



SYNOPSIS.

Warned by his physician that he has not more than six months to live, Dan Failing sits despondently on a park bench, wondering where he should spend those six months. Memories of his grandfather and a deep love for all things of the wild help him in reaching a decision. In a large southern Oregon city he meets people who had known and loved his grandfather, a famous frontiersman. He makes his home with Silas Lennox, a typical westerner. The only other members of the household are Lennox's son, "Bill," and daughter, "Snowbird." Their abode is in the Empqua divide, and there Failing plans to live out the short span of life which he has been told is his. From the first Failing's health shows a marked improvement, and in the companionship of Lennox and his son and daughter he fits into the woods life as if he had been born to it. By quick thinking and a remarkable display of "nerve" he saves Lennox's life and his own when they are attacked by a mad coyote. Lennox declares he is a reincarnation of his grandfather, Dan Failing I, whose fame as a woodsman is a household word.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

Dan saw the door close behind him, and he had an instant's glimpse of the long sweep of moonlit ridge that stretched beneath the window. Then, all at once, seemingly without warning, it simply blinked out. Not until the next morning did he really know why. Insomnia was an old acquaintance of Dan's, and he had expected to have some trouble in getting to sleep. His only real trouble was waking up again when Lennox called him to breakfast. He couldn't believe that the light at his window shade was really that of morning.

"Good Heavens!" his host exploded. "You sleep the sleep of the just."

Dan was about to tell him that to the contrary he was a very nervous sleeper, but he thought better of it. Something had surely happened to his insomnia. The next instant he ever forgot to wonder about it in the realization that his tired body had been wonderfully refreshed. He had no dread now of the long tramp up the ridge that his host had planned.

But first came target practice. In Dan's baggage he had a certain very plain but serviceable sporting rifle of about thirty-four caliber—a gun that the information department of the large sporting-goods store in Gitchepolis had recommended for his purpose. Except for the few moments in the store, Dan had never held a rifle in his hands. The first shot he hit the trunk of a five-foot pine at thirty paces.

"But I couldn't very well have missed it!" he replied to Lennox's cheer. "You see, I aimed at the middle—but I just grazed the edge."

The second shot was not so good, missing the tree altogether. And it was a singular thing that he aimed longer and tried harder on this shot than on the first. The third time he tried still harder, and made by far the worst shot of all.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. "I'm getting worse all the time."

Lennox didn't know for sure. But he made a long guess. "It might be beginner's luck," he said, "but I'm inclined to think you're trying too hard. Take it easier—depend more on your instincts."

Dan's reply was to lift the rifle lightly to his shoulder, glance quickly along the trigger and fire. The bullet struck within one inch of the center of the pine.

For a long second Lennox gazed at him in open-mouthed astonishment. "My stars, boy!" he cried at last. "Was I mistaken in thinking you were a born tenderfoot—after all? Can it be that a little of your old grandfather's skill has been passed down to you? But you can't do it again."

But Dan did do it again. If anything, the bullet was a little nearer the center. And then he aimed at a more distant tree.

But the hammer snapped down ineffectively on the breech. He turned with a look of question.

"Your gun only holds five shots," Lennox explained. Reloading, Dan tried a more difficult target—a trunk

almost one hundred yards distant. Of course it would have been only child's play to an experienced hunter; but to a tenderfoot it was a difficult mark indeed. Twice out of four shots Dan hit the tree trunk, and one of his two hits was practically a bull's-eye. His two misses were the result of the same mistake he had made before—attempting to hold his aim too long.

Dan and Lennox started together up the long slope of the ridge. Dan alone armed; Lennox went with him solely as a guide. The deer season had just opened, and it might be that Dan would want to procure one of these creatures.

"But I'm not sure I want to hunt deer," Dan told him. "You speak of them as being so beautiful—"

"They are beautiful and your grandfather would never hunt them, either, except for meat. But maybe you'll change your mind when you see a buck. Besides, we might run into a lynx or a panther. But not very likely, without dogs."

They trudged up, over the carpet of pine needles. They fought their way through a thicket of buckbrush. Once they saw the gray squirrels in the tree tops. And before Lennox had as much as supposed they were near the haunts of big game, a yearling doe sprang up from its bed in the thickets.

For an instant she stood motionless, presenting a perfect target. It was evident that she had heard the sound of the approaching hunters, but had not as yet located or identified them with her near-sighted eyes. Lennox whirled to find Dan standing very still, peering along the barrel of his rifle. But he didn't shoot. The deer, seeing Lennox move, leaped into her terror-pace—that astounding run that



"There's Something Living in That Thicket."

is one of the fastest galts in the whole animal world. In the wink of an eye she was out of sight.

"Why didn't you shoot?" Lennox demanded.

"Shoot? It was a doe, wasn't it?"

"Good Lord, of course it was a doe! But there are no game laws that go back this far. Besides—you aimed at it."

"I aimed just to see if I could catch it through my sights. And I could. My glasses sort of made it blur—but I think—perhaps—that I could have shot it. But I'm not going to kill does. There must be some reason for the game laws, or they wouldn't exist."

"You're a funny one. Come three thousand miles to hunt and then pass up the first deer you see. You could almost have been your grandfather, to have done that. He thought killing deer needlessly was almost as bad as killing a man. They are beautiful things, aren't they?"

Dan answered him with startling emphasis. But the look that he wore said more than his words.

They trudged on, and Lennox grew thoughtful. He was recalling the picture that he had seen when he had whirled to look at Dan, immediately after the deer had leaped from its bed. It puzzled him a little. He had turned to find the younger man in a perfect posture to shoot, his feet placed in exactly the position that years of experience had taught Lennox was correct; and withal, absolutely motionless. What many hunters take years to learn, Dan had seemed to know by instinct. Could it be, after all, that this slender weakling, even now bowed down with a terrible malady, had inherited the true frontiersman's instincts of his ancestors?

The result of this thought was at least to hover in the near vicinity of a certain conclusion. That conclusion was that at least a few of the characteristics of his grandfather had been passed down to Dan. It meant that possibly, if time remained, he would not turn out such a weakling, after all. Of course his courage, his nerve, had yet to be tested; but the fact remained that long generations of frontiersmen ancestors had left this influence upon him. The wild was calling to him, wakening instincts long smothered in cities, but sure and true as ever. It was the beginning of regeneration. Voices of the long past were speaking to him, and the Fallings once more had begun to run true to form. Inherited tendencies were in a moment changing this weak, diseased youth into a frontiersman and wilderness inhabitant such as his ancestors had been before him.

They were slipping along over the pine needles, their eyes intent on the trail ahead. And then Lennox saw a curious thing. He beheld Dan suddenly stop in the trail and turn his eyes toward a heavy thicket that lay perhaps one hundred yards to their right. For an instant he looked almost like a wild creature himself. His head was lowered, as if he were listening. His muscles were set and ready.

Lennox had prided himself that he had retained all the powers of his five senses, and that few men in the mountains had keener ears than he. Yet it was truth that at first he only knew the silence, and the stir and pulse of his own blood. He assumed then that Dan was watching something that from his position, twenty feet behind, he could not see. He tried to probe the thickets with his eyes.

Then Dan whispered. Ever so soft a sound, but yet distinct in the silence. "There's something living in that thicket."

Then Lennox heard it, too. As they stood still, the sound became ever clearer and more pronounced. Some living creature was advancing toward them; and twigs were cracking beneath its feet. The sounds were rather subdued, and yet, as the animal approached, both of them instinctively knew that they were extremely loud for the usual footsteps of any of the wild creatures.

"What is it?" Dan asked quietly.

Lennox was so intrigued by the sounds that he was not even observant of the peculiar, subdued quality in Dan's voice. Otherwise, he would have wondered at it. "I'm free to confess I don't know," he said. "It's booming right toward us, like most animals don't care to do. Of course it may be a human being. You must watch out for that."

They waited. The sound ended. They stood straining for a long moment without speech.

"That was the dumbest thing!" Lennox went on. "Of course it might have been a bear—you never know what they're going to do. It might have got sight of us and turned off. But I can't believe that it was just a deer—"

But then his words chopped squarely off in his throat. The plodding advance commenced again. And the next instant a gray form revealed itself at the edge of the thicket.

It was Graycoat the coyote, half-blind with his madness, and desperate in his agony.

There was no more deadly thing in all the hills than he. Even the bite of a rattlesnake would have been welcomed beside his. He stood a long instant, and all his instincts and reflexes that would have ordinarily made him flee in abject terror were thwarted and twisted by the fever of his madness. He stared a moment at the two figures, and his red eyes could not interpret them. They were simply foes, for it was true that when this racking agony was upon him, even lifeless trees seemed foes sometimes. He seemed sure and unrelaxing as he gazed at them out of his burning eyes; and the white foam gathered at his fangs. And then, wholly without warning, he charged down at them.

He came with unbelievable speed. The elder Lennox cried once in warning and cursed himself for venturing forth on the ridge without a gun. He was fully twenty feet distant from Dan; yet he saw in an instant his only course. This was no time to trust their lives to the marksmanship of an amateur. He sprang toward Dan, intending to wrench the weapon from his hand.

But he didn't achieve his purpose. At the first step his foot caught in a projecting root, and he was shot to his face on the trail. But a long life in the wilderness had developed Lennox's reflexes to an abnormal degree; many crises had taught him muscle and nerve control; and only for a fraction of an instant, a period of time that few instruments are fine enough to measure, did he lie supinely upon the ground. He rolled on, into a position of defense. But he knew now he could not reach the younger man before the mad coyote would be upon them. The matter was out of his hands. Everything depended on the aim and self-control of the tenderfoot.

Dan Failing's true marksmanship proves that he is not the weakling he is supposed to be—on several occasions—in the next installment of "The Voice of the Pack."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BIG DAY IN BALBOA'S LIFE

Great Spanish Explorer First Sighted the Pacific Ocean on September 25, 1513.

On Sept. 25, 1513, Vasco Nunez de Balboa had his first peep at the blue expanse of the Pacific ocean, remarks the Los Angeles Times. It was gained from the top of the mountain range at the isthmus of Darien. Four days later, on the 29th, he reached the slopes himself and stood waist deep in the waters. He called it the Great South sea and he took formal possession in the name of the king of Spain, after the manner of the old-time explorers. That was the big day in Balboa's life. He came to the New World as a stowaway and he attained the title of admiral of the Pacific and governor of Panama. Yet four years later he was executed in the public square at Acla on a trumped-up charge of treason. Balboa was an adventurer with the passions of the gambler, the drunkard and the spendthrift; yet as he gathered power and authority he indicated prudence, judgment and foresight. He was a regular scout and now California has a delightful beach and a guarded bay named after him. It would be very proper to call the last

week in September Balboa week in this section, for from the discovery to the possession of the Pacific four days elapsed.

Earthquake Belts.

There are two earthquake belts, which encircle the world. One of them runs through the Mediterranean region and Asia Minor to the Himalayas and beyond, crossing the Pacific to Central America and the Caribbean. The other encircles the Pacific ocean, running northward along the Andes in South America, following the west coast of North America, continuing on by way of the Aleutian chain to Kamchatka, and passing through the Japanese islands to the Philippines and New Zealand. The two belts cross each other in the Andes and in the western Pacific. Within them occur 94 per cent of all the earthquakes recorded on the terrestrial globe.

Plaster for Mending.

Adhesive plaster is just the thing for mending hot-water bags, raincoats, gloves and rubber goods of all kinds.

Exactly. "I have found out we can have an open fire in our library." "That's a grate piece of news."

POULTRY CACKLES

PREPARING MARKET POULTRY

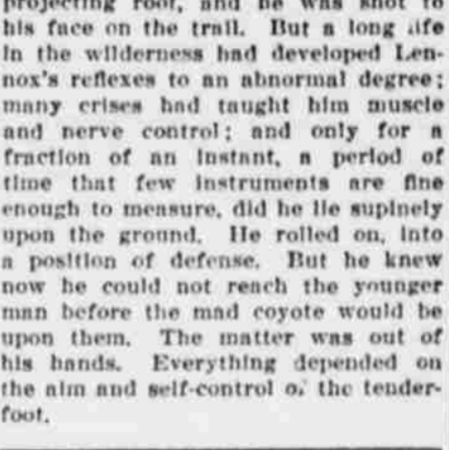
Fowls Should Not Be Given Any Hard Feed From Eighteen to Twenty-four Hours Before Killing.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Poultry should be kept without any hard feed from eighteen to twenty-four hours before killing, but a light meal of soft feed can be given up to twelve hours before killing. Water should be given them up to time for killing, say poultry specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture. When ready to kill, suspend the fowl by the legs and, using a knife, cut the vein at the back of the throat through the mouth. As soon as this vein is cut run the point of the knife through the roof of the mouth into the brain and give the knife a slight turn, which causes the bird to lose all sense of feeling.

In most markets dry-picked birds are preferred. Immediately after killing,

while the birds are still bleeding, the picker should remove the feathers, being careful not to tear the skin. If the picker waits until the bird is partly cold, the feathers will be difficult to remove. As soon as picked the fowls should be hung in a cool place until thoroughly cold. If the weather is warm and fowls are to be packed in ice where no cold storage is available, they should be placed in a tank of ice water until all the animal heat has left the body.



Capons Properly Dressed for Market.

TEACHING CHICKS TO ROOST

Difficult to Keep Young Fowls Clean When Permitted to Remain on the Floor.

It is often advisable to teach the chicks to roost when 8 to 12 weeks of age, say poultry specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture. When they are allowed to remain on the floor, it is difficult to keep them clean and to keep them from crowding. If wide roosts—3 to 4 inches—are used, there is but little, if any, more danger of crooked breasts than if the chicks are allowed to remain on the floor.

The chicks can generally be taught to roost by putting the perches near the floor, but if this plan is inconvenient or does not prove effective the chicks may be placed on the perches after dark for a few nights until they have learned to go there of their own accord. Where a large number of chicks are brooded together around a brooder stove it is a good plan to place roosts in the house when the chicks are four to five weeks old, so that the larger and stronger chicks will start using the roosts while the weaker chicks still stay around the brooder hover.

SOME FAILURES WITH DUCKS

Weak Breeding Stock is Generally Cause of Unthrifty Fowls—Use Strong Birds.

Failures with ducks are generally due to weak breeding stock. Strong, vigorous birds can be profitably bred even at four years of age. In the early part of the season a 50 per cent hatch should be considered a good one, but later on the percentage runs very high.