

The Forest Fire.

Tessie and I were friends. We had always been friends since—well, since we were dresses together. That was when I was five and she was four. We were, from that time, always together. Like brother and sister, you say? More than this. For brothers and sisters are not always close friends. We were chums. She went everywhere I went and did everything I did, and, as we grew up to boyhood and girlhood, we were inseparable. Even when I had attained the dignity of long pants I preferred her society to that of my male friends, for there was nothing so soft about Tessie, except, perhaps, her eyes, and they were a beautiful, rosy hazel.

She was strong and athletic, but of a slender build; could drive, row and swim as well as I could; and had a complexion well browned by a long and intimate acquaintance with God's sunlight. A brave girl, too. I remember well how once she swam across a quarter of a mile of choppy river to get the doctor for that grumpy old Sarah Tore, the lighthouse keeper's wife. She loved the cross old woman, she said, although no one else saw anything in her to love.

Then Tess went to boarding school and came back at the end of three years with a little of that "horrible tan"—that's what her proper sister Laura called it—gone out of her cheeks, and just the faintest trace of city manners about her; but at heart the same dear old Tess as of yore.

How, although my girl friend and I had known each other so long and so intimately, yet we had never talked in love with each other. I am positive of this, because when I got soft on Jennie Bingham and lavished all my money on flowers for her, Tess only laughed. Then there was the time I fell head over heels in love with dashing Cora Sands. Why, then I had it bad. I got to the stage where you moon around street corners and carve her name on old stumps and gate posts. I even wrote my name and hers together on the marriage page of the old family Bible, just to see how it would look, and then rubbed it out in guilty haste. Even then didn't Tessie get up a lawn party and manoeuvre so that Cora and I were partners for the whole evening? And then, there was the Jack Manners episode. Jack quite lost his head over Tess, and asked her father if he could marry her. I think he even proposed elopement to Tessie. But she didn't love Jack, she said, and so wouldn't hear of his winning any time or money on her. And I didn't feel a bit jealous. I am sure I didn't. So you see it's quite plain that we had not given the mischievous little god Cupid any work to do for us. But now I was twenty and Tessie nineteen, and somehow, as I took the shapely little hand she offered me to welcome her back, after those three years at school, somehow it came to me suddenly that Tess was a beautiful girl, and that her eyes were bewitching. And there came into my heart a strange, uncomfortable feeling—dissatisfaction, jealousy—what was it? It certainly was not pleasant. Suppose some one should take it into his head to fall in love with Tessie and marry her? Confound him! But then, what was that to me? I was not in love with her. Of course not. We were simply friends. And yet I instinctively disliked this fellow who might make love to my girl chum.

The summer I wish particularly to tell you of, the one following Tessie's return from school, our folks and her folks decided to spend the hot season at a little mountain hamlet with an unpronounceable name—a mixture of French and Indian—thirty miles or so to the north of Lake Superior. We had already spent one season there and knew of a good boarding house where they gave you enough to eat and where too unsophisticated to charge a ruinous price. It was a one-house sort of a place, containing about a dozen families, mostly French Canadians habitant's primitive as Noah. The population numbered about one hundred persons. The town was perched right on the side of a thirteen-hundred-foot-high hill. Dover mountain they called it. Directly back of this hill—in fact almost a continuation of it—rose a tall, pointed mountain about three thousand feet high, which the French called Ducre's Spine. This eminence, as well as the hill on which the little village lay, as though it had been dropped there, was very thickly wooded. Just a little space close about the houses had been cleared of trees, while for miles around extended the dense virgin forest, most of whose heavy growth of pine, cedar, chestnut oak and hickory, besides a rank undergrowth of sumac and scrub oak, had never been desecrated by the woodman's axe.

The folks were to go up to this wild retreat early in the summer, and I was to join them in August, when I got my vacation. The railroad by which one reached this out-of-the-way place followed the shore of the mighty Lake Superior for about one hundred miles from Duluth, and then struck into the forest for a short distance to avoid a great mass of basalt rock, too hard to tunnel through, the tracks coming close to the water's edge again about five or six miles from where they left it. Just where the road was farthest from the lake, at the most northeasterly point of the detour, the train slowed up a moment to let off any passenger with the place with the long name. The hamlet boasted no station, only a platform of rough unhewn logs. From this point there wound up through the thick forest a narrow, tortuous road, rough and stony, and dark even in the daytime, from the overhanging trees up to the houses on the hillside. Only one train a day stopped there, at half past five, and they always drove down from the boarding house to meet it in an antiquated, nondescript vehi-

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cle that might have come out of the ark. This was a two wheeled rig, the wheels thick, rough slices cut from a hickory log. The horse usually attached to it—he was the only being attached in any way to the unlovely thing—was a dignified, conservative animal, full of years, and which no amount of persuasion, either oral or flagellative, had ever been known to induce to accelerate his progress to [anything] faster than a stately walk.

It had been unusually hot for summer. As the train swept along the lake shore I noticed the vegetation appeared very dry and parched, and that the little pools, which always flashed like gems from the rocky soil along the edge of the lake, had disappeared. The yellow red swamp lilies that fringed the marshy ground to the north margin of the track seemed to literally burn in the scorching rays of the afternoon sun, and the sparks from the engine stack fell unpleasantly near some dry hemlock brush that edged the lake. Uncomfortable thoughts of forest fires came up in my mind. Away off to the west I could see a wreath of thin, black smoke curling lazily upward. I watched it a moment and it seemed to get thicker and blacker.

'A trapper cooking supper,' I thought, but the notion of a forest conflagration still lingered unpleasantly in my mind. As the train slowed up I grabbed my valise and sprang off onto the platform. The conductor in the caboose behind—it was a long train of two passenger coaches and twenty or so freight cars—waved his arms and the heavy train once more increased its speed. Soon it had vanished around the curve. I walked up and down the rough platform, waiting for my stage, and my thoughts again returned to the possibility of a fire on the mountain. What a terrible thing it would be!

But just then I spied the antediluvian rig winding in and out among the trees, about half a mile up, and I quickly dismissed from my mind all thoughts of fire. Tess was driving the conveyance and she was alone. I was delighted with the prospect of a two hours' tete-a-tete with her, but thought it strange that old Joe, the farm hand, had not come for me, as usual. Tess explained that the man was off at Tour Croix, a neighboring town, helping fight a forest fire. 'Great Heavens!' I exclaimed. 'Suppose the fire should come this way and overtake us before we get home!' Tess laughed. 'No danger of that, I guess,' she said, as she turned the horse's head back in the direction he had come.

It was a delightful afternoon. The air was now cooling down, and under the shade of the trees that overhung our homeward way, it was very pleasant. We chatted and laughed until we quite forgot the existence of any such thing as fire or danger.

It was a good eight miles from the railroad to the farm house, and we had covered about a quarter of that distance, when, on looking to the south, I suddenly noticed a dense black smoke rising in large, thick masses three or four miles off. It seemed to be rapidly approaching. Again that terrible thought of fire suggested itself. 'We had better get home as quickly as possible! That is the forest on fire!' said Tess. 'Wouldn't it be a terrible thing if it should reach the road before we do! It is certainly coming toward us!'

And coming toward us it was, at a most alarming rate. Our ochrean steed would not move any faster and the road seemed to cross the track of the fire; some distance ahead of us. Our situation was becoming serious. The road was not wide enough to afford us an oasis in this approaching simoon, and if the flames got within half a mile of us we could not escape, except by a miracle. The fire came nearer. There was no mistaking it now. The evergreens and withered undergrowth had become veritable tinder in the long continued hot and dry spell, and before the destroying flames they disappeared as snow before the sun. It was only about half an hour since I first noticed the smoke and now we could hear distinctly the distant crack and roar of the flames, and very now and then the heavy, resonant swish and boom as some great king of the forest fell, crashing through the smaller growth beneath it. The twilight was coming swiftly on. We began to get thoroughly frightened as the fire came nearer and nearer.

A great cloud of cinders and smoke, the

advance guard of the all-devouring enemy, began to blow in our faces and fire the dry underbrush at our feet. A breeze had sprung up. We might have died for it two hours before and not received it, but now, when its presence was most deadly, it appeared to give greater velocity to the already furious pace of our destroying enemy.

I applied the whip vigorously to the old horse, and he seemed to put forth his best energies, but the crazy wagon was so heavy that we did not get along any faster than a good trot.

The girl beside me was pale, but her lips were firmly set and her eyes burned a lustrous, determined light. She would not flinch, I saw. She came of stern stuff, this tender young girl, and the fierce, stubborn spirit of her Dutch ancestry was standing her now in good stead. I knew Tess would not faint or scream or do anything foolish or wild, but would be a comrade to me in our danger, with a courage equal, if not superior, to my own.

On came the fire. It was now within half a mile of us and roaring like a wild beast in sight of his prey. A great cloud of smoke and cinders preceded the flames and blew right in our faces, making our eyes smart so that we could scarcely see and griming and peppering our flesh till it felt raw. A flock of teal—great big, beautiful fellows—swept over us, flying toward the lake, uttering loud, discordant cries. Now and then one of number would fall to the ground, its wings, perhaps, singed by the flames over which it had passed. Four beautiful deer, a massive stag with magnificent antlers and three soft eyed does, came at full bound from the covert to the left of the road, the buck leading in a frightened run and the females following with that startled, almost human, look in their large eyes that one notices in animals at bay. A long, glossy black snake writhed its swift way through the underbrush across the road and was lost to view in an instant. I scarcely knew how I managed to see all these minor features in the play which afterwards came so near being a tragedy, but every little thing is indelibly impressed upon my mind, even to this hour.

Our old horse was now fully alive to the danger we were in. He trembled and shook in every limb and drew the rickety old vehicle along at the rate it had never gone before. I held the reins and spoke encouraging words to him, and tried to comfort the brave girl at my side. Tess was trying to keep the cinders off us with a little silk parasol—one of my gifts to her—but soon there were so many hot spots burned in that dainty relic of civilization that it became a veritable colander, through which poured a red-hot blinding flood of sparks and smoke. A great hissing, crackling underlight on her Tam-o'-Shanter and that soon was so near a blaze that I pitched it off and threw it away. Tess looked like an angry goddess. Her long brown hair had escaped from its tasterings and swept out behind in the wind our passage created. As she held the reins while I warded off a great blazing fir branch that came hurtling down upon us, with her eyes sparkling with excitement, her face pale as ash, and her lips set, she looked like another Queen Boadicea driving her chariot of wrath over the necks of her proud Roman insulters. Even in these moments of agony I wondered how she kept up so marvelously.

We were now about half way home and almost in the belt of flame. Things might now get better, and if we could hold out for another half hour there was a chance of our getting off with our lives. I tried to speak, but my throat was so parched that I could not utter a sound. The heat was frightful. Clouds of dense white smoke settled about us in suffocating closeness, while the thunder of the falling giants of the forest, together with the sharp fusillade produced by their snapping branches and the ever-increasing roar of the flames, made up a grand and awful diapason. And the fire came closer and closer—and finally—it reached us.

'Tess! I shouted, as I put my arm about her waist and drew her down below the sides of the crazy old vehicle. 'Dear girl, our time has come! Good-bye!'

'Dear Ben, good-bye!' I read, rather than heard from her lips. It was impossible to hear her words.

And after that as the novelists say, all was like a dream. I have a confused recollection of a heat so terrible as to almost force my eyes from their sockets and shivel my skin up to parchment—o the old horse dropping to the ground—of standing over my brave Tess fighting off the blazing branches—of agonizing burns on my head, face and hands! And then there came a terrible crash! I seemed to see ten thousand stars and all was darkness!

I never knew just how long I was unconscious, but it must have been for many hours, for when consciousness again mounted



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ed her throne in my soul it was broad day. At first I could not open my eyes at all. Then I managed to just separate the lids, but it was the acutest torment to do so. I afterwards found that they had been horribly burned.

Full sensibility came back very slowly. For awhile I was dazed. I could not think—only gaze upward stupidly at the clear sky and wonder what had happened. Soon, however, it all came back—all the horror and pain—and I attempted to start up. 'My God! Tess! I groaned, as I realized fully where I was and what had transpired. But I found I was too weak to do anything except barely move my head.

When I could see about me, what a desolate scene it was that met my blurred and crippled vision. As far as my poor sight could reach there was nothing but blackness, except over head—a landscape in jet silhouette sharply against the soft azure of the clear sky. A few feet from me lay the finger of a human being! My God! It was Tess! And was she dead? Merciful Heaven! About half her clothes were gone and she lay motionless, as though dead.

How I suffered at that sight no one but myself can ever know. It was worse than my own misery. But I could not move, and the hot tears, of which I was not ashamed, distilled from my eyes like drops of liquid fire and ploughed red-hot furrows down my scorched cheeks. And then I again lapsed into unconsciousness.

Whole ages might have passed before I knew anything more. Then suddenly I opened my eyes and saw. I was in bed at home. By the bedside sat my small sister Jennie.

'You have been sick just three weeks, Ben,' said she, 'and Tessie—every one of us said 'Tessie' and not Miss Mills—is just able to walk around.'

It came out afterwards that Tess had received her worst burns while trying to ward off a great blazing branch from my head, after I had become unconscious. Of course, she was lionized for her bravery—'when I didn't do anything brave at all,' she afterwards said to me, with a bright blush. I didn't say anything and what I did is scarcely worth recording.

The doctor says I will bear no permanent evil effects of my adventure save several deep, ugly scars on my head and arms.

But when I take my youngest boy on my knee and pour into his never tiring ear, again and again, the story of my escape from fiery death, and then look over across the table where sits my sweet faced wife, I shudder at the recollection of that night of horror and marvel at the strength of a true woman's love.

THE EIGHTY WHO SUFFER.

In Every Hundred From Catarrh Have a Friend Indeed in Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder.

'I was a catarrh victim for many years. Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder has done me great service. I tried every remedy in the category of catarrh cures without any permanent relief. After taking only a few doses I received great benefit, and in a very short while my catarrh had disappeared. I am satisfied it is the best, safest and quickest remedy known for this malady today.' Jas. E. Ball, Paulding, O.

Gambling on a Dead H.

'Bob' Hamilton is dead. The news of the policy king's death travelled rapidly. It was known in a few minutes, says the Philadelphia Times by the frequenters of all the policy shops. Those who hang around his old haunts were grieved. Many were the kind words spoken of the man who for years had taken in the small bets of the players and who had been rich and poor by turns. His good qualities were remembered; his bad ones forgotten. True to the superstitions of the policy players, they tried to benefit by his death. They started in to 'play the rows' he had played and the rows suggested by his dead h. Of course the 'dead row' was played, and, of course, it did not 'come out' or win. This was the row of figures—9 19 29—on which Bob had made a winning the day after his wife died. The 'policy row,' another of Hamilton's favorite combinations, was a winner yesterday morning, but few of the players knew of his removal to the hospital in time for that fact to suggest it to them. Bob often played the 'gate row'—17 9-21—and that was a favorite in last night's drawing. But it did not win.

Explained.

'I know he does not mean it. He says in his letter that everything has seemed dark as night since I went away.' 'He may be telling the truth. You know love is blind.'

AN AURORA LETTER

A Correspondent Approves Rev. F. Elliott, of Richmond Hill.

Dodd's Kidney Pills a Heaven-sent Medicine—Their Work in Aurora—Cure Every Case of Bright's Disease, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Lumbago, Lame Back and All Other Kidney Diseases.

AURORA, FEB. 14.—Dear Sir—The article published a few days ago, relating to the recovery of Rev. F. Elliott, of Richmond Hill, has been discussed at length in this town. It states facts similar to those of many cases here, all of which are well-known to our citizens.

It is refreshing to find such a prominent and respected clergyman as Rev. Mr. Elliott taking so pronounced a step as he has done, in publicly recommending Dodd's Kidney Pills. His experience with this wonderful medicine is exactly similar to Aurora people. There is no medicine to be procured that can approach Dodd's Kidney Pills, which never fail to cure.

Bright's Disease and Diabetes, so long said to be incurable, are cured by Dodd's Kidney Pills as easily as a puff of wind blows out a candle flame. They have been used in this town by scores of people who were given up to die, by their doctors, and who surprised and delighted their friends by their rapid and thorough recovery, after having used these Heaven-sent pills.

There is no medicine on earth that can compare with Dodd's Kidney Pills for Rheumatism, Lumbago, Lame Back, Heart Disease, Paralysis, Gout, Gravel, Stone in Bladder, Urinary Troubles, Blood Impurities, Female Weakness, and all other Kidney Diseases. The Pills are simply infallible in these ailments.

It is the duty of every man to lighten the sufferings of his fellows as much as possible, and for that reason, I write this to proclaim to all victims of Bright's Disease, Diabetes, and any of the other Kidney Diseases I have named, that Dodd's Kidney Pills will cure them as certainly as night follows day, if they are given a chance.

All sufferers can get Dodd's Kidney Pills at any drug store. They cost only fifty cents a box, six boxes \$2.50, on receipt of which price they will be sent by The Dodd's Medicine Co., Limited, Toronto.

Yours, etc.,
HUMANITY.

He was in doubt About it.

In these days of scientific achievement the following amusing story, from the Boston Herald, is not unreasonable. Recently two gentlemen, driving in a wagonette, were smoking, when a spark falling from one of their cigars set fire to some straw at the bottom of the carriage. The flames soon drove them from their seats, and while they were extinguishing the fire, a countryman who had for some time been following them on horseback, alighted to assist them.

'I have been watching the smoke for some time,' said he.

'Why, then, did you not give us notice?'

'Well,' responded the man, 'there are so many new-fangled notions nowadays I thought you were going by steam.'

THE TRAIL OF DEATH

It begins at the Throat and ends at the Grave. How many a human life is unnecessarily sacrificed.

There are many remedies on the market for the cure of consumption, but consumption, once it reaches a certain stage, cannot be cured. In proferring, therefore, to do what is impossible, these remedies prove themselves to be simply humbugs.

Consumption is a disease which destroys the tissue of the lungs. Once gone, no medicine can replace that tissue. Good medicine may arrest the disease even after one lung is wholly gone, as long as the other remains sound. Once both are attacked, however, the victim is doomed.

Just why people should risk their lives to this dread disease and go to great expense afterwards to check it, it is hard to conceive. It is much easier prevented than cured. Throat troubles and severe colds are its usual forerunners. A 25-cent bottle of Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine will drive these away. It is, without doubt, the best medicine for the purpose to be had anywhere.