

Wild Water gasped. "You're almighty

he said, with a hint of a snart.

"We're only accepting your own

"All right; bring on the paper; make it out hard and fast," Wild Water cried

CHAPTER XX.

Four Years Old.

brought about a reconciliation with

Wild Water paused with uplifted pen

as he was about to sign. "Hold on."

he said. "When I buy eggs I buy good

eggs. If I find one bad egg you've got

to come back with the \$10 I paid for

"That's all right," Smoke placated.

Smoke inserted the word "good" in

the contract, and Wild Water sullenly

a tin pail, pulled on bis mittens and

back at them and slammed the door.

Smoke was a witness to the play

next morning at Slavovitch's. He sat,

as Wild Water's guest, at the table ad-

joining Lucille Arral's. Almost to the

letter, as she had forecast it, did the

'Haven't you found any eggs yet?"

"No, ma'am," came the answer.

she murmured plaintively to the waiter.

They say somebody's cornered every

egg in Dawson. Mr. Slavovitch is try-

ing to buy a few just especially for

you. But the fellow that's got the cor-

It was at this juncture that Wild

"I'll attend to it personally myself,"

they at the next table beard him say,

"Compliments of Mr. Wild Water."

ous forerunner of a smile that was

"Will she cat 'em-that's the ques-

restaurant proprietor.

whispered agonizingly.

"Goodby, you robbers," he growled

MOKE wrote the document.

wherein Wild Water agreed to

take every egg delivered to him

at \$10 per egg, provided that

dozen advanced to him

proposition." Smoke answered.

in the anger of surrender.

Lucille Arral.

"It's only fair "

opened the door.

scene come off.

ner won't let loose,"

time you sing out."

Slavovitch assured bim.

her two shirred eggs.

are they?"

Arral there,"

swift with business up here on the

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Shorty sat down at the table. By the | that Lucille Arral had agreed to smile. time the expected knock came at the door Smoke was facing him across the table, and before each was a plate containing three hot fried eggs.

"Come in!" Smoke called. Wild Water Charley, a strapping young giant, entered and shook hands. "Bet down an' have a bite, Wild Water," Shorty invited. "Smoke, fry him some eggs. I'll bet he ain't scoffed an

egg in a coon's age." Smoke broke three more eggs into the hot pan and in several minutes placed them before his guest, who looked at them with so strange and strainad an expression that Shorty confessed afterward his fear that Wild Water would slip them into his pocket and carry them away,

"Say, them swells down in the states atn't got nothin' over us in the matter of eats," Shorty gloated. "Here's you an' me an' Smoke gettin' outside \$90 worth of eggs an' not battin' an eye."

Wild Water stared at the rapidly disappearing eggs and seemed petrified. They-they sin't worth no \$10," Wild Water said slowly.

Shorty accepted the challenge. "A thing's worth what you can get for it, ain't it?" be demanded.

Yes, but-you can't est eggs like that," Wild Water objected. "It-it ain't right."

"We just dote on eggs, Smoke an' me," was Shorty's excuse.

Wild Water finished his own plate in a half hearted way. "Say, you fellows can do me a great favor," he began tentatively. "Sell me, or lend me, or give me, about a dozen of them eggs."

"Sure," Smoke answered. "I know what a yearning for eggs is myself. But we're not so poor that we have to sell our hospitality. They'll cost you nothing. Go ahead, Shorty. Cook them up for him." But Wild Water laid a restraining

hand on the eager Shorty as he explained. "I don't mean cooked. I want them with the shells on." "So that you can carry 'em away?"

"That's the idea." "But that ain't hospitality," Shorty

objected. "It's-It's tradin'." Smoke nodded concurrence. "That's different, Wild Water. I thought you just wanted to eat them. You see, we went into this for a speculation."

The dangerous blue of Wild Water's eyes began to grow more dangerous. "I'll pay you for them," he said sharp-"How much ?"

"Oh; not a dozen," Smoke replied. "We couldn't sell a dozen. We're not cetallers; we're speculators. We can't his detaining clutch on the proprietor's with himself, then rejuctantly gave in break our own market. We've got a shoulder. rd and fast corner, and when we sell out it's the whole corner or nothing." "How many have you got and how

much do you want for them?" "How many have we, Shorty?"

Smoke inquired. Shorty cleared his throat and performed mental arithmetic aloud. "Lemme see. Nine hundred an' seventythree minus nine, that leaves nine hondred an' sixty-two. An' the whole shootin' match at \$10 a throw will tote up just about nine thousand six hundred an' twenty iron dollars. Or course, Wild Water, we're playin' fatr, an' it's money back for bad ones, though they ain't none. That's one

Wild Water shook his head sadly sud helped himself to the beans, "That would be too expensive, Shorty. I only want a few. I'll give you \$10 for a couple of dozen. I'll give you \$20, but can't buy 'em all."

thing I never seen in the Klondike-a

"All or none," was Smoke's uitima-

"Look here, you two," Wild Water said in a burst of confidence. "I'll be perfectly bonest with you, an' don't let it go any further. You know Miss Arrat an' I was engaged. Well, she's broken everything off. It's for ber 1 want them eggs. I want to give them to her on a platter shirred. That's the way she likes 'em."

"Do you want 'em placty-six bundred no' twenty dollars' worth?" Shorty queried.

"Aw, listen to reason," Wild Water "I only want a couple of dozen. I'll give you \$20 apiece for 'em, What do I want with all the rest of them eggs?"

"I should say Miss Arral's worth the price of the eggs," Smoke put in

Worth it?" Wild Water stood up In the heat of his elequence. "She's worth a million dollars. She's worth all the dust in Klondike, But that ain't no call for me to gamble \$10,000 on breakfast for her. Now, I've got a proposition. Lend me a couple of dozen them eggs. I'll turn 'em over to Slavovitch. He'll feed 'em to ber with compliments. She atn't smiled to me for a hundred years. If them eggs get a smile for me I'll take the whole ng off your hands."

moccasined foot under the table. "Will you sign a contract to that effoct?" Smoke said quickly, for he knew tion-will she eat 'em?" the latter

And with sidelong glances they saw Lucille Arral besitate, almost push the dish from her, then surrender to its

"I'll take them eggs," Wild Water said to Smoke. "The contract holds. Did you see her? Did you see her! She almost smiled. I know her. It's all fixed. Two more eggs tomorrow an' she'll forgive an' make up. If she wasn't here I'd shake hands, Smoke, I'm that grateful. You sin't a robber; you're a philanthropist."

Smoke returned jubilantly up the hill to the cabin only to find Shorty in black despair.

"It's all off with the big Swede," be grouned, "The corner's busted. What d'ye think I run into? A geezer with three thousan' eggs-d'ye get me?three thousan' an' just freighted in from Forty MRe."

"Gautereaux's bis name, a whackin" big, blue eyed French Canadian nusky. It was our cornerin' eggs that got him started. He knowed about them three thousan' at Forty Mile an' just went an' got 'em. 'Show 'em to me,' I says, An' he did. There was his dog teams an' a couple of Indian drivers restin' down the bank where they'd just pulled in from Forty Mile. An' on the sieds was soap boxes-teeny wooden sonp boxes.

"We took one out behind a ice jam in the middle of the river an' busted it open. Eggs-full of 'em, all packed in sawdust. Smoke, you an' me lost We've been gamblin'. D'ye know what he had the gail to say to me? That they was all ourn at \$10 a egg. D'ye know what he was doin' when I left | contaminated." his cabin? Drawin' a sign of eggs for sale. Said he'd give us first choice at ten a throw till 2 p. m., and after that if we didn't come across be'd bust the market higher 'n a kite."

"It's all right," Smoke said cheer fully. "Quick action and team play is all that's needed. I'll get Wild Water here at 2 o'clock to take delivery of eggs. You buy that Gautereaux's eggs. Even if you pay \$10 aptece for signed, received the trial two dozen in them, Wild Water will take them off our hands at the same price. If you can get them cheaper-why, we make profit as well. Have them here by not later than 2 o'clock. Borrow Colonel Bowle's dogs and take our team." Smoke found Wild Water at the M. & M., and a stormy half hour ensued.

"I warn you we've picked up some more eggs," Smoke said after Wild Water had agreed to bring his dust to the cable at 2 o'clock and pay on delly

"You're luckler at finding eggs than me," Wild Flower admitted. "Now, how many eggs have you got now-an' how much dust do I tote up the bill?" Smoke consulted his notebook. "As it stands now, according to Shorty's figures, we've 8,962 eggs. Multiply by Water beckoned the proprietor to him.

and, with one hand on his shoulder. "Forty thousand dollars!" Wild Wadrew his head down. "Look here, Slavovitch," Wild Water whispered ter bellowed. "You said there was only something like 900 eggs. It's a stickhoarsely, "I turned over a couple of up. I won't stand for ft!" dozen eggs to you last night. Where

Smoke drew the contract from his pocket and pointed to the pay on delly-"In the safe, all but that six I have ry. "No mention is made of the numall thawed and ready for you any ber of eggs to be delivered. You agreed to pay \$10 for every egg we delivered to you. Well, we've got the eggs, and "I don't want 'em for myself," Wild signed contract is a signed contract. Water breathed in a still lower voice. "Shirr 'em up and present 'em to Miss Honestly, though, Wild Water, we didn't know about those other eggs intil afterward. Then we had to buy them in order to make our corner good." "Au' don't forget-compliments of

me," Wild Water concluded, relaxing allence, Wild Water fought a battle For five long minutes, in choking

Pretty Lucille Arral was guzing forbe there at 2 o'clock. But \$40,000f" fornly at the strip of breakfast bacon At 1:30 Shorty arrived with Gaute-ceaux's eggs. "We pretty near double and the tinned mashed potatoes on her renux's eggs. plate when Slavovitch placed before our winnings," Shorty told Smoke as they piled the soap boxes inside the "Compliments of Mr. Wild Water," cabin. "I holds 'em down to \$8, and after he cussed loco in French he falls for Smoke acknowledged to himself that it. Now, that's \$2 clear profit to us for it was a fine bit of acting-the quick, each egg." joyous flash in the face of her, the im-

Promptly at 2 o'clock Shorty, peeppulsive turn of the head, the spontaneing, saw Wild Water coming up the hill. When he entered he was brisk and businesslike.

"Bring on them eggs, you pirates," he commenced "An' after this day, if you know what's good for you, never mention eggs to me again." They began on the miscellaneous as-

sortment of the original corner, all three men counting. When 200 had reached Wild Water suddenly cracked an egg on the edge of the table and opened it deftly with his thumbs. "Hey, hold on!" Shorty objected.

"It's my egg, ain't it?" Wild Water snarled. "I'm payin' \$10 for it, ain't 17 But I am't buyin' no pig in a poke. When I cough up ten bucks an egg I vant to know what I'm gettin'."

Wild Water looked and smiled, That's a good egg. Glmme a pail. I'm goin' to eat it myself for supper." Thrice again Wild Water cracked good eggs experimentally and put them

in the pall beside him. "I'wo more than you figured, Shorty," he said at the end of the "Nine hundred an' sixty-four, count.

not sixty-two." "My mistake," Shorty acknowledged handsomely. "We'll throw 'em in for good measure."

"Guess you can afford to," Wild Water accepted grimly. "Pass the batch \$9,620. I'll pay for it now. Write a receipt. Smoke. Going to his fur coat, from each of

the side pockets he drew forth two dians anyway? Nothin' but hearsay, sacks of dust, so rotund and long that they resembled bologna sausages, When the first batch had been paid for there remained in the gold sacks not more than several hundred dollars. A soap box was carried to the table, only checked by a superb self control and the count of the \$3,000 began. At which resolutely drew her face back the end of 100 Wild Water struck an so that she could say something to the egg sharply against the edge of the table. The resultant sound was like that Smoke felt the kick of Wild Water's of the striking of a sphere of solid marble

> "Frozen solid," he remarked. "Hub!" said Shorty. "It ought to be solid, seein' it has just been freight-

ed up from Forty Mile. It'll take a ax to bust it." Smoke brought the ax and Wild Water split the egg cleanly in buil. The appearance of the egg's interior was anything but satisfactory. Smoke felt premonitory chill. Shorty was more

his nose.

"Smells all right," he said. "But it looks all wrong," Wild Water contended. "An' how can it smell when the smell's frozen along with

valiant. He held one of the halves to

the rest of 1t? Walt a minute." He put the two haives into a frying pan and placed the latter on the front lid of the hot stove. Then the three men, with distended questing postrils, waited in silence. Slowly an unmistakable odor began to drift through the room.

"Throw It out!" Smoke cried, gasp-

"What's the good?" asked Wild Wa ter. "We've got to sample the rest." "Not in this cabin." Smoke coughed and conquered a qualm. "Chop them open, and we can test by looking at them. Throw it out. Shorty! Throw it out! And leave the door open!"

Box after box was opened; egg after egg, chosen at random, was chopped in two, and every egg carried the same message of hopeless, irremediable de-

eny.
"I won't ask you to eat 'em, Shorty.' Wild Water Jeered, "an', if you don't mind, I can't get outs here too quick. My contract called for good eggs. If you'll toan me a sled an' team I'll haul them good ones away before they get

Smoke helped in loading the sled. "Say, how long you been holdin' that orner?" was Wild Water's parting gibe.

Smoke made no reply, and, with one glance at his partner, proceeded to fling the soap boxes out into the spow. "Say, Shorty, how much did you say you paid for that three thousand?" Smoke queried gently.

"Eight dollars. Don't talk to me. 1 can figger as well as you. We lose seventeen thousan' on the flutter, if anybody, should ride up on a dog sled an' ask you. I figgered that out while waltin' for the first egg to smell."

Smoke pondered a few minutes, then igain broke silence, "Say, Shorty, \$40,000 gold weighs 200 pounds. Wild Water borrowed our sled and team to baut away his eggs. He came up the bill without a sled. Those two sacks of dust in his cost pockets weighed about twenty pounds each. The understanding was cash on delivery. He brought enough dust to pay for the good eggs. He never expected to pay for those three thousand. He knew they were bad. Now, how did he know they were bad? What do you make of it anyway?"

"Huh! That ain't nothin'. A child could answer it. We lose seventeen thousan', Wild Water wins seventeen thousan'. Them eggs of Gautereaux's was Wild Water's all the time. Anything else you're curious to know?"

Yes. Why in the name of common sense didn't you find out whether those eggs were good before you paid for

"Just as easy as the first question. Wild Water swung the bunko game timed to seconds. I hadn't no time to the central pass, low in comparison examine them eggs. I had to hustle to with the mountains it threaded, yet get 'em here for delivery. An' now, formidable in itself and not possible Smoke, lemme ask you one civil question. What did you say was the partortnous winding, from lower altitude ty's name that put this egg corner idea to lower altitude, brought them to the

Smoke was casting about to begin the preparation for supper when Colonel Bowie knocked at the door, handed Smoke a letter and went on to his own

"Did you see his face?" Shorty raved. "He was almost bustin' to keep it tended the broken ranges of the prostraight. It's the big ha-ha for you an' me, Smoke. We won't never dast show our faces again in Dawson.'

The letter was from Wild Water, and Smoke rend it aloud:

"Dear Smoke and Shorty-I write to ask, with compliments of the season, your presence at a supper tonight at Slavepresence at a supper tenight at Slave-vitch's joint. Miss Arral will be there and so will Gautereaux. Him and me was pardners down at Circle five years ago. He is all right and is going to be best man. best man. About them eggs. They come into the country four years back. They was all bad when they come in. They was all when they left California. They salways was bad. They stopped at Carlule one winter, and one winter at Nullik, and last whener at Port. hast winter at Forty and this winter I was sold for storage. And this winter I guess they stop at Dawson. Don't keep them in a hot room, Lucille says to say you and her and me has sure made some weekernent in Dawson. And I say the drinks is on you, and that goes.

"Reancefully your friend, W. W."

CHAPTER XXL Captured by Indiana. MOKE, sitting on the edge of a

sleeping robe, examined the feet of a dog he had rolled. snarling, on its back in the

"We've got to rest over tomorrow and make moccasins," he vouchsafed. "That illtie crust is playing the devil with their feet."

"We oughts keep goin' somehow," shorty objected, "We ain't got grub enough to turn back with, and we gotta strike that ran of caribou or them white indians simighty soon or we'll be entin' the dogs, sore feet an' all. Now, who even seen them white In An' how can a Indian be white? Smoke, we just gotta travel tomorrow."

"They'll travel all the better with a day's rest for their feet and moccasins all around," Smoke counseled. "If you get a chance at any low divide take a peep over the country beyond. We're likely to strike open rolling country any time now. That's what La Perie told us to look for."

"Muh! By his own story it was ten years ago that La Perie come through this section, an' he was that loce from hunger be couldn't know what he did

see. An' he said himself he never seen any white Indians. That was Anton's yarn. An' Anton kicked the bucket two years before you an' me come to Alaska. But I'll take a look tomorrow. An' mebbe I might pick up a moose." Smoke spent the morning in camp Shorty's face. "Nope," he answered.

sewing dog moccasins. At noon he cooked a meal for two and began to look for Shorty's return. An hour later he strapped on his snowshoes and went out on his partner's trail.

The way led up the bed of the stream through a parrow gorge that widened suddenly into a moose pasture. But no moose had been there since the first snow of the preceding fall. The tracks of Shorty's snowshoes crossed the pasture and went up the easy slope of a low divide. At the crest Smoke halted. The tracks continued down the other slope. The first spruce trees, in the creek bed, were a mile away, and it was evident that Shorty had passed through them and gone on. Smoke looked at his watch, remembered the oncoming darkness, the dogs and the camp and reluctantly decided against going farther.

Until midnight Smoke maintained a huge fire for the guidance of Shorty. And in the morning, waiting with camp broken and dogs harnessed for the first break of light. Smoke took up the pursuit. In the parrow pass of the canyon his lead dog pricked up his ears and whined. Then Smoke came upon the Indians, six of them, coming toward him. They were traveling light, without dogs, and on each man's back was the smallest of outfits.

Surrounding Smoke, they immediate ly gave blm several matters for surprise. That they were looking for him was clear. That they talked no Indian tongue of which he knew a word was also quickly made clear. They were not white Indians, though they were taller and heavier than the Indians of the Yukon basin. Five of them carried the old fashloned, long barreled Hudson Bay company musket, and in the bands of the sixth was a Winchester ride which Smoke knew to be Shorty's

Nor did they waste time in making him a prisoner. Unarmed himself. Smoke could only submit. The contents of the sled were distributed among their own packs, and he was given a pack composed of his and Shorty's sleeping furs. The dogs were unharnessed, and when Smoke protested one of the Indiana by signs indicated a trail too rough for sled travel. Smoke bowed to the inevitable, cached the sled end on in the snow on the bank above the stream and trudged on with his captors.

The first night was spent in a camp which had been occupied for several thousan' of good runnin' meat in the days. Here was cached a quantity of dried salmon and a sort of pemmican, a followin' an' livin' off the straggiers which the Indians added to their packs. From this camp a trail of many snowshoes led off-Shorty's captors, was Smoke's conclusion-and before darkness fell he succeeded in making out the tracks Shorty's narrower snowshoes and left.

Always in the days that followed they pointed north, and always the trail, turning and twisting through a jumble of upstanding peaks, trended

In six days they gained and crossed for loaded sleds. Five days more of open, rolling and merely billy country Perle had found ten years before. Smoke knew it with the first glimpse Far as he could see rolled the open still thrust their snowy ramparts heavenward. To the south and west ex-

jecting spur system they had crossed. And in this vast pocket lay the country La Perle had traversed-snow blanketed, but assuredly fat with game at some time in the year and in the summer a smiling, forested and flowered land. Before midday, traveling down a

broad stream, they came upon the site of a large camp, recently abandoned. Glancing as he went by it, Smoke estimated 400 or 500 fires and guessed the population to be in the thousands. So fresh was the trail and so well packed by the multitude that Smoke ed casually over his shoulder: and his captors took off their snowshoes and in their moccasins struck a swifter pace. In the long twilight no sign was man-

ifested of making camp. They held steadily on through a deepening gloom that vanished under a sky of lightgreat glittering stars, balf velled by a greenish vapor of pulsing aurora borealia. His dogs first caught the noises of the camp, pricking their ears and whining in low eagerness. Then it came to the ears of the humans-a murmur dim with distance.

The men about him quickened. The egs that had lifted through a dozen strenuous hours lifted in a still swifter pace that was half a run and mostly a running jog. Through a dark spruce flat they burst upon an abrupt glare of light from many fires and upon an abrupt increase of sound. The great camp lay before them.

And as they entered and threaded the irregular runways of the hunting camp a vast tumult as in a wave rose to meet them and rolled on with them -cries, greetings, questions and an-swers, jokes and jokes thrust back again, the snapping snari of wolf dogs, the scolding of squaws, laughter, the whimpering of children and wailing of infants, all the pandemonium of a favored by explorers and wealthy big camp of nerveless, primitive wilder-

They halted in the trampled snow by an open fire, where Shorty and two young Indians, squatted on their hams, vere breiling strips of caribon meat. Three other young Indians, lying in race, like those of his companions, made no sign and went on broiling the

"What's the matter?" Smoke de manded, half in irritation. "Lost your speech?" The old familiar grin twisted on

show surprise. When did they catch you?

"Next day after you left." "Hum! Well, I'm doin' fine, thank you most to death. This is the bachelors' camp. An' these are the bachelors. They're glad to meet you, Smoke. Set down an' dry your moccasins, an' I'll cook up some grub. You'll have to come to it, for looks as if we'll be with these folks a long time. They's another white man here. Got caught six years ago. Danny Mc-Can is what he goes by. He's settled down with a squaw. Got two kids'already, but be'll skin out if ever the chance opens up."

Apparently this was Smoke's appointed domicile, for his captors left him and his dogs and went on deeper into the big camp. While he devoured strips of hot meat Shorty talked.

"This is a sure peach of a pickle, Smoke. An' we got to go some to get out. These is the real, blowed in the glass wild Indians. They ain't white, but their chief is. He talks like a mouthful of hot mush, an' if he ain't full blooded Scotch they ain't no such thing as Scotch in the world. He's the hi-yu, skookum, top chief of the whole caboodle. What he says goes. You want to get that from the start off.

"Danny McCan's been tryin' to get away from him for six years. Danay's all right, but he ain't got go in bim. He knows a way out-learned it on huntin' trips-to the west of the way you an' me came. He nin't had the nerve to tackle it by his lonely. But we can pull it off, the three of us. Whiskers is the real goods, but he's nostly loco, just the same."

Who's Whiskers?' Smoke queried. "Why, be's the top geezer. He's the Scotcher. He's gettin' old, an' be's sure asleep now, but he'll see you tomorrow an' show you clear as print what a measly shrimp you are on his stompin' grounds. These grounds belong to him. You got to get that into your noodle. They ain't never been explored nor nothin', an' they're hisn, an' he won't let you forget it. He's got about 20,000 square miles of huntin' country here all his own. He's the white Indian, him an' the skirt.

"Huh! Don't look at me that way. Wait till you see her. Some looker, an' all white, like her dad-he's Whiskers. An' say, caribou! A hundred herd an' ten thousan' wolves an' cats an' the leavin's. The herd's movin' to the east, an' we'll be followin' 'em any day now."

"Here comes Whiskers, lookin' like ne's goin' somewhere," Shorty whispered.

It was morning, and the bachelors were squatting over a breakfast of caribou meat Smoke glanced up and saw a small and slender man, skin clad like any savage, but unmistakably white, striding in advance of a sled team and a following of a dozen indians. Bushy whiskers, yellowish gray and stained by camp smoke, concealed most of the face, but failed wholly to conceal the gaunt, almost cadaverous, cheeks.

"How do you do?" the man said, slipping a mitten and holding out his bare hand. "My name is Snass."

"Mine's Bellew," Smoke returned, feeling peculiarly disconcerted as be country. High in the east the Rockies gazed into the keen, searching black

"Getting plenty to eat, I see. Rough rations, but we don't starve often. And it's more natural than the hand reared meat of the cities." "I see you don't like the cities,"

Smoke laughed in order to be saying something and was immediately startled by the transformation Snass un-Quite like a sensitive plant, the man's

entire form seemed to wilt and quiver. Then the recoil, tense and savage, concentered in the eyes, in which appeared a hatred that screamed of immeasurable pain. He turned abruptly away and then, recollecting himself, remark-

caribon are moving east, and I'm going rage. ahead to pick out a location. You'll all come on tomorrow."

Later on in the morning Smoke went for a stroll through the camp, busy with its primitive pursuits. A big body of hunters and just returned, and the men were scattering to their various fires. Women and children were departing with dogs barnessed to empty toboggan sleds, and women and children and dogs were hauling sleds heavy with ment fresh from the killing and already frozen. Furs and soft tanned leather clad all alike. Boys passed with bows in their hands and quivers of bone barbed arrows, and many a skinning knife of bone or stone Smoke saw in belts or neck banging

Segregated in the heart of the camp, Smoke came upon what was evidently Snass' fire. Though temporary in every detail, it was solidly constructed and was on a large scale. A great heap of bales of skins and outfit was piled on a scaffold out of reach of the dogs. A large canvas fly, almost balf tent. sheltered the sleeping and living quar-

game hunters. Smoke had never see such a tent and stepped closer. As he stood looking the flaps parted and a young woman came out. So quickly did she move, so abruptly did she appear, that the effect on Smoke was ar furs on a mat of spruce bows, sat up. have the same effect on her, and for a long moment they gazed at each other. long moment they gazed at each other.

She was dressed entirely in sains, but such skins and such magnificently beautiful fur work Smoke had never dreamed of. Her parks. the bood thrown back, was of some strange for of palest silver. The mukluka, with walrus hide soles, were composed of



And For a Long Moment They Gazed at Each Other.

the silver padded feet of many lyares. The long gauntleted mittens, the tassels at the knees, all the varied furs of the costume, were pale silver that shimmered in the frosty light, and out of this shimmering silver, poised on a slender, delicate neck, lifted her head, the rosy face blond as the eyes were blue, the ears like two pink shells, the light chestnut bair touched with frost dust and coruscating frost gilnts.

All this and more, as in a dream, Smoke saw; then, recollecting himself, his hand fumbled for his cap. At the same moment the wonder stare in the girl's eyes passed into a smile, and she slipped a mitten and extended her

"How do you do?" she murmured gravely, with a queer, delightful accent, her voice as silvery as the furs she wore.

Smoke could only mumble phrases that were awkwardly reminiscent of his best society manner.

"I am glad to see you," she went on slowly and gropingly, her face a ripple of smiles. "My English you will please excuse. It is not good. I am English like you," she gravely assured him. My father he is Scotch. My mother she is dead. She was French and English and a little Indian too. Her father was a great man in the Hudson Bay company, B-r-r-! It is cold. Let us go to the fire and talk. My name

is Labiskwee. What is your name?" And so Smoke came to know Labiskwee, the daughter of Snass, whom Snass called Margaret.

"Snass is not my father's name," she informed Smoke. "Snass is only an Indian name."

Much Smoke learned that day and in the days that followed. Thes real wild Indians, the ones Anton bad encountered and escaped from long Years before. But strive as he would Smoke could get no clew to Snass' history in the days before he came to five in the northern wilds. Educated he was, yet in all the intervening years what had happened in the world he knew not. Nor did he show desire to

know. Nor could Labiskwee belp Smoke with earlier information. She had been born on the hunting grounds. Her mother had lived for six years after. Her mother had been very beautifulthe only white woman Labiskwee had ever seen. She said this wistfully, and wistfully in a thousand ways she showed that she knew of the great outside world on which her father had closed the door. But this knowledge was secret. She had early learned that "I'll see you later, Mr. Bellew. The mention of it threw her father into a

Anton had told a squaw of her mother and that her mother had been a daughter of a high official in the Hudson Bay company. Later the squaw had told Labiskwee. But her mother's name she had never learned.

> CHAPTER XXII. The Love of Labiskwee.

POU'RE the first intelligent man we've had," Snass complimented Smoke one night by the fire, "except old Four Eyes. The Indians named him so. He wore glasses and was shortsighted. He was a professor of zoology. My young men picked him up strayed from an expedition on the upper Porcupine.

"He was intelligent, yes; but he was also a fool. That was his weaknessstraying. He knew geology, though, and working in metals. Over on the Luskwa, where there's coal, we have several creditable hand forges be made. He repaired our guns and taught the young men how. He died last year, and we really missed him. Strayedthat's how it happened-froze to death within a mile of camp."

It was on the same night that Snass said to Smoke:

(Continued next Saturday.)

The household helpers yo wife needs can be found qui ly through the Journal Want