

CHAPTER IV

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Snowbird felt very glad of her inflmate, accurate knowledge of the whole region of the Divide. In her infancy the winding trails had been her playground, and long ago she had acquired the mountaineer's sixth sense for traversing them at night. She had need of that knowledge now, She slipped into her free, swinging stride; the last beams from the windows of the house were soon lost in the pines behind her. It was one of those slient, breathless nights with which no mountaineer is entirely unacquainted, and for a long time the only sound she could hear was her own soft tramp in the pine needles. The trees themselves were motionless, That peculiar sound, not greatly different from that of running water which the wind often makes in the pine tops, was entirely lacking. Not that she could be deceived by it-as stories tell that certain tenderfeet, dying of thirst in the barren hills, have been. But she always liked the sound; and she missed it especially tonight.

She felt that if she would stop to there would be many faint listen, sounds in the thickets-those little hushed noises that the wild things make to remind night-wanderers of their presence. But she did not in the least care to hear these sounds. They do not tend toward pence of mind on a long walk over the ridges.

The wilderness begun at once Whatever influence toward civilization her father's house had brought to the wilds chopped off as beneath a blade in the first fringe of pines. This is altogether characteristic of the Oregon forests. They are much too big and too old to be tamed in any large degree by the presence of one house, No one knew this fact better than Lennox himself who, in a hard winter of four years before, had looked out of his window to find the wolf pack ranged in a hungry circle about Within two hundred yards his house. after she had passed through her fa-ther's door, she was perfectly aware that the wild was stirring and throbbing with life about her. At first she tried very hard to think of other things. But the attempt wasn't en-tirely a success. And before she had covered the first of the twelve miles, the sounds that from the first had been knocking at the door of her consciousness began to make an entrance.

If a person lies still long enough, he can usually hear his heart beating and the flow of his blood in his arteries. Any sound, no matter how faint, will make itself heard at last. It was this way with a very peculiar noise that crept up through the silence from the trail behind her. She wouldn't give it any heed at first. But In a very little while indeed, it grew so insistent that she could no longer disregard it.

Some living creature was trotting along on the trail behind, keeping approximately the same distance be tween them,

Foregoing any attempt to ignore it she set her cool young mind to thinking what manner of beast it might be. its step was not greatly different from

that of a large dog-except possibly a

she heard the brush crushing and rustling as something passed through. Sometimes, when the trail was covered with soft pine needles, it was practically indistinguishable.

a heavy foot, and again and again

up.

mounted.

ous sense of discomfort in his

curious white heap beside

trail, he was extremely glad that It had. But there was no chance to mis-

take the thing. The elements and

much more terrible agents had each

wrought their change, yet there was

grisly evidence in plenty to show what

had occurred. Dan didn't doubt for

an Instant but that it was the skele-ton of Landy Hildreth.

buzzards were almost done, and one white bone from the shoulder gave un-

mistakable evidence of the passage of

a bullet. What had happened there-

He got back quickly on his horse, He understood, now, why nothing had

been heard of the evidence that Landy Hildreth was to turn over to the

courts as to the activities of the arson

ring. Some one-probably Bert Cran-

ston himself-had been walting on the

trail. Others had come thereafter.

And his lips set in his resolve to let

this murder measure in the debt he

The Lennox house seemed very sl-

lent when, almost an hour later, he turned his horse into the corral. He

had rather hoped that Snowbird would

be at the door to meet him. The dark-

ness had just fallen, and all the lamps

were lighted. He strode into the liv-

ing room, warming his hands an in-

stant beside the fireplace. The fire needed fuel. It had evidently been

Then he called Snowbird, His voice

echoed in the silent room, unanswered.

He called again, then went to look for

her. At the door of the dining roon

he found the note that she had left

It told, very simply and plainly, that

her father lay injured in his bed, and he was to remain and do what he

could for him. She had gone for help

He leaped through the rooms to Len-

door, then went in on tiptoe

to the ranger station.

neglected for nearly an hour.

after, he could only guess,

had to pay Cranston.

He forced himself to go nearer. The

The animal was approximately one hundred feet behind. It wasn't a wolf, she thought. The wolves ran in packs this season, and except in winter were more afraid of human beings than any other living creature. It wasn't a lynx -one of those curiosity-devoured litthe fellnes that will mew all day on a trail and never dare come near. It was much too large for a lynx. The feet fell too solidly. There were no dogs in the mountains to follow at heel; and she had no desire whatever to meet Shag, the faithful hybrid that used to be her guardian in the hills. For Shag had gone to his well-deserved rest several seasons before. Two other possibilities remained. One was that this follower was a human being, the other that it was a cougar.

Ordinarily a human being is much more potentially dangerous to a woman in the hills at night than a cougar A cougar is an abject coward and some men are not. But Snowbird felt berself entirely capable of bandling any human foes. They would have no advantage over her; they would have no purpose in killing from ambush; and she trusted to her own marks-manship implicitly. While it is an extremely difficult thing to shoot at a cougar leaping from the thicket, a tall man standing on a trall presents an easy target. Besides, she had a vague sense of discomfort that if this animal were a cougar, he wasn't acting true to form. He was altogether too bold.

The animal on the trail behind her was taking no care at all to go silent-He was simply pit-patting along, wholly at his ease. He acted as if the fear that men have instilled in his breed was somehow missing. And that is why she instinctively tried to hurry on the trail.

The step kept pace. For a long mile, up a barren ridge, she heard step it made. Then, as the every brush closed deeper around her, she couldn't hear it at all.

She hurried on, straining to the slience. No, the sound was stopped. Could it be that the animal, fearful at last, had turned from her trail? then for the first time a gasp that was not greatly different from a de

And the first thing he saw when he opened the door was the grizzled man's gray face on the pillov "You're home early, Dan," he said "How many did you get?" It was entirely characteristic. Shaggy old Woof is too proud to how! over the wounds that lay him tow, and this gray old bear on the bed had partaken of his spirit. "Good Lord," Dan answered. "How adly are you hurt?"

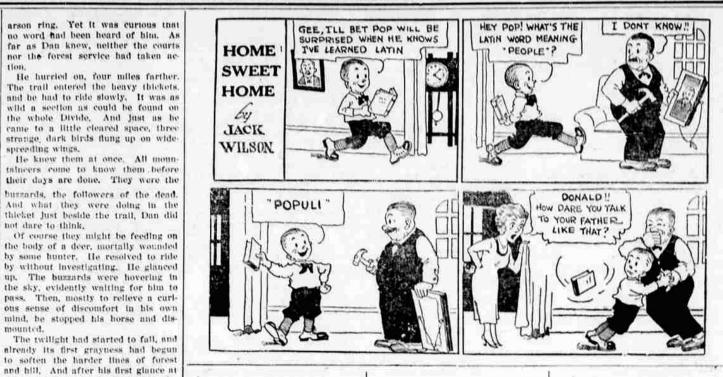
for him.

nox's

"Not so had but that I'm sorry that Snowbird has gone drifting twelve nilles over the hills for help, It's dark as pitch."

And it was, Dan could scarcely make out the outline of the somber ridges against the sky.

They talked on, and their subject was whether Dan should remain to take care of Lennox, or whether he



HOT WATER ALWAYS AT HAND Continuous Flow of Boiling Liquid

and Steam From the Innumerable Geysers of Iceland.

The hot-water fountains of Iceland are on mounds averaging seven feet in height, the top of each of which forms the edge of a sort of basin, From these basins the steam of boiling water can be seen rising and the over flow of water is continuous. The contents of these basins is as clear as crystal and one can see to a great, depth, while just below the surface are many wonderfully beautiful white incrustations, to obtain samples of which many a visitor to Iceland has burned his fingers. The petrifications caused by the bolling water streams from the geysers include birch and willow leaves, grass and rushes seemngly converted into marble.

At no time is it entirely safe to olter in the vicinity of one of these bottomless basins, for the gever has a way of spouting and gives no ad-vance warning. Sometimes there will be a shoot of boiling water to a height of 15 feet, followed by a succession of jets. The highest shoot of which there is any record was 90 feet.

Occasionally a basin will for some unexplained reason become entirely empty, or will give forth a "steam shoot," which, in the form of a column of spray and vapor at least 60 feet in height, presents a really magnificent pectacle.

For Those Who Believe in Dreams, To dream of chickens, you will be the victim of a cowardly act. To eat one, you will expose a treacherous friend. To kill them, honor and glory. To cook them, you will injure a friend unintentionally.

Long Range Fire. A gossip is never willing to repeat unkind remarks to your face. We re-cently heard one when accused of this try to justify herself by saying: "Gosup, madam, is a social attack conducted on the approved principles of mod-ern warfare-you are not supposed to see the person at whom you are shoot-ing."-Boston Transcript.

Denmark Leads in Pigs.

Ireland, supposed to be the great country for pigs, has, in fact, only one olg for every three persons, while Dennark has one plg for each two human beings.

A Winter Catastrophe,

Little Howard had been accustomed to going for milk to a neighbor who kept a cow. One winter day he was told that the cow had gone dry and he could have no more milk until spring. The little fellow lost no time in running home and explaining to his moth-"Ob, muvver, the cow's frozed up er : and he won't have no more milk till spring !"

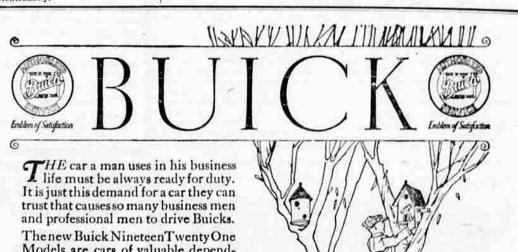
Natural Result,

"Some men are bashful when it comes to meeting their obligations," remarks an exchange. This may be ecuuse they are financially shy.



done you want the most efficient workmen to do it. Have you always had satisfactory work done? That is the only kind we do. We do your work right or not at all.

A. W. Bontrager Greenwood Avenue





dog would have made slightly more noise. Yet she couldn't even be sure of this basic premise, because this animal, whatever it might be, had at first seemingly moved with utmos caution, but now took less care with its step than is customary with the wild denizens of the woods. A wolf, for instance, can simply drift when it wishes, and the silence of a cougar is a name. Yet unless her pursuer were a dog, which seemed entirely unlikely, it was certainly one of these two. She would have liked very much to believe the step was that of Old Wolf the bear, suddenly curious as to what this dim light of hers might be; but she couldn't bring herself to accept the Woof, except when wounded or cornered. Is the most amiable crea ture in the Oregon woods, and would give her almost a sense of se-curity to have him waddling along behind her. The wolves and cougar remembering the arms of Woof, would not be nearly so curious. But unfor tunntely, the black hear had never done such a thing in the memory of man, and if he had, he would have made six times as much noise, - El i can go fairly softly when he is stalk ing, but when he is obliged to trot-as he would be obliged to do to keep up with a swift-walking human figure -he cracks twigs like a rolling log She had the impression that the ani-

mal behind had been passing like smoke at first, but wasn't taking the trouble to do it now.

The sound was a soft pat-pat on the trail-sometimes entirely obliterated but always recurring when she began to believe that she had only fancied its presence. Sometimes a twig, rainsonked though it was, cracked beneath

She Heard the Steps Again.

spairing sob caught at her thront. She heard the steps again, and they were In the thickets just beside her.

Two hours before Snowbird had left the house, on her long tramp to the ranger station, Dan had started home. He hadn't shot until sunset, as he had planned.

He rode one of Lennox's cattle ponies, the only piece of horse-flesh that Bill had not taken to the-valleys when he had driven down the live stock. She was a pretty bay, a spirited, high-bred mare that could whip about on her hind legs at the touch of the rein on her neck. She made good time along the trail. And an hour before sunset he passed the only human habitation between the marsh and Lennox's house-the cabin that had been recently occupied by Landy Hil-

He glanced at the place as he passed and saw that it was deserted. No smell of wood smoke remained in the air. Evidently Landy had gone down to the settlements with his

with the horse. Of course the girl had ordered him to stay. Lennox, on the other hand, said that Dan could not help him in the least, and desired him to follow the girl.

"I'm not often anxious about her. he said slowly. "But it is a long walk through the wildest part of the Di-vide. Some way-I can't bar accidents tonight. I don't like to think of he on those mountains alone."

And remembering what had inin be side the trail, Dan felt the same. He had heard, long ago, that any animal that once tasted human flesh loses its fear of men and is never to be trusted again. Some wild animal that still hunted the ridges had, in the last month, done just that thing. He left the room and walked softly to the door.

(To be Continued)

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