

RONDEAU.

Since Christ was born in Bethlehem,
True man, of royal David's stem,
And yet in every act did shew
A beauty not of earth, divine;
On all men sits a diadem
Which Ho, THE MAN, hath brought to them
Who will but touch His garments hem;
And men have drunk of Heaven's mine
Since Christ was born.

His words, scorned of Jerusalem,
Are sweet to us—"not to condemn,"
He came, and blot each evil line
And makes us one, and with one sign,
Of love; for love is earth's best gem
Since Christ was born.

MATTHEW RICHIE KNIGHT.

Benton, N. B.

HELD CAPTIVE BY WOLVES.

BY FRANK H. RISTEEN.

It will be just twenty years ago this Christmas Eve that I had the most thrilling adventure of my life. My cousin Tom—you know Tom Halleck don't you, and the big-bored, big-hearted fellow he is, just the same then as now, tender as a woman in his sympathy and brave as a lion in the hours of danger! Well, Tom and I were out deer-hunting that memorable December day—a new experience for me—close to where the Quebec line crosses the north-east angle of Township Number Nine, following the tracks of a big buck that the boys on the survey had started up the night before. It was a cold, still and sunny day. Mile after mile we tramped along, our snowshoes sinking quite deeply in the light, powdery snow, our rifles feeling heavier every hour we travelled and our hopes of venison for supper—for we intended to camp wherever nightfall found us—growing fainter as the shadows of the forest grew longer and darker across our path. Much of this country on the upper St. John had years before been burnt over by forest fires and was now quite thickly wooded with birch and ash. At times we crossed extensive bogs or barrens, on which no trees save scrubby spruce would grow. To the right of our route was a low range of hills, the sides of which were rocky and almost void of any kind of vegetation that could be seen above snow level. The snow seemed to rest on everything as a mantle of silence—such silence as only those who have penetrated into the heart of our great forest wilds in winter can ever know or feel.

Tom had brought old Scott, the deer-hound, along, but for whose vigilance the trail, which was much obscured in places by the drifted snow would have been lost beyond recovery. The scent, however, was still too faint to arouse within him much of his old time energy; it was evident that for some reason the deer had travelled at great speed since he started across the Portage the night before.

Just before sundown we were making our way tired and rather dispirited with our fruitless chase through a heavy clump of white birches to a little knoll on which we had decided to camp, with the intention of renewing the hunt next day. We had nearly reached it, when the hound raised his nose and uttered a short sharp bark, followed by a long dismal whine—a sure sign Tom said, of danger. We had not gone a rod when a beautiful doe leaped over a fallen tree a short distance in front of us and fell into a slight hollow beyond as a bullet from Tom's rifle pierced its side.

Scarce had the echoes of the report died away when a sound broke out upon the frosty air which once heard is surely never forgotten, the hoarse hungry howling of a pack of Canada wolves, apparently but a few rods away. Tom rushed for a tree and I for another, leaving our rifles at the foot and poor Scott to his fate. We had not more than reached the lower branches when the grey devils mounted the slope of the knoll and crashed through the underbrush beneath us. Under the tree which Tom had climbed the faithful hound stood at his post and was instantly seized by the foremost of the wolves. He fought gamely for life, but his broken teeth were no match for the long fangs of his enemy. In a moment the gallant old fellow fell lifeless on the snow. Then Tom fired two shots in quick succession from his revolver and stretched his grim foe beside him.

At this time the remainder of the pack, were devouring the deer which Tom had shot, and which lay about forty yards away just beyond the fallen log over which it had taken its last gallant leap. From the readiness with which the snarling pack had found the carcass we concluded that they had been pursuing the doe for hours perhaps before it came upon our view. Tom bitterly lamented his hasty shot and seemed heart-broken at the loss of his dog.

And now ensued an experience which no words of mine can adequately describe. To say that we were treed by wolves conveys to the reader, I am sure, no conception of the thrilling situation in which we found ourselves. Another moment and the snarling, snapping and tearing in the hollow ceased, the bones of the deer were stripped of every particle of flesh, and the now doubly fierce and ravenous horde rushed rapidly towards us. The sight they presented as they bounded through the light snow, over fallen trees and through the underbrush, many of them falling and tumbling over each other in their haste to reach us was one which I at least will

never be able to efface from my mind. I even fancied at the last rays of the setting sun brought his features clearly into view that Tom's face turned a deathly pallor. I am morally certain that mine did. There were about thirty wolves in the savage pack that now surged like a tide around us, and in an instant the hound as well as the big fellow that Tom had slain were torn into fragments by their voracious jaws. I had read of the avidity with which wolves, especially when they have just had the scent or taste of blood, will devour their prey or even one of their own number that has fallen, but no effort of the mind can really grasp the greedy rage and fury with which the onslaught in this instance at least was made. My head fairly reeled with the sickening sight and the thought of death by the teeth of such terrible brutes as these was indeed a thought of horror.

They began at once to turn their attention to us. Around the foot of the trees in which we sat they circled, leaping sometimes several feet from the ground, clashing

they seemed to weary somewhat in their efforts, and gradually formed themselves into a semi-circle of gleaming eyes and lolling tongues a few paces away from our perches.

When the moon rose their forms were revealed still more clearly to us. At times a single wolf would rush out from the group, and with his ugly snout raised high in the air yell hideously. Then they would all become uneasy and trot round and round us on the soft snow, howling as only wolves can howl, all the while. I was much exhausted by the fight for life I had had, but the exercise was beneficial in one way. I was almost unconscious of the biting cold from which Tom now began to suffer. Cold as he was, however, he managed to light his pipe, and I soon had my own in action. The most ardent enemy of the weed would not, I trust, have grudged us that slight comfort in such an hour.

How glorious the scene as the moon gilded every object with its silvery rays, and yet how appalling the fate that faced us.

thought of how she would bear, if ever she knew at all, the news of a brother's and a lover's awful fate.

Not until now—so rapid had been the succession of events—did it occur to us that we might, perhaps recover the guns which we had dropped in our hurried rush for safety. Mine was a smooth-bore. Tom's a Henry rifle that had seen service in the recent great rebellion. So great had been the tramping of the wolves below us that the smooth-bore was almost buried in the snow; its stock to this day bears the marks of where one of our assailants tried his teeth upon it. It was the work of a moment to tear our handkerchiefs into shreds, cut a couple of forked twigs, and then the tedious process of fishing up our weapons began. Twice the wolves, suspicious of our actions, dashed in upon us, and we had to desist from our efforts. All the while the air seemed to be getting colder and it was only by constantly rubbing his hands together and beating his feet against the trunk of the tree that Tom was able to keep from freezing. My suffer-

could hardly load our weapons. The wolves were now more wary of showing themselves, but their vigorous howls still attested the solemn fact that they held us in durance vile.

Then the idea occurred to me that perhaps we could decoy them into range. I made as if to descend the tree. The wolves rushed forward as before. Ere they could retire, the rifle had laid two of their number dead upon the snow. Thrice we repeated this operation, with the same result. Again I slid part way down the trunk, when, O horror! my chilled and stiffened fingers lost their hold, and I fell headlong to the ground. That moment I thought to be my last. I was up quickly, however, with rifle in hand, when, to my surprise, Tom, noble fellow, determined that we should either do or die together, with a ringing shout jumped into the snow beside me. For an instant, as if astonished at this change of front, the wolves faltered in their onward charge, and during that interval we fired our revolvers as fast as we could pull trigger. Again they came

UNHAPPY AND HAPPY.

The four-year-old son and heir of the respectable and well to do Mulberry's leaned over the edge of a tub half-filled with deep blue water, which struck the romantic little fellow as bearing a striking resemblance to the deep blue sea, and vainly attempted to make miniature masts in a clothes pin keep above water, which they stubbornly refused to do, for just as soon as the chubby little hand let go its hold did the masts suddenly dive towards the bottom of the tub. A few feet behind him was a heap of clothes waiting to be rubbed on the wash board. To the left of him was a clothes basket and to the right a water pail, while a broom stood against the wall. Indeed the floor of the room presented much the appearance of a hilly country, and reminded one of a marsh which required careful steps. In the middle of the room Mrs. Mulberry herself stood before a wash tub, her arms up to the elbows in thick white soap suds, as she laboriously rubbed piece after piece of linen and woollen underwear over the board. Now and again she cast glances at the heaps of soiled clothes about her and sighed as she wondered if she "ever would get done."

The little Mulberry couldn't understand why the masts in his boat would not stay above water as well as under, and as he persistently tried to solve the problem, he leaned more and more over the side of the tub. But he leaned over too far; there was a splash, a spluttering and the Mulberry family bid fair to become extinct with the present generation.

The good woman's arms bounded out of the suds, sending the soap and water in every direction, and with a scream she leaped over a water pail to save the child. Excited and alarmed, she hurriedly caught the spluttering boy and lifted him from the water, when he instantly set up a roar that made the people in the adjoining houses wonder. A few of them, indeed, sent their own little boys around to inquire if anything serious had happened, while Mrs. Mulberry's favorite neighbor and particular friend came in herself.

"It's impossible to watch children and do your work, especially on wash day," explained Mrs. Mulberry, after the excitement attending the rescue had subsided. "They will be splashing in the water, no matter what you do, unless one locks them in another room, and goodness knows what they might do there, when you ain't watching them." Then looking about her in an apologizing way: "Well, isn't this place in a frightful state; I sometimes think I'll never get it set to rights again, and then to think that a person has got to iron all those things afterwards—it's enough to make one weep."

"Oh, the ironing is nothing; I never mind that," said her friend; "and as for your house Mrs. Mulberry, show me anybody's that looks better on wash-day."

"Yes, that's so, and I really don't mind ironing; John never grumbles about that, but he is always in bad humor on wash day, and if I say anything, he says, why don't I get a woman to help me; but bless me, it would take me half my time watching her, and my girl seems only in the road on wash-day. So, to tell the truth, I would sooner do the work myself than be bothered with either of them."

"Just so, just so," assented the neighbor; "and when we have a spell of bad weather and two week's washing gets before you, well it sometimes makes me feel discouraged," and with the hope that the weather would keep fine and that Master Mulberry would be more careful in future, the well-wishing friend departed.

"Well! well, well," said Mr. Mulberry, crossly as he scanned the dinner table, with his brow wrinkled up tight and a scowl about his mouth, "if I'd known it was going to be like this, I wouldn't have come home to dinner, you may be sure. Steam! steam! steam! Why, it's all through the house; and then a man's got to eat a cold dinner in the midst of it."

"Well, you know John, this is wash day."

"Yes, wash day! how many wash days are there in a week?"

"Only one, John, and it can't very well be helped," said the good woman kindly; "and when the stove is full of boilers and pots, it's hard to cook a dinner."

"Yes, I suppose so," grunted her husband. "What's the matter with the boy, he looks like something that would be in a potato field? Is that wash day, too, or are you going to dress him like that in future?"

"Poor Jack! he fell in the tub, and I had to put those clothes on him till I get a chance to clean him up."

"Oh! that's it, is it? Well, I hope you won't let anybody else see a Mulberry dressed in that fashion, that's all."

The dinner was eaten in silence.

"Do you think you'll be through by supper time?" said Mr. Mulberry, sarcastically, as he put on his overcoat preparatory to leaving; "because if you don't, I rather think I'll wait till you get through."

"Oh, yes, I'll surely be through by then," said the patient and forbearing little woman, kindly; "but I'll have my ironing to do tonight."

"I don't mind that at all," said her lord, softening a little. Then he left the house.

Two months afterward Mrs. Mulberry stood in the kitchen looking neat and clean, with a shining white apron before her, and merrily humming a tune as she run the smoothing iron over piece after piece of white linen. Mr. Mulberry strode in from an adjoining room, and shoving his hands far down into his trousers pockets, he stood watching his wife as she quietly went on with her work. Suddenly he said, and his smile broadened:

"Well, my dear; this has been wash-day, has it not? I didn't think I could ever feel happy while such a thing as washing had to be done, but you seem to have solved the difficulty some way."

"I'm sure I never used to like to see wash day coming round," said the little woman looking up with a quiet smile; "but just think what a mistake a person will make for want of thinking. There I had been working myself to death all those years, when I could get my washing done at Ungar's Laundry for 25 cents a dozen, and have it taken away and brought back into the bargain, and all I have to do is the ironing, which is something I never heard a woman grumble at yet."

"Or a man either," added Mr. Mulberry with a little chuckle.



THE FIRST BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS.

their jaws together and giving vent to cries that were awful in the mad, brute fierceness they expressed.

The tree in which Tom was perched was straight and free of limbs for a distance of perhaps twelve feet above the ground. The one in which I sat was leaning somewhat, and formed a fork about seven feet up. Into this fork the wolves tried to leap. One grey monster got his forepaws fairly into the angle, and tried to reach the branch to which I was clinging, but I had dragged one of my snowshoes with me in my hasty ascent, and with this I beat him off, and he fell among his howling comrades below. Another, and still another lodged in the fork; some of them were so wedged in as to be quite helpless when they reached there; others I belabored with the snow-shoe until they tumbled to the ground. Tom in the meantime kept up a constant fire with his revolver, but it was now quite dark, and his hands were so cold that he did little execution. For almost an hour this terrible struggle continued, and once I came near losing my balance and falling right into their midst. Then

We spoke to each other of those who had hoped we might be home tonight—the home we little thought to see again, and of the forms that were gathered we knew that every hour about the blazing Christmas hearth. They were thinking of us no doubt, those loved ones, little fearing that the places now vacant in the circle would never be filled again. Their mirth might be checked a little as they missed us tonight, but as yet no shadow of our doom had crossed the threshold. In the years that were to come each Christmas Eve must be to every member of that group a time of sadness and sorrow. There were eyes in that household, perhaps, resting on that same white Christmas moon that we now gazed upon, and though its face seemed cold and chilling as the grave, it was a bond of sympathy between us. What would we not give to be with them now? What would we not give for the least reflection of the warmth that glowed from the big open fire-place so far, so far away? One of the brightest and the dearest of that group was soon to be Tom Halleck's wedded wife and I groaned within me as I

ings were not so severe, but we both felt that unless we could somehow raise the siege we would certainly perish from the bitter cold before morning.

At last my cousin's voice announced that he had succeeded in hooking up his rifle; the smoothbore was also recovered, and we opened a rattling fire on the enemy. We opened that the work of driving them off was not an easy one. As soon as a wolf would drop he would be set upon by his comrades and torn to pieces in an instant. Then they would fall back out of range, only to return whenever we stopped firing, to their station on the outer edge of the birches. At one time we thought of sliding down—so bitter was the cold—in order that one of us might build a fire while the other kept the pack at bay with his rifle. But at the first move we made the wolves came boldly forward, and we saw how fatal such an experiment would be. There was nothing for it but to take advantage of every chance that offered to thin them out. This we did pretty successfully. At least a dozen were shot in the next half hour, though our hands were so benumbed we

forward, but in a cowed and hesitating manner, and when within a dozen paces of us turned about and fled.

We were too cold just then to return thanks to Providence for our deliverance, but we felt them all the same, and our hearts as well as our half-frozen limbs glowed with warmth and gladness, when a few moments later we stood beside a rousing fire of birch bark and spruce boughs which sent the sparks flying by myriads out into the frosty air. We neither saw nor heard more of the wolves that night and in the morning started for the camp, carrying on our toboggan four handsome wolfskins as tokens of our prowess and our peril. Two of them adorn the threshold of my study to-day; Tom has the other two, but neither Tom nor I require a sight of them to polish up our recollections of that awful Christmas eve in the birches on the upper St. John, just twenty years ago.

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