"Then it will be a better thing than if we had found the very article we've been searching for."

"Looks as if it might," said Wash. "Come on! Let's hunt up Raed and Wade!"

"But no: let's not be too fast. Let's take another look at it. Question is, Can we get at it? Can the *mine* be worked? Here's lots of rocks on top of it."

There was from eight to twelve feet of ledge piled over the deposit; but the rock was of a coarse, loose texture. We concluded that it might be blasted off at a not impracticable expense by a company formed to work the mine. Of course, we could not tell how far back into the ledge the graphite veins ran: that could only be ascertained by actual blasting. It looked, however, as if they might extend under the whole superposed ledge of quartzose rocks; and, on climbing to the top, it appeared that this ledge covered quite a large area.

"Won't this just make Raed brighten up!" cried Wash, quite unable to hold in his elation.

"How glad the old fellow will look! and yet how grave he will be about it!"

"How about Cluey?" said I.

"Well, I don't know hardly. Is there any necessity for making him a partner?"

"I don't see any."

"We merely hire him for so much a day. He's not spending his time and money."

"Not a bit of it. And then there's another thing," said I, suddenly remembering that we had made our discovery on the wild, unappropriated lands. "We've got to keep still about this, or some other party may get in ahead of us, and oust us out."

"That's so!" exclaimed Wash.

"You know what the old man's habits are," I continued. "He would be going down to Mattawamkeag, and getting outside of some of their bad whiskey there: then ten to one he would let out the whole story."

It was very apparent that Cluey was not a safe person to put in possession of a valuable secret.

"Mum's the word," said Wash. "Not a syllable of this in his hearing."

"But, if we should actually make a good thing out of this," continued he as we went down toward the camp, "we could give the old fellow a nice little gratuity."

This seemed to be the best way of arranging it.

We found Cluey busy getting dinner, and lay down in the shade of a spruce to rest. Presently Raed and Wade came in; Raed looking tired and serious, Wade tired and impatient. We could sympathize with both, and had hard work to keep from *hurrahing* out our discovery. We held in with an effort; and dinner was

eaten in silence. Then, while Cluey smoked, we lay in the shade; for the sun shone out pretty hot. By and by Raed got up.

"I won't ask the rest of you to go out this afternoon," he said. "It is warm. You stay here in the shade, and get rested up. There are two or three more ledges up near the top of the ridge I want to look at. I'll be back by supper-time. Enjoy yourselves, now, — the best you can," he added, a little deprecatingly. "Spin them one of your best yarns, Cluey."

"I guess we'll go with you, old fellow," said Wash; both he and myself getting up to follow him.

"I rather think you had better rest," said Raed.

"No, no!" exclaimed Wash, laughing. "Come on, Wade!" — turning to that worthy, who had seemed very much inclined to avail himself of the captain's permission.

Wade got up. Something in Wash's face, I think, made him change his mind. He got up, and came on after us.

"What's up now?" he whispered to me, catching up when twenty or thirty rods from where we had left Cluey smoking.

I gave him an encouraging wink. Raed and Wash were a number of yards ahead. Raed was veering off to climb the ridge at some distance beyond where we had discovered the graphite. I do not think he had any suspicion of the surprise we had in store for him; for he was walking on with a very sober, pre-occupied air, — the same he had worn for several days.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Wash. "Don't drive ahead so! It's a warm day, remember."

Raed slackened up, and turned to wait for the rest of us. Seeing us grinning, he looked a little curious; for, to tell the truth, we had not looked very smiling of late.

"Kit and I found something this forenoon," Wash began. "It wasn't galena, and it wasn't silver: so don't go to looking so queer. Still we should like to have you just take a look at it as we go up the mountain."

"Where is it?" asked Raed, glancing alternately from Wash's face to mine.

"Right up straight above us, where you set us to looking this forenoon," said Wash.

"Lead the way!" exclaimed Raed.

Wade came closing up, his great black eyes round as saucers.

"Don't go to expecting too much, now," cautioned Wash, starting up the side of the hill.

He led on pretty fast; but Raed and Wade kept close to his heels. They were all curiosity. I greatly feared they would be disappointed.

In our haste we got considerably above the ledge; in fact, had nearly lost it, and had to come down several hundred feet: but at length we got our eye on it, and soon came under the same overhanging rock.

"There!" exclaimed Wash, stopping at the place where we had lain when we picked up the black bit. "That's what we found," — pointing to the black knobs and layers.

Raed and Wade glanced eagerly along the rusty granite.

"What is that?" they both demanded.

"What do you call it?" asked Wash.

They both stepped up to finger it.

"It's coal!" cried Wade.

"Rub it with your finger, Raed," said I.

He did so.

"Now try it on this piece of paper," said Wash.

Raed made a mark with it.

"Black-lead, is it?" said he, turning quickly.

"That's what we think," replied Wash. "Now, the question is, Is it good for any thing? Will it be worth any thing?"

"Why, yes; I should think so," Raed replied. "Black-lead, or graphite, is quite valuable. There are very few mines of it in this country. They work a poor little vein of it at Sturbridge, Mass., at quite a profit, I believe. There's a mine at Brandon, Vt., I've heard; and another at Ticonderoga, N.Y."

"And I have read of a famous mine in England that the proprietors guard as rigidly as if it were gold or diamonds," said Wade. "It's on a mountain called the Seatallor Fell, in Borrowdale, Cumberland. They only keep it open six weeks in a year, and the profits are forty thousand pounds, — two hundred thousand dollars.

"That's what it used to be, anyway," added Wade.

"It is not worth so much now," said Raed. "That mine, too, has always been noted for its great purity. In order to pay well, nowadays, the deposit must be tolerably pure, I believe."

"That's why we had hopes of this being worth some thing," remarked Wash. "It seems to be real pure

Just look at that big steel-blue vein! Doesn't that seem pure enough for pencils?"

Raed got out his knife, and tried it; broke out bits, and marked with them.

"From what I know of such things, I should call that a very pure article," he said at length. "If there's only a good lot of it," he continued, looking about, "I shall think you've struck a good thing here."

"Well, just go up on top of the ledge and look about," said Wash. "It looks to me as if these veins ran back a good ways. The top ledge covers acres of ground."

Raed and Wade climbed up where we had gone in the morning: they were up there some time, and came down looking very hopeful.

"I think, boys," cried Raed, "that you've made a ten-strike! It looks so."

"Don't say *we've* made it," said Wash: "say *you* have made it *yourself*. You know that we should have gone back long ago if it hadn't been for your grit and perseverance."

"That's so!" cried Wade.

"Don't talk about my *grit!*" exclaimed Raed. "I was just ready to give it up to-day noon. Why didn't you say something about this at dinner-time?"

Wash then explained what we had thought about Cluey.

"Well, on the whole, that was wise," replied Raed; "though, of course, we'll remember the old man if we make this pay."

"Then this is on the State land," remarked Wade.

"Cluey says this land belongs to a Bangor lumbering

company," said Raed. "I supposed all along it was State land; but one day I asked Cluey, and he told me that the State has either sold it, or let it for a long term of years, to these lumber-men, with the right to use it as they please. I presume that would include a right to work any mine they might find on it."

"Then that just stops us!" exclaimed Wash.

"Not quite," said Raed; "for we know where this graphite is, and they don't. They may be glad to buy our secret of us. What we want to do now is to keep shady. We must carry away some good specimens of the graphite here, and get the opinion of some chemist, geologist, or State assayer: then we can make the land-holders a proposal to sell our valuable secret. We probably couldn't work this mine ourselves without trouble, — lawsuits, &c."

"I do not believe this lumbering company has any right to work the mineral resources of these unincorporated lands," said I.

"Whether they could or not, they would probably give us trouble if we undertook it," replied Raed; "and, in case of a lawsuit, they would be too *heavy* for us, as legal questions are decided nowdays. They would stop us, and cause us expense. Our best way will be to sell our secret for what we can get. Besides, we do not wish to turn miners ourselves. What we want is to raise money for another purpose, — the one we have previously discussed."

"In other words, a yacht," suggested Wash.

"Exactly," replied Raed.

"To make a voyage up north," said Wade.

"Well, I have sometimes looked forward to that," said Raed. "It would be a grand thing to penetrate within the polar circle. What an experience it would give us!"

"Hurrah for the land of the 'Huskies'* and the iceberg," shouted Wash, "where the days are six months long!"

"And the nights ditto," added Wade.

There was a good deal of this sort of boyish talk, which I record simply to show how our thoughts were running that day.

It was nearly four o'clock before we had finished our castle-building, and were brought back to the more practical matters of the present by Wash's suddenly asking Raed if he felt as well satisfied as he would if it had been galena ore instead of this graphite.

"Well," said Raed, "a person had commonly rather find what he sets out to find than any thing else. Still I think this graphite deposit bids fair to be as valuable as galena; perhaps more valuable."

"Then we may fairly consider the object of this expedition *as gained;* can we not?" asked Wade.

"I should say we fairly might," replied Raed.

"Which means that we are to get out of this and go home as soon as we can, I suppose?" replied Wash.

"Yes; and the sooner the better," said Raed.

We all jumped up, and gave three cheers. Cluey heard us, and responded from far down in the valley with a faint "*Hooraw!*" We then went down to camp, and

* "Huskies," — a common name for the Esquimaux among the whalemen.

still further electrified the old man by telling him to prepare a big supper, and get ready to go home the next day.

"Show!" exclaimed the old man: "hev ye diskivered that ar galliny?"

"No, sir," said Wade.

"I didn't know but ye had when I heerd ye hollerin'."

It seemed too bad not to let the old fellow share our triumph; but, on the whole, we concluded that it wasn't best.

Cluey cooked the choicest of every thing that night. We had a "grand feed" for that region. During the evening we made the forest resound to songs, Cluey winding up the concert with a very spirited ballad commencing, —

> "Heigh, Betty Martin! tiptoe, tiptoe!
> Heigh, Betty Martin! tiptoe fine!" —

which tickled Wade immoderately.

In the morning we went up after the specimens. By a very reckless use of the hatchet we succeeded in breaking out several junks as large as one's fist. We also spotted several spruces, and set up a "landmark" on the top of the ledge. Wade then took the bearings of several peaks with a compass, and Raed made a rough map of the locality, to facilitate a future visit. This done, we went back to camp. Cluey had packed up the luggage, and stood waiting for us.

CHAPTER XX.

Adieu to Katahdin. — The "Head of Chesuncook." — A Long Day's Tramp. — Farewell to Cluey. — Home again. — Parting with the Boys. — An *Author* by Lot.

Adieu to Katahdin.

IN a quarter of an hour we were following Cluey through the woods, N. W. by W., toward the "head of Chesuncook," distant about thirteen miles.

So inured had we become to the rough walking of the forest, that we made this distance in a little over four hours without any extra fatigue.

The little settlement at the head of this picturesque lake consists of seven or eight families, whose "clearings" extend down on both sides of the water for over a mile. Their business is chiefly to raise vegetables and hay for the lumber-camps.

At the house of a Mr. Berdeen, with whom Cluey was acquainted, we had dinner, — a substantial meal of pork and beans, with a baked Indian pudding, — quite an improvement on our hasty-pudding; for a change, at least. This was the first meal we had taken under a roof (unless we except the wretched days we spent in the loggers' hut on the pond-shore) for over a month. Mrs. Berdeen, a very motherly body, made us so com-

fortable at the table, that it seemed really delicious. Not a cent would they take for our dinner, either. We, however, struck a bargain with Mr. Berdeen and son to take us down the lake in their four-oared *bateau* for the sum of four dollars; and set off at about two in the afternoon, we assisting at the oars. I should think that any small party of tourists might find the "head of Chesuncook" a delightful place to spend a few weeks any time during August or September. They would hardly fail to find good gunning and fishing; very possibly get a moose.

Lake Chesuncook, down which we sped at a jolly rate, is about sixteen miles in length by one and a half in breadth. Its shores are not bold, but slope up from the water very gently, and are covered with a mixed growth of maple, birch, cedar, spruce, and fir. We saw no ledges till near the lower end. The lake itself is but an expansion of the West Branch, which enters it at the head, and flows out at the foot. It was just ten minutes past six when the nose of the *bateau* touched up against the lumber-dam at the foot of the lake. It was not quite sunset. The Berdeens decided to return up the lake during the evening, — a feat at oars which only Penobscot boatmen would have undertaken.

Cluey's shanty was about five miles down the river. We concluded to push on for it. Below the dam the West Branch is too rapid for boats. There is, however, a well-beaten portage-path along the bank down to the head of the Ripogenus Lake, three-fourths of a mile. This is a small lake, with a very wild look; at least, such was the impression we gained as we hurried along its shores in the gathering dusk.

The old shanty was finally reached at about eight o'clock. Coffee and pudding, with potatoes and fried pork, were prepared; and we supped, and went to bed on hay-shake-downs, after one of the hardest day's tramps (thirty-four miles in all) of our tour. In the morning, after breakfast, we paid Cluey, and bought, from his supplies, meal and pork for three days.

As the season for mosquitoes was now past, we gave Cluey the "bar" for next year.

It was not without sorrow that we bade the old fellow farewell, standing in his shanty-door, — the same place where we had first espied him.

"Gud-by, yonkers!" he said feelingly. "Ye're a pooty good lot. I shan't sune forgit ye."

"Good-by, Cluey!"

"Good-by, old man!"

"We shall hope to see you again," said Raed.

"Wal, mabbe; but an ole chap like me can't last allus, ye know. I 'xspect sum un'll find me keeled over 'ere" (pointing into the shanty) "un o' these days."

We made the trip down home in two days and a half. Save a trifling adventure with a family of adders at a rick of old logs on the "brulé," and a glimpse of two bears "blueberrying" on a knoll, it was uneventful.

I will not weary the reader with a second account of the same places, especially since my narrative has, as I fear, been already too far prolonged.

On the second evening we encamped on the "big rock" again. The basket still hung in the spruce. In the morning we went down to the boat, which lay at its moorings undisturbed. Embarking, we sailed down the

pond, passed through the thoroughfare, and finally arrived at the landing opposite the farm at about one o'clock.

As will be supposed, "the folks" had wondered at our long absence; and not only wondered, but worried: in fact, they were about despatching a man in search of us. It did seem good to get back where there were grandmothers and girls once more; though the latter declared that we were "frights," with our long, uncut hair, sunburnt faces, and fearfully soiled and ragged clothing. We spent the rest of that day fixing up. Luckily the boys had brought their summer suits with them, else they would have made a sensation going home.

We urged them to stay another week with us, and have a general good time after our labors. But Raed and Wash declared that they scarcely dared to go home, as it was, they had been gone so long; besides, there were several paternal letters peremptorily urging a return to school: so, the next morning, they started for Boston. I took them down to the fork of the road in the wagon.

"I shall take the specimens to the assayer as soon as I get home," remarked Raed as we stood waiting for the stage, which was late that morning. "You shall know the result immediately if it turns out to be worth any thing. You are all agreed to use the money for a yacht, I suppose?"

We all were, decidedly.

"I hope you've enjoyed the tour," I said.

"Of course," said Wash. "We've had some adventures, too, that wouldn't read bad in a book. What say for having this written out?"

"Not so bad a plan, certainly," said Raed; "and, if we get our yacht, we may have something better still."

"That's so!" cried Wade. "Let's have it done!"

"But who's *to do* it?" asked Wash.

"Must be one of us four, of course; for we're the ones who have had the adventures."

"Raed's the man," said I.

"Not much. I should get aground the first thing."

"Then Wash must do it," said Wade.

"Not I!" cried the naturalist. "But I'll tell you: let's draw lots for it."

"Well."

"Do you agree to that?"

"Yes."

Wash then cut four lots from a hard-hack twig, put them in his hat, and held it over his head. We all stepped up, and, standing on tiptoe, took out one. We then compared lots. And such a shout as arose!

"Jonah" had the *short one.*

"Hard-hacked!" cried Wash; and they all laughed till the tears came.

Just then, the stage came rattling along.

"Good-by, old fellow!"

"Good-by!"

They went off laughing, and swinging their hats.

I felt rather lonesome after they had gone, and so fell to work writing out this account of our expedition. As it is the first thing of the sort I have ever undertaken, I hope the reader will forgive its faults kindly considering the fact that the narrator is not an author by inclination or profession, but simply *by lot.* It has been

quite a task for me; but I console myself by thinking that some of the rest of them will have to try it next time.

Day before yesterday I received the following letter from Raed: —

BOSTON, Oct. 21, 1867.

DEAR KIT, — I handed those chunks of graphite to the assayer, just mentioning to him that I had found them on the "wild lands" of Maine. He said he would tend to them in a week or two. Well, last evening, the assayer and two other gentlemen — strangers to me — called. The assayer did not introduce them by name, but simply as two "friends of his." He began by saying that he had found those specimens I left a very good lot, and that these two gentlemen felt interested in the matter. They then asked questions relative to the sort of rock in which the deposit occurred, &c.; all of which I answered as correctly as I could.

They made no attempt to pry into the locality where we found it. It wouldn't have been any use if they had.

At last one of them says, —

"I suppose you hope to make something out of your discovery?"

I said that I hoped to.

The other then asked what I valued it at.

I said that I would guide a person there for fifteen thousand dollars.

They then went away.

But this morning they called again, and asked if I

would guide them to it, they giving their written stipulation, that, if it was as good as I had represented it, they should pay me the sum I had named.

I didn't know what to say to that at first. Finally I asked them to go down to Mr. H——'s office (that's father's lawyer). We went down. I told him how it was. He talked with the men a while, and finally advised me to take their written agreement as they had proposed.

A document to that effect was made out and signed; but, as there is probably snow at Katahdin before this time, we have agreed to delay going up there till next May.

What say to this? Did I offer too cheap? It looks as if we might get the fifteen thousand dollars. Hope you won't be dissatisfied.

Very truly yours, RAED.

[This was in the autumn of 1867. In the second volume of this series, written the next fall, Wash has recorded the sale of the "lode," with the story of the first yacht-cruise.]