The Book of Beasts

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Although practically all the Nature Books of recent years have been carefully studied in order to gather material for this volume, the author desires to make grateful acknowledgment of her indebtedness to the following works, which have proved particularly helpful and suggestive:

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THE BOOK OF BEASTS

LITTLE UPSIDAISI

I shall never forget the day I first saw him! That, indeed, was a day to be marked in my note-book with a red cross. I kept red ink and maltese ink in my cabin, to be used when things did or did not happen, as the case might be. By this simple method I was enabled to keep track of the notes suitable for the magazines which pay the best, reserving the others for the periodicals which reimburse their army of contributors at the starvation rate of a cent a word, no distinction being made between long and short words. It is depressing, when you think of it, that a long scientific name brings no more than a plain Anglo-Saxon word in one syllable, and that only a cent apiece is paid for new words coined for the occasion and which have never before been printed in any book.

But I digress. It was early in the Spring when my physician said to me: “My dear Mr. Johnson-Sitdown, you are getting dashed dotty.” This was a pleasing allusion to my employment, for, as the discerning reader has long since guessed, I was a telegraph operator in a great city, where the click of the instrument was superadded to the roar of the elevated trains, the rumble of the surface cars, and the nerve-destroying concussions made by the breaking of the cable during rush hours morning and evening.

“What you need,” said this gifted scientist to me, “is absolute rest and quiet. If you do not pack up and take to the woods within three days from the receipt of this notice, I will not answer for the consequences. Your brain is slowly but surely giving way. Your batteries are becoming exhausted and must be renewed if measurable currents are to be expected. I recommend new cells, rather than recharging from a dynamo. Get busy now, and let me see you no more until September first.”

Face to face with my death warrant, as it were, I unhesitatingly obeyed. Fortunately, my grandmother had left me a small log cabin in a clearing, this being her ancestral domicile and the only piece of real estate she possessed at the time of her long-delayed demise some months back. Without waiting to inspect it, I hurried to my new home, accompanied only by a few books on Natural History—which, as I afterward discovered, were by ignorant and untrustworthy writers, seeking to prey upon the credulity of the uninstructed public,—and Tom-Tom, my Cat.

I had not intended to take Tom-Tom, but his fine animal instinct warned him of my impending departure, and he sat upon my bookcase and wailed piteously all through my packing. My foolish heart has always been strangely tender toward the

lower animals, and I hastened to reassure Tom-Tom. After a little, I made him understand that wherever I went he should go also, and he frisked about my apartment like a wild thing at play, waving his tail madly in the exuberance of his joy.

Among the ignorant, the waving of a tail by any member of the Cat family is taken to mean anger. According to my own observations, it may also indicate joy. Darwin has distinguished several canine emotions which are distinctively expressed in the bark. Correlatively, I have tabulated eight emotions expressed by the caudalis appendagis felinis, according to the method of waving it—down, up, right, left, twice to the right, once to the left, then up, and so on. These discoveries I reserve for a future article, as I began to tell about Little Upsidaisi.

When I reached my home in the wilderness, it was nearly nightfall. I had only time to unpack my books, place them upon a rough shelf I hastily constructed, draw out the rude table which happened to be in a corner of my cabin, and place upon it my observation ledger, my pocket note-book, and my red and maltese inks.

Tom-Tom watched my proceedings with great interest, and after I had built my camp-fire, just outside the cabin door, we ate our frugal meal of bologna, wienerwursts, pretzels, and canned salmon, relying upon the cracker-box for bread, which Tom-Tom did not seem to care for. I was too tired to make either bread or coffee, but promised myself both for breakfast the following morning.

Before retiring, I made a pilgrimage to the beach and secured nearly a peck of fine sand. I scattered this all about my cabin, that in the morning I might see what visitors had left their cards, so to speak, upon this tell-tale medium of communication.

My first night in the clearing was uneventful. The unusual

quiet kept me awake, and I thought that if someone would only pound a tin pan under my window, I could soon lose consciousness. The Cat purred methodically in the hollow of my arm, but even with the noise of my Tom-Tom in my ears, it was four o'clock, according to my jewelled repeater, before I finally got to sleep.

When I awoke, it was broad day, and after dressing hurriedly, I ran out to look at the sand, which the Cat had not disturbed, being sound asleep still. Poor Tom-Tom! Perhaps he, too, found a cabin in the wilderness an unusual resting place.

Much to my delight, though hardly to my surprise, the sand was covered with a fine tracery, almost like lace-work. The prints of tiny toes were to be discovered here and there, and now and then a broad sweep, evidently made by a tail.

I would have thought it the work of fairies, dancing in the moonlight, had I not dedicated my life to Science. As it was, I surmised almost instantly that it was the Field Mouse—the common species, known as rodentia feminis scarus, and reference to my books proved me right.

By measuring the prints, according to the metric system, with delicate instruments I had brought for the purpose, I soon discovered that these tracks were all made by the same individual. The Bertillon method has its uses, but unfortunately I was not sufficiently up in my calling, as yet, to reconstruct the entire animal from a track. I have since done it, but I could not then.

Tom-Tom came out into the sunlight, waving his glorious, plumed tail, yawning, and loudly demanding food. I called him to me, using the old, familiar Cat-call which I have always employed with the species, and the faithful pet made a great bound toward me. Suddenly he stopped, as if caught on a foul half-way to the grand stand, and began to sniff an-

grily. His back arched, his tail enlarged, and began to wave in a circle. Great agitation possessed Tom-Tom, and he, too, was scrutinising the sand.

Wondering at his fine instinct, I hastened to his side, and, thereupon, my pet unmistakably hissed. It required a magnifying-glass and some reconstruction of line before I could make out what had so disturbed him, but at last I discovered that a rude picture of a Cat had been drawn in the sand, evidently by a tail tipped with malice, immediately in front of my cabin door!

Truth compels me to state that the hideous caricature was not unlike Tom-Tom in its essential lines. No wonder he was angry! Before I could get a photograph of the spot, however, Tom-Tom had clawed it out of existence. Nothing remained but to soothe his ruffled feelings, which I did with a fresh Fish newly caught from the lake.

During the day, I meditated upon my nocturnal visitor. Evidently he had drawn the Cat in the sand as a warning to others of his kind, as some specimens of the genus homo mark gate-posts. That night I made the sand smooth before retiring, and in the morning I looked anxiously for further messages, but there was nothing there. A charm had evidently been set against my cabin door.

I began to consider getting rid of Tom-Tom, feeling sure that the Mice would know it if I did so, but after long study, I concluded that it was better to keep my faithful companion than to wait in loneliness for problematical visitors.

The health-giving weeks passed by, and I gained in strength each day. When I went there, I was so weak that I could not have spanked a baby, but I soon felt equal to discharging a cook. Frequently I went far away from the cabin, in the search for

food and firewood, leaving Tom-Tom at home to keep house. The intelligent animal missed me greatly, but seldom offered to go along, his padded feet not being suited to the long overland journeys. I made him some chamois-skin boots out of some of the Natural History Shams I found in print, and, for a few times, he gallantly accompanied me, but it soon became evident that he preferred to stay at home and bear his loneliness, rather than to face dangers that he knew not of.

When I returned from my hunting trips with a string of Fish, a load of wood, a basket of Quail on toast, or some other woodland delicacy, Tom-Tom, who was watching from the roof of the cabin, would sight me from afar off, and after putting on his boots to protect his tender feet, would come to meet me by leaps and bounds, purring like a locomotive under full steam. Words cannot describe my joy at this hospitable greeting, and I made up my mind that I would love and cherish Tom-Tom, even though I never saw a Mouse again.

However, as we became accustomed to our new home, Tom-Tom regained some part of his former courage, and at times would wander quite a distance from the cabin. His method was really very original and deserves recording, as I have not since found it in any book on Natural History. At the time, I marked it among my own observations, appropriately enough, with a maltese cross.

With the long, prolonged howl which meant farewell, Tom-Tom plunged into the depths of the forest, stopping at the first tree to sharpen his claws. Suspecting that he was in search of game for our Sunday dinner, I followed him cautiously at a respectful interval. Strangely enough, I found that the trees leading to the left, for a long way into the wood, were scarred with Tom-Tom's claws. It was some time before the signifi-

cance of this burst upon me. He was blazing his trail through the woods that he might not get lost coming home.

As time went on, these absences became more frequent, and once he even stayed out all night. In the morning the delicate tracery was again seen in the sand around my cabin door, only this time there was no picture of a Cat.

While I was engaged with my household tasks, I felt myself observed. Turning, I saw upon my door-sill a little white-throated Field Mouse, sitting upright, and waving a friendly paw at me in salutation. It was Little Upsidaisi! I always called him that, thinking the Indian name much more musical than our own.

As soon as he saw me looking at him, he hurried away, but the memory of the hunted look in his bright eyes haunted me for many a day.

I saw very little of Tom-Tom now. For days together he would remain away from home, and I was lonely indeed. Late one afternoon, as I returned from my hunting trip, I saw a picture of a Cat newly drawn in the sand, and after it, very distinctly, was placed a large interrogation point.

Fully understanding the work of that wonderful tail, I took the point of my umbrella and printed in large letters, "NO," underlining it to make it more emphatic. After that, Upsidaisi came every day, selecting such times as the Cat was out. He seemed to feel that he had a friend and protector in me.

Before many weeks had passed, Upsidaisi had become more bold. He practically lived in the cabin, and took refuge in my sleeve or trouser leg upon approach of the Cat. Tom-Tom, engrossed with affairs of his own, seemed unconscious of his rival's presence, and this was well, for Upsidaisi was faithful and Tom-Tom was not.

How well I remember the day when Tom-Tom came in suddenly, and saw Upsidaisi sitting on the edge of my plate, helping himself daintily to fried bacon with a straw from the broom neatly slit at one end! There was a low growl from the Cat and a snort of terror from Upsidaisi as he ran down my neck for safety. I wore larger collars in those days, that the panics of my little friend might not cause a stricture in my œsophagus.

After that, it was war to the knife, as I too well understood, and I could only tremble and wait for the end. Both of my pets were aflame with jealousy, and there could be but one result. The end of a wild animal is always a tragedy.

One day, when Little Upsidaisi was asleep in my hat, I followed Tom-Tom's trail into the woods, paying close attention to the marks upon the trees. Far away, so far away that I no longer wondered how the Cat had worn out eight separate and distinct boots in as many weeks, I came upon a nest at the foot of a pine tree, in the hollow formed by the outspreading roots, and lined with the fragrant pine needles. A large, matronly, black and white Cat sat proudly on the nest, brooding over her young. She trembled at my approach, but did not seek safety in flight. With a few kind words I lifted her, and discovered six squalling little ones under her. One black, yellow, and white egg was not yet hatched, but I could see that very soon a little tortoise-shell kitten would claim her maternal care.

So this was the explanation of Tom-Tom's defection! Where he had found his mate, I did not know. Close by was a square of red blanket, which had been mysteriously cut out of my bed covering, and my best tin cup, freshly filled with cream, was within the mother's easy reach. One of Tom-Tom's worn-out shoes, at a little distance from the nest, completed the evidence.

I took pains, after this, to scatter desirable food and clothing for mother and children along Tom-Tom's ghostly trail. The next day these were always missing, and Tom-Tom seemed grateful in his dumb way, though he presumed too far upon my sympathies and took to petty larceny.

For instance, I had a little black box, with a hinged cover, upon my table. I kept in it pens, postage stamps, and other small implements of the writer's craft. One day I found my pens neatly piled upon my table and the stamps blowing about the cabin. Upon searching for the box, I found it, carefully placed at the foot of a tree, and freshly filled with catnip. Upon the cover were scratched these words: "Magdalene Tom-Tom, from her devoted Cat-band." I inferred from this that the tortoise-shell egg had hatched and that the seven youngsters were all lively. I meditated reclaiming my property, but after thinking it over, concluded to let the incident pass without comment. It might be in celebration of some sentimental anniversary, and Tom-Tom's peace of mind might be at stake; but I took the precaution to lock up everything else which I wished to keep.

Upon the shelf in the cabin was a cigar box where Little Upsidaisi slept. I had made a very soft nest for him with some returned manuscripts, and endeavoured to keep food and drink in one corner of it. Thus, at any hour of the day or night, he might be safe from the Cat and well provided for.

After a little, as the trying duties of paternity relaxed, Tom-Tom, thin and pale as he was, took to spending a part of his evenings at home, and I trembled lest his acute senses should lead him to the cigar box. It was tightly closed, except for the little opening gnawed just below the cover, which made sort of a slot for Little Upsidaisi's tail and kept it from being pinched when he got into the box.

Still, things went on smoothly, and Tom-Tom claimed his old place in my affections, ignorant of the fact that his rival slept in the cigar box above. There was a period of three days, once, when Tom-Tom did not leave the cabin, and I did not go out either, as I thought it safer to remain. There was no telling what might happen in my absence.

At the end of the third day, I sat at my little table, recording various valuable observations in my ledger, when suddenly a terrible thought struck me. I had forgotten to feed Little Upsidaisi!

I dared not make any attempt at it while Tom-Tom was watching me, and though I tried more than once, I could not decoy him out of the cabin. I wondered what had become of my little pet, and feared to find him stretched out stark and stiff upon the returned manuscripts. My heart reproached me bitterly.

Strangely enough, I was recording in my journal at that instant the fact that the Field Mice seemed to have no method of communication with the outside world, except the picture language made with the sharpened tip of the tail. While I was considering what to do, and whether or not to use force and temporarily eject Tom-Tom, a faint, far-away tapping assailed my ears, which my anxious mind soon traced to the cigar box upon the shelf.

At the succession of taps, my hair stood up in astonishment and I rose to my feet with such violence that Tom-Tom was frightened. Little Upsidaisi was attempting to communicate with me by means of the Morse code!

I am well aware that this will not be believed by the reader, but I can only set down my own observations and trust to later explorations to substantiate my claims.

Tap-tap-tap, the ghostly message came, and, trembling with

excitement though I was, I managed to make out the words: "What do you take me for? Do you want to starve me to death? Can't you get rid of that blanked Cat?" Courtesy to my readers compels me to use the word "blanked" in place of the profane adjective Little Upsidaisi applied to Tom-Tom.

A desperate expedient possessed me. After tapping out a few words for Upsidaisi's comfort, I made a low Kitten cry, such as used to perplex my teacher in my younger days. With every sense instantly alert, Tom-Tom erected his tail and started off down the trail like a blue streak.

I supplied the exhausted Mouse with food and drink, and bade him be patient until the following day, using the form of speech which he so readily understood.

Tom-Tom soon returned with the air of a fire engine which has just chased up a false alarm. He watched me very closely, and the following day, as I tapped out a message of hope to Upsidaisi, I noted a gleam of intelligence in Tom-Tom's green eyes. I began to wonder, but I had no time to frame a definite thought, for, with a prolonged meow, Tom-Tom scratched on the floor vigorously, and my accustomed ears soon made out, through the bewildering succession of dots and dashes, another message in the Morse code.

"Where is that blamed Mouse?" it said. "My Kittens are about to be weaned and require solid food."

There was a terrible cry of pain from the shelf, and before I could protest or interfere in any way, Little Upsidaisi was out of the cabin, running like mad, with Tom-Tom in full pursuit. Instinctively, I followed them—through the dense undergrowth, over open fields, through barbed wire fences, along unblazed forest trails, and so on, with Upsidaisi always several lengths in the lead.

Even if I would, I could not interfere, and I had long since learned that it is the truest kindness to let the animals fight it out among themselves, since the fittest must survive and the weakest be crushed to the wall.

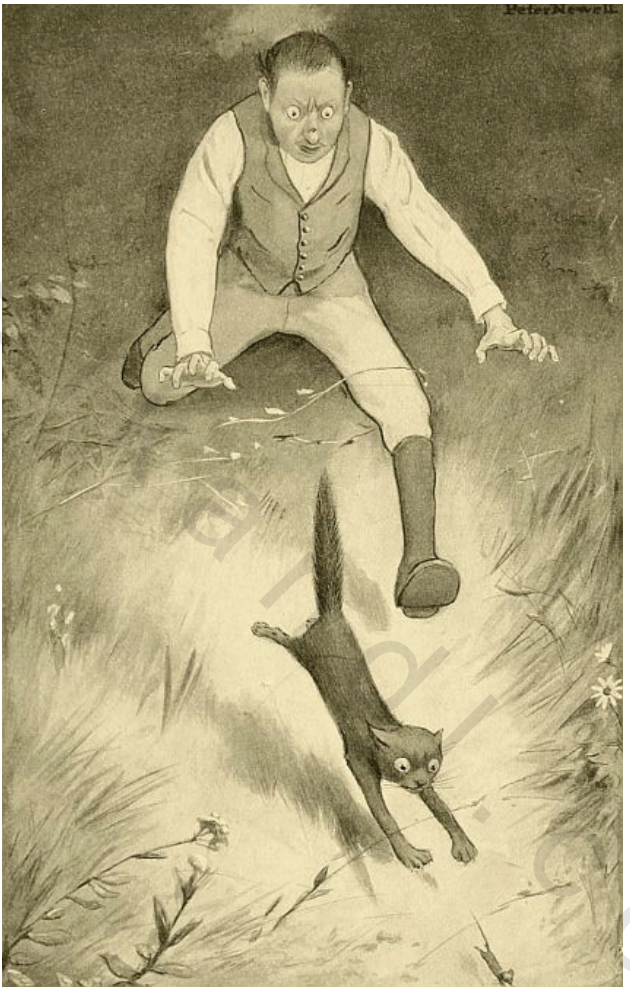
Now and then I heard a sob from the grass, where the Mouse was running in deathly fear, and deep, harsh breathings from Tom-Tom, who was now gaining his second wind and plunging ever closer to his hapless victim. A little ahead was the railroad track, which much surprised me. I had been so interested that I had kept no account of the distance and it came to me with something of a shock that we had run over ten miles.

On went the mad struggle for life. There was a whistle near by, and I knew the express was coming. Upsidaisi was nowhere in sight, and Tom-Tom was nosing through the long grass eagerly. Then there was a little glimmer of white and silver in the sun, and Upsidaisi flew across the track just as the express rounded the curve. Tom-Tom followed, heedless of his danger, and the cow-catcher, striking his tense body, threw him so far up into the air that the corpse has not yet been recovered.

I stood aghast at the fiendish cleverness of it. Little Upsidaisi had decoyed his enemy to the track, at the very moment the express was to pass!

Scarcely conscious of what I did, I picked up the exhausted Mouse and walked home in a brown study. My soul was torn with grief at the loss of my pet, but the new facts in Natural History that I had learned were worth some sacrifice.

As I sat at my table, writing in my journal, I heard a low, mournful sound from the shelf and then the words, tapped out in the Morse code: “Forgive me; I had to do it.”



“Instinctively, I followed them.”

I foolishly paid no attention, but went on writing down the noble ideas that surged hotly through my brain. Later on—I shall never know how much later—I heard the dull sound of

a falling body, and the pungent odour of cyanide of potassium filled the room. The bottle of it which I kept on the shelf to attract butterflies had been opened and drained to the dregs.

Close by it, with the glaze of death over his bright eyes, lay Upsidaisi. Heart-broken by my coldness, the little Mouse had committed suicide.

Little feet, little feet, shall I see your delicate tracery no more around the door of my cabin in the wilderness? The end of a wild animal is always a tragedy.

JAGG, THE SKOOTAWAY GOAT

After the tragical deaths of Tom-Tom and Upsidaisi, my life was strangely lonely. No one who has not experienced it can realise the subtle, almost spiritual attachment which may exist between man and his kindred of the wild. The Squirrels barked at each other, but there was no bark for me except on the oak tree at my cabin door. The little Birds sang, but not for me. Whenever I approached a thicket where the woodland chorus was in rehearsal, trying to learn the Bird-calls which are printed in the books, there was a spontaneous silence which seemed to possess a positive rather than a negative quality.

I felt like a marked man. In my fevered fancy I could hear the wood creatures saying to one another: "There goes the man who lived with Little Upsidaisi. By the way, have you seen Upsidaisi lately? What a brute the man looks, to be sure! Come, let us skip, while we have the time."

So it was that I seemed to be the centre of an ever-widening circle of departure. Feet pattered away from me in a continual diminuendo, dying at last into that mournful, unchanging silence which encompassed me like a blanket of gloom. It is not my intention to depress the reader, but the scientific observer must make accurate records, and my mental state at the time may have been partially responsible for what followed.

Regularly, I took my walk of fourteen miles into town. At first I had contented myself with weekly visits to the post-office, but as the returned manuscripts augmented, I went every morning and took my simple breakfast at a restaurant. For some occult reason, I have never been able to make coffee even remotely resembling that customarily prepared by my immediate ancestor on the feminine side.

The long, business-like envelopes which I received every morning contributed largely to my local importance, and the gossip of the place buzzed eternally about my head. According to some, I was an insurance agent. Others admitted me to the bar without examination, and a certain keen observer, well up in the guileful ways of commerce, thought I had paid two dollars to get my name on somebody's "list," thereby being guaranteed "lots of mail."

Fortunately, no hint of my true calling escaped, and the rejection blanks continued to accumulate. I have preserved these with the idea of incorporating them in a psychological treatise on The Gentle Art of Turning Down, which will be printed as soon as I get a publisher for the noble, epoch-making volume upon which I am at present engaged.

I had learned that editors were variable, and were not always what they seemed. A rejection was merely an indication of the man's mood at the time he got my piece, and I have, more than once, sold the same thing to him later for a goodly sum. I offer no explanation of this, as my field is limited to animal, rather than human observations, and the Labour Union to which I belong is very strict in such matters. I may be permitted to add, however, that one editor, to whom I sent a mental fledgling for the second or third time, wrote me a personal letter in which he said that he was no more of a fool now than he was three months ago. I do not know what he could have meant by the statement, but I record it in the hope that someone else may.

For a long period there had been nothing in my note-book but maltese crosses and items pertaining to the weather and to my daily tasks. One morning it rained so hard that I was obliged to postpone my walk to town until afternoon. I

made the journey in the usual time, secured the customary number of returned manuscripts, and bought stamps to send them out again. I thought, as I turned away, that the pursuit of literature was little more than sending out manuscripts to get money to buy stamps to send out manuscripts to get money to buy stamps to send out manuscripts to get money to buy stamps to—but I forbear. My meditations ran on like this for three pages or more, and the end was like the beginning, so what's the use?

As I approached the station, I saw several of my fellow-townsmen headed for the north-east. They had a determined, yet pleasantly excited air which interested me, and I went back to make inquiries of the postmaster.

"Where are they going?" I asked.

"Hey?"

"I asked where they were going."

"Who?"

I inclined my head toward the company on the far horizon. I could not incline it much, for it was heavy, being full of books.

"Oh," said the postmaster. "Them. Over to Porcupine Hill."

"Porcupine Hill!" I repeated in astonishment. "Where is it?"

"Follow your nose," he replied, somewhat brusquely, slamming down the window in a way which indicated that the interview was ended.

My pulses throbbed with new joy, for here, at last, was a diversion. I lost no time in following my nose, first taking the precaution to point that useful organ in a bee-line with the disappearing company. Ultimately I joined them, to their surprise if not their pleasure.

"We're late," said one of them. "The show's just beginning."

I quickened my steps to a run, and was presently brought up

with a round turn against a rope stretched across the foot of the hill. Several strange-looking balls were rolling from the crest toward us, and a man with a note-book was registering bets, all of which, however, were in small coin.

"What is it?" I inquired in a loud, clear voice which commanded instant attention.

"Porcupines," answered a courteous gentleman in blue overalls, a hickory shirt, and one suspender. "Every afternoon at two, when it ain't raining, they roll down that there hill."

"You be n't a detective, be you?" asked an agitated voice at my elbow. It was the postmaster.

"I am not," I returned, with freezing dignity.

"All right," continued the postmaster. "Here, bookie, ten to one on Salina Ann. Salina's a high roller," he explained, turning to me, "but she ain't in this race."

The Porcupines came in at our feet, a huge dark one rolling under the wire three lengths ahead. Dizzy, exhausted, and panting, he sat up straight for a moment, launched a playful quill at the bookmaker, and shambled off around the hillside.

Upon the crest of a distant hill, a single figure sat in monumental silence. It had two points at the top, and I wondered what it might be. At last I concluded that it was a rock.

Throughout the long, sunny afternoon, I watched the interesting pastime with keen enjoyment. Had not my exchequer been so pitifully low, I should have staked a dime or so myself upon Salina Ann. She won three races in succession and finally retired, giddy, but triumphant.

When the last race was over, as much as four dollars had changed hands, and there were loud protests against the system of bookmaking employed. As an outsider, I was appealed to, but I declined to interfere, and, remembering the long four-

teen-mile walk which lay between me and my cabin, I loosened up for the home stretch, noting, as I started, that the peculiar, pointed rock had disappeared from the opposite hill.

During the ninth mile from the Porcupine track, I was acutely conscious of observation. Little Brothers of the Woods can always feel the bright eyes that are turned upon them from the thickets. I paused several times, but heard nothing and saw nothing, though I put on my glasses and thus gained a sort of second sight.

Afterward, I meditated. Perhaps the ban upon me had been removed and the forest folk no longer feared to look at me. I made one maltese cross in my note-book, drawing a red circle about it to indicate possibilities, and entered a full account of the Porcupine race, which so far, according to my knowledge, has been described by only one other writer.

My sleep was more nearly normal that night than it had been since the lamentable occurrences chronicled in the previous chapter.

For a time, my life was as usual. I arose in the morning, just before sunrise, and took a cold bath in the lake. Then I built a fire and made coffee. I had postponed my trips to town until afternoon in order to attend the Porcupine races, and this condemned me to drink my own coffee, but many sacrifices must be made by the earnest student. I would wash the dishes, swishing them back and forth in the lake, sweep and dust the cabin, and, by nine o'clock, be ready to devote myself to literature.

I worked until twelve, when I prepared luncheon, cleared up again, cut wood if I needed it, and started for town. I had timed myself and learned that it took me just forty minutes to walk the fourteen miles. I thus had ample time to go to the post-office, and usually reached Porcupine Hill a few minutes before the entertainment began.

It must have been two weeks later that, in the same section of the homeward trail, I again felt myself keenly observed. It was disquieting, more especially as I beat about among the bushes for a long time without finding anything. I meditated that night in two separate meditations of one hour each, but came to no conclusions.

By the pitiless light of high noon and the baldly truthful report of my grandmother's cracked mirror, opportunely left in the cabin, I discovered that I was moulting at the top, and cast about for some means to remedy the condition, not caring to be a front row observer at the noble drama of Unnatural History. While in town that day, I purchased a small flask of whiskey, as I had seen in the beauty columns, more than once, that it was a good hair tonic, but I did not know whether to apply it internally or externally.

I attended the Porcupine race that afternoon, and lost forty-three cents on Salina Ann, who flunked miserably every time. Much depressed, I started homeward, just at sunset, and, in a quiet place, I attempted to improve my spirits by taking a teaspoonful of the hair tonic. I learned immediately that the remedy was not meant to be used internally, and I did not doubt that external application would produce a crop of tresses which might well be the envy of a professional musician.

A little nearer my cabin than before, I was once more conscious of the fact that I was not alone. Somewhat excited, I crept into the thicket and swung my knapsack about violently. I distinctly detected a strange odour, which was like nothing else on earth, but otherwise all was as usual except for an inexplicable breeze blowing directly against the wind. Fancy an Indian blanket, of Angora wool, which has been used by three tribes indiscriminately, year in and year out, in sick-

ness and in health, hanging on a clothes line with a high wind blowing. Let the wind be blowing from the east and the scientific observer be standing just west of the blanket. It will give you a faint idea of what I met in the thicket, though at the time I wrongly attributed it to the misapplication of the hair tonic.

On reaching my cabin I discovered that the flask had dropped out of my knapsack when I swung it through the undergrowth, but, rather than go back, I determined to spend another fifty cents the next day, provided that I could do so without drawing upon myself unjust suspicion.

The next day—ah, with what emotion I write those words! How little do we dream, as we close our eyes in peaceful slumber, what the next day may bring forth! Careless, happy, even whistling as was my wont, I performed my simple household tasks, rejoicing in the fragrant morning air, the cheery chatter of the Squirrels, and the progress of the pan of bread I was baking over my open fire.

From the woods at the left came a brisk breeze. Someone seemed to be airing a blanket such as I have described above. Before I had time to investigate, a huge white ball rolled toward me, with no visible means of propulsion. There was no incline and the speed of it was tremendous. Deep, pointed excavations marked the trail over which it came, and my hair was raised far beyond the potential power of the lost tonic. So swiftly that I was breathless with wonder, the thing rolled into my fire.

Then there was a shrill cry of pain, but the momentum was too great, and it went straight on through, stopping on the other side of my woodland hearthstone, singed, and apparently dead. Trembling with excitement, I made my way toward it, but before I could offer my sympathetic assistance, it had assorted itself and was standing up on four singed and shaky legs.

It was Jagg.

How a Goat had penetrated that fastness, where the hands of few white men had ever trod, was beyond me, but it was a condition and not a theory which confronted me. Here, at my hospitable door, so lately made desolate by the departure of Tom-Tom and Little Upsidaisi, was a new and wonderful creature. The singeing had overpowered the Indian blanket motif and made way for the softer notes of the hair tonic. Jagg was plainly intoxicated, and immediately upon my recognition of it, I named him.

His suffering was pathetic. The burns were merely superficial, but he was very much soiled, and his head was swollen far beyond its normal limits. His tongue, which he promptly offered for my inspection, was dark brown and fuzzy. He sat down, stroked his brow wearily with one of his four feet (fore, if you prefer), and stuttered out an hysterical bleat.

My friends in the telegraph office used to characterise me occasionally as a Goat, and I am not prepared to admit that there is not something in the theory of reincarnation, for at that moment a great pity dominated me.

"Jagg, old man," I said, tenderly, "you have misjudged your capacity and you are full. Come."

He followed me into the cabin, eager, yet shamefaced, and I lifted him to my bed. I anointed his burns with carron oil and tied a cold wet bandage over his temples. He was only an ordinary Goat, with the customary tuft of spinach in the maxillary region, now badly singed, but there was something very human in the grateful look he gave me just before closing his eyes for twenty-one hours of sodden sleep.

I rolled up in an extra blanket that night and slept on the floor of the cabin, rather than disturb Jagg. We might have slept together without violating any of the precepts of The

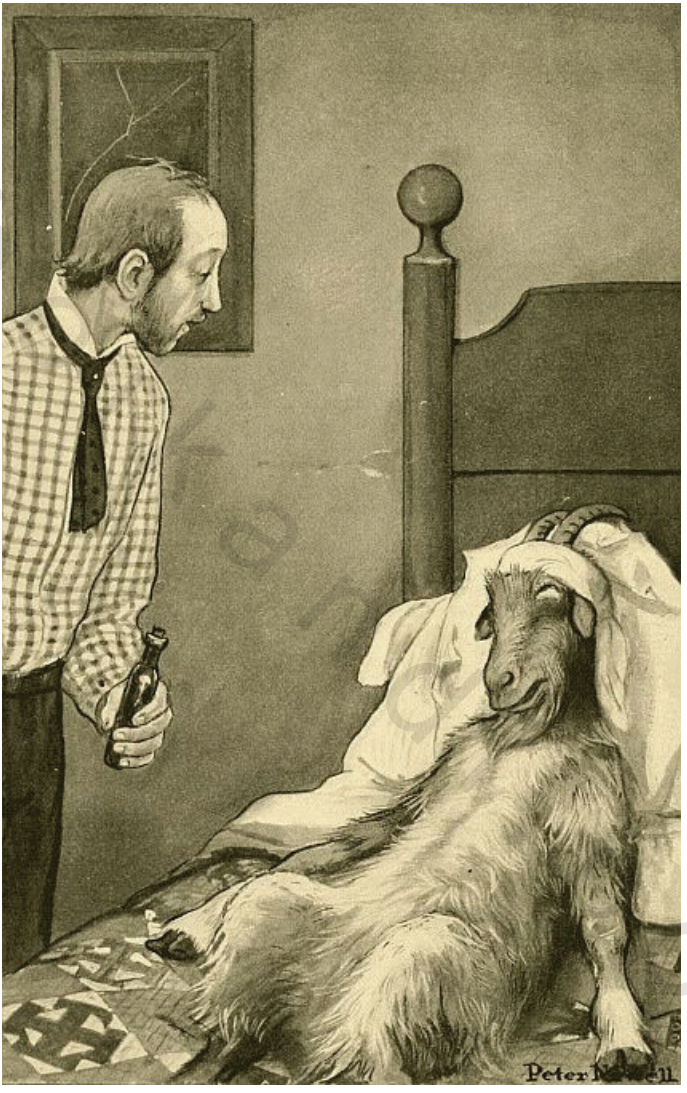
Ladies' Own, for, even in high circles, people often sleep with Kids, but my natural instincts were against it and I let Jagg have the bed.

In the morning, I closely scrutinised the ground over which my butter-ball had come. At regular intervals were the deep, pointed excavations before referred to, and I surmised that they had been made by his horns. In them I appropriately planted goatsrue. My grandmother had left some seeds of this herb on the shelf in the cabin, and I had been intending to plant them for some time.

I followed the trail into the woods until I came to the thicket where I had felt myself observed. The empty flask lay on the ground and corroborated my suspicions. The branches were broken down all through the shrubbery, and the bare earth was thick with tiny hoof-marks in prints of two and three which were strangely suggestive of a waltz.

When I went back, Jagg came out of the cabin, very pale and repentant, blinking sleepily and wagging his insignificant tail. I spoke a few kind words to him and we breakfasted together.

In less than a week he had recovered his spirits, and his devotion to me was really extraordinary. He followed me like an unpaid bill and never took his eyes away from me except to sleep. At night he lay like a dog in my cabin door, whither he had dragged his bed, and usually waked me by prodding me playfully, in some sensitive spot, with the sharp tip of one of his horns.



“There was something very human in the grateful look he gave me just before closing his eyes.”

There was something mysterious in his eyes. They were fairly human in their expressiveness, and his intelligence was also of that high order which Man proudly claims as his own. I discovered it accidentally.

Most hermits, I find, are wont to relieve their solitude by declaiming poetry, and I was no exception to the rule. I knew all of Thanatopsis and most of The Ancient Mariner. When I recited these, Jagg always listened with an air of polite interest. One morning, however, as I built my fire, I chanced to repeat Cowper's beautiful lines beginning: "O for a lodge in some vast wilderness!"

Immediately my attention was attracted by Jagg. He tore about madly, giving every evidence of joy, bleating loudly, and furiously wagging his stub of a tail. He stood on his head, rising at once to the perpendicular, then as swiftly reversed. Something happened then which I could not explain, and I rubbed my eyes in wonder. A moment before he had been there and now he was nowhere in sight. I never learned how he did it, for he moved too rapidly for the eye to follow, but, according to my theory, he put his four feet together and with a single powerful muscular effort shot himself into space, alighting perhaps a quarter of a mile distant, and returning when he pleased. This gave him his sub-title in my records: "The Skootaway Goat."

At first I was overjoyed to have the faithful animal with me, but, by insensible degrees, his companionship began to pall. He went with me once to the Porcupine race, but speedily made both of us unpopular. Again, I locked him into the cabin, but no sooner had I returned than I regretted it. He ate one of my note-books and thereby many priceless observations are lost to the world.

I bought a rope and tied him to a tree, but he joined me at Porcupine Hill with evident satisfaction at the reunion. I got a long chain from the village and this foiled him only once. He filed it apart with tooth and horn and acquired so insatiable an appetite for cold metal that he even hunted my pockets at night for coins. Canned goods were eaten, tin and all, as soon as I brought them home. I began to perceive, dimly, that I must part with Jagg, and ultimately regarded the notion as a relief measure passed by an overwhelming majority.

Yet ways and means were lacking, and also, possibly, the initiative. He had grown into a very handsome animal by this time, and I was so accustomed to him that the woods had an unfriendly, alien smell when I fared forth alone. I had given up the thought of tying him, and he usually went with me, quite as a matter of course.

At the post-office one morning, I received a letter from my lawyers, stating that I had fallen heir to another ancestral estate about one hundred miles south of my present habitation. My grandfather on my mother's side had just been reaped, and this testimonial of his affection was left to me.

I folded the letter idly and stood for some moments, lost in deep thought. Jagg snatched it out of my hand and ate it, but not before I had made myself master of its contents. Later on, I was thankful for the ponderous verbiage with which the idea was practically swamped, though, as it happened, the obscurity was useless, the legal description of the property being appended.

Jagg ruminated for some time upon the letter, but experienced no personal discomfort. He was very intelligent and doubtless believed, with the great Macaulay, that "a page digested is better than a book hurriedly read."

Still we lived together—that is, Jagg lived, and I existed. The sight of him, through constant attrition, became an annoyance, and finally an irritation. He ate my clothes, tore all the love scenes out of my small but choice library of fiction, and took my article on Natural History Shams to ornament the head of his bed.

Before long I discovered an infallible method of communicating with him. I would write my remarks on a small slip of paper, in my fine Italian hand, and feed the paper to Jagg. As soon as it was assimilated into his system, he understood, but his answers were limited. He could shake his head when he meant "no" and nod when he meant "yes." A bleat, of indescribable tonality, meant that he was unfamiliar with the topic, or else prevented by his personal handicap from making any sort of an explanation.

For instance, one fine morning, just at sunrise, I wrote: "Jagg, I am going to the village this afternoon. Will you be a nice Goatie and stay at home?"

At nine o'clock, he grasped my meaning. Coming close to my knee he looked up into my face with an expression of adoring love, and sadly but firmly shook his head. I never knew him to lie, and at noon, when I started, Jagg rioted along beside me.

In town, by this time, they had decided that I was an editor on my Summer vacation, and they used to call us "The Two Bocks." For some reason, this irritated me to such an extent that I was ready to lay out Jagg on his last bier, but I forebore to pull the trigger through a lingering belief in re-incarnation. Suppose Jagg were my grandmother, or some other distinguished ancestor? Moreover, I knew, through the subtle workings of some sixth sense, that I could not lose him before his time.

It happened that the county authorities stopped the Porcupine races by building barriers of chicken-coop netting here and there across the hill, and the inhabitants of the village, to a man, blamed me for it. I protested my innocence, but I was an outsider and my efforts were futile. The gambling laws are rightfully stringent, but Lambs gambol, so why not Porcupines?

"'Tain't no use o' lyin' about it," said the postmaster, shifting his quid, "you've had it in fer us ever since Salina Ann lost you that there forty-three cents. It was a day for the mud-larks and was heavy goin', and you should have known better than to bet on her, but you seemed to have a hunch. It's a gent's sport, partook of by gents, and you'd orter be able to take defeat like a gent, or else," he added, with bitter emphasis, "git!"

Two days later, a boycott was proclaimed against me.

I could buy nothing in the village except postage stamps, and I must either move or starve.

My heart was heavy, then I thought of my new possessions and the cloud lifted. My medical adviser had chased me out of town until September first, so I still had a month to live outdoors. I would go, I decided—and I would lose Jagg. I did not doubt his ability to get his living—he had got mine, whenever I had brought canned goods home.

I wrote out one morning: "Jagg, I am going to clean house," and fed him the slip. An hour or so later he came to me and nodded intelligently, but I could see the lingering sadness upon his visage and, for the first time, it struck me that Jagg might once have been married.

Under this safe disguise, I packed my things and swept out the cabin with a broom and a pail of water. Jagg watched me intently, and I saw that I would have to deceive him if I

escaped. I pondered long after I had resolved myself into a committee of ways and means, but my bright ideas were all packed away with moth balls on the high shelf of my mind until such time as I could get to my typewriter and begin anew the bombardment of the magazines.

That night we sat in darkness, for Jagg had made a light luncheon of the only remaining candle, but I was patient and bided my time, knowing that on the morrow I would give him the last slip.

In the morning I began to scrub the cabin vigorously. When I went after another cake of soap, I saw that there was nothing left but a piece of the wrapper about the size of a curl paper, and, since I have the usual masculine aversion to curl papers and wrappers, I gave an exclamation of horror.

Jagg's guilty face betrayed him, and I hastened to my table. "If you ate that soap," I wrote, "you will have to stay here while I go to town for more. If you ate it, nod, and if you are willing to stay, nod. It will be better for you if you decide to stay." These last words I underlined with red ink to give them a sinister significance.

After assimilation, Jagg came to me and nodded twice. He was evidently sincere in his repentance, so I took my suit case, and my note-books, and set out for the station with a light heart. He sat in the door of the cabin, watching me wistfully, and the old, familiar, Indian-blanket odour sensibly decreased as I progressed.

When I boarded the train, he was nowhere in sight, and my pulses throbbed with exultation. Freedom at last, after weeks of Jagg! It was too good to believe.

I found my new cabin occupied by a morose, hickory-shirted individual christened "Abadiah," but known simply as

"Ab." He refused to believe that I was the rightful owner of the place, and I had no way of proving it, as my evidence had been eaten. He said he'd just "squat" round there until he saw a written order to move out, and I made the best of a bad bargain. There were two cots in the cabin, so I did not mind particularly, and it was not altogether unpleasant to have someone of my own species with me after my long isolation. Weary, but foolishly light-hearted, I went to sleep. When I awoke, I had the same old uneasy feeling of being watched, and, rubbing my eyes, I saw, sitting on the foot of my cot—who should it be but Jagg, chewing the cud of reflection?

An old silk hat was wedged tightly over his horns, there was a baleful gleam of mockery in his singularly human eyes, and around his neck was tied an ordinary express tag, which was inscribed, simply: "Please pass the Butter." Where he had obtained it, I do not know, but he had evidently taken the next train.

When Ab woke up, he viewed the new arrival with disfavour, which was promptly reciprocated by said arrival.

"Likely lookin' animile," grunted Ab. "Whose is it?"

"It seems to be ours," I answered, with a hollow laugh.

"Smells like thunder, don't it?" asked Ab.

Jagg bleated five times in rapid succession and plunged out into the fresh air, then turned toward the spring where we got our drinking water and took off the brakes. Before any one could prevent him, he had taken a bath in the spring and emerged dripping wet, with his hat still on.

Ab's disgust knew no bounds. "Bilin' the water won't help it none now," he said. "Reckon we'll have to drink bug juice." He drew a flask from his pocket and took a long draught, smacking his lips with evident enjoyment.

Here Jagg did his Skootaway stunt, and Ab blinked. There was not even a glimmer of white in the air—one merely had the impression that something had gone by.

"Say, pardner," said Ab, brokenly, "tell me the truth. Have I got 'em, or was there a Goat with a plug hat on settin' here a minute ago?"

"The Goat and the hat were both here," I assured him, and he sighed in relief. "I suppose," he continued, meditatively, "that we both orter take the pledge."

Jagg returned in time for breakfast and sat opposite us. The dislike between him and Ab speedily ripened into hate, and I could see that a catastrophe was due before long, but I made no allusion to it.

"What be you goin' to call the beast?" asked Ab.

"Haven't thought about it," I returned, shortly.

"I suppose he wouldn't need to be called," remarked Ab. "He seems to be here most of the time."

I smiled as pleasantly as could be expected under the circumstances, and Ab went on with his part of the sketch. "Too bad he ain't a Sheep."

"Why?" I asked, seeing that he was waiting for the question.

"Had a fool friend once," observed Ab, "with one of them high-toned stock farms. He had one cussed old Sheep of some fancy breed that he paid five thousand dollars for. The boys used to call him Hi-ram."

I made no answer, being busy with the dishes, and Ab retreated into the shrubbery. "Say," he yelled, from a respectful distance, "be you English?"

My blood burned to be at him, but I did not wish to quarrel with the only human being for miles around, nor to lower myself to the level of my kindred of the wild, who fight it out with

claw and tooth and fang. Jagg, who was sitting near me, snorted loudly with anger and the hair on the back of his neck bristled. He came to me, and by repeated significant gestures made me understand that he wished me to remove his hat. I did so, but with difficulty.

When Ab appeared at dinner time, Jagg took no apparent notice of him. The kettle was singing cheerily and the delicious scent of the frying bacon was abroad in the landscape. "Ab," I called, "get some more sticks and put them on the fire." He bent over the cheerful flame and replenished the blaze with an armful of chips which he had found in the woods. Jagg was not a part of the domestic scene and I did not know where he was, but I heard a loud imprecation, saw Ab careening madly in midair, and fancied that I saw a glimmer of white just over the shrubbery.

My quick, active mind at once inferred that I should have to add Ab's biography to my great work: The Lives of the Bunted. Nothing was said, and on the surface, at least, all things were as usual, but I saw the red gleam of implacable hate in the faces of my two companions, and dreaded the deadly combat which must soon take place.

For a week or more there was comparative peace, then, one morning when I opened my cabin door to admit the fresh air of dawn, I saw a pathetic sight. On my threshold, faithful to the last, was Jagg, stark and stiff and cold in death.

He lay flat on his back, his eyes wide open, and his feet were at right angles to his body. The rigor mortis had already set in to such an extent that I felt as if I had struck a picket fence when I endeavoured to pass. It was characteristic of him, perhaps, that he could not even die without arranging some kind of a trap for me to fall into. I was obliged to move him before I could

get outdoors, and the undertaking proved unusually difficult.
I gave him a decent burial, and painted him a headstone, but I never saw Ab again. The Goat's body was bloated in a way which led me to suspect poison, and, as time goes on, my suspicion becomes stronger, for the end of a wild animal is always a tragedy, and Jagg was unquestionably wild.

SNOOF

I passed the remaining weeks of my exile in hermit-like solitude. I was not disposed to make further studies in my chosen calling, and time hung heavily upon my hands. I checked off the days upon my calendar with red ink, so that I should not become confused and miss the date of my departure. Having been shipped out of town until September first, to save my life, I did not intend to sacrifice it by returning on August thirty-first. "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well,"—a trite copy-book maxim, that, but none the less a true one.
The English language, vast as it is, can convey no adequate idea of my longing for civilisation. The rush and roar of city life, the loud-voiced clangour of commerce, and the fine, inspiring click of my telegraph instrument would have been music to me. I packed up, ready to start at one minute after twelve on the night of my release. Happily, there was a train at a quarter past one, and I could get to town in time for breakfast. From the time of my packing until I set off on the long trail, at one minute after twelve, by my jewelled repeater, I experienced the discomfort of those who have moved mentally, but are still clamped, physically, to the places they have moved from.
My stern fidelity to truth compels me to record the fact that my arrival in the city was not as pleasing as I had fancied it

would be. The noise was terrible, and before eating my simple breakfast at a quick-lunch counter, I was obliged to stuff cotton into my ears. This did not prevent me from hearing the candid comments made upon my personal appearance by the pretty waitresses.

"Uncle Rube, from Hayville," observed a dashing blonde to her giggling companion. "Pipe the alfalfa on the jay's mug," said another. At this there were hissing murmurs of: "Sh-h! He'll hear you!" "Naw," said the speaker, "he's deef. He's calked his listeners with white fur. Bet his wife had a hand in it. She don't want him to bring home no gold bricks in his carpet-bag."

The talk had risen to such a crescendo pitch that passers-by were fain to take an interest in it, and it seemed to me that it was time to interfere.

"Young ladies," I said, clearing my throat, "I have neither wife nor carpet-bag. I have calked my listeners, as you concisely put it, to keep the chatter of green parrots from interfering with my noteworthy meditations. I am a Scientist—an unchristian Scientist, I may add, and I shall take pleasure in sending a copy of The Ladies' Own to this restaurant for the guidance of the help. Read it carefully, study it, ponder over its noble precepts, and it will enable you to win the respect of your employer and his customers."

In the midst of a profound silence I walked out, discovering two blocks farther on that I still held the green check calling for fifteen cents. I bought two copies of The Ladies' Own and sent a boy back with them, thus more than repaying my indebtedness.

I determined to report at my physician's office before returning to my apartments. In the reception-room of his

suite, I first caught a glimpse of myself in a mirror, and was compelled to admit that I looked seedy. My hair, which had not been cut for over three months, hung down over my collar in the manner of Buffalo Bill's, and I had a thirteen weeks' growth of undisciplined beard upon my erstwhile smooth countenance. My linen, also, was questionable.

Finally, I was admitted, and my medical adviser gasped out something which sounded like "gosh," but which doubtless was not, since he is a perfect gentleman.

"Dear friend," I cried, advancing with outstretched hands, "I have come to thank you for my life!"

"Don't mention it," he returned, modestly. "I assure you, it is nothing worth speaking of."

"When I left you," I continued, "I was a physical wreck. Behold me now! I have lived next to the ground and studied the ways of those wonderful creatures whom, in our arrogant self-esteem, we call the lower animals. I have had for my friends all the wood folk—Upsidaisi, the Field Mouse, Unk Munk, the Porcupine, Ka-Ka, the Pole-Cat, Tom-Tom, the felinis simpaticus, Kitchi-Kitchi, the Red Squirrel, Hoop-La, Sing-Sing, Pitti-Bird, Chee-Wee——"

Here my medical adviser interrupted me. "Mr. Johnson-Sit-down," he said, wearily, "as this is my busy day, it will be a kindness if you will put the remainder of that into a phonograph and have it sent. The collection of Chinese laundry checks is doubtless interesting and valuable, but I am obliged to specialise in my own line. Permit me to give you another prescription."

He rose from his chair, handed me a bit of folded paper, and opened the door. My Summer in the wilderness had so sharpened my naturally acute senses, that I instantly per-

ceived my friend's wish to be alone, and accordingly, with rare tact, I bowed myself out. How I pitied the man who could not be a hermit except between patients! Nevertheless, one must have patience before one can be a hermit.

At the first drug store I handed in the prescription, and the clerk returned presently with the remark that they did not keep it. I asked him where I could find it, and he suggested a barber-shop.

Outside, I opened the prescription. It read as follows:

"1 bath, repeat twice daily,
3 shaves,
8 hair cuts,
New clothes."

I spent the rest of the day and all the money I had left in explicitly following out the directions of my gifted friend. In the morning I was back at my desk.

Throughout the Winter I spent my evenings studying Natural History and writing out my own experiences for the magazines. A boom was on in this kind of literature and the supply was not at all equal to the demand, so, in place of the returned manuscripts, I speedily acquired some sort of a vogue. Doubtless the reader will remember that I had some pieces, carefully edited, in The Ladies' Own and The Girlie's Close Companion. Meanwhile my income was pleasurably increased, and I shortly became so independent that I wholly ignored those miserable sheets which pay "on publication" and publish when they like. I planned to quit work entirely during the warm months, and this choice morsel of news was noised about among the literary editors. In more than one

paper I read that "Mr. O. Sitdown-Johnson Johnson-Sitdown, the well-known naturalist, will spend the Summer in Yellowstone Park, studying the animals of that region." Before I left town, I had contracted for the publication of all the work I could do—and more, too, as it afterward proved.

That was a great year for Bears, and all through the West they were unusually abundant. Cattle and sheep were killed on the range, chicken coops rifled, and provisions stolen from the lumber camps. In fact, the nuisance became so great that a bounty was put upon Bear pelts in more than one State and every trail was practically barricaded with traps.

Indians coming in reported that the woods were vocal with low, mournful sounds which, in every case, originated at the Bear traps. When a Bear was caught in a deadfall, his mate, or her mate, as the case might be, would sit by, holding the poor head in tender arms, and rock back and forth, moaning, until the men came to remove the body. Considerations of safety alone would put the bereaved mate to flight. This is the law of the wilderness—self-preservation first, the old, primeval instinct, supported by claw and tooth and fang and the swift pace down the trail.

Other observers have found two instances only of a Bear sitting by the trap, holding its dead mate in its arms, and moaning. Whether I was more fortunate or more observing, it is not for me to say, but that year, and in that locality, the woods were full of it.

Naturally, with all this material at my disposal, I made up my mind to study Bears first. I had not been in the Geyser House three minutes before I was out in the kitchen, making earnest inquiries of the cook and scullery maids. I learned, to my delight, that Bears came to the back door every day,

and that by sitting on the step, I might see them. One of the scullery maids suggested to me that I peel the potatoes as I sat there. It seemed that the odour of this succulent root was very attractive to Bears, and, in fact, they never came to the back door except when potatoes were being peeled.

There were few guests at the Geyser House, as it was comparatively early in the season, but I studied the register carefully. Upon it, in an angular hand, I noted the names of "Mrs. Miranda Kirsten," and "Miss Miranda Kirsten." For some reason, these names moved me profoundly, and I was still thinking of them when I fell asleep.

In the morning, when I went down to breakfast, a lady and a child were seated at my table. At once, I knew who they were. The mother ignored me, but the little girl's eyes were fastened upon me with tender interest. While she was engaged in contemplating me, she choked on her near-food, and doubtless would have strangled had I not with swift presence of mind gone to the rescue. I grasped the child, reversed her, and swung her back and forth by the heels until the section of straw mattress which she had vainly attempted to swallow was dislodged from the main line of her bronchial system.

"Dear sir, kind sir," said the mother, with tears in her eyes, as I put the thoroughly frightened child into her outstretched arms, "how shall I ever thank you for preserving my daughter's life!"

"Do not mention it," I replied, in the happy and appropriate words of my medical adviser; "I assure you, it is nothing worth speaking of."

"Sir-r-r-r!" exclaimed the mother, in a freezing tone.

"I mean, dear Mrs. Kirsten," I went on, in my best manner, "that I am accustomed to it. From Maine to San Francisco, every Summer, it has been my good fortune to save the lives

of unnumbered children who have choked upon near-food."
Here the little Miranda slipped out of her mother's arms and came to me. "Pitty man," she said, placing her hand upon mine with tender confidence. "Baby loves 'oo."
That settled it. I was at once restored to the mother's good graces, and we chatted pleasantly all through breakfast.
Immediately afterward, with my camera and my notebooks, I went out to see Bears. I felt, rather than heard the animals, for, as every observer knows, the soft, padded feet of a Bear make no noise whatever upon the trail.
I walked along as carefully as possible, but saw nothing to photograph until the path turned. There, sitting up on her haunches, not twenty paces from me, was a large black Bear! Her Cub, also upon his haunches, was about a yard and three-eighths behind her, and I realised that my situation was serious. I had no weapon—the authorities do not allow weapons of any description to be carried in the Park, except the pen, which is mightier than the sword, but no use to anybody in an emergency like mine unless it is a Bear pen. If I turned and ran, she would doubtless follow me and overtake me long before I reached the hotel. In fact, I was sure that I never should reach it, if the Bear followed me. There was nothing left for me to do but to try the power of the human eye.
Now, as everyone knows, Bears are near-sighted, and I was almost upon the animal before she saw me. Then she gave a loud "S-n-o-o-f!" and ran into the depths of the forest, her Cub so hot upon her trail that he might have stepped on it and torn it.
So great was my relief that I laughed aloud, but I could not help wondering what would have happened if the Bear had been more near-sighted than she was. Nature gives the animals what they most desire—the silent wing to the Owl,

the keen claws to the Panther, and the soft walk to the Bear. I walked about for some little time, but saw no more Bears. I chronicled the incident in my note-book, immediately, naming the mother "Snoof," and the Cub "Snooflet." I supposed she was one of those who had been widowed by the traps in the forest outside of the Park limits, but inquiry at the hotel assured me that both she and her Cub were well known. I was told, also, that if I wished to see Bears, I must go to the garbage heap, a mile away from the Geyser House.

That night, as we sat upon the veranda of the hotel, I regaled Mrs. Kirsten and the little girl with the story of my morning's adventure. The moon was shining brightly, and my fair companion had the immemorial charm of the widow, with the added witchery of moonlight. Together, the combination was a powerful one.

Miranda climbed into my lap and nestled sleepily in the hollow of my arm. "Tell me," said Mrs. Kirsten, in a soft, musical voice, "why are you here?"

"Because you are," I responded, gallantly. "Why are you here?"

"On Miranda's account," she said, shortly. She snatched the sleeping child out of my arms, and in less time than it takes to tell it, she was gone.

I waited nearly three hours, but she did not return, so I went off into the Park a little way to compose my thoughts for the night. In a clearing, four miles from the hotel, I came upon a strange sight. Snoof sat on her haunches, with one arm around her Cub. With her free paw, she was pointing to the heavens, outlining, as I shortly saw, the constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor for her offspring. Reverently removing my hat, I tiptoed away. Truly, maternal devotion has depths far beyond my ken.

In the night, I saw Snoof and Mrs. Kirsten, Miranda and Snooflet, waltzing around the garbage heap, and I was overjoyed to wake and discover that the painful spectacle was merely a fantasy of sleep.

It must have been two or three days later that I went downstairs very early in the morning and found Mrs. Kirsten upon the veranda with her little daughter. She was removing the child's shoes and stockings, and I did not make my presence known for fear of embarrassing them both.

Miranda toddled off, and her mother sat down upon the top step, watching her with agonised mother-eyes until she was well out of sight. Then a dry, tearless moan welled up from the depths of her heart. A moment later, her face was buried in her handkerchief, and she was shaking with sobs.

This was too much for me. I am a landlubber when it comes to salt water, and have never been able to endure a woman's tears. I hastened out and put my hand upon her shoulder.

"Mrs. Kirsten," I said, very gently, "you are troubled. Let me help you!"

"Oh, sir," she answered, breaking down utterly at the unexpected sympathy, "you cannot help me—no one can! The most celebrated physicians and alienists have given up the case."

"Dear Mrs. Kirsten, Miranda the First," I continued, "you can at least tell me. Two heads are three times as good as one if the extra head is mine." To the critical reader this may sound egotistical, but the situation was tense, and it was no more than the truth.

"Oh, how can I bear to tell you! I, who have always lived a decent, respectable life, holding my head as high as my neighbours' heads, I, to have this shame, this fear!"

"Dear Miranda the First," I pleaded, forgetting all conventional forms, "tell me! Believe me, I am your friend!"

"I know it," she cried, "but it is too terrible! Miranda, my darling little daughter, my own and only child, is—is—is—is——"

"Is what?" I demanded, excitedly.

"A Little Sister to the Woods!" she gasped, then hid her face against my shoulder.

With rare comprehension, for a man, I only stroked the weeper's spine and said nothing. At last her sobs quieted.

"You do not despise me?" she asked, tremulously.

"Despise you?" I repeated. "No, dear lady, no!"

When she was calm, she told me the whole miserable story. From her birth, Miranda the Second had been exceedingly fond of animals and had refused to associate with children at all. She drew animals of all kinds as a sheet of sticky fly-paper draws Flies. She made friends with Lizards, Spiders, Toads, Bumblebees, Hornets, Foxes, Wasps, Rabbits,—in fact everything that crossed her path, with the single exception of Snakes. For three days she had been lost, and when she was finally discovered, it was in the wake of an Italian who had a dancing Bear. Miranda wept bitterly when the police took her home, and for over a week she raged and screamed, demanding with every breath to be taken back to the "pitty Bear."

It was only upon the promise of seeing plenty of Bears that she had quieted down at all, and her mother had brought her to Yellowstone Park, knowing that the animals there would be practically harmless, especially to one of Miranda's gifts, and in the hope that satiety might work a cure.

Yet every morning, for the three weeks they had been there, Miranda had insisted upon going forth alone. "My baby," sobbed the mother, "my baby, out there alone with the wild beasts! I cannot go with her, for she is safer without me.

I am no relation whatever to the woods, to say nothing of being a Little Sister."

"But her shoes and stockings," I said, pointing to the soft bundle half concealed by Mrs. Kirsten's skirt, "why are they here?"

"I do not know," she answered, shaking her head, sadly. "It is possible, of course, that they may insulate her, as it were, from her mother earth, and thus make her so different from the other animals that they could not recognise her as one of them. It is possible, also, that she sees more Bears when she is barefooted."

There was a long silence, then the little toddler came within range of our vision. She was accompanied by a huge grizzly Bear, who was walking beside her on his hind legs. Her little hand rested confidingly in his great paw, and I confess that the sight made me shudder. They came together, the great Bear walking slowly to accommodate Miranda's short steps, until they reached a point half-way between the hotel and the edge of the forest.

Then the Bear stopped, pointed to us with his free paw, and Miranda nodded, in token that she understood. She ran on ahead a little way, then turned back. The great grizzly bowed very low, with his right paw placed over the pit of his stomach, then came down on all fours and ambled off into the forest.

Miranda came to us, breathless and laughing.

"Oh," she cried, with her face aglow, "pitty Bears! Booful, booful Bears!"

“Her little hand rested confidingly in his great paw.”

"Pray, what does 'booful' mean?" I inquired in a low tone of the mother, as she put on Miranda's shoes and stockings.
"It is early English for 'beautiful,'" explained Mrs. Kirsten, her face white with pain.
Perceiving that it would be the truest kindness to the woman I had learned to love, I stole away. My keen scientific mind quickly grasped the possibility before me. Miranda might be of great use to me—so much was plain—but would it be right? Then I saw that I could not hope to cure Miranda's malady until I had seen the working of it so often that I fully understood its character and scope. Happy, happy thought!
That afternoon, while Mrs. Kirsten slept the sleep of utter exhaustion, I told Miranda the story of Goldenhair and the Three Bears, and so won her childish affections forever. As yet, I dared not suggest my plan to Mrs. Kirsten, but I felt sure that the time would come when I might appropriately do so.
The next day I went out to the garbage heap, and settled myself comfortably under the tree nearest to it. I must have seen over two hundred Bears, but I was near enough to none of them to make the observations I desired. So, with the true Scientist's fine disregard of inconvenience, I made an excavation in the top of the garbage heap, climbed in, and concealed myself as well as I might with the litter. I do not claim that it was pleasant, but it was unavoidable.
All day I saw Bears, meanwhile plying my camera and note-book vigorously. They came and went, but before night I was so familiar with the different individuals that I had named many of them and knew them all by sight. I saw nothing of Snoof and Snooflet, however, and began to wonder where they were keeping themselves.
Shortly after sunset, the Bears disappeared from the gar-

bage heap, apparently with one accord. They moved so silently that I did not see any of them go away. I waited half an hour but none of them came back. Then I determined to extricate myself from my unsavoury predicament, but some sixth sense bade me wait a few moments longer.

Presently I saw the huge grizzly who was Miranda's friend, cautiously limping toward the garbage heap, and my heart grew heavy with portent, for he was an ugly customer to meet without a weapon of any sort. He pawed over the cans, setting some aside with evident care, and kicking the others far away in disgust. I snapped my camera at him, and at the click he pricked up his ears, then gave a deep, thunderous growl which echoed and re-echoed through the silence.

I scarcely dared to breathe. In my inner consciousness I promptly christened him "Growler," but I did not attempt to take his picture again.

Hard upon the roar came Snoof, and she instantly rushed Growler away from the garbage heap. He made no defence, but simply slunk away, and I gathered that he was a suitor of hers who had not as yet found favour. He was old and rheumatic, and many a time, after that, I found him wallowing in the hot mud around the sulphur spring to cure his rheumatism, but this belongs in another book.

She sniffed over the cans, and angrily thrust aside those that he had gathered together, though I could see that some of them were nearly full. She tasted here and there, but ate nothing, and presently went back into the forest.

Snooflet met her here. She washed his face after the manner of a Cat, paying special attention to his neck, then began on his hands and nails. I did not know that Bears did this, though I have since discovered it in a new book on Natural

History. Then, from its hiding-place at the root of a tree, she took a comb, made from an Elk's horn, and a very creditable comb it was, too. She combed poor Snooflet until he howled, then collared him and cuffed him, finally making him sit still until she completed her own toilet.

Together they approached the garbage heap, Snooflet sniffing loudly in anticipation of the feast. He seized immediately upon a tin which had contained maple syrup, and began to eat greedily, but his mother gave him another pair of cuffs and took it away from him.

I wondered what her object could be, but I was not long left in doubt. Bidding him be quiet, she pawed over the rubbish until she found two tins which had contained condensed soup. They ate the remnants of this, polishing the inside of the cans with their rough tongues until the metal shone like new. Then Snooflet had a salmon can and his mother a lobster tin which contained little aside from the juice. Next they each had an entire can of roast beef, which had somehow been spoiled in transit, some cold potatoes, some peelings of raw potatoes, half a can of peas, and a canned tomato or two. A dry cracker came next, with some salad dressing and a hard rind of Roquefort. I wondered why she did not make a presentable salad of the tomato and the dressing—salads are always made of leftovers and these things had been left over a long time, but I dared not make the suggestion for fear my first name would have to be changed to Claude if I did so.

Then came dessert. Snooflet had his maple syrup tin, and his mother the remnants of a pot of raspberry jam. Having eaten their dinner in well-bred seclusion and in the proper order, they went away together, apparently happy.

By this time I was hungry myself, so I climbed out and made

my way to the Geyser House. Mrs. Kirsten was on the veranda, and at the sight of me she laughed the first hearty, unconscious laugh I had ever heard from her lips. "Hello, garbage pail," she said, merrily, when the paroxysm had subsided somewhat, "why don't you go around the back way?"

I looked at myself. A sardine box hung on my tie, a lobster tin protruded from my pocket, and I was covered from head to foot with melon seeds. A cabbage leaf and a melon rind adorned my hat.

Melancholy though I was, I was about to pass her in a frigid, dignified manner, and go up to my room, but the stony-hearted manager of the hotel interfered. "Here, you blamed old scavenger," he cried, "this isn't a dump heap. Go and bury your clothes! Why you look like a guy, sir!"

"Is not this the Geyser House?" I asked. The joke, which might have been sold to a funny paper for three dollars, was utterly lost upon him. He repeated his impolite suggestion about my clothes and said he would send a boy to me with more.

I had no choice but to obey. In my changed raiment I was allowed to go to my room, where a bath, clean linen, and a shave speedily set me right again. I had left my clothes in the woods for future expeditions of the same sort.

Elaborating my notes and developing my plates took me the better part of a week, and all the time, there was a decided coolness between Mrs. Kirsten and myself. Not so with Miranda. She loved me, if her mother did not, and pleaded with me at every meal to take her with me when I went to see the "pitty Bears."

The next morning I was sitting on one corner of the veranda and Mrs. Kirsten on the other, with Miranda's shoes and stockings in her lap. I knew where the child had gone and

surmised that a tempest was raging in the mother's heart, but she was too proud to turn to me for even a look of sympathy. Presently Miranda came toward us at the top of her speed, with a Bear in full pursuit. Man though I was, my heart stood still with fear. I had no weapon—I was utterly helpless—and Mrs. Kirsten, literally paralysed with horror, stood like a statue.

The Bear was gaining at every step. Go it, Miranda! On, for Heaven's sake on! Heed not the thorns that pierce thy tender feet, but run, Miranda, run!

With an inarticulate moan, Mrs. Kirsten flew down the steps, her arms outstretched, and I followed, willing to sacrifice my own life, if need be, to save the child of the woman I loved. But we were too late. Snoof—for it was she—felled Miranda to the ground with one blow, turned her limp body over, face upward, and took something out of her hand, throwing it aside with an angry sniff.

In a twinkling, Miranda was on her feet, violently chastising the Bear with her chubby hands. "Naughty, bad Snoofie!" she screamed. "Take Miwanda's bewwies!"

Snoof cast a glance of peculiar intelligence at me, winked suggestively, then ambled off into the forest to rejoin her Cub, who was calling her plaintively.

I hastened to find what the Bear had thrown away. It was a little china mug, ornate with blue and gold, and the inscription, "For A Good Girl," lettered on it. All around were scattered the bright red berries which Miranda had picked. At once I understood—they were poison, and Snoof had saved Miranda's life.

In a few well-chosen words, I acquainted the mother with the facts. She promptly spanked Miranda and carried her into the house, yelling like any normal child. In an hour she returned, pale, haggard, and trembling with emotion.

"To think," she said, brokenly, "that that old Bear should have saved my child's life! I will never doubt the wisdom of Providence again. Had it not been for Snoof, Miranda would at this moment have been a cold, cold corpse. The Little Sister of the Woods would have known the 'pitty Bears' no more!" was gratified at the change in my loved one's demeanour, but the next morning the bars were up again and Mrs. Kirsten treated me with the barest politeness.

Some days later the grizzly came up to the hotel, dressed in the coat and vest, collar and tie, which I had left in the woods. He had evidently found that the trousers did not fit him, for he had made no more attempt than a Highlander to dress the rest of him, and went about, with equal unconcern, in his bare legs. He coquetted around for a long time, watching for Miranda, then Snoof appeared, with a tin pail in each hand. She had come to the hotel, as she often did, for milk and molasses. Miranda came out and spoke in friendly fashion with the grizzly, using a language I did not understand, but she paid no attention whatever to Snoof. Having secured her milk and molasses, Snoof went away, leaving her suitor conversing amiably with Miranda, but I could see a red look in her eyes that boded no good to anybody.

The end came shortly afterward. Miranda and I had been playing croquet and Miranda still kept her mallet in her tiny, chubby hand. Not expecting visitors from the suburbs, Miranda wore her shoes. I mention this, that the reader may judge whether or not it had any influence upon what followed.

We sat down upon the steps to rest a moment. The steps of the Geyser House were very comfortable indeed, being made of soft wood and having been given two coats of paint. Suddenly the grizzly materialised. You can never hear a Bear

come. Now you see it and now you don't—they make no noise whatever. He had on my coat and vest and was walking on all fours, but at the sight of Miranda, he stood up and began to walk like a man—a man with the rheumatism.

The child laughed gleefully at the sight. "Wait," she said, "baby make circus."

She called the Cat, set it upon the grizzly's back, and made them gallop around an imaginary ring in spite of the grizzly's loud yowls of pain. While the fun was in full blast, Snoof appeared, aflame with hatred and jealousy, and charged straight at Miranda.

My tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth and I tasted blood, but Miranda, with great calmness, raised her croquet mallet, and waited,—the merest fraction of a second. At the proper instant, she brought it down with a sounding whack upon the end of Snoof's nose—her single vulnerable spot. The great Bear fell to earth, stunned.

I quickly finished the execution with my pocket knife. The grizzly, frightened, tore madly off into the woods, forgetting his rheumatism, and leaving us alone with the dead.

It was not pleasant, even though the end of a wild animal is always a tragedy. The only way to make a story of this kind untragic is to quit before you get through.

An astounding change was taking place in Miranda. She leaned over the corpse, her eyes dilated and her small body tense. Her breast was heaving and she shook like an aspen. I would have picked her up and carried her to her mother, but I was fascinated by her face, and moreover, I wanted to see what would happen. The true Scientist must ever sacrifice his emotions to his reason.

Gradually, the entire expression of her face altered. The ee-

rie, wild look had vanished completely, and in its place was a very normal fright. “Tum!” she shrieked. “Baby ’fraid!”
I took up the Little Sister of the Woods and ran into the hotel, rejoicing in my heart that the child was cured. That evening, I proposed marriage to Mrs. Kirsten, who was overjoyed at her child’s sudden recovery, but my hopes were felled to earth as suddenly as Snoof had been that very afternoon.
“The bigamy laws are very strict,” she sighed, meditatively. “Do you not find them so?”
“What,” I gasped, “is your husband alive?”
“Yes,” she returned, “if he hasn’t drunk himself to death since we came here. If Miranda had only been able to charm Snakes,” she continued, “we could have lived very happily with her Pa.”

KITCHI-KITCHI

Strangely enough, this episode made me very weary of the Yellowstone. Mrs. Kirsten and the cured Miranda departed by the first train, leaving a formal farewell for me with the hotel clerk, who grinned sheepishly as he delivered the message. Republics are said to be proverbially ungrateful, and women are proverbially uncertain. I concluded to trust them no more, but to go back to one of my lodges in the vast wilderness and spend the remainder of the Summer far from maddening woman's ignoble wiles.

I paid my William at the hotel—I have too much respect for it to call it a bill—and returned to my hermitage by the river and the little stream, where Jagg lay buried. As before, I found that my cabin had recently been occupied.

Human belongings were strewn upon my cot, and a kettle, hung in gypsy fashion, sang merrily over my camp-fire. I was righteously incensed, and I determined to make Ab understand, once for all, that my possessions were not to be trifled with. He had poisoned my pet, the principle remaining the same even though I was anxious to rid myself of that selfsame pet, and had made himself obnoxious in every possible way. With every heart-beat my ire grew until it assumed fairly tremendous proportions.

I went back to my cabin in search of some sort of a weapon, muttering to myself and savagely shaking my fists. When I came out, armed with a base-ball bat, an Indian stood by the fire, regarding me with pained astonishment.

He was about six feet six in height, and wide in proportion. His hair was short, and he wore no feathered head-dress, much to my surprise, for I thought an Indian always wore a

feathered head-dress to keep his wigwa'm. His powerful bronze body was artistically draped in a Navajo blanket, however, and he had moccasins on his feet, so he looked his part.

Students of psychology have often observed the inexplicable effect that a surprise has upon the emotions. Frequently a complete reversal takes place, and it was so with me. A moment before, I had been furious and literally aflame with the lust of slaughter. Now I was conscious only of a broad, far-reaching brotherly love, and a keen, deep-seated desire to be friends with that Indian.

Acting swiftly upon this impulse, I advanced with hands outstretched and a smile of welcome upon my lips. "How!" I exclaimed. "The White Father is overjoyed to find his brother, the Red Man, sharing his humble hospitality. Too long have the feet of the palefaces had the right of way upon the trail. The woods are lonely without their brothers, the Red Men, and together we will live in this peaceful solitude until Bliz-Bliz, the snow-bird, spreads his wings and brings the cold. In my knapsack I have ample provisions to make the heart of my noble brother glad—Ma-Ma, the white bread, Bow-Wow, the Bologna sausage, Fishy-Can-Dish, the sardine, a package of the famous Polly crackers, Ah-Sid, the lemon, and a fragment of Phew-Phew, the well-known German cheese. Strange lands have sent their best viands to grace this notable occasion. Will not my brother, the Red Man, accept these small gifts until such time as I can go to the city after more? This very night I will set out upon the long trail, returning upon the wings of the wind with further tokens. If this is pleasing to my brother, I will now spread the evening meal, and after it, while the Night Owl searches for his prey, we will smoke the Perfectos of Peace. Will not my brother, the Red Man, tell the paleface his name?"

“John Baldwin,” said the Indian, very quietly. “Carlisle, Centre rush on the team.”

When I came to my senses, he was fanning me with a corner of his blanket, and moistening my numb lips with brandy. Presently I was able to sit up against a pine tree, though still weak, and take notice.

“Are you—?” I stammered. “Are you civilised?”

“No,” returned the Indian, with well-bred composure. “Are you?”

I could not tell whether I was or not, and with the swift, silent movements peculiar to his race, Mr. Baldwin emptied out the contents of my knapsack. He squeezed the lemon over the sardines, rubbing the mixture to a paste, cut the bread in very thin slices, and expeditiously made a pile of sandwiches. He brought me one on a burdock leaf.

“How,” he said. “Fishy-Can-Dish make paleface strong. Heap good sandwich.”

Trembling, I ate, and the stony features relaxed into a smile.

“What part of the country did you come from?” he asked.

“All over it,” I answered. “The world is my country, humanity my people, and studying Natural History my job.”

“Oh,” said Mr. Baldwin. “I see. There was one of those blokes at Carlisle, but the boys chased it out of him.”

I would fain have risen to my feet, but I was held back.

“Don’t get excited, partner,” continued my friend, who had one of his huge paws laid on my shoulder in a way that implied intimacy. “Whose cabin is this?”

“It was mine,” I explained, “until you came. Now it is yours.”

“No,” replied Mr. Baldwin, “it is still yours. You are off your trolley there. I beg your pardon for my intrusion, and

to-morrow I will leave you. I would go to-night, but there is no train, and I must perforce trespass upon your hospitality a little further."

"You are welcome," I said, feebly. "It is the greatest joy of my life to have you here."

"I do not doubt it," he rejoined. "No one who heard your simple, sincere words could think otherwise. Such fine feelings are rare in the prosaic age we live in, do you not think so?"

I could only acquiesce. In fact, every time he said anything, I found that I had precisely the same point of view, and he must have thought me a very agreeable companion.

My night's rest was illuminated with vivid dreams in which the war-whoop and the tomahawk played a star part, but whenever I started from my cot with my hair bristling, I was reassured by the peaceful breathing of my companion, who slept soundly on the other cot on the opposite side of the room.

In the morning he explained his Summer adventuring as a reversion to type. He was a lawyer in Oklahoma, but nevertheless he had been consumed with the longing to live as his ancestors did and to dress as they dressed. He had felt the call of the wild while he was toiling over briefs and contracts, and so far he had carried out his plan, omitting only the murderous features of his forefathers' working days.

As his train did not leave until afternoon, he spent the time from breakfast to luncheon in my society, and afterward I was glad that he did so, for I learned many curious facts which I might otherwise have missed.

The trees around my cabin were so full of Squirrels that you could hardly see the leaves, let alone the branches, which were obscured by the bark of the Squirrels until their native covering was wholly hidden. The chatter was incessant and

was like nothing so much as the composite sound one hears at the entrance to the Dog Show. Perceiving that I was interested, Mr. Baldwin very kindly gave up a little of his time to the Squirrel proposition.

"What is the Indian name for Squirrel?" I asked.

"Kitchi-Kitchi," he replied.

"How did it happen?" I inquired. "What is the application?"

With a fine smile upon his bronze face, he went to the foot of a tree, where the Squirrels were having a nutty argument, and called very softly, using a language I did not understand. Then he retired almost to the door of the cabin, and sat down, still making the same peculiar call. Presently, with a swift, searching glance from a pair of bright eyes and a soft rustle like that made by a new silk petticoat, a lady Squirrel, of the red variety, came down the tree and ran straight into his lap.

"Kitchi-Kitchi," said Mr. Baldwin.

At this the Squirrel turned over, and the Indian, with a playful forefinger, tickled her in the ribs, again saying, "Kitchi-Kitchi." The Squirrel shrieked with delight and ran away, returning almost immediately to have the pleasant pastime repeated. The argument in the tree broke up, and Mr. Baldwin tickled Squirrels, each time saying, "Kitchi-Kitchi," until his finger must have ached, strong though it was.

I was very much astonished and keenly interested. From his ancestors, all of whom belonged to the First Families of America, this young Carlisle man had inherited the wonderful lore of the woods. What could I not hope to accomplish if I had him with me!

When I broached the subject, he frowned, and said he must be going. Within four minutes he was gone, as completely as if

the earth had swallowed him. I was left alone with my books, a half-eaten sardine sandwich, Kitchi-Kitchi, and my thoughts.
I devoted some days to replenishing my larder. It was only twenty miles to the nearest village and I went every day, bringing back all I could carry each time. I laid in a liberal supply of pemmican, army beef, home-made biscuits, and other condensed foods, and rolled a barrel of flour before me on one of my last trips home. On the very last trip of all, I brought a bushel of shelled corn and two bushels of nuts for the Squirrels.
For a few days there was silence in the branches, then the racket began once more and from that time on there were plenty of Squirrels. My affections, however, were principally engaged by the bright little lady Squirrel I had first seen and whom I named "Kitchi-Kitchi." She was a beautiful creature, in her mahogany-coloured coat with its fine markings, her dancing eyes, and her magnificent tail. She had all the airs of a soubrette and continually played to the front row.
I soon identified many of the Squirrels and singled them out from among their fellows. One of the red Squirrels I named "Meeko," because he was far from meek, and because it is an Indian word meaning "mischief-maker." Another one, also a red Squirrel, was called "Bismarck." These two were suitors for Kitchi-Kitchi's hand. She had other admirers, of course, but the race soon narrowed down to these two.
It was Bismarck who greeted me one afternoon when
I ran my canoe ashore near camp. He stood on his hind legs, on the sandy beach, barking and gesticulating furiously. When I landed, he went to a log near by and ran the whole length of it three times, barking madly meanwhile, then back to me, then to the log again. It was not until he sat

up on the log and beckoned to me with his right paw that I discovered what he meant. He was asking me, as plainly as any Squirrel could, to follow him.

With every sense instantly alert, I did as he wished me to. He led me to a hole he had dug in the leaves and pointed to it, still barking. I bent over it and found a Toad, which had been bitten through the back and could not hop.

I picked up the Toad and held him in my hand, meditating upon the mutability of all earthly things, and Bismarck almost went mad with excitement. He had evidently found the strange creature and bitten it through to make it lie still until he could find me. Now he was asking me what it was and whether or not it was edible.

By signs I made Bismarck understand that it was not edible in its raw state, and that I had no inclination whatever to cook it for him. I put it back into the hole, covered it, and went off a little way. Bismarck uncovered it, bit it once more, and was immediately taken very sick. He was well satisfied to leave it alone after that, and I made a corset of splints for it, lacing it on with a bit of twine I happened to have in my pocket. This done, the Toad hopped off in a great hurry, not even staying to say "thank you." He evidently had no desire to pit his feeble strength against Bismarck again.

At the time, this whole incident was new to me, but after reaching home, I discovered much the same thing in a new book on Natural History. The other observer had found a Lizard in the hole, instead of a Toad, and he made no corset for the injured animal—at least if he did, he did not record it, but I always record everything.

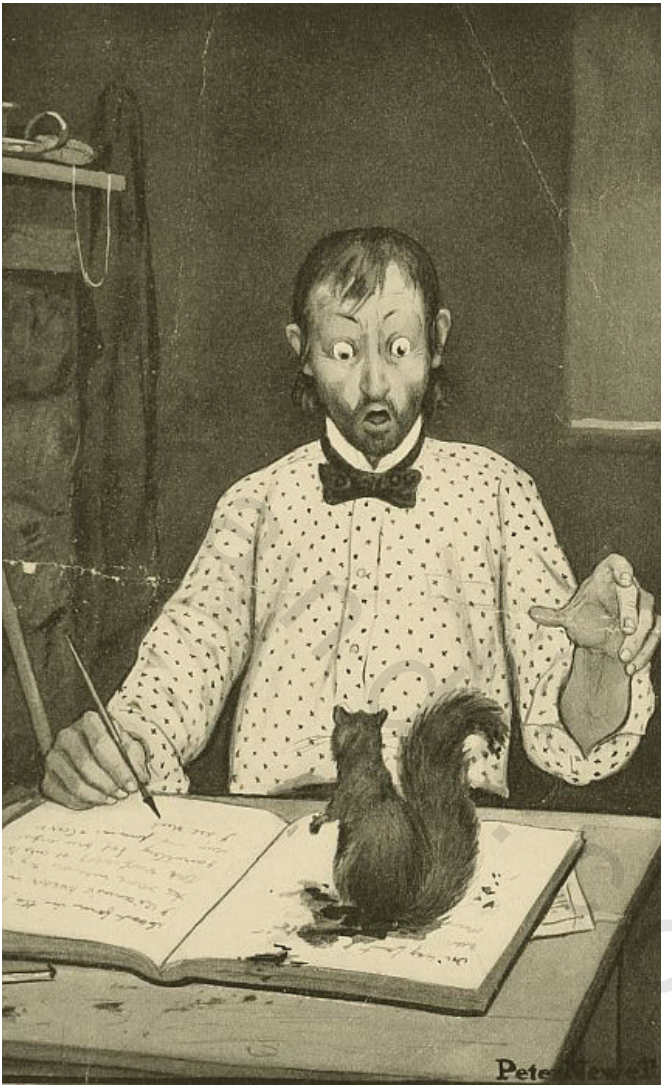
Every morning, at four o'clock, Meeko, Bismarck, and Kitchi-Kitchi would waken me by giving a dance, with qua-

drille calls, on the roof of my cabin. I soon formed the habit of early rising and once I was up, ready for the day's toil, before three. In order to let them know how it seemed, I pounded with an axe on the trees where the three had their nests, and they all scampered down, very much frightened. After that, I was not disturbed until half-past five, when they insisted upon my rising, and to which, as a compromise measure, I did not in the least object.

Kitchi-Kitchi, Meeko, and Bismarck would come into my cabin several times each day to be tickled. At first I found the novelty of it rather amusing, but at length it became wearing, and I was obliged to shut the doors and windows in order to have any time to write. Even then, they would dance on the roof and pound on the window glass in a way which was exceedingly disturbing to one of my artistic temperament.

My table was near the fireplace and Kitchi-Kitchi came in one day by way of the chimney. She arrived on the fair, open page of my observation ledger, sooty, panting, but thoroughly happy, and demanded to be tickled.

After that, the others came in that way, and even when the doors and windows were wide open, they would sometimes come in by the chimney route just for the fun of the thing.



“She arrived on the fair, open page of my observation ledger, sooty, panting, but thoroughly happy.”

It is not generally known that the Flying Squirrel has not a monopoly of the aërial navigation business as far as mammals are concerned. His body, it is true, is especially constructed for flying. The loose skin with which his legs are connected spreads out in falling, parachute fashion. Perhaps the other Squirrels have learned this from him; perhaps they learned it independently, but it is certain that a Squirrel can fall from almost any height without apparent inconvenience. They flatten their bodies and tails against the air and sail triumphantly downward, alighting easily and scampering off unhurt.

I did not know this before, but now I saw it done repeatedly. It was one of Kitchi-Kitchi's favourite amusements to send Meeko and Bismarck to the topmost branch of a lofty oak near by, and at her signal make them jump. The one reaching the ground first was rewarded with a nut and a playful, coquettish pat.

Like the Chipmunks, the Squirrels hide their food, though it is done differently and on a much smaller scale. The Chipmunk will hide much and all in one storehouse; the Squirrel hides very little and everything in a different place—an ear of corn in the crotch of a tree, a handful of acorns under the eaves of a barn, bits of bread between two twigs, relying on the spring of the wood to keep it in position, and nuts everywhere.

I saw a terrible quarrel once, between Bismarck and a Blue Jay who raided his bakery. When it was over, Bismarck had four pecks on his body and one peck of feathers for his nest. The Bird immediately started south, though it is not common for this species to travel in the altogether. He was naked and very much cast down—in fact, the bluest jay I ever saw.

One day I did something for Kitchi-Kitchi which won her eternal gratitude. We had gone fishing together, as we of-

ten did, and she sat upon the gunwale of my canoe, sorely tempted to rock the boat, but obedient to my expressed command not to. Presently, by gestures, she made me understand that she was thirsty. I dipped up a cup of water from the lake on which we were rowing and offered it to her, but she put it aside with disgust. So I put a little brandy from my flask into the water and offered it to her again. She was indignant and scolded me violently—her language was positively scurrilous. When we landed she still insisted that she was thirsty, and, at my wits' end, I drew some of the sap from a tree for her and offered it to her in the cup.

She drank every drop and whisked about madly to express her joy. She nibbled at my ears and put her cool nose into my neck, then tried to tickle me under the chin with her paw, making a noise, meanwhile, that sounded like "Kitchi-Kitchi." It was unpleasant, but I understood the spirit of it and forgave the means.

The same afternoon, she led her admirers a pretty chase. Fleet as they were, Kitchi-Kitchi was more fleet. Nothing except Atalanta or an automobile gone wild could run as she did that afternoon. I had previously wished I knew the Squirrel language, and now I saw that in order to converse intelligently with Kitchi-Kitchi, I must learn Russian. Finally, in a bacchanalian frenzy of action, she ran to the top of a lofty oak and prepared to jump to the next, folding her tail daintily about her as a fine lady does her skirts at a muddy crossing.

Meeko screamed in terror and Bismarck fainted, but Kitchi-Kitchi made the jump safely with several inches to spare. After that, whenever she wanted to bring them to terms, she took the high jump. The scheme always worked, but it was a terrible leap, even for a Flying Squirrel,—fully

twenty feet,—and Kitchi-Kitchi had no wings except her youthful spirits and her bounding energy. Many a time have I seen her upon a lofty branch, swinging by one hand, and waving the other at Meeko in a tree close by. He was fain to follow her, but she was always about four trees ahead.

Never have I seen the sweet influence of woman more beautifully exemplified. When she was with them, Bismarck and Meeko treated one another like long-lost brothers. The three took many a promenade together, arm in arm, Kitchi-Kitchi folding her tail over the hollow of her elbow as though it were a train. When she went away for her afternoon nap, or to gather some choice morsels for her evening meal, they invariably fought.

I kept court-plaster and bandages on hand to repair the damage that was always done on such occasions, and Kitchi-Kitchi never appeared to notice it except once. When Bismarck called upon her with a blood-stained bandage tied over one eye, she shrieked and kicked him outdoors. He fell to the ground like a dead weight, I suppose because his heart was so heavy—but fortunately was not injured further. Meeko had her to himself for a week after that, then Bismarck, the bandage gone, resumed his place at her side and upheld his right to it in many a scrimmage.

The two vied with each other in bringing dainties to tempt her appetite. Robins' eggs, with the top part of the shell removed, all ready for sucking, mushrooms, nuts, berries, apple seeds, pop-corn, and the thousand other choice bits her educated palate was accustomed to, were laid at the door of her nest, high in the branches. It was Meeko who accidentally brought her a poisonous mushroom which made her so ill that for days her life was despaired of. She forgave him,

however, and used to sit in the sun, very thin and pale, with two devoted attendants to wait upon her.

Naturalists who think that Squirrels eat Birds are very much mistaken. I have seen Meeko pounce on a wayfaring Bird hundreds of times, but curiosity has always been the motive. They will not eat Bird unless it is properly cooked. I know, for I have tried them with bits of a raw Crow, that had died from natural causes. The fact that Birds are not afraid of Squirrels triumphantly proves my theory, in spite of the fact that the eggs are occasionally taken out of the nest. Whenever a Squirrel has visited a Bird's nest, after the young were hatched, curiosity and friendly interest in the welfare of the young have been the sole reasons in every case.

Meantime, my fame as a tickler had spread abroad, and I used to give up hours to it each day. I might better have spent the time in writing, but it was so noisy that I could not write, except to make hasty notes in my note-book, and I was there to study Natural History. An old grey Squirrel from the next county brought her entire family of young for me to tickle, and when I refused, she bit one of my ears until the blood came in a bright red stream. Bismarck drove her away and Kitchi-Kitchi stanched the bleeding with a bit of Rabbit fur she brought from the woods for the purpose.

Kitchi-Kitchi was devotedly attached to me. She would stop eating a nut any time to scamper down the tree-trunk and perch upon my arm or shoulder. She would sit upon my shoulder while I performed my manifold household duties, and would occasionally precede the broom, sweeping the floor with her tail. She would stay in my cabin long after I had told her to go home, and when I put her out, she would return by way of the window or chimney, cross the room,

climb me, and put her head down between my collar and neck, barking meanwhile unless I spoke to her, stroked her, or tickled her. It used to give me an uncanny feeling when she ran up my spine while I was writing in my ledger—in other words, the climate disagreed with me.

It fell to my lot this Summer to hear a Squirrel singing a duet with itself. It sounds as though the voice were split, the high part coming through the nose, and the low tones through the throat. It is always a lively tune, perfectly rhythmical, interspersed with gales and gusts and cyclones of very human laughter. It is not generally known that Squirrels sing, but Little Brothers of the Woods can find out a great deal if they only give their minds to it and buy plenty of books.

At length, I missed Kitchi-Kitchi, and my heart grew sick with foreboding. I feared lest one of those terrible tragedies of the woods had taken place and my little friend's life had thus been sacrificed. The end of a wild animal is always a tragedy—the pitiless law of the wilderness, supported by claw and tooth and fang, has so ordained.

Meeko and Bismarck were as usual, except that they carried a great many nuts and mushrooms up one particular tree. Determined to find out, I climbed, and there on her nest, pale and worn with the long vigil, but still cheerful, sat Kitchi-Kitchi. She would not let me lift her, protesting loudly when I tried it, but when I tickled her in the ribs she moved enough to give me a glimpse of the eggs under her. Very few observers have ever seen a Squirrel's egg. They are about the size of a Turkey's egg, a dark brown in colour, with a long, handle-like projection, fully as long as the egg itself, at the wider end. This undoubtedly holds the tail of the baby Squirrel. Six weeks later she came down—a mere shadow of her for-

mer self. In three weeks more, the babies were able to come also, and they made a pretty group, playing in my dooryard and falling over themselves at every step, not yet having learned how to manage their tails. I would have tickled them, gladly, but I already had my hands full and I did not wish the new generation to acquire the habit.

Things went on as usual until late in the Fall. Summer lingered long that year, and the woods were a golden glory almost until November, but the Birds had gone and the Squirrels were making ready to follow.

One morning there was a great chattering, and I was so sure that preparations for departure had begun that I gave up my work entirely and went out to investigate. A few moments of close, quiet observation proved my hasty surmise correct. From every conceivable corner were brought large, flat chips. They were fully six inches square and much worn, as if they had been used often. A depression in the centre was the only variation from the flat surface.

Such a time as there was! The woods seemed to be one solid Squirrel in multitudinous attitudes. The scene would have been very perplexing to any but a perfectly sober man, and at intervals I even doubted the evidence of my own senses. The older and larger Squirrels dragged all the chips to the brink of the river, which flowed from north to south, and then, at last, I began to understand. So poor are our weak wits in comparison with the denizens of wood and field, whom, in our pitiable self-conceit, we call "the lower animals." A Squirrel is normally a much higher animal than any of us, excepting only the tree-dwellers on the Orinoco. Some of the chips were fastened together with strands of wild-grape vine, and were heavily laden with nuts and corn.

Others were passenger boats and sailed proudly alone. The young ones were put on the chips before they were launched, and screamed in terror as the little craft slid into the current.

The commissary fleet, in charge of an old grey Squirrel, who was perfectly calm, was launched first, then the chips bearing the small fry. The passenger boats were last to go, and the travellers swam out into the stream to catch them. One grey Squirrel missed his boat entirely and was drowned. It came ashore four miles farther down and I still have it among my most-prized possessions.

As long as I live, I shall never forget that sight. The day was glorious, with never a hint of frost in the air, and the woods, strangely silent, now that the Little People were gone, echoed and re-echoed when a nut dropped on the fallen leaves.

Down the stream sailed the Squirrel fleet—brave little mariners, these, with tails proudly spread to catch each favouring wind. Bismarck did a wonder of navigation, tacking repeatedly and coming up beside Kitchi-Kitchi under full sail. Meeko was stationed at her other side and his boat went at exactly the same speed as hers. Close together, as married lovers down the stream of life, the three sailed, with the family of young ones on a large chip just ahead, where the anxious mother could keep an eye upon them.

I stood watching for over an hour. The current was swift and bore them away all too soon, but with my powerful field-glass I kept them in sight until the tears blinded me and I had to wipe my eyes.

The only way to make an animal's story untragic is to finish before you reach the end, so I shall leave them here—that little company of fur-clad, bright-eyed captains, making the long journey southward before the frost should come. Far

down the stream was a bend, where the fleet turned, and even with the field-glass I could not see around a corner, so with one last lingering look and a deep sigh, I gave it up.
But a glimmer caught my eye, and, trembling with excitement, I raised my glass once more, fixing it upon the bend of the river, where the last boat was just rounding the curve. Was it fancy, or did Kitchi-Kitchi stand up, wave her hand at me, and across the boundless waste of waters that lay between us, send me a parting smile?

JIM CROW

I always called him that because he was so dark and because I have no race prejudice whatever. People used to allude to him as my Crow, but the real truth lay much deeper than that. If there was any idea of possession in our somewhat singular relationship, I was Jim's—he was not in the least mine.
He adopted me one day at sight. I was walking through a pasture about fourteen miles from my cabin, when I saw Jim sitting upon a rail fence. He did not move at my approach, and I thought he must be a stuffed animal, put out to dry by some

taxidermist in the neighbourhood. I walked up to him and, at length, stroked his head gently. At this, he opened his eyes, yawned, and with a sleepy "Caw-w-w-w," perched upon my shoulder and so rode home with me, in spite of my protests.

To this day I have never been able to solve the mystery. I examined him carefully for signs of damage, but to all intents and purposes he was sound in wind and limb, free from pink-eye, string-halt, or glanders, and not afraid of automobile or steam roller.

He ate plentifully of the simple meal I cooked over my campfire, and, while I washed the dishes, followed me around like a devoted dog. I suppose he must have recognised me as a Little Brother of the Woods—at any rate, he stuck to me closer than a brother while our strange attachment lasted.

When I perceived that Jim had no intention of leaving the cabin, I went outside, shook him off my shoulder, and ran back, closing the door gently but firmly. Imagine my surprise to hear a loud, jubilant "Caw!" from the rafters. Jim had anticipated me, and had flown in—when, I did not know. Three times this was repeated. At last, I thrust my head and shoulders through the window and remained there some time, enjoying the landscape and the Summer moonlight. Jim, still on my coat collar, finally went to sleep, and this time I easily dislodged him, then quickly closed the window with a triumphant bang.

Outside, everything was suspiciously still, and I began to wonder whether or not Jim had taken offence and left me for good. I was still meditating when there was a crash of glass, and Jim, having broken the window, joined me with every evidence of pleasure. I saw plainly that I must make the best of a bad bargain for the night, and the next day, or as soon as possible, put crowbars on all the windows of the cabin.

I retired, but not to sleep. Jim followed me into my cot, stretched himself full length on my pillow, and put his cold, clammy feet on my cheek. When I moved, Jim flopped. When I turned over, burying my face in the pillow, Jim sat on my head, scratching constantly. I tried to put a bit of the sheet between us, but it was useless. Presently, Jim slept, as his snoring unmistakably proclaimed, but as soon as I moved, he woke and resentfully pecked at my face.

So I lay there, miserably enough, until dawn. Jim woke of his own accord, took away his feet, which were warm by this time, yawned, stretched himself, and demanded breakfast. I took my time about preparing the meal, but Jim made such a racket with his caws of complaint that I determined to be more prompt in future.

That day I barred up all the windows, and at night, after two hours of strategy that would have done credit to the commanding general of an army, I found myself in the cabin, with doors and windows locked, and Jim on the outside.

He tried all the windows, but my barriers held. It was suffocatingly close in the cabin, but I knew that the chimney would furnish a draft and keep me from being poisoned by the impure air. Then a terrible thought struck me—suppose Jim should come in by the chimney route, as Kitchi-Kitchi and her friends were wont to do, and, sooty though he was, insist upon sleeping with me!

This did not occur to him, however, or perhaps he knew a better way. He made night so unspeakably hideous with his loud and vociferous calling, his vicious pecks at the glass, and the beating of his wings against the door, that at last, in sheer desperation, I got up and let him in.

I slept the sleep of utter exhaustion that night—with Jim's feet on my cheek. As the weeks went by, I got used to it,

though it was never pleasant. We can get used to almost anything, if we have to.

I tried to find consolation in Jim's cunning tricks, of which he had a great many. A Crow is about the most intelligent wild beast I have ever come across, and, after study, becomes fascinating. It added a pleasantly human element to my solitude in the wilderness, for Jim was as unexpected, as unreasonable, and as incomprehensible as a woman.

When I planted my garden, he watched me, and afterward he dug up the seeds and ate them. By way of atonement, he brought me some crocus bulbs from somebody's else garden. I was never able to find out where they came from and so I could not return them.

He made deep excavations into my potato hills and ate the eyes out of the potatoes, passing by the Bugs, which I could never induce him to touch. He would eat the Worms I gathered to go fishing with, and afterward would caw repeatedly, with bated breath. Mosquitoes, Flies, Potato-Bugs—all these he disdained, but he would eat anything which he could eat without being of indirect use to anybody. I discovered later that after he had gorged himself with the eyes of the potatoes, so that he could not hold so much as another eyelash, he would keep on digging until he was exhausted, merely to make a nuisance of himself.

I stretched a white cotton string across my dooryard, between two trees, and taught Jim to jump over it, turning a double somersault in mid-air. Some choice tidbit rewarded him for this, and he got so that whenever he was hungry, between meals, he would run up to an imaginary string, take the flying leap, turning the double somersault before he touched ground again, and walk up to me, cawing loudly with pleasure in his performance. I always praised him, and sometimes stroked

his head or back, whereupon he would demand the tidbit, which was generally forthcoming. Sometimes it was a bit of raw bacon, a small dish of pork and beans, or a cold pancake, liberally sweetened with molasses.

On one of these occasions, Jim broke his leg. While turning the somersault he missed his calculation by a hair's-breadth, and caught a claw on the string, which happened to be a little heavier than usual. He fell heavily to the ground with a yell of pain which brought me instantly to his side, but he would not let me touch him. Whenever I reached forth my hand, he gave a cry of alarm which warned me very effectually to keep away. Half flying, half walking on the other foot, he made his way to the river bank, where he took some soft clay from the edge of the water and with his bill made a little mound of it. Then, by the same methods of locomotion, he went away a short distance and gathered some grass of a particularly tough variety. All the time he was seemingly oblivious of me, though I was close by and, as the reader may well imagine, watching him intently.

Returning to the river bank with a liberal supply of the grass, he first washed the broken leg thoroughly in the stream. Then he smeared the broken place with soft clay, working fibres of grass into it meanwhile, then more clay, grass, and so on in distinct layers until the enlargement was about the size of a butternut. All the time he was pale, but very brave. It took him fifteen minutes by my jewelled repeater to set the leg. Afterward, for exactly one hour, he sat under an overhanging shrub with the injured member stretched out in front of him. His eyes were closed but his face wore an expression of great suffering. At the end of the hour, which must have been agony to him, he fluttered up into the nearest tree, and with great effort sawed off a small branch which had just the proper

crotch. He stripped this of its leaves, put the crotch under his wing, and with this improvised crutch, went back to the cabin. He lay down on my pillow unrebuked, and I brought him a cup of water to moisten his parched lips. He gave me a thirsty peck, then drank eagerly. Poor Jim! That night, and indeed many a night afterward, my calloused cheek missed one of the firm, small feet to which it had become accustomed.

He used the crutch constantly, and every day he examined his leg with an expression of deep personal concern upon his dark countenance. Its progress seemed to satisfy him and at the proper time he took off the clay cast. The leg seemed as good as ever, though a little stiff, but I could never get Jim to jump over the string again. He seemed afraid of it and shared the same fear regarding anything white. Waving my handkerchief at him would frequently drive him away from me for hours together, and thus I gained time to write, and to put down in my observation ledger priceless records, made on the spot, of the great and glorious panorama of wild life which was passing under my gifted eyes.

Naturally, I was proud of my pet. When I returned to the city, however, and resumed my researches in the library, I learned that this method of setting a fractured limb was well known among the Birds. One of the new books on Natural History described at great length the setting of a Woodcock's leg by the same means, the operation having taken place under the writer's own eyes. The only difference was that the Woodcock used no crutch. I learned, further, that hunters often shot Woodcock, Grouse, Snipe, and Quail who had been repaired in the same way. To many of these Birds remnants of the clay casts still clung; others bore only slight evidences of the fracture, which, in knitting, became perfectly smooth.

“Put the crotch under his wing, and with this improvised crutch, went back to the cabin.”

Every one knows how a Chicken's leg is sometimes broken, and, in healing, is twisted to one side. This, of course, refers to very young Chickens. I have seldom had one on my own plate whose leg could have been broken by anything short of a butcher's cleaver. The legs of fliers and the wings of walkers are choice morsels, but of the legs of walkers and the wings of fliers, the less said the better, and the more polite when at the table.

To return, not to our mutton, as the French have it, but to our Crow, as the politicians say.

Jim had a great many friends among his own race, and after they learned not to be afraid of me, they used to call upon him at stated intervals. Often I have gone out in the morning and found my dooryard black with Crows holding a caucus. Some Unnaturalists have it that every Crow is an independent caucus, but I am not prepared to make any positive statements on this point.

It was by watching these assemblies that I learned the Crow language. Every student of Natural History admits that Crows have a way of talking to each other and making themselves understood. It has remained for me, however, to tabulate these utterances in suitable lists, and by the same method pursued by Champollion with the Rosetta Stone, together with the system of cipher-solving elucidated in The Gold Bug, arrive at the inner meaning of their language.

A few keen-eyed Little Brothers of the Woods, working independently, have discovered with me that caw is only one syllable of a somewhat complicated speech. They often say ker-ker, ah-ah, cluck-cluck, haw-haw, and ha-ha, making in addition several other sounds which are difficult to describe adequately in print.

I took the precaution to use a phonograph, and thus secure

exact records. The entire subject, treated scientifically, and at the proper scientific length, will be found in my volume published last year, under the title: The Nature, Habits, and Language of the Crow Indians, as Seen by a Scientific Observer Cooped up by Them on Their Reservation: Together with Exhausting Notes Concerning Their Songs, Ballads, Dramas, Customs, and Crafts.

My publishers thought the title was a little too long, but I pointed out to them that many scientific works have even longer titles, and that when anybody pays two dollars for a book, it is with the expectation of securing two dollars' worth of language.

Not to weary the reader with details, and to interest the general public in the more expensive book, I transcribe below a few of the more prominent words of the Crow language.

Caw—Has as many uses as the Latin verb fero, and the precise meaning depends largely upon the tone of utterance. In a loud, clear, cheerful tone, it means, as nearly as can be expressed: "Good morning, Carrie."

Caw—Fortissimo, means: "Man. Might be dangerous. Keep sharp lookout."

Caw-Caw—In sharp, imperious accents, means: "Man has gun. Fly the coop."

Caw-Caw—In a tone of contempt, means: "Gun is only umbrella. Stay where you are."

Haw—"Horse in off field very sick. Watch."

Haw-Haw—"Donkey instead of horse. Wouldn't that jar you?"

Ker, naturally, means "dog." Ker-Ker means two dogs. Haw-Ker means travelling salesman or man practising music.

Ha-Ha indicates laughter, as all through the brute creation.

Cluck means Chicken, Cluck-Cluck two Chickens. Two Crows together indicate a Rooster.

Ah-Ah shows deep astonishment, mingled with pain.
Ker-Cluck, from its root derivation, would mean Dog-Chicken. In other words, a lower form of Chicken, something which is smaller and equally edible. Also, onomatopoetically, a Frog.
Caw-Ker means the best thing of its kind, whatever it may be. Students of philology will note the resemblance to an Aryan word still common among the lower orders of English-speaking peoples.
Ah-Ker means a sore place. Example, a broken leg or aching tooth.
It will be seen that the language is very condensed and in a few syllables may epitomise an entire conversation. For instance:
"Caw. Caw-Caw. Haw. Ker-Ker. Haw-Haw. Cluck-Cluck. Caw-Ker." Freely translated, this runs as follows: "Good morning! How do you find yourself this morning? Don't get excited, that two-legged thing is only a Man with an umbrella. There is a sick Horse in yonder field that I have my weather eye on, also a dead Donkey. Two Dogs are watching, and there are a couple of nice Chickens that appear to be spring broilers, trotting peacefully around the farmyard. The Horse is a Donkey, too; wouldn't that make you sick? Nevertheless, those two Chickens are corkers and I intend to have them before my feathers turn white with old age and theirs fall out for the same reason."
From this brief instruction, the intelligent reader will be able to translate the Crow language. Just here, perhaps, I ought to mention the fact that I gave Jim an anæsthetic one day and slit his tongue, hoping that he could speak English. Some of our words, as is well known, are tongue-twisters. Whether it was to spite me or not, I shall never know, but I record the painful fact that Jim never learned any English

except my last name. Whenever I did anything that displeased him, he would shriek out "SITDOWN!" in a loud, compelling tone that I invariably and instinctively obeyed. Then, with a merry laugh, he would flutter off over the trees to tell his friends about it.

When a Crow sings, it reminds you of a cornet half full of molasses. They only sing when they are courting, which is extremely fortunate. If I were a lady Crow, wooed with song, I should take vows of eternal celibacy. They may not be saddest when they sing, but other people are.

I shot one of them one day, when they were doing too much singing, and the rest of the company called an indignation meeting on the spot. Having decided that I was the criminal, they sentenced me to have my eyes pecked out and appointed six of their number as executioners. Happily, I had on my spectacles, and when they had broken and eaten the lenses, they were satisfied. That night six more Crows died in great agony from the eating of broken glass. They did not molest me further, but buried their dead comrades with great pomp and ceremony.

Very few observers have ever seen a Crow funeral, but it fell to my lot to be present at this one. It was a bright moonlight night and I crouched behind a stump in a pasture lot, partly screened by the undergrowth that had sprung up around it, and had an unobstructed view of the entire affair.

Sometime during the day, a long, transverse trench had been dug and lined with leaves. The seven corpses, feet upward, were lying on burdock leaves at a distance of about seventeen feet from the trench. A long stem was left on each burdock leaf, and to it was tied a long, stout string which shone whitely in the moonlight. I did not know what it was for, then, but later I understood.

Seven of the oldest and most prominent Crows, at a given signal, advanced to the dead. Each one took the end of a string in his beak and stepped over it in such a way that the cord passed straight under his body. I noted with a thrill of pride that Jim was in the lead.

The rest of the Crows were in tiers a little to the left. At another signal, Jim and his followers began to march, to a low mournful tune produced by the other Crows, swaying their bodies in time to it. In my note-book I hastily jotted it down. It went like this: "Caw-Caw, Caw-Caw, Caw-Caw, Caw-Caw," the first syllable of each foot being heavily accented. It was not until they reached the third measure, which, I noted, had eight feet instead of four, that it dawned upon me that they were marching to the solemn and beautifully appropriate measures of Poe's wonderful poem, The Raven. It was so touching that the tears blinded me, and when I could see again, the procession was well under way.

Shall I ever forget it, I wonder—those stately marchers convoying their dead? Each one of the seven Birds was drawing a large burdock leaf, on which lay the remains of his dead friend. When they reached the trench, the bodies were all laid in, in an orderly row, covered with burdock leaves and then with earth. The simple ceremony over, they dispersed, silently and solemnly, but it set me to thinking and wondering if, after all, man had any right to kill the lower animals for any reason whatsoever. I was brought, also, to a new comprehension of the law of compensation. I had lost a pair of spectacles, and, in return, I had speedily witnessed another spectacle which was indeed wonderful and which set me upon a lofty height, far above my fellow-observers.

It was a day or two before Jim came back to me. He had a

strand of black yarn tied around his left leg which he would not suffer me to touch, and which, at the end of the thirtieth day, he removed of his own accord. For a week or more he was sad, then he gradually chirked up and began to act more like himself. He ate Thrushes' eggs, tweaked wool off the backs of the farmers' Sheep, and stole countless small articles out of my cabin.

I came upon his hoard one day in a hollow tree which had been struck by lightning and broken off about eight feet above the ground. He had pebbles, clam shells, strings, my diamond scarf-pin, a bit of the mica from the front door of my stove, two pieces of broken glass, a square of blue glass I had brought to observe an eclipse with, a blue-bottle Fly, a piece of resin, some bits of bright coloured wool, the handle of a china cup, a cordial glass, a choice collection of white Rabbit fur, which he was evidently saving for his nest, and, vanity of vanities! a triangular piece of broken looking-glass, which was carefully laid across the top of the collection. It was the sunlight playing upon this which led me to the spot. I took out my diamond pin and the cordial glass, leaving the other things undisturbed, but the next time I investigated, there was nothing there. He had moved his treasures to some safer place.

Jim Crow had peculiar notions about his eating, being especially fond of 'possum, sweet potatoes, watermelon, fried Chicken, corn bread, corn fritters, and molasses. Seeing that his tastes ran that way, I baked some Johnny-cake on purpose for him. He pecked at it politely, but truth compels me to record the fact that it was very hard—almost too difficult for solution. At length he took a large piece in his bill, having chiselled it away from the main formation, and flew away slowly. He could not go fast, for the bread was not light, save in colour. Won-

dering, and quickening my footsteps to a run, I followed him to the river. He selected a place where the current was swift, hovered over it a moment, then dropped the bread squarely in. I was hurt—I do not deny it, but later developments showed me that I had no reason for it and that Jim had sufficient cause for his action. Keeping his eye on the bread, which, to my surprise, floated, Jim flew down stream, cawing loudly. With nice calculation, as it afterward proved, he sat down on the bank at exactly the right place and waited.

In a few minutes, the bread came ashore, soft and palatable. Jim ate it with great relish, then, seeing me peering at him through the shrubbery, he distinctly laughed, and flew back home again. When I got there, he had soaked the rest of the bread in a pan of milk which I had left in an exposed position, and was finishing up with molasses.

He did a great many things which at first puzzled me, but which I afterward understood. I had taken down his perch, which was merely a branch nailed across one corner of the cabin, thinking to get a fresh one the next time I went out. Days passed, and I forgot it, but Jim called my attention to it in rather a curious way.

I had been fishing one afternoon, returning about five o'clock with a fine string of Fish which I intended to cook for supper. Jim lit on one of them and refused to budge. I picked him up and he pecked my hand so severely that I was glad to put him down. He let me take the other Fish without protest, but camped on this one until bedtime, cawing loudly at intervals of three minutes or less. When at last he flew in to take his accustomed place on my pillow, I picked up the Fish to see if I could solve the mystery, and, in an instant, my quick, active mind began to work. The Fish was a Perch—the only one I

had caught—and Jim was doing his best, in his poor weak way, to remind me of my shameful neglect.

The brilliant Bird had his reward, and, that very night, before I slept, I fixed his new perch across his old corner of the cabin. Jim watched me, with something very like a smile upon his face, making sleepy caws of gratitude all the time I was at work. When I went to bed, he tickled my face playfully with his tail and caressed me with his beak, to show his appreciation. We slept that night as we always did, with Jim's feet high on my cheek. I did not mind it then, but long afterward, when I went back among the haunts of men, and discovered deep crow's feet around my eyes, I wished that I had broken him of the habit by any method, no matter how desperate.

It added years to my age and made it practically impossible for me to get a position in a telegraph office. Fortunately age does not affect literature. After a man is dead, he may continue in the business and often rank higher than his living competitors. Mr. Plato and Mr. Shakespeare are still formidable rivals of the industrious knights and ladies of the pen.

My knowledge of Jim's epicurean tastes came about in a strange way. I was preparing our simple repast one noon, when I felt the rush of wings over my head. Before I had time to look up, something dropped with a splash into the pan of bacon I was frying and then, from a distant branch, Jim laughed gleefully.

He had dropped a young Rooster, which he had just killed, into my hot grease. He had made some attempt to take off the feathers but it was not successful, and I removed it, to Jim's great disgust.

He talked so much and so long that I finally lost track of it, but I had the main idea. He had killed the Rooster not

only for the fried Chicken, but to satisfy a personal grudge. I judged from Jim's remarks, that this young Rooster had crowed over him long enough and had come, by a swift vengeance, to an ignominious end.

We had the Chicken the next day, fried, with bacon and corn fritters, and it was not half bad—rather less than a quarter, I should say, which was all I could expect, since I had no ice and was obliged to keep it over night in a warm climate.

One other observer has found that Crows play games with each other, but he has not specified the games. I have fully tabulated these and have found striking resemblances to the games of children. Personally, with my own eyes, I have seen a flock of Crows playing "Follow the Leader," "Puss in the Corner," "London Bridge," "Tag," "Prisoner's Base," and "Drop the Handkerchief." The handkerchief was a bit of white wool unwillingly contributed by some Sheep, a ball of hair from a Hare or Rabbit, or a compact cluster of feathers from someone who had been called down.

Early in the Summer, Jim moulted. It was pathetic to see him going about without his clothing, and I made him a red flannel jacket, such as the kind ladies in Cranford made for the Cow who fell into the lime. The jacket and a good hair tonic, rubbed in thoroughly about every other day, put him well in advance of the season, and long before the other Crows had their new clothes, Jim was strutting about in the full glory of his, as proud as a Peacock and fully as impertinent. He always cherished the red flannel jacket. It hung from his perch for a while, where I was not allowed to touch it, and then he flew off into the woods with it, to pack it away, I suppose, with his other treasures.

It grieves me to the heart to write of the end of Jim, that

brave, gay, mischievous Bird, who shared my bed and board for a Summer, and then met the universal fate of the wild. The end of a wild animal is always a tragedy and the only way to avoid writing tragedy is either to stop long before you get through, or not to begin. I cannot stop before I get through, on account of a habit I contracted when I was writing for the magazines at a cent a word, and, moreover, I need the royalty on this book. A big book can be sold for more than a little one, every time. If you don't believe me, go and price a dictionary. The cheaper books are merely a part of the dictionary arranged in another order.

Hitherto, I have failed to mention the fact that Jim was married. I knew nothing of it until he was also a parent, and I never knew how much of a parent he was, for he was singularly uncommunicative on the subject and his nest was upon an inaccessible height. He stole an empty bottle out of my cabin and kept it in a crotch of a tree near by, with the cork which belonged to it tied to the neck by a string. Jim was a cautious Bird. On nights when I left the pan of milk outdoors, Jim would not sleep with me. When I discovered this, I set myself to figure out the connection.

I left the pan of milk in an open space in the yard one bright moonlight night, and, as I half expected, Jim refused to share my pillow. I went to bed as usual, but in a few minutes got up and watched him from a secluded position.

He walked around the pan of milk a few times, cawing under his breath in an important, businesslike way, then flew off for the bottle. He returned with it, and filled it from the pan, using his beak for the purpose, and tilting the pan with his foot when the milk got shallow.

When the bottle was full, he pounded in the cork, grasped it in his claws, and flew away with it towards his nest. I surmised then that Jim was so much of a parent that Mrs. Jim did not have milk enough for all the little ones, and the husband and father was compelled to forage for the balance. Deeply touched, I left a large can of malted milk tablets on the window-sill, open. Within two days, they were all gone.
It was Hoot-Mon, the great Owl, who put an end to Jim. Between the Owls and the Crows there is lifelong enmity. An Owl will attack a Crow at night and a Crow will attack an Owl in the daytime. I knew Hoot-Mon, of course—every Little Brother of the Woods knows Hoot-Mon,—but an article on him had not as yet been ordered, and so I made no special study of him.
It was my fault, too. After Jim was asleep, I put the pan of milk outside for fear it would sour. When he woke and missed it, he scratched my face violently. Trembling with rage, I put him out, saying, as I did so: "You miserable, low-down, black beast, I wish I might never see you again!"
Unexpectedly my wish was granted. In my dooryard, in the morning, when the blood-red sun rose out of the mists of dawn, I found poor Jim, torn and mangled and irretrievably dead, lying beside the empty milk-pan.
He had been slain by Hoot-Mon, who, after eating as much as he could, had sailed away with beak and claws dripping, to wait for darkness and further feasting.
Even if Jim had not been so very dead I could not have saved him, for, in the words of a rival Unnaturalist, "there are no hospitals for sick Crows."
Poor Jim Crow! Time has softened your misdemeanours with its kindly touch and my memory of you is a pleasant one!

HOOP-LA

When you meet a Fox, there are nine surprises. Five of them are his and the other four are yours. You may be looking for him, but he is not looking for you; consequently, he is more surprised than you are.

The following Summer, when I went to my cabin, I found it occupied. By this time I should have been accustomed to such things, but, strangely enough, I was not. To make it worse, the new occupant was not one I could turn out, being a relation. He had been a distant relation hitherto, but was now a near one.

Our family has intermarried a great deal with the descendants of European royalties, and Uncle Antonio was of the great and well-known family of the Cæsars, who, if my readers will remember, used to rank high in Rome. The line of descent was somewhat blurred, it is true, but Uncle had a Roman nose and was given to roaming about the country. By profession, he was a musician—one of those rarely talented people whose genius is infinitely above such minor details as technique. Rubenstein, according to his biographers, used to make bad mistakes in reading his own music, and nearly everyone who has played him has, at some time or other, followed in his gifted footsteps.

Uncle was another Rubenstein, as regards the mistakes. His soul, lifted above all mundane things, soared to meet the thought of the composer, and his fingers stumbled over the keys. This would not have bothered some people, but Uncle was sensitive and it annoyed him, so at length he had an instrument especially made to suit his own needs.

It was an organ of the regulation type, small and compact,

yet with a glorious volume of tone that would have delighted Wagner. Connected with the interior by a wonderfully scientific system of levers, was the motive power. The superior form of the instrument made possible some changes in the manner of playing it.

Instead of pushing on the keys, in the ordinary, common way, my Uncle's organ was played with a rotary sweep of the whole arm, the hand, meanwhile, firmly grasping the lever. This enabled him to put more expression into the music. I would like to say right here that my Uncle's organ was invented long before the day of patent piano-players, and that we, as a family, have about decided to prosecute the makers of these cheap, clap-trap instruments, in behalf of Uncle Antonio.

It was gratifying to see Uncle's face when he played. With all mechanical difficulties overcome, he was free to give his entire attention to the fine shadings and hidden meanings of the composition. It was pleasing, also, to note how close he came to the hearts of the people. Even the little children would come and stand around Uncle Antonio when he played upon his organ, and musicians in the neighbourhood, gnashing their teeth in jealous rage, would close their windows to keep my Uncle's notable accomplishments from belittling their own. It is ever thus. Upon my own trail have sprung up a score or more of writers on Natural History—but I must not say more, lest I be thought too personal.

Uncle Antonio, also, was a lover of the wild animals. He had one pet, in particular, which meant much to him—a genuine African Monkey, imported at great expense and difficulty. He had taught the intelligent animal a great many cunning tricks—in fact, Jocko could do almost everything but speak. Through Jocko I had first come to an understand-

ing of Uncle Antonio. There is an old saying to the effect that, in order to know a man, you must first meet his Dog, and then see them together. In the same way, you must have known Jocko in order to comprehend my Uncle.

I was within a quarter of a mile of my cabin, my pulses bounding with happy anticipation, when a low moan, which seemingly came from a broken heart, struck my ear. I paused and stood like a marble statue—a trick I had learned from my kindred of the wild. Then the curious sound was repeated.

Stealthily, I made my way toward the cabin, but I was not yet so skilled in woodcraft that my feet made no noise. Before I reached the door, my Uncle came out, and a glance at his face showed me that he had met with a great loss.

Like other geniuses, Uncle was somewhat careless in his attire. As a family, we had often laboured with him on this point, but to no avail. The unfettered spirit of the great will express itself in outward semblance, and at length we gave it up. Uncle wore a pair of trousers which, at first sight, did not appear to be his, and a negligee shirt, wide open at the throat, like a poet's. A bright red handkerchief, carelessly knotted, took the place of a tie, and his coat was his velvet one, to which he had been strongly attached for many years. Small hoops of gold, similar to those worn by Venetian noblemen, hung from the pendant lobes of his musical ears.

Seeing me, he eyed me for a moment in great astonishment.

"Hella da dev!" he exclaimed. "What for you coma da here?"

I can never hope to describe, in English, the charm of my Uncle's foreign accent. Long years of residence in this country had not eradicated it, and his low, melodious voice, full of unexpected harmonies, gave a lyric quality to his conversation.

"I am here," I returned, "because this is my cabin. I might ask the same question of you," I added, playfully.

"Hella da dev!" said Uncle once more. This quaint, foreign phrase, indicating a pleasant surprise, often appeared in his speech. "My father-in-law, he giva da coop to you? It is astonish!"

"Yes," I sighed, "it is." Grandfather was one of those thrifty pioneers who held on to a cent until the Indian howled.

Uncle sat down and wiped his forehead with the fancy, coloured handkerchief which was an heirloom in his family. This was quite in keeping with the situation, for I have often known the unexpected sight of a relative to produce cold perspiration on the skin of a sensitive, emotional person.

"Listen," said Uncle, struggling to his feet. "I tella you. Here I come two, tree day back. Maka da gr-rand professional tour through ze back countree, where zees poor pipple, zey haf no moosic at all. It ees pitiful."

I nodded. Such generosity was like Uncle.

"Getta da cent," he resumed, "getta da tree cent. Zees grateful pipple, what haf no moosic, zey nevaire giva da nick, no, nevaire! Wis Jocko, zen, I meet zees place, where I stay for ze little res' away from ze unappreciatif pipple. An' here, what you zink? Jocko haf been stole from me!" Here his voice rose to an agonised shriek: "Jocko haf been stole!" His grief broke through the dam and overflowed. The sight of a strong man's tears is always terrible, and I turned away until the first outburst subsided.

Then I advanced to comfort the stricken man. "Perhaps, Uncle Antonio," I said, kindly, "Jocko ran away of his own accord."

"Hella da dev!" cried Uncle, clenching his hands. "What are zees pipple I haf been married to! Jocko, da monk, run away? Nevaire! Listen. Tree year now, Jocko and I maka da professional tour together. Jocko getta da cent from da audience, bringa him to me. Smarta da monk—weara da

asbestos glove, taka da warm cent also. Jocko run away? Nevaire! Jocko haf been stole!"

After long consideration, I thought so, too. I knew very well that if any human being had stolen the Monkey, he would have been returned long before this. My memory of the animal was that he was rather troublesome, but of course I did not wish to say so, for fear of hurting my Uncle's feelings.

Eliminating the human element from the proposition, there remained only one possible conclusion. Some animal had done it, in response to that merciless law of the wilderness, which bids the wood people seek and slay and devour; the law of claw and tooth and fang, from which there is no appeal.

Jocko had not been taken from his high perch—this left tramps and neighbours out of the question, also Coons and Owls. He had not been left partly eaten, so that Weasels, Pole-Cats, or Minks were not responsible. What animal could have taken Jocko away bodily? My quick, active mind immediately answered: "A Fox!"

I said nothing to Uncle Antonio of my suspicion. In the morning, when I went down to the lake for my bath, I found a foxglove which surely had not been there the night before. It was a mother, then, foraging for her young. I wondered how they liked Jocko. He was so disagreeable to me, personally, that he would certainly have disagreed with me, even if I had eaten him.

The next day, my suspicions were confirmed in an unexpected manner. The ivy which grew around my door was pulled down and badly trampled upon. I remembered the old saying, then: "Little foxes spoil the vines." The mother, growing bolder, must have brought her young into my dooryard.

When you are troubled by a mother Fox, you may know that her den is far away. She never draws attention to herself

in her own neighbourhood. When you are not troubled by a mother Fox, you may know that one is near at hand. This great truth is familiar to every Little Brother of the Woods.
One bright afternoon, later in the week, I took my field-glass and went to a lofty hill near by. I climbed to the summit and from that point of vantage surveyed the surrounding country, looking for the den. I found it, at last, under an overhanging rock, far to the south.
The mother Fox sat in the doorway with her sewing, making another glove, doubtless, to replace the one she had so strangely lost, while her little ones gambolled about her. I never saw more than three at any one time, and so I concluded that there were only three in the family.
I felt wicked, spying upon this charming domestic picture, even though it was through my field-glass and I was so far away that they would never know they were observed. Here I was proved wrong, however. The weary seamstress laid her work aside and stood up, brushing the threads from her lap. She yawned, smoothed her back hair a bit, and was about to go inside, when she paused.
With every sense alert, she leaned forward, shaded her eyes with her hand, and stared straight at me—the man with the field-glass on the summit of the hill so far away. I was embarrassed, but I did not move. When she had satisfied her curiosity, she grinned at me and then, unmistakably, winked. She seemed to know that I was far different from that barbarous race of men who would hunt her and her babies with dogs and guns. Her composure was so perfect, her intuition so swift, and her wink so suggestive of amiable deviltry, that I at once named her "Hoop-La," which is an Indian word signifying lady-like mischief, and so she remains in my annals to this day.
We knew where each other lived, and we were friends—so

much was already established. I felt sure now that Hoop-La would visit me when she knew I was at home, perhaps bringing her little ones with her, but the question quickly arose in my mind: how should I dispose of Uncle Antonio? That night, as delicately as I could, I told him that I had enjoyed his brief stay with me very much and that I was sorry he must go.

"Mus' go?" repeated Uncle, pricking up his ears, "for w'y you say zis? I haf no mentions made of ze departure—it is wis me you haf someone else maka da confuse."

"Perhaps," I answered, with rare tact. "My dreams are sometimes very vivid."

"I see," said Uncle Antonio, with a child-like smile upon his calm, high-bred face; "you hitta da pipe."

I did not enlighten him, for it is bad manners to contradict a guest. You must never insult people in your own house—always go to theirs.

"I have come, dear Uncle," I continued, "to study Unnatural History. It is an absorbing pursuit, and I fear you will find me poor company."

"No," returned Uncle Antonio, in his gentle, foreign way, "zat no maka da dif to me. I lika you mucha da bet when you say nossing—nossing 't all. Ze more you keepa da still, ze more your Oncle lofe you."

With his fine comprehension, he had instantly penetrated to the heart of things. "Staya da here," he said, with touching dignity, "until Jocko maka da return trip. Jocko always bringa cent when he coma da back."

In some way, it reminded me of those stories of New England, so plentiful in our day and generation, and always so beautifully written, where somebody is always wait-

ing for somebody else, who never comes. In those rare instances where the long wait is rewarded, the emotion of the lost one's arrival has always been attenuated into nothingness. In a reminiscent mood, also, I mused upon an epigram my sister made, on the tenth anniversary of her wedding day. "Before marriage," she said, with a little choke in her voice, "woman spends all her life waiting for her husband. After marriage, she spends three quarters of it in the same way." My brother-in-law, I may say, in explanation, was one of those people who make it the chief business of their lives to be late to everything.

I left a note for Hoop-La under a boulder by the path which I felt sure she would take when she grew bolder and came to visit me. The next day, when I went to look for it, it was gone, and I was pleased to think she had it. At supper, however, Uncle Antonio produced it from the secret recesses of his attire. "I getta da dead next to you," he said, with a merry laugh. "You gotta da sweetheart here. Zat is ze reason w'y you maka da chase of your poor old Oncle out. Me no leava da monk." The ensuing quarter of an hour was very unpleasant for me, though at length I convinced him that I had nothing to do with the note. He would not accept my word until I wrote a page or so for him, in another hand. I was foxy enough to learn to write three or four different hands at school and it has come in handy early and often since.

I soon saw, however, that I should not be troubled much with Uncle Antonio. Every day he took long, cross-country tramps, "to finda da monk," as he pathetically said, and often having disagreements with cross country tramps whom he met on the road. But he did not mind, and his faith and hope were absolutely without limit.

Hoop-La came one day when he was absent. I first felt her

bright eyes upon me from a thicket close at hand, then I saw her tawny orange-coloured fur, and presently she approached, walking on her hind legs, with her magnificent tail thrown over one arm. Her tail was her principal adornment; her paws were her chief features. She was doing the kangaroo walk to perfection, and when I went in and brought out a paper of cookies she did the cake walk also.

She sat near me for some time, contemplating me gravely. She could not speak my language and I did not know hers, nevertheless a perfect understanding was soon in operation between us. A Fox looks beyond your eyes to your inner thought, which is not especially difficult, for the thought-tank, as students of physiology all know, is the padding around the optic nerve. She had not brought her fancy work—I suppose she did not feel that she knew me well enough, or else, like many human ladies, she did not fancy work.

At all events, it was a very formal call. At the close of it, she bowed and went away with great dignity. Had I followed her I would have seen capers, tail-chasing, quick turns, high kicks, and flying jumps, then a mad gallop home, but I did not know this until I got back to the city and read it in a book. Some of the Little Brothers of the Woods have seen a great deal that I have unaccountably missed, but because they have been more fortunate than I have, it does not necessarily follow that they have lied about it.

I never saw Hoop-La's husband, and concluded, therefore, that she was a widow. Her ways were sufficiently winning to justify my hypothesis, and she was as clever as any of them. One time, she was unjustly suspected of stealing some Chickens, and the Hounds were set upon her trail. I had gone to the hill I have spoken of before, to add up my accounts on the summit, and I saw them, far in the distance,

headed straight for the open field just below me, where Hoop-La was fixing up their day's work for them.

First, she ran all around the field three times, then took a long jump toward the centre, and wove herself in and out in a circle. Then she took another jump and wove more circles, and so on, for the better part of an hour. All the time, the deep bellowing of the Hounds came nearer, but Hoop-La did not seem to be at all alarmed. It was not until the leader of the pack struck the field and caught the scent that she took any notice of them at all.

By a series of swift and wonderfully clever sorties, which included high jumps and frequent wetting of her feet in the brook, she gained the hill. Then she came up beside me, taking care, however, to keep on a small patch of orange-coloured grass which exactly matched her coat. The wonder of it was not that the grass should match Hoop-La, but that she should know that it did.

Down below, in the field, the hunt went on. There must have been five hundred Dogs there, or else they ran so fast that they looked like more. The pasture seemed to be one solid Dog, circling in and out, jumping, leaping, and weaving strange designs upon the green sod below.

Suddenly the significance burst upon me. With her own clever body, sentient and alive from nose to tip of tail, Hoop-La had made a quilt pattern, and the Dogs were following it. It was like a game of living chess, such as the barbarian kings used to play before the Republican party got into power.

Have any of my readers ever seen a Fox laugh? Hoop-La sat beside me, with her hands on her sides, rocking and swaying in a spasm of merriment. Salt tears of joy rolled down her cheeks and made little rivulets through her fur. By looking at these narrow lines, I perceived, for the first time, the wonderful pinky fairness of her complexion.

Meanwhile the Dogs wound in and out on the trail, the pattern becoming more and more distinct every minute. When there was a space in the swiftly moving mass, I could see deep scars upon the surface of the field, and this seemed to amuse Hoop-La all the more. She laughed until I was afraid her hysterics would bring the Dogs upon us. I was sure she could take care of herself, but I was not anxious to have my own footsteps dogged by that pastureful of howling fiends.

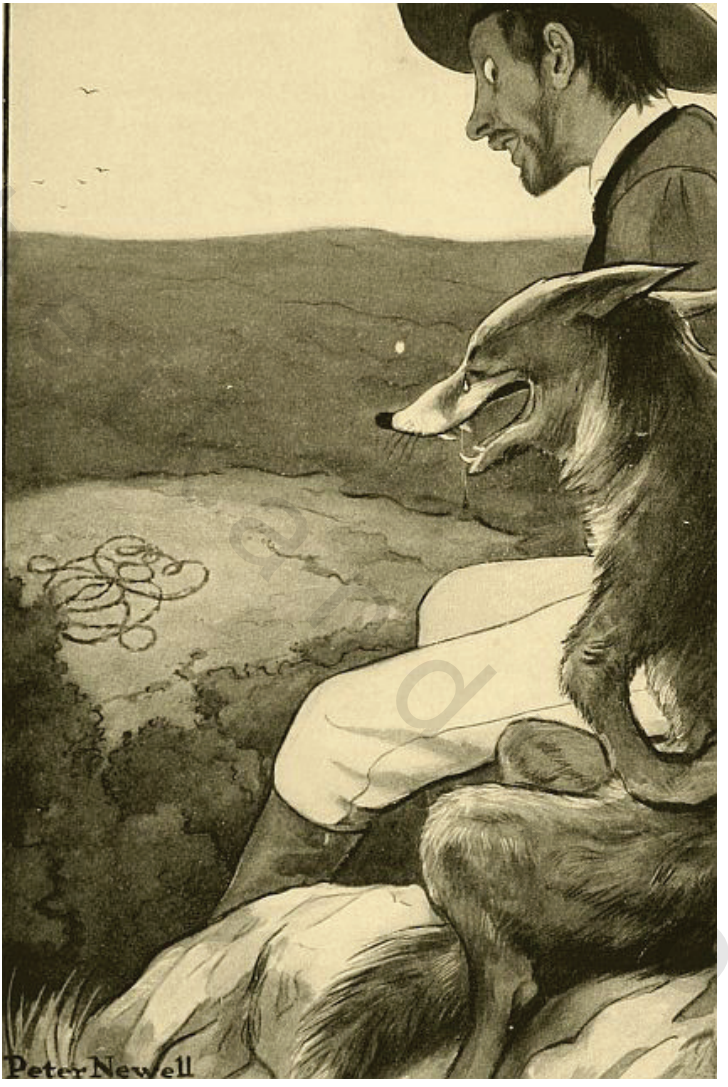
One by one, the Dogs dropped out. Some of them lay flat on their backs, utterly exhausted, and breathing like so many locomotives. Enough short pants were made in that field that afternoon to clothe the inmates of all the orphan asylums in North America, but Mother Nature is ever too generous with her material—in spots.

Hoop-La was still laughing and it got worse every minute. Remembering her sex and thinking to divert her, I took a handful of coins out of my pocket and laid them on the grass beside her. She pawed them over without interest for a moment or two, then her eye lit upon a penny which was evidently fresh from the mint.

She played with it for a time, enjoying the glint of the sun on the shining copper, then her face suddenly illumined with a bright idea. Before I realised what she was going to do, she took it in her mouth, walked over to the edge of the hill, sat down, and with a precision of aim which was unusual in her sex, threw it straight down into the pasture.

I was aghast. Hoop-La had deliberately given the Dogs a new scent!

Still, they received it without enthusiasm and she seemed very much disappointed. I knew one thing that she did not; namely, that Dogs are instinctively afraid of coppers.



“Hoop-La sat beside me, with her hands on her sides, rocking and swaying in a spasm of merriment.”

When the baffled animals went home, Hoop-La descended into the field and retrieved her financial losses. I suppose she took the coin home to her children, and after familiarising them with its outward appearance, she told them: "That is man-scent."

A week or so after that, when I sat upon the summit of the hill, with my field-glass fixed upon the roomy piazzas of her home, it fell to my good-fortune to see her teaching her little ones. She was a tender mother, but a severe task-mistress, and plied the rod liberally when they made mistakes. She taught them how to play dead, how to manage their trails so the Dogs could not step on them, how to pick a Squirrel's teeth and bones, how to catch Field Mice without a trap, how to hunt Mares' nests, how to play Leap Frog, and how to sing the woodland spring song. I have jotted down the words:

> "Tinkety tank, tinkety tink,
> Haunt of the Weasel and haunt of the Mink;
> Tinkety tank, tinkety tink,
> Come little Foxes, come here and drink."

This is the water song of the Fox family and corresponds to a college yell. Many a night, you can hear it over the hillsides, in deep, loud-mouthed bays that brook no delay and harbour a sinister meaning.

Among other things, she taught them these proverbs:

"Never sleep on your track until you have curled it up so much that it makes a soft bed.

"When your leader fails you, shuffle the pack for a new deal and turn up another trump.

"Money may not be your best friend, but it is the quickest to act in time of trouble. Therefore, trust your scent.

"Dried up water never runs.

“Do not sleep in the river-bed when the springs that used to be there have rusted away.
“Never travel by daylight if you can help it. Take the night express and be there in the morning.
“If you don’t know what it is, bring it to Mamma. She will put you on.
“Never hunt for Hens in a boys’ college, nor for Mice in a female seminary.
“A gasolene automobile overpowers everything but a Skunk.
“Don’t sit on the paint.
“If you climb telegraph poles to do the tight-rope act on the wires, don’t eat the currents.
“Take a yellow journal with you when you are going where there is no orange-coloured grass.
“If you can’t smell anything, the wind is wrong, and other people are smelling you. Turn around and it will be all right.
“Never feel ashamed of your clothes. Fox fur may not be Sealskin, but it is expensive enough to be decent.
“Never throw an Indian off the scent. It is against the coin-mutilation law.
“Try to use other people’s experience and profit by bad example. Pattern after the Indians, who never moccasin.
“Let the Snakes alone; fur boas do not grow wild.
“When you drop your Rabbit’s foot, look out for falling hair.”
The instruction was interrupted by a strange animal flopping wildly about in front of the den, as though attached to a chain. It was smaller than Hoop-La and of a different colour. It had bright red on its head and body, and, even at that distance, I could see a tail long enough to make a three-volume novel. Then my heart gave a violent lunge into my ribs. Unquestionably, it was Jocko!

I put the glass down, my hands trembling. Why had Hoop-La monkeyed with Uncle Antonio's pet? And what would Uncle Antonio do if he should hit upon the truth? Would he not shoot Hoop-La and all her children and make a Winter coat for Jocko out of their complexions? Echo answered me—he would.

My quick, active mind was partially paralysed. The cogs were rusty and the chains of thought creaked over them without producing any power. What should I do?

Should I remain silent, while my blood-relation ate his heart out and all the provisions I could buy? Should I listen, night after night, to the heartrending strains of Bedelia, syncopated by a strong man's sobs? Every night, when playing that painful melody, Uncle was overcome at the line: "I've made up my mind to steal you." "That is it," he would shriek, "my Jocko haf been stole!" By a wonderful modulation, too swift for the ordinary ear to perceive, Uncle Antonio always changed off to Could Ye Come Back to Me, Douglas, and played it twice before he ceased.

Obviously, it was up to me. In my hands were the tangled threads of Fate, which I and I alone could unkink.

I did not sleep for three nights. On the fourth day, I walked out a little way from the cabin—perhaps eight or ten miles. In the woods I met Hoop-La under strange circumstances.

She was walking on her hind legs, carefully holding her magnificent tail away from the dust and the cockleburrs. She may have believed in the re-incarnation theory, but it was evident that she did not care to become even a little burred. Upon her arm was an old Fox, with a scarred face, blind and helpless, as I soon perceived. He was bald in many places, had false teeth in both jaws, and his tail had only one new sprout at the end of it. He paid no attention

whatever to me, and I quickly surmised that he had also lost the sense of hearing.

I knit my brows in deep thought, then instantly unravelled them. The express thundered around the bend, and, in a flash, I understood. He was some poor old foxy grandpa, totally deaf, whom Hoop-La had found walking upon the railroad track and was taking home. It gave me a new insight into her kind heart, and I was sure that if I could only make her understand how Uncle Antonio and I felt about Jocko, she would release him, even though the children wanted to play with him.

But to make her understand? Ah, measureless, impassable gulf that lies between us and our kindred of the wild!

Several days later I visited the den. I could hear Jocko flopping about on his chain in the far corner, and hear the little Foxes screaming with delight. I did not think Hoop-La was at home, and was about to crawl in and kidnap Jocko. Just then, as if reading my thought, she came out.

She looked at me disdainfully—contemptuously, I thought. Then she went back, returning almost immediately with an old, worn-out rubber, which she expressively dropped at my feet. I crept away in shame, fully understanding her point of view.

Eventually, the thing was solved, and in a strange manner. It came about in this way.

Uncle Antonio, like many foreign noblemen, carried with him a miniature cooking outfit and some imported ingredients. He had said nothing about these, being content to subsist entirely upon my humbler fare, but one day, when I was about to start for the village, he came to me.

"You goa da town?" he asked.

I nodded.

"Looka da here," pleaded Uncle Antonio. "You bringa sixa da

pork chop, two lar-rge can da tomat, one onion lika your head."
"What for?" I asked, suspiciously.
Uncle Antonio's face became radiant. "Hist!" he replied, in a stage whisper. "Me cooka da spaghett! Nica da spaghett!"
For the first time in my life, I felt deep and abiding love for my Uncle. Needless to say, I hastened back with the required articles.
In a kettle, over the fire, Uncle Antonio fried the pork chops and the onion to a deep seal brown, then added the contents of both cans of tomatoes. He salted the mixture liberally, then from his pack brought two large cloves of garlic and a bottle of paprika. He sliced the garlic in, sprinkled it with the paprika, and, by some means known only to himself, decreased the heat.
All day the appetising compound simmered. At night, Uncle Antonio pressed the entire mixture through a sieve that he had in his kit, and set it aside. Then he prepared a kettle of boiling water, with a tablespoonful of salt in it, and from the inside of his organ took out a great bundle of spaghetti, the tubes being very small, and something over a yard and a half long.
"Nica da spaghett," crooned Uncle, stroking it fondly. "Maka da wonderful moosic!"
He boiled it twenty minutes by my jewelled repeater, drained it, put some on my plate, poured a liberal quantity of the sauce over it, and passed me a bottle of grated cheese, which, until now, he had kept in his hat.
I tasted of it with some misgivings, but instantly I was Uncle's. Through my system vibrated a single joyous thought—I had watched him and I knew how to do it.
I must have eaten nearly a peck of it. There was some left, and when I went to bed I put it outside, for fear I should get up and eat it in the night.

In the morning I crept out, hungrily, thinking to steal a march upon Uncle, but, to my astonishment, the plate looked as if it had been washed, and all the sauce was gone!

I made a loud exclamation of pained surprise, and Uncle Antonio came out, fully dressed. He slept in his clothes to save time and trouble. "Oh," he shrieked, tearing his hair, "eet ees Jocko! Jocko haf been here in ze night w'ile I sleep! Jocko lova da spaghett! He always washa da plate for me!" He tore around like a madman, looking for his pet, but of course he found nothing. I saw something, but wisely held my tongue about it. A box of Hoop-La's footprints had been left on the doorstep and there was a bundle of her tracks a little farther on in the wood.

Like Minerva from the head of Jove, a great scheme presented itself, all ready to be worked out. That afternoon, I climbed to my observatory, and with my powerful field-glass saw Hoop-La on the veranda of her home, grinning, licking her chops, and occasionally patting her stomach with an air of satisfaction.

That night I said to my esteemed relation: "Uncle Antonio, if you will fix up another pail of that spaghetti, borrow a Horse, and trust me implicitly, I think I can restore Jocko to your empty arms."

He looked at me suspiciously, then assailed me with a torrent of questions, to all of which I made no reply. He spent the night preparing more sauce, and at dawn he set out for the nearest village, twenty-one and a half miles distant, to borrow a Horse. About noon, he rode in, put up the Horse in the bridle chamber attached to the premises, and cooked a savoury mess of spaghetti. My mouth watered, but I dared not hesitate. I mounted, took the plate, and rode off toward Hoop-La's den.

As I had hoped, she was at home. I tied the plunging steed, whose mouth was dripping and who regarded the spaghetti yearningly, and advanced to the front piazza.

Sniffing hungrily, she came out, and I heard the frenzied clankings of Jocko's chain. "Come, Hoop-La," I said, though my voice trembled. She called her children, and in a moment they were all eating greedily.

As I had planned, poor, imprisoned Jocko came out to the end of his chain. It did not permit him to go farther than a foot from the entrance, but that was sufficient for my purpose. Quick as a flash, I unfastened the chain from his collar, took the thoroughly frightened animal in my arms, and ran for dear life to the Horse.

I was none too soon. With an angry snarl, Hoop-La followed me, but she had already eaten too heartily to do her best work on the rough track which lay ahead of us. She clung to the Horse's tail, growling and snarling in baffled rage, her claws and teeth urging the trembling steed into a foaming gallop.

My hat flew off and many of my most valuable ideas blew out through my ears, never to return, but Jocko, terrorised into death-like stillness, lay quietly inside my coat.

Somehow or other, I kept my seat, and thus we dashed into Uncle Antonio's presence. When she saw the strange man, Hoop-La let go and slunk back into the woods, defeated and ashamed.

"Jocko!" screamed Uncle, in a passion of joy, as his long-lost pet flew into his arms. "Bambino! Cara mia!" Fine family feeling compels me to draw a veil over that affecting reunion.

Just at sunset, they left me, marching southward, Uncle's blissful state of mind expressing itself in exultant strains from his organ. He read meanings into the music that the composer, in

his wildest moments, could never have hoped to convey. It is a peculiarity of travelling musical geniuses, like my Uncle, that they always begin a journey at sunset, when the day goes.

Growing ever fainter, the compelling strains of triumph broke upon my listening ears, fortunately without doing any damage. Fortissimo, forte, decrescendo, piano, diminuendo, pianissimo, peace—thus the clear commanding notes died into silence, winding in a thread of silver melody around the base of the distant hill.

Night fell, but I dodged and it did not hit me. The quiet sweetness of the woods was like a plaster on a sore place, and I enjoyed it to the full. My conscience reproached me somewhat for betraying the trust the tawny mother had reposed in me, and I felt, intuitively, that I should never see her again.

I never did, though I am always expecting to meet her in the woods, and I never hear a faux pas without thinking it maybe Hoop-La or one of her children.

JENNY RAGTAIL

After my Uncle went away, the silence began to rasp on my nerves; it was so different from what I had been accustomed to. I had that curious, attenuated nervousness which is always expecting something unpleasant to happen. This was especially acute along about seven in the evening, at which time my talented relative was wont to begin his regular recital upon the instrument he so thoroughly understood.

From seven to eleven, the air would be full of faint, mysterious echoes which had no discernible source. Fragmentary, disorganised phrases from Bedelia, Could Ye Come Back to Me, Douglas, and the beautiful, though familiar melo-

dies from Il Trovatore, came in from the woods around me and beat against the walls of my cabin. It seemed as though some of Uncle's music had been canned and the cans were exploding. The effect was uncanny, to say the least.

As time went on, it became evident that I must do something desperate, or else become the star inmate of a padded cell. Those who do not believe in personal influence should remain alone for a time in a place which an uninvited relation has regretfully left. With nerves and senses sharpened by the ordeal through which they have recently passed, they will hear and feel some queer things, or I miss my guess.

At the crisis of my unhappy condition, I remembered the old saying, "Like cures like," and I clutched at it as a drowning man grabs the proverbial straw. "The hair of a dog will cure the bite," continued my inner consciousness.

But what could I do that would even remotely approach the things that Uncle did? I had no musical gifts, and an organ like his was out of the question for about eleven hundred and eighty-nine different reasons. I must have something, however; something distinctively Italian. Like lightning the solution of my problem burst upon me. A concertina!

Within a week I had procured a fine one, also an instruction book. The new study became so absorbing that I forgot all about Unnatural History, for the time being. It was not long before I could play Down on the Suwanee River, The Last Rose of Summer, and Home, Sweet Home. The instrument had a wonderfully fine tone, and, for the first time, I began to understand the wild, universal passion to learn music.

I discovered that the pleasure is mainly selfish, the joy being principally that of the performer. The one who plays, or rather works, an instrument of any sort, can never give others as

much pleasure as he gives himself. With the voice, the principle is the same, though greatly intensified. Conversation exemplifies it in lesser degree, though not much less. I remembered that when I was very young, a number of other rising citizens used to battle with me for the control of the harmonica which I found in my infantile sock one radiant Christmas morning. "The child is father of the man," said Wordsworth, though how much his word's worth it is not for me to say.

As I played, one day, I felt bright eyes upon me. I was taking deep accordion plaits in the silence, but I was not wholly oblivious to my surroundings. "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast"—how wonderfully true that is! Already I looked forward to the time when all the woodfolk should come and stand around me, open-mouthed and rapt, while I worked my concertina.

Every day, when I began to practise my technical exercises, I felt the bright eyes. When an eye is laid on a Little Brother of the Woods, he can feel it all through his system. I was not sufficiently interested, however, to investigate.

One bright morning, when I was practising that beautiful song beginning: "Knock, and the world knocks with you; boost, and you boost alone," I heard a corroborative thump from the woods.

It was really a tremendous noise and seemed as though it must have been made by a Moose, an Elephant, or some animal equally large. At brief intervals the sound was repeated and at last I concluded that someone in my immediate neighbourhood was giving a pound party.

The next day, according to the entries in my observation ledger, I had filled the concertina with cooky crumbs and had begun to play a cake-walk, adding a little milk to the

interior occasionally to produce a more liquid tone. From the distant shrubbery, from the same quarter where I had repeatedly felt the bright eyes, I heard a thump-thump-thump, perfectly metrical, and in time with my merry tune. It was accompanied by a soft patter, seemingly from very small hands. With a sudden reversion to my former interests I threw the concertina aside, and dashed into the forest.

There, beneath a bush, were Jenny Ragtail and her son, Chee-Wee, still patting and thumping in the metre of the cake-walk and not knowing that the music had stopped. It takes sound some time to travel and I have always been very quick on my feet.

As soon as they saw me, they vanished.

When I returned to my instrument, it refused to work, and upon taking it apart, I discovered that the milk had been churned to butter. I was obliged to scrape the entire mechanism before I could play any more, but there was a smile of satisfaction upon my face as I did so. I had always known that the long ears of Rabbits served some good purpose in the wise economy of creation, and now I perceived that they were ears for music. A Donkey's telephonic apparatus is constructed upon much the same plan, and everyone knows how he can sing.

I have not space to describe the gradual manner in which my acquaintance with Jenny Ragtail progressed, nor how I learned all that I know about Rabbits and their language. Suffice it to say that before many weeks had passed by, she and Chee-Wee would scamper into my presence as soon as I began the first notes of the cake-walk, and would sit very close to me as I extracted the melody from the instrument, patting and thumping at the accented notes.

I remembered reading in my well-thumbed copy of Uncle

Remus that "Bre'r Rabbit was always a master hand to pat a tune," but I never wholly believed it until I saw it done. Little Brothers of the Woods are sometimes very incredulous of the observations of others, as my readers have doubtless noted.

In the remainder of this scientific treatise, though I may translate freely and frequently from Rabbit into English, I shall say nothing that the Rabbits did not say. Accuracy has always been a strong point with me—in fact, I am rabid upon it.

Jenny Ragtail was a large, well-shaped brown Rabbit. Her body tapered slightly in at the waist line, and this led me to surmise that in the privacy of her chamber she wore some sort of a corset. Her finale was a gloriously beautiful tuft of white Rabbit fur, which led Chee-Wee in and out of the mazes of the forest trails like a friendly beacon. Her eyes were large and brown and motherly, and projected so far from her kind, matronly countenance, that she could see behind her, in the same manner that the ever-feminine of our own species can see around a corner or through a stone wall. Jenny's intuition was marvellous.

Chee-Wee was almost infinitesimal in size. He looked like a baby Rat and was once taken for one by a lady book agent, with a very dignified carriage, who penetrated the wilderness as far as my hermitage. I never knew whose Nature Library she was canvassing for, because, at the first glimpse of Chee-Wee, she took the brakes off her carriage and fled into the next county. Those who think that women cannot run should have seen this book agent.

Chee-Wee was not many weeks old, but already he was beginning to study in the school his mother taught. There are schools of Rabbits, just as there are schools of Fish, though it is not so generally known. They learn by whisker touch-

ing, the sense of smell, telegraphy with the hind feet, and by another method which I shall explain later.

The first thing Jenny taught Chee-Wee was to play dead. One thump means "freeze." Two thumps mean "follow me." Three thumps mean "danger—run for dear life," and four thumps mean "come." The politicians who have their ears to the ground are many times only Unnaturalists in disguise, listening for Rabbit thumps. Then, when a valuable franchise comes along, they are in a position to grab it.

One day Chee-Wee had a dreadful adventure. He was in the woods near my cabin and Jenny was out foraging. She had put him in a crèche under the roots of a pine and told him not to move a muscle until she came. A terrible serpent, with a very bright head, was close to Chee-Wee; a peculiar, striped serpent that made him stiff with fright. He had read in his little primer about garter snakes, and in his childish ignorance supposed this was one. He was scared almost to death, but he had enough presence of mind to thump for his mother, who instantly left her shopping tour and hastened to his side.

He was partially right, though it was not a Snake at all and had been dropped by the lady book agent in her mad flight through the forest, but, none the less, Chee-Wee was soundly spanked for turning in a 4:11 alarm for nothing more than a smoking chimney, while his mother was engaged in chasing up a bargain sale.

Those who have not lived near enough to the animals to know what they are talking about will think I have made Chee-Wee and his mother too human, but that little band of choice spirits who study the encyclopedias all Winter and get out a Nature Book apiece every Spring, will know that I have not so abased my high calling as to be inaccurate in even the smallest detail.

A Rabbits best friend is his brier patch and he is seldom more than eight and one half hops away from it. Jenny Ragtail used to carry a copy of that beautiful poem, Brier Rose, in her reticule, so that she would always have a place of refuge in time of trouble. I know this, because I wrote the piece out for her myself from my book of Parlour Elocution. Jenny was devoted to Chee-Wee. She loved him nineteen times as hard as she could have done if his eighteen little brothers and sisters, who were published simultaneously, had not died of a fever before they were a week old. This was an epidemic which raged fiercely among the Squirrels and nearly spoiled all the Rabbit stew. He got nineteen times as much schooling and learned nineteen times as much as he could otherwise have done. This accounts for anything that may seem unusually intelligent in the future conduct of Chee-Wee.

First, she taught him geography. With a toothpick I gave her, she drew out a singularly accurate relief map of the surrounding country in the sand at my door. I still have the toothpick and a small bottle of the sand, which I kept to convince the doubting ones. She was a week or more in making it, and I fear that Chee-Wee would have been very restless, had it not been for the little silvery minnow in a glass of water at Jenny's elbow, which interested him greatly. She kept it there in order that her map might be drawn to scale.

When the map was finished, I was allowed to inspect it, and it was really wonderful, though it was not at all the kind of a map that I should have drawn. She had marked the brier patches, the dens of Woodchucks and Weasels, the kennel of a distant farmer's Hound, and a log in the middle of a pond. This latter place was marked by a small piece of flag-root which bore the picture of a Rabbit's hind foot, and

meant “Last Stand.” It was well named, for no animal but a loan shark could have found them there.

She taught him to comb his hair, brush his teeth, wash his face, paying special attention to his ears, and to curl his tail up over his back, like a Squirrel. It was the merest stub of a tail and Chee-Wee got vertigo once from chasing it round and round trying to get a good view of it. Their comb was an ordinary curry comb, which presumably had dropped from the vest pocket of some canine pursuer.

Jenny saved her own combings, putting them carefully away in a box made of Squirrel bark. I noted afterward that she had stuck little bits of fur on some of the thorns in the brier patch where she and Chee-Wee lived, after the manner of Hop o’ My Thumb, who dropped pebbles in the wood that he might find his way home again. This was to guide Chee-Wee to the family residence in time of need.

It is not generally known that Rabbits make a blanket to cover their babies out of tufts of fur which they pick from themselves. Jenny’s blanket was a beauty and exemplified the arts and crafts movement among the Rabbits in a particularly striking way.

The background was white, and on it, in bold relief, was a large brown Rabbit, just vanishing around the corner of the blanket. Below was the motto, “Always Keep Your Front Feet off the Landscape.”

When this blanket was soiled, she washed it in the brook, using a bit of soap bark on the more soiled places, and hanging it out to dry on a line from home. Thinking that Chee-Wee might possibly take cold, I offered her a small square of brussels carpet for them to sleep under. It was the best I had, but she disdained the offering, and upon examining it

closely, I saw why. Neither of them could have slept under it, because the nap was all worn off.

Rabbits love rose bushes and even that fine, new, man-made rose bush which climbs all over the country—the barbed wire fence. Jenny taught Chee-Wee how to lead his enemies into the fence and how to take the flying leap through the wires, leaving not so much as a tuft of fur behind to tell the tale. That summer Chee-Wee killed two Dogs, a Weasel, a Skunk, and three Bull Frogs, who were chasing him across the country, at different times, of course, by leading them full blast into this dangerous fence. Here they always hung until some of their mourning friends or relatives would come and cut down the body.

A Rabbit's nose is exactly like the paper pin-wheels the children make and pin to the end of a stick. When the children run, with the stick held straight out in front of them, the pin-wheel whirls merrily, as everyone knows. A Rabbit's nose has an interior formation of precisely the same size and shape, which revolves on an axis of cartilage at the slightest movement of the wearer. Thus does Nature care for her children.

Chee-Wee would never eat anything until his mother had certified to the quality of it. She always had to taste of it first, to be sure that it was all right, and frequently he took the food out of her mouth, in this way becoming very fond of hash. I have often seen them nibbling the ends of a long blade of grass, coming closer and closer together as the grass got shorter, and finally ending in a very loving kiss. It was both pretty and touching.

One cold day, I prepared some spaghetti according to Uncle Antonio's method, though the pipes that I bought in the village were not at all like those that he took out of the

interior recesses of his organ. We had it for lunch, Jenny Ragtail, Chee-Wee, and I, and we all ate heartily.

I was never more forcibly convinced of the truth of the saying that "What is one man's meat is another man's poison," than I was that afternoon. Personally, I never felt better in my life. A warm glow of brotherly love pervaded my entire system, and there was enough spaghetti left for my luncheon the following day, if I could summon up sufficient self-denial to keep it that long.

But in less than an hour, Jenny and Chee-Wee were both very sick. Chee-Wee lay on the ground at the foot of a pine tree, and his mother, pitiable though her condition was, hobbled off to the marsh for some medicine.

When she returned, weak and exhausted, she had a large quantity of teaberries. She brewed these into a strong, bitter liquid over my fire, with boiling water from my tea-kettle. She dosed Chee-Wee with it liberally, then drank some of it herself. In half an hour, they were capering around as usual, and I was much pleased with Jenny's cleverness.

Seeing that the mixture was a good Hare tonic, I rubbed some on my dome of thought where the thatching was thin, but it did not work in the same way.

The next day, when I brought out the plate of spaghetti for my luncheon, intending to divide, as usual, with my guests, they both scampered off at such a mad pace that I could see nothing but a cloud of dust and the gleam of light from their white tails. I did not know that anything on earth could go at such a pace as that, though my mother used to tell me, when she was making my gingham shirts, that brown and white were always fast colours. I believe it now, but I did not then, for those shirts never used to get me to school on

time during the swimming season, and, indeed, often delayed me, with unaccountable knots in the sleeves.

Chee-Wee soon grew into a good-sized Rabbit. He used to stand up on his hind legs and bite the trees as high as he could reach. One tree, a few feet from my cabin door, is scarred with these tiny teeth marks from the height of one inch above the ground, where he could just reach when he was a little baby Rabbit, up to three feet and eighteen inches from the ground, which measured his height in his prime.

Any Rabbit, passing through the woods, would know that he was on Chee-Wee's reservation, and would stop to measure his height on the tree. If he was taller than Chee-Wee, he would go on, and when they met, they would fight it out with claw and tooth and fang and the wild rush through the long-burrows that honeycombed the earth beneath my cabin. If the trespasser was not as tall as Chee-Wee, he would go away, taking long jumps that he might not leave any tracks.

This custom is also followed out by Bears, as any writer on the subject will tell you. I am always willing to give my fellow Unnaturalists credit for what they see. Goodness knows it is little enough, compared with what I have done.

Jenny's school was near the lake, beyond a hill, and securely sheltered from observation except from the water. When a canoe approached, they all had plenty of time to hide before it came near enough to be dangerous. These brown, fuzzy things are so much like the landscape that they are fully protected.

Usually, a Rabbit does not travel much in the daytime. They are nocturnal animals and by day they sit in forms, or cases, that they have made of grass and leaves and their combings and stationed in secluded spots. When they get tired of living in one place, they change their spots, but it always means the building of a new form.

The Rabbits were not afraid of me, however, and I shall never forget the day that I rowed up silently along the shore and came upon Mistress Jenny's school. The baby Rabbits were all sitting on toadstools, with their spelling-books held up close to their faces. One little Rabbit missed a word while I was looking on, and was promptly put to bed on account of his sick spell, as was quite right and proper.

There was a large map made on the hill just back of the teacher's desk, and a tin pail, freshly filled with water, stood in one corner. They drank out of a nutshell, cunningly chiselled by sharp little teeth into the shape of a cup, and many were the trips to the corner. How it reminded me of my own schooldays! Another little brown Rabbit, who seemed to be a very naughty bunny, brought a Spider to school and put it in Jenny's desk while she was teaching the youngest class to count. Jenny learned what she knew of arithmetic from an old Adder that lived under a log in the woods. When she saw the Spider, she instantly called the culprit to her, and in plain sight of the whole school punished him severely with a lady's slipper that I had unaccountably missed from my flower bed.

“In plain sight of the whole school, punished him severely with a lady’s slipper.”

Under Jenny's careful tuition, all these little Rabbits learned things that their own parents would never have had time to teach them. Children are born so fast in Rabbit families that there is never an opportunity for any one set of children to learn more than the merest rudiments of education, and this school of Jenny's was like a University Extension Centre in an Esquimaux village. My cabin became a general meeting place for the Rabbits of the neighbourhood, and at length they got to be rather of a nuisance. Uncle Antonio had taken my only pillow with him for Jocko to sleep on—dear Uncle was always so considerate of animals!—and I was forced to make a pair of overalls do duty instead. I used to roll these up at night, with a stray feather or two in the pockets, and put my weary head down over all. Usually, I knew nothing more until morning, when Jenny and Chee-Wee would come and pat my face with their soft, velvety paws, and tell me it was time to get breakfast, and, please, could we have breakfast food this morning?

I used to explain to them that anything that was eaten in the morning was breakfast food, but they were as keen for good cereals as the editor of a popular magazine.

One night my overalls were stolen, so gently that I did not know it. I looked all over the premises for them and could not find them. Jenny seemed troubled also, and after breakfast she and Chee-Wee went out to look for them.

In about an hour, they returned, Jenny with the trouser legs in her mouth and Chee-Wee bringing up the rear. I should never have known them for mine, had not the autograph of the laundry marker been travelling with the band. They were torn, and had as many small holes in them as a fly screen. I was angry and was about to wage a war of exter-

mination on the entire Rabbit tribe, but Jenny pleaded with me so effectively that I refrained. A Rabbit is very cunning when he sits up on his hind legs, with his paws folded, and looks at you eagerly with his bright eyes.

These are all minor details, however, and have been commonly observed by others. The only discovery of real importance which I made that Summer was in relation to the Rabbit method of communicating with each other. Fellow-Unnaturalists have written of the thumping, the whisker touching, and so-on. Some have even attempted to tabulate the thump code, but with only partial success.

My discovery is entirely new and has never appeared in any book before. Briefly it is this. Rabbits converse with each other by means of a deaf-and-dumb alphabet, very similar to that made by mutes of our own species, using their ears entirely.

I have not space here to elaborate upon it, nor to explain how I happened to discover it, but the entire subject will be found in a monograph which will be published in pamphlet form as soon as my paper on The Rabbit Grammar has been read before the International Society of Registered Unnaturalists.

Jenny was very clever at making me understand her, even without resorting to her own language. For instance, one day I had given her a handful of salt, in response to unmistakable signs and gestures on her part. She tasted of it, sniffed, then sat down upon it and began to sway from side to side. I understood then that she preferred rock salt and immediately gave it to her, but was it not clever? Could a human being, without the power of speech, have done more?

Among themselves, the talk of the Rabbits was astonishingly easy and informal. After I learned their language, by watching Jenny, Chee-Wee, and the friends who used to call

upon them, I heard, or rather saw, many amusing things. All unconscious of my familiarity with their speech, they used to discuss me in my own presence.

Once, after a long and prolonged wig-wagging on the part of an old, grey-whiskered Rabbit, I made out this: "Say, Jenny, what earthly good is that blamed hermit to you? Haven't you influence enough to get us some corn?"

With a rare gift of repartee, Jenny replied: "You're nothing but a pig. You've had so much corn now that you'll have to ride in a grain elevator if you ever get home." This Rabbit lived high up in a hollow tree to be out of the reach of draughts, as he was old and rheumatic, and so the speech had a double-edged meaning that set all the company to sneezing with suppressed mirth.

Other observers have described a Rabbit entertainment, but I doubt if any of them have ever seen such a one as fell to my lot to witness and even take part in, the night before I left my home in the wilderness to take my vacant place in the city. I do not know that I had been missed in the city, but it was pleasant to think so when the Fall rains fell upon me, and the woods had a penetrating chill which my bravest fire could not subdue. I was packing, and Jenny and Chee-Wee sat sadly by, heart-broken at the prospect of separation. When I packed my little pincushion, Jenny went out and got a few pine needles to put in; when I gathered up my pens and ink, Chee-Wee scampered away to his treasure box and brought the skin of a Field Mouse for a penwiper. He had prepared and cured the skin himself, and I have it still.

I sat down on the side of my cot, and using the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, I spelled out with my fingers: "I would take you back with me, but you would not like the town, and I shall return next Summer."

Surprised beyond measure, they were dumb animals for a moment, then Jenny's ears began to work nervously. "We would not go," she answered; "we have Winter flannels and are very comfortable here. There is going to be a party to-night. Will you not come?"

"Gladly," I returned, with all sincerity. "What shall I bring?"

With one accord, Jenny and Chee-Wee ran to the opposite corner of the cabin and sat down on my concertina. They did not know how to spell the name of it, so they chose the more primitive manner of expression.

At eight o'clock they called for me. They were freshly washed and combed, had picked all the burrs out of themselves, and looked very spruce indeed.

We walked about eight miles to a clearing in the midst of the woods—a clearing where some hunters had once camped. This is the kind of a place that Rabbits love. I had matches in my pocket, and as soon as I got there I gathered materials for a fire, and peeled a large, straight piece of very white birch bark, which I set up on a forked stick behind the cheerful flame. This rude reflector served very well, and threw great pieces of ruddy light into the black shadows beyond us.

There were about twenty Rabbits in the gathering, all of whom I knew by sight if not by name. Some were brown and some were white, and there were an equal number of ladies and gentlemen.

While preparations were going on, the ladies and gentlemen promenaded in couples around the clearing, arm in arm, doubtless whispering tender nothings to each other. They were not afraid of me at all, and some of them would even come and jump over my foot as it was stretched out in front of me.

The first number on the programme was a tug of war en-

gaged in by the gentlemen Rabbits, brown on one side and white on the other. The rope was a long strand of Virginia creeper from which the leaves had been stripped. The brown Rabbits won, and Jenny wig-wagged to me with her curiously intelligent ears that the brown Rabbits were the stronger, because they did not bathe as often as the white ones. This was very interesting. I believe there was some old Greek who renewed his strength every time he touched the ground, and the Rabbits seem to have caught the idea.

Then there was a hurdle race, a game of Leap Frog, another of Follow the Leader, and a very fine game of Base Ball. The ball was a perfectly round gourd which they had found somewhere, and at the proper time Chee-Wee brought in a stuffed Bat, which gave great interest to the game. The old rheumatic Rabbit did not play, but continually made love to Jenny while the sport went on. Poor Jenny! I hope she had too much sense to go and be an old man's darling.

Presently the moon came up and I let the fire go out. It had warmed the clearing pleasantly, and the birch bark reflector was charred so much that it was of no further use.

Refreshments consisted of clover blossoms, dried, preserved rose petals, and toadstools. The lady Rabbits did not eat the toadstools, and when I asked Jenny why, she patted her stomach suggestively, and then with her delicate ears spelled out to me that they took up too mushroom.

I was enjoying myself exceedingly, and after the refreshments had been cleared away a committee of the gentlemen waited upon me, and, not knowing that I understood their language, pointed suggestively to my concertina.

I took up the instrument and began to play the cake-walk which had first attracted Jenny to my side. Instantly the

clearing was full of flying feet, and those who were not dancing were thumping with their hind feet and patting out the tune with their paws. One Rabbit, who seemed to be the clown of the party, would dash around the clearing like the ponies at the circus, now and then taking a high jump, or two or three ungraceful hops in imitation of a Bear trying to dance. It was very amusing.

Round and round they went, their mobile noses whizzing like an automobile as they passed. It was like nothing so much as fireworks of brown and white fur.

When I changed the tune, they changed their steps also. There was a minuet, in which the ladies did themselves proud, and a quadrille in which all joined but the rheumatic Rabbit, who knew the calls and thus served the first useful purpose of the evening. To do him justice, however, I believe that after he had eaten all the clover he could hold, he took a few choice blossoms to a little brown mouse of a Rabbit who seemed not to know anyone.

While the ladies were cooling off, there was a boxing match between two of the most athletic of the gentlemen, and it was declared a draw at the end of the fifth round. These gay young bloods refreshed themselves with liberal draughts of beer, which was very innocent, however, being made of Frog hops. I tried it, but it was not to my taste, being clammy in flavour and not cold enough.

The play lasted till long past midnight, and I do not believe the merry party would have broken up then had I not risen to go home. My little furry friends clustered around me with many unspoken regrets, but I fear that the loss of the concertina was uppermost in their thoughts. They had never had music to dance to before.

My suspicion was strengthened the next day when I finished my packing. As before, Jenny and Chee-Wee came and camped on the instrument, refusing to move when I attempted to put it into my suit case. A generous impulse struck me, and, attracting her attention, I spelled out: "You can use it this Winter if you will be very careful of it and not leave it outdoors. I shall want it again in the Spring."

They forgot me, then, and dragged it away to some secret treasure-house. Such was the ingratitude of the beasts that I never saw either of them again, not to mention my instrument, but there are drawbacks in all callings, so why should there not be in mine? When you come to think of it, the work of a concertina is wholly composed of drawbacks.

Sometimes on moonlight nights, when the earth is exquisitely still, I fancy I see the Rabbits dancing in the clearing, and when a faint, far-off melody comes to my listening ears, so delicate that it might be fairies touching cobweb strings, I think perhaps it may be Chee-Wee or Jenny Ragtail, playing on my lost concertina.

HOOT-MON

I was in the woods one night at twilight, sitting on a stump, with my face hidden in my hands, thinking. I had written about everything I knew for the magazines, and my work was still in demand, but, seemingly, there were no new animals.

While I was thinking, I was knocked senseless by a blow on the head. When I came to, there was nothing in sight, and no tracks on the smooth mould around me. Only the blood which streamed down my face convinced me that I was not suffering from an hallucination.

The doctor who sewed up my head gave me a very queer look when I told him how it had happened, and then tapped his forehead suggestively. I suppose he was endeavouring to comprehend the situation and was trying to stimulate the place in which the phrenologists have located the faculty of comprehension.

After my head got well, I went out and sat on the stump once more, determined to pursue my investigations at whatever cost. Just as I expected, I was hit again, only this time not quite so hard. I chased around madly through the underbrush, but, as before, I saw nothing.

That night, when I got up to put another bandage on my aching dome of thought, an idea struck me. "You blithering idiot," said my inner consciousness, "it was an Owl that hit you on the head!"

Of course it was—what else should it be? I went to sleep much reassured, and in the morning I determined to prove myself right.

It must have been my head that attracted Hoot-Mon. Owls live on Weasels, Rabbits, Squirrels, and Hares. At dusk I

took my grandmother's old Mink muff, tied a long string to it, and went out to the stump. I poised the muff airily upon the undergrowth and retired to a safe distance. Then I imitated the Owl's song and twitched the muff a bit.

A great white shape swooped down and took up the muff in its talons, tearing at it until the interior fell out. Greedily, the Owl ate of this, then immediately coughed and disgorged the whole thing. I laughed wickedly. "Hoot-Mon, my dear old friend," said I to myself, "that is the time you muffed it." I was fully revenged for his attack upon me.

I followed him to his nest, which was in a birch tree about three miles from my cabin. I made no attempt to climb to it then, deeming the location of it sufficient work for the time being. His home was there; his watch-tower was a blasted tree which commanded my front door.

A few days later I made the ascent. Very few observers have ever seen an Owl's nest. This one was not round, but long and narrow, with a great bundle of feathers at one end for a pillow. Hoot-Mon was asleep, lying flat on his back, with a blanket made of Rabbit skins over him, and snoring audibly. In the bottom of the nest was a Hare mattress. I did not disturb him, for he works at night and needs his sleep in the daytime.

An Owl is really a very peculiar beast and one that will amply repay study. His sight and hearing are wonderful, and his eyes are just as good by daylight as by dark, some amateurs to the contrary notwithstanding.

The next time you get hold of a stuffed Owl, part the feathers and closely examine his ears. You will find that they are long, crescent-shaped excavations in his face, coming to a point over his eyes. They are barbed with hairs which act like telephone wires and double and redouble the intensity

of every sound. His eyes are set in deeply, so that when he wants to look around, he has to turn his head. He cannot see behind him like a Rabbit, or a Horse without blinders.

An Owl's stomach is also very peculiar. The alimentary tract is shaped like a wide-mouthed vase, with no intervening crop, as in most Birds. Hoot-Mon packs his food into the flaring top, which is his mouth, and without chewing, crowds it with one foot down through the narrow opening, into the bulb-shaped base. In his stomach is a gland which secretes hydrochloric acid.

With this he digests practically everything but fur and feathers. The facile stomach rolls these into small balls and pushes them out through that same door where in they went.

In fact, you can track an Owl by these little balls of undigested securities. Sometimes they incorporate them into the lining of the nest, but more often build a wall, like the defence of a fort, around their homes. Seeing so much fur, the enemy is not disposed to go any further.

I have often seen an Owl sitting on the lower branch of a tree in the early dusk, and throwing these balls to his children, one at a time, as though they were bean-bags. Once, when I was watching, one little Owl mistook one of them for a Mouse and ate it. The father laughed heartily, knowing that the plaything would soon be returned in the original package.

The white Owls are very scarce, but I saw a great many of them that year. Summer was very late, and they had flown around the Arctic Circle until they got dizzy and had come down to chase each other around the larger meridians. In the Winter, they get their living by fishing. I have often seen a big white Owl, sailing around on a cake of ice which perfectly matched his plumage, taking his ease like any fisherman in a rowboat.

They are very clever with their claws and will bait their hooks with Worms and Frogs which they have caught in the Summer and kept on ice until they were ready to use them. It is a charming sight to see a white Owl bait his hook, toss his line overboard, and wait, with sublime patience, until there is a nibble at the other end. You can almost hear his wild eerie laughter as he draws in his catch and eats it, bones and all, without stopping to cook it.

One Winter when some fishermen spilled a cargo of dead Fish overboard, the beach was so thick with white Owls that you could not see the sand. They used nets and gathered in the Fish by wholesale, though sometimes an Owl would sail out over the water like a Seagull, catch up a Fish in his claws, and come back, laughing, amidst the plaudits of his companions who were waiting in a row upon the shore. No other observer has seen this on so large a scale as I have, according to the books, but I have a photograph of the beach and of one of the Owls, which I shall be glad to show to the doubting ones.

Once, while I was shooting Ducks, I had a strange experience. My decoy was a lady Duck with a string tied around her leg. I had fastened the other end to my boat anchor to restrain her natural wandering propensities. She was sailing around on the cold water, protesting at her unhappy plight, when a big white Owl heard her profane remarks.

He sat on a dead branch and giggled for a while, then began to make fun of her. At this her composure vanished and she began to sob, so he rushed to her, on his big, perfectly silent wings, lifted her up, gently and tenderly, with one great claw, poising her body meanwhile against his wing, and with the file on the inside of his other leg, deliberately filed away my string and gave her her freedom.

I thought she deserved it, so I said nothing, and the last I saw of them, they were walking down the beach together, wing to wing, coquetting like lovers on a moonlight night. I never shot any more Ducks, and refused, ever afterward, to wear Duck trousers in the Summer time. These garments are really a luxury, being made of canvasback Duck.

“Coquetting like lovers on a moonlight night.”

In the Winter, the Owls nearly starve, and get so thin that they cannot fly. Their big wings overbalance them, like a craft carrying too much sail, and the wind carries them in every direction. In the Winter, if the wind is right, you can stand on the beach any day and more Owls than you can ever hope to study will blow almost into your arms. They are not good eating, however, for in the early Spring and late Fall they live mainly upon mussels and this makes their bodies too muscular to carve.

They get so hungry in the Winter that they will even eat Cats. In this way I once lost a very pretty black and white pussy to whom I was much attached. A red Squirrel had hidden some walnuts in a little cave near my cabin door, and while he was digging them up, the Cat saw him and began to stalk him, merely by way of amusement. Hoot-Mon swooped down upon poor pussy, and she nearly scratched his eyes out. Both were game, but he finally killed her with a terrific blow on the head, such as he once gave me, and bore her away in triumph to his nest.

I was inconsolable, and with the fine instinct of the animal, Hoot-Mon must have known it. Two weeks afterward I found on my doorstep one morning a small, soft, furry ball. I unrolled it and discovered that it was the complexion of my lost pet, nicely prepared, a necklace made of her delicate teeth, pierced and strung on a fine wire, with a locket made of her claws. It was very pretty and touching. I would have been glad to have had one of her eyes, for a cat's-eye scarf-pin, but that was too much to expect. I had long known that Owls make an ointment of Cats' eyes, with which they rub their own. It is this that enables them to see in the dark.

Once I had a very peculiar adventure. I had caught a Rat

in my cabin and had buried the body just outside, in some sand. In the night I was awakened by a prolonged clucking and a long drawn whoo-oo-oo, the characteristic hunting note of the Owl. Fortunately it was bright moonlight.

I looked out of my window and there was Hoot-Mon, a big white furry thing, clucking like a Hen and scratching furiously in the sand, which rose in a cloud around him and nearly obscured him from my scientific gaze. My quick, active mind immediately guessed that he was excavating for the Rat, and when the dust subsided, I saw that I was right. He took his prize and hurried away, still clucking. Two weeks later, he brought me the ball representing the inedible portions, but this I threw away, having no sentimental attachment for the Rat.

It is interesting to see Owls eat. When they are very hungry, they are savage about their food and tear it apart like the other wild things, but when their eagerness is partially satisfied, they are as dainty about it as any lady. Once I gave Hoot-Mon a bit of nicely broiled beefsteak and he received it with unmistakable notes of pleasure in his clucking.

With the file which Nature has provided on the inner side of his right leg, he cut it into small, neat morsels and ate it with his left foot as though it were a fork. Afterward he came and wiped his beak upon my handkerchief. He had evidently enjoyed the meal very much and for some days he hung about my camp-fire, watching eagerly for more.

The following week he flew into my presence with a long stake to which a link or two of chain was still attached.

I recognised it as the peg to which a neighbour's Cow was fastened in a distant pasture. He had filed off the chain, dug up the peg, and brought me the beef stake in the hope

that I would broil it for him. With gestures I made him understand that, even so, it would not be edible, and he flew away, broken-hearted.

An Owl moves so silently that you can never see him come. Where other Birds have feathers he has hair, and this makes no noise when he moves. You can hear the rustle of a Duck's wings, the flutter of a Sparrow or a Lark, and the wind fairly screams through the Eagle's pinions when you spend a dollar, but the breeze makes no more noise blowing through an Owl's wings than it does in passing over your own head. Owls are as fond of Rats as Chinamen are. If you can only catch an Owl you will need no Rat-trap, for he will clear the premises of the vermin in no time. I caught Bre'r Hushwing once when I was a boy and put him into our oat bin. When I went to get him again he was dead from indigestion. I dissected him and found the heads of eighteen Rats in his stomach. The skins of twenty-three more were tacked up around the oat bin with their own claws.

I have devoted the preliminary part of this paper to the general nature and habits of the Owl in order that my readers may fully understand what is to follow. I do not claim that my Owl was more brilliant than the Owls of my fellow Unnaturalists, but only that I had superior opportunities to study. When a Little Brother of the Woods sees anything that I have missed, I do not call him a liar, and I expect others to pay the same courtesy to me.

I became so interested in Owls that I determined to spend the Winter in my cabin. The Snowy Owl is abroad only in Winter—in Summer he is grey. Nature changes his flannels for him to make him feel safer. "Death loves a shining mark." For two weeks and more I went to town every day, and each

time brought home all the provisions I could carry. I bought more ink, a ream of paper, and a dozen blue pencils also, in order to anticipate the editors.

It is terrible to live in the woods and see Winter come. The Birds and Squirrels go south at the first sign of changing foliage, but the Rabbits, Weasels, Minks, and other small furred creatures remain. There was no snow until late in December, but it was bitterly cold. When I went out, my breath froze in lateral chunks and I would have to break off the icicles with a hatchet before I could get into my cabin. I had no idea that I breathed so much until I saw it in solid form. I had piled enough wood at my back door to last an army all Winter, and I was very glad indeed that I had it when the first snow fell.

It was an unusually heavy storm for so early in the season, being nearly two feet deep on the level. Nothing was left for the little creatures of the woods but the rose hips, the seeds of the pine cones, and each other. Indeed, it was scanty fare. That night while I lay in my warm bed, with the fire blazing merrily upon my hearth, I heard the deep, long-drawn, sonorous notes of an Owl.

Something in the sound filled me with foreboding. I felt that a fellow-creature of mine was out in the woods starving. The impulse was strong upon me to get up, put on my snow-shoes, and go out to find him, but my reason battled steadily against it. The mournful cry was repeated, closer still, and at last I got up, threw open the door wide, and imitated the sound as nearly as possible. Almost immediately, cold, wet wings beat against my face and a big white Owl, more dead than alive, fell full length on the floor of my cabin.

I grasped my brandy bottle and poured a liberal quantity down the Bird's throat. Presently he sat up, blinked,

dragged himself over to the fire, and bowed twice to me, very gravely, as though to say, “Thank you.”

All that night we sat there, watching each other. By nature we were enemies; by force of circumstances we were friends. Toward morning Hoot-Mon got up and tried to dance, but fell over and went to sleep instead. I fixed him up a bed on the floor and lifted him over on to it. There he stayed, snoring loudly, until the middle of the afternoon. Then he awoke, sighed heavily, yawned, and rubbed his eyes with the backs of his hands.

“Well, Hoot-Mon,” I asked, “do you feel better?”

He came to me, sat down on the table in front of me, and nodded, with something very like a smile upon his face. It could not rightly be characterised as an exact smile, because he was too preternaturally solemn.

I fed him, then opened the door. “Do you want to go now?” I inquired. With a scream of dismay, he flew back into the darkest corner of the cabin and refused to budge. I understood then. He had made up his mind to live with me.

The next day, he found my watch and took it out from under my pillow. He seemed greatly interested in the mechanism and held it to his ear that he might hear it tick. I did not especially mind, for the wild animals had always taken up my time, more or less, but I hid my jewelled repeater and gave him the alarm clock, which did just as well. In time he learned to set the alarm and would laugh like a Parrot when I jumped out of my chair at the unexpected report.

All that Winter, Hoot-Mon and I lived together. Often he got hungry for his own kind of food, and at such times I would put on some red flannel stockings I had made for him, without feet, a red flannel shawl, pinned closely at the throat, and a face

mask, also of red flannel, with openings for the eyes and beak and those wonderful ears of which I have spoken before.

He got so that whenever he wished to go hunting, he would search out these articles from the corner of the cabin where they were kept,—never forgetting the safety-pin that fastened the shawl,—bring them to me, and stand very still while I put them on.

He usually had conspicuous success upon these hunting trips. He would come back with three or four beach Rats, two Rabbits, the body of a belated Squirrel who had not yet gone south, and more Weasels and Muskrats that a person could count without more knowledge of arithmetic than I had. Hoot-Mon would skin all of these animals, preferably doing the work in the house, and then he would store them in a natural cave of ice just beyond the wood-pile.

He gave the skins to me, and I made a quilt of them for my cot. He usually ate his own food raw, but once he dropped a Muskrat into the pot in which I was making an Irish stew, and laughed loud and long at my language when I took it out.

He had many mischievous tricks and would often hide my pens, tip over my ink and track it all over the fair, smooth pages of my observation ledger. At other times, he made himself very useful to me, especially on sweeping day. Strutting around gravely on one leg, Hoot-Mon would sweep the floor first with one great wing and then with the other, pushing the dirt always toward the door. When he had it all in a neat pile and the corners were perfectly clean, he would make a signal to me. I would open the door, and with a great, forward sweep of both wings, Hoot-Mon would brush all the dirt outside, meanwhile saying something that sounded like “shoo!” It was clever of him, but it wearied

him greatly and he would always take a long nap afterward, though he never slept on my bed. I was very grateful to him because he was willing to sleep in his own corner, remembering a previous unhappy experience.

That Winter, also, he made me a rag carpet. I had a great many pieces of old worsted garments, some of them being left by my grandmother and others being discarded wearing apparel of my own. I had also an old red blanket which I could not sleep under because there was a large hole in the centre which acted like a chimney and created a draught. Some white cotton cloth was among the pieces, and I gave him two old sheets, with which he was greatly pleased.

First, he tore all the cloth into strips about half an inch wide, fastening these together with a pine needle and some linen thread I gave him, and with his claws and beak rolled it into a ball very similar to those made in his stomach. When he had the rags all torn and sewed together, he began work, and I do not think, in all my career as an Unnaturalist, I have ever seen such wonderful intelligence in an animal.

I can never describe the way he did it, though I watched him for hours, uninterruptedly. With claws and beak and wings he was continually at work, tying knots, twisting, weaving in and out, rolling and turning in every conceivable way. Finally he turned his back to me and would not let me see what he was doing.

Respecting his wish for secrecy, I paid no further attention to him then, but the next time he went hunting I hunted for his work. I did not find it, but when he came back, he knew instantly what I had been doing and pecked my face so severely that the blood came. He also opened up the old wound on my head. Needless to say, I did not offend him in that way again.

He worked nights, after that, while I slept. Many a time I have wakened and seen poor, faithful Hoot-Mon sitting by the fire, patiently toiling at his self-appointed task.

On the morning of my birthday, he presented me with a wonderful rug, a yard wide and long enough to go across the cabin directly in front of my bed. The background was red and black and in the centre, entirely in white, was an enormous Owl with outstretched wings—his own portrait to the life!

It was marvellous that he should do it with only the primitive implements with which Nature had provided him, and I praised him early and often. When I stroked him and patted his head, he would strut around with his head in the air, purring and clucking.

This story may seem almost incredible, but I have the rug and a photograph of the Owl that did it. These things will be on exhibition at the time and place printed in the catalogue in the appendix. Both my publishers and myself will be glad to have all the doubting ones investigate. The entire "H" exhibit will be distinguished by the green flag of Ireland, because the things came from the "owld" country.

Hoot-Mon was very much interested in my hat and used to kick it around the cabin and play with it as a Kitten plays with a ball of yarn. I determined to make him one of his own and cut out a paper pattern, fitting it together with pins. I made one of the cocked hats worn by Colonial soldiers, and put a gay feather in the top. The result was very pleasing, to me, at least, and all went well until I attempted to put it on Hoot-Mon's head.

He snorted loudly, clawed, kicked, and spluttered like an angry Hen. His eyes glared so fiercely that I was afraid of him and ran outdoors, cold as it was, without hat or coat.

I stayed until his wrath had somewhat subsided, then cautiously ventured back. He had burned the offending hat in the open fire and the ashes of it lay upon the hearth. He sat on his perch in the corner, wrapped in impenetrable gloom through which his eyes burned like live coals.

It was not until the next day that I learned why he had been so mortally offended, and I hit upon the truth only by accident. I had unfortunately selected foolscap paper for the pattern. I had legal cap in the house and could have made him a lawyer's bonnet just as well as not, if I had only thought of it.

Strangely enough, Hoot-Mon and I never had any well defined method of communication, though we lived together in intimate association for so long.

I tried him with the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, but he paid no attention to it. I wrote out the various things I wished to say to him and offered him the slips of paper, but he did not eat them or try to read them, and in memory of the insult I once offered him, I presume, he threw the slips into the fire as fast as I could write them. He had no ears that he could wig-wag signals with, and his own vocabulary was confined to two or three syllables, the phrasing and intonation of which varied scarcely at all.

He presented a strange bundle of contradictions, for he was slow witted at times, yet did not understand English, and too quick to jump at conclusions at others, yet the United States language passed him by unharmed. He ate Frogs but did not understand French, sausage and beer, without knowing German, and though he roosted by preference in the attic, he did not know Greek. He was very fond of oatmeal, but he had not the faintest comprehension of Scotch, though I caught him once, with my spectacles on, poring over a book of Scotch dialect which I had in my library. He burned the

book afterward, which I did not in the least regret—I had meditated doing it for some time.

I tried him with phrases from every known tongue, but they all seemed alike to him. He did not have a speaking acquaintance with a single modern language, so far as I was able to discover. Very possibly he understood them all, but did not wish to let people know the extent of his knowledge. Perhaps it is his monumental silence which has given him his well deserved reputation for wisdom. At any rate, it contains a hint worth passing on, for there is a great deal of trouble in this world which is not caused by people keeping their mouths shut.

So Hoot-Mon and I lived through the most terrible Winter ever known in that latitude. The unaccustomed warmth of the cabin made him moult while the snow was yet deep upon the ground. He ate the feathers, afterward disgorging them in the usual ball when he had enough to make it worth the trouble. I have all of these little balls now, put away with my most treasured possessions.

He was a pitiful sight when all of his feathers were gone, and he caught cold. His cough distressed me greatly and his spirits drooped perceptibly. He had chills at regular intervals and his poor body was all covered with goose flesh. He wore his shawl, pinned closely at the throat with a safety-pin, until the feathers began to sprout again. While his head was moulting, he also wore his face mask.

Presently, however, Nature resumed business at the old stand and his body was covered with grey down. He looked like an Angora Cat at this stage. I examined the growth minutely with a magnifying-glass and was surprised to find that each feather grew up from a single stalk, like a plant, and sent out numerous branches which were closely interwoven with the

branches from the stalk next to it. This is why an Owl's wings make no sound; the wind passes under these branched feathers and the noise is smothered. You cannot hear the wind blow if you have a pillow over your head.

At last the backbone of Winter broke with a loud crash and the Chinook wind blew in from the south, laden with warm rain. The songs of Robins and Bluebirds were in the breath of it, though the snow was yet deep upon the ground, and my dooryard was filled with hungry Birds.

"Who would not give a Winter seed for a Summer song?"

I went out one day, with my shovel, and Hoot-Mon followed me, warmly wrapped in his shawl. I chose the lofty stump that was his watch-tower and began to shovel a clear space. He sat on top of it, well out of reach of draughts, and watched me. I intended to keep a free lunch set out here for the Birds. Round and round I shovelled, keeping always in a circle. Hoot-Mon never took his eyes off me—his devotion was absolutely pathetic. When I had finished, I galloped around the stump a few times to get warm, as it was still bitterly cold.

I began to get dizzy, but I went on faster and faster, for the blood was singing in my pulses and it was good to be alive. I was stopped in my mad rush by the most astounding thing that could have happened.

Hoot-Mon's head, bleeding profusely, and with the eyes staring from their sockets, fell at my feet. On the stump, still clad in the shawl, was his lifeless body.

I was stunned, and it was more than an hour before I saw how it had happened. It was my own fault; no one but myself was to blame. An Owl will turn his head, but never his body, and Hoot-Mon had followed me around the stump with his fond eyes until he had wrung his own neck.

It was too terrible, and I am not ashamed to say that a man's salt tears bedewed the downy body of my pet as I lowered him into his grave. I made him a shroud of my only 4re-maining sheet and covered him with my last pillow slip. I did not begrudge them to him in the least, and I still have his red flannel shawl. This pathetic relic will be found by the reader in its proper place in the exhibit.

The shocking occurrence saddened me so much that I gave up my study of Unnatural History and returned to the city, where I speedily found some honest employment which paid me fairly well.

At times, the voices of the wilderness call me, but I dare not go back, lest the old magic of the woods take my spirit into slavery again.

Sometimes, at night, I start from my sleep, thinking that poor Hoot-Mon's bleeding head is again at my feet. It is a consolation, however, to know that he did not suffer any more than a spring broiler which is prepared for the market, and, after all, it may have been a kinder fate than the one which was waiting for him somewhere in the gloom of the tall pines, for the end of a wild animal is always a tragedy.

APPENDIX

Realising that much of this work must, of necessity, seem almost incredible to all save genuine Little Brothers of the Woods, I have, at great expense and difficulty, secured for exhibition purposes a collection of relics which will fully substantiate every statement I have made.

This exhibition will be an annual affair, and will be held in the main office of my publishers, on the thirty-first day of November only.

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Punctuation has been normalized. Variations in hyphenation have been retained as they were in the original publication.