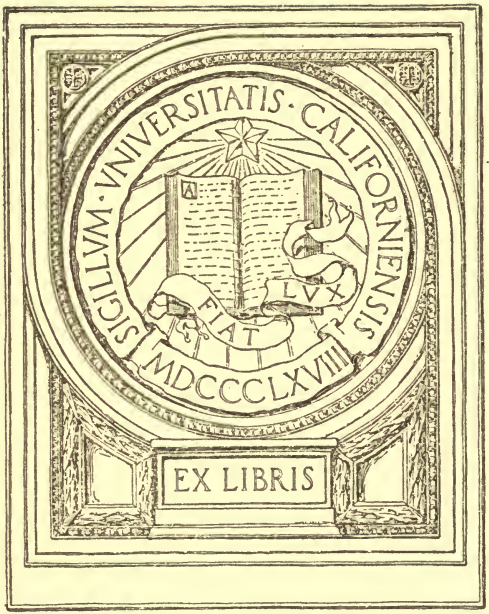
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THE MAGIC FOREST

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BY

STEWART EDWARD WHITE

AUTHOR OF "THE CLAIM JUMPERS," "THE WESTERNERS,"
"THE BLAZED TRAIL," "CONJUROR'S HOUSE,"
"THE FOREST"

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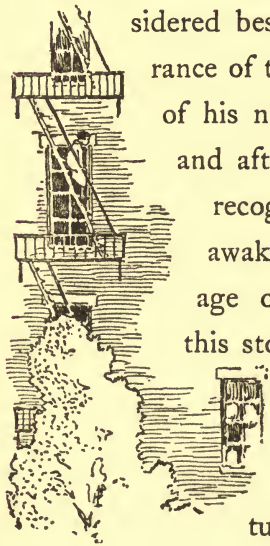
CHAPTER I

When James Ferris was only five years old, he slipped from his bed, pattered barefooted through the bedroom and down the hall, and was finally reclaimed by an excited mother just as he was about to crawl through the window on to the sloping roof of the veranda. James was promptly spanked, although he disclaimed all knowledge of the episode. About a year later he left his sleeping-car berth, and was only restrained

by the porter from stepping off the moving train. At the age of seven he horrified his family by climbing down four stories of a hotel fire-escape. The third coincidence set his mother's wits to work. After a time it became fully established that Jimmy Ferris was a somnambulist, or sleep-walker.

Jimmy did not know this. It was considered best to keep him in ignorance of the fact. The recurrence of his night prowlings was rare, and after his condition became recognized, he was never awakened. In fact, until the age of nine, at which time this story opens, he had made but six such excursions.

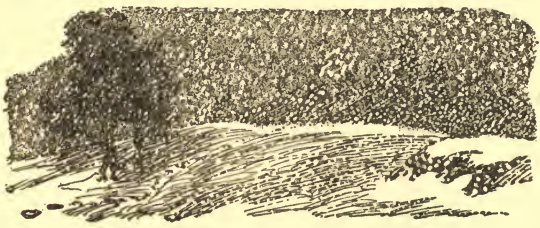


Aside from this unfortunate tendency, he had

never been very strong. His passion had always been for out-of-door life, and that would have been the very best thing for him; but his mother was too worried about him. She exercised a general supervisory authority over such things as rubbers, flannel bands, sponge cake, and oatmeal, which convinced Jimmy that mortal man would die if his feet got wet or if his diet were in the least irregular. It is natural for a boy to pattern his mental cast by that of his mother, and Jimmie's mother was very anxious. Indeed, about this time she imagined that Jimmie's lungs were weak, and so nothing would do but that they must all go to Monterey for the summer and Santa Bar-

bara for the winter. As Jimmy's great but thwarted ambition had always been to see the "big woods," he was more than delighted.

They set out by the Canadian Pacific railroad early in May. Jimmy was at the car window all of the daylight hours, marvelling at the Canadian country, the stretches of forest, the numerous lakes. North of Lake Superior he was surprised to see still a great deal of snow lying in the hollows, and in fact, late one afternoon,



the big, white flakes began to zigzag slowly through the air. Jimmy was filled with wonder. A snow-storm in May!

All the afternoon he flattened his little nose against the window, his eye wide with the mystery of the forest. He could see into it just about ten feet, but who knew what lay beyond that? His restless mind conjured up the hollows, the streams, the springs, the wild beasts. Up in through that country lay the Long Trail to the fur regions. At Sudbury, late in the afternoon, he had glimpsed a *voyageur* just from the wilds. The man had worn a fur cap with

the tail hanging down behind! He had been wrapped in a long blanket coat bound with a red sash, and his feet were encased in beaded moccasins! Jimmy's mind went galloping off on the leagues of the Long Trail and after he had gone to bed he dreamed of it. He too travelled in the Silent Places.

About five o'clock in the morning the train paused an instant because the driving wheels could not grip the slippery rails on the grade. The engineer promptly turned on his sand. Five minutes later he had forgotten the circumstance.

But in that pause something had happened. Jimmy Ferris, travelling the Trail in imagination, had wandered down the aisle of the car, had stepped from the platform at precisely the moment the engineer reached for his sand lever, and was now blundering aimlessly through the falling

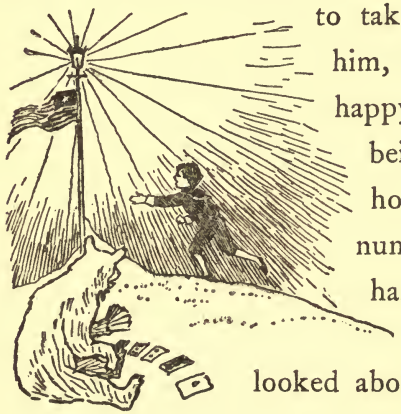
snow, over rolling bald hills, clad only in his slippers, a pair of trousers, and his night-gown, firmly convinced in his own mind that he was discovering the North Pole.

Two hours and a half later, which of course meant seventy or eighty miles farther on, Mrs. Ferris discovered her son's berth empty. Then there was trouble! Telegrams, questions, conjectures, flew. Section men scurried over every inch of the track on hand-cars, thinking to find Jimmy's

mutilated body. He was evidently not on the train: it seemed impossible that he could have left it while moving without receiving some injury. Nobody remembered

that labored moment when the engine had coughed its protest of the grade. No sign nor clew could be discovered. Mrs. Ferris was prostrated; Mr. Ferris stricken to the heart; everybody else was supremely puzzled. Jimmy had simply vanished into thin air.

In the meantime Jimmy went on discovering the North Pole, and the arctic weather became more and more severe. He was just on the point of plucking the pole to take home with him, from which happy event he was being prevented however by the numbness of his hands, when he awoke and looked about him.



He knew perfectly well he was no longer dreaming, but for a moment he seriously doubted whether he was alive. His last moments of consciousness had felt the yielding of a

Pullman berth, had heard the regular clinkety-clank of the car wheels, had seen the thin crack of light that swayed between his curtains. And here all at once he was out on a gray, bleak, boulder-strewn hillside, without a sign of berth, or car, or even track anywhere within sight. You must remember that he knew nothing whatever of his sleep-walking propensities. He could not summon to his bewildered brain even a wild solution of the affair.

Before him stretched a mistlike forest country, indistinct in the early light, about

whose skeleton branches lingered a faint, wraithlike fog. And all about him was a great silence.

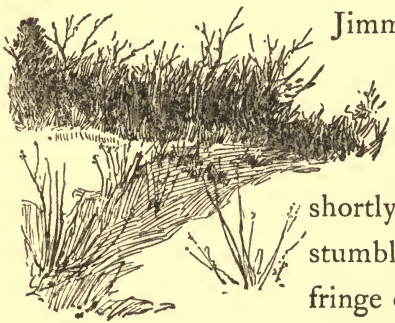
He was not frightened; the whole thing was too unexplained for that, and, being unable to account for himself in any way, he was as yet unterrified by a feeling of responsibility. But he was very cold. His thin slippers, which he had instinctively assumed before setting out to discover the North Pole, were wet through by the damp snow; his bare shanks were goose-fleshed, and a thin, cotton nightgown and a pair of knee breeches are not precisely an early May costume in the North. Having been taught that damp feet meant pneumonia and inadequate clothing consumption, Jimmy immediately gave himself up for lost. "I must get back," he said to himself.

Get back where? He had never seen

this country before. That Pullman car might be on the other side of the world. For a moment he imagined he might be dead, but then a certain sturdy little piety of his own came to his aid. It was not that. But since the human mind must have explanations or perish, and since Jimmy was only nine years old and more conversant with Grimm and Andersen than with medical authorities, and since sorcery is after all much nearer to the hearts of most of us than such a stupendous metamorphosis as this, he shortly concluded that he was living a fairy tale and that this must be the Magic Forest.

In that case he must go somewhere. He struck out sturdily, his mind quite at rest from the fears that would have assailed it had he been lost in an ordinary and comprehensible manner.

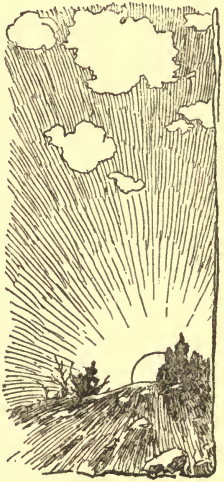
Of course he set out in the wrong direction. Even had he known enough to follow a back track, it would have been impossible for him to have done so. The back track was covered by the light fall of snow. Travel was difficult enough and uncomfortable enough in any direction, but level places are easier than hills. Accordingly, Jimmy took his way down toward the wraith of vapor, and so, shortly after an hour's stumbling through a fringe of wood, found



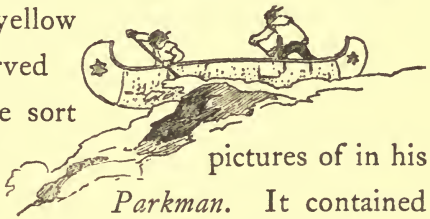
himself on the banks of a brawling north-country river. By this time the sun was well over the horizon, the clouds had scattered, and Jimmy's blood was circulating, so that, had he only known it, the danger of pneumonia or a harmful chill had passed.

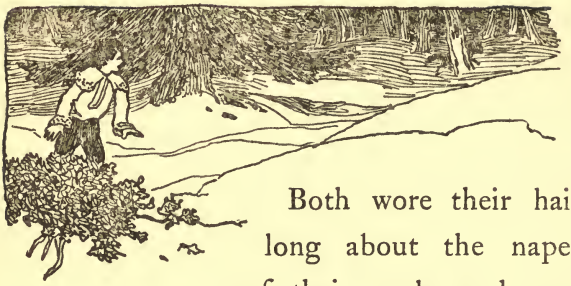
But Jimmy did not know it. He only knew that the repeated contact with melting snow had turned his feet positively blue, that his thin, wet garments sent a spasm of cold through his body every time a new movement brought their smooth clamminess next his skin in a fresh place, that the wood's brush had scraped and torn his skin cruelly. Once something abrupt and strange had glided away like a streak of brown from a thicket before him, startling him into a cry, which returned from the great silence to strangle in his throat. Now he stared in helpless bewilderment at the swift stream,

and wondered what new thing he must do. It would not have surprised him to have been whisked back at any moment to his berth in the Pullman car. Above the little stone beach on which he stood, the river boiled and tumbled and whirled down a slope strewn with big and little boulders. The water was broken into foam, slid in a smooth green apron, twisted in savage eddies. The pool before him was filled with white froth. And Jimmy was a very lonesome little boy in a great, strange place.



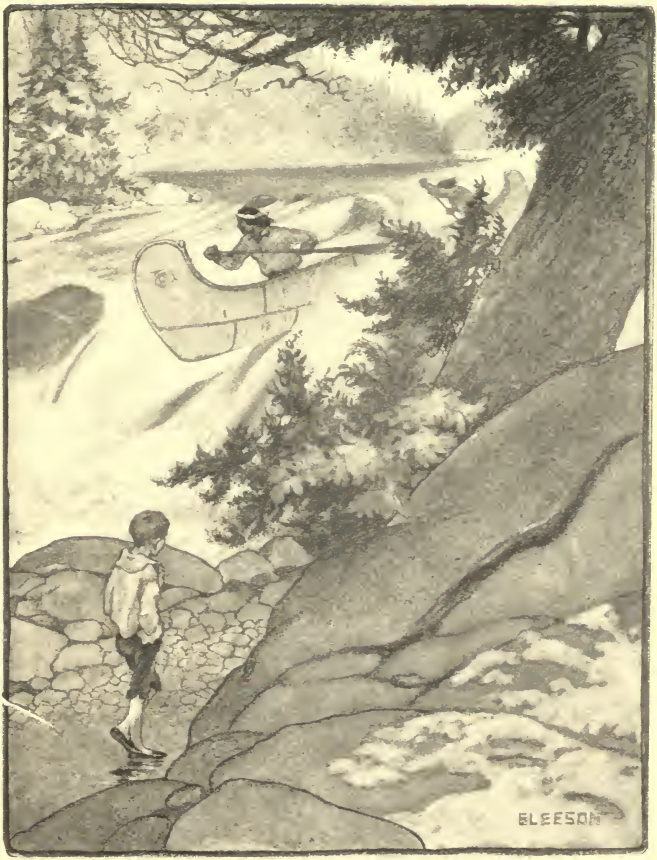
Suddenly at the extremity of the vista something sprang into view and came shooting down the hurried waters. It stopped abruptly, worked jerkingly sideways, to slant with terrific impetus across the smooth apron. Jimmy's bewildered vision made out a canoe, a birch-bark canoe of bright yellow with up-curved bows, of the sort he had seen pictures of in his father's *Parkman*. It contained two men. As the canoe leaped nearer and nearer, the men came more plainly into view. Their bold, copper-colored faces were set in rigid lines of attention, their beady black eyes were fixed unwaveringly on the difficulties of the descent, their sinewy brown hands wielded long paddles whose blades were colored vermilion.





Both wore their hair long about the napes of their necks and over their ears, and bound it in place by bands about their foreheads. Even before the boy's quick faculties had sensed these things, the craft had reached a spot where the current divided about a great boulder to tumble over a sunken ledge in a cataract. The men simultaneously rose to their knees and thrust at their paddles in one superhuman effort. The canoe quivered, jumped sideways, shot forward just to clear the boulder, and rushed on the cataract.

"Ae! hi, hi, hi-yáh!" shrieked the men in an ecstasy.



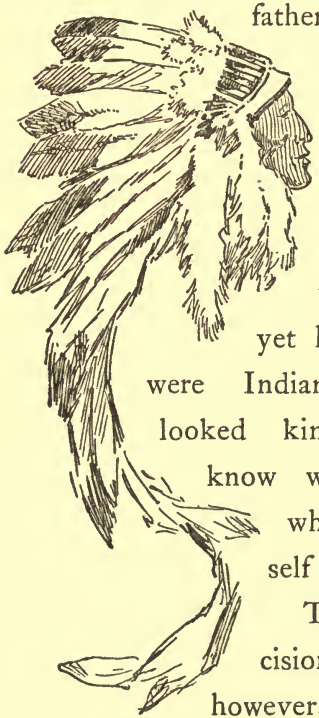
"The canoe quivered, . . . and rushed on the cataract."

The craft leaped directly out in the air. A smother of spray arose. It floated peacefully in the eddy of the pool.

Another canoe appeared, another, then two, all rushing down the current, all taking the leap. The air was full of shoutings, of laughter. Some set to work at once bailing water, others looked eagerly up-stream to watch their successors shoot the rapids. Almost instantaneously, as it seemed, the empty place was alive.

And the little boy, shivering in the shadow of the wood, shivered still more with mingled terror and delight; for now

he saw that these were Indians, the wild Indians of the woods, of a hundred years ago, whose wigwams had given place to the New York he knew, about whom his father had read to him in Cooper, — come back from the mysterious, romantic past to traverse the Magic Forest. He was frightened, and yet he was glad. They were Indians, and yet they looked kind. He did not know whether to flee or whether to reveal himself and ask for aid.



The trouble of a decision was saved him, however. The keen eyes of

the savages did not long overlook him. Instantly he was surrounded by a curious group, eager to know the meaning of his appearance.

The strange, handsome men in moccasins talked to one another in beautiful singing syllables; then an old man knelt before him.

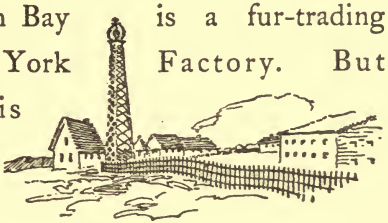
"You get los'?" he asked laboriously.

Jimmy only stared. You see he really did not know himself.

"Where you liv'?"

"New York," replied Jimmy.

"New Yo'k," they repeated to one another, puzzled. They thought they knew the place, for far up on the shores of the Hudson Bay is a fur-trading post called York Factory. But how did this child come to be here?



"You go dere now?" inquired the old Indian after a moment. He spoke swiftly to his companions.

"You wan' go to York?" he asked.

"Yes! Yes!" cried Jimmy.

"A' right," replied the Indian.

"Is it far?" asked Jimmy.

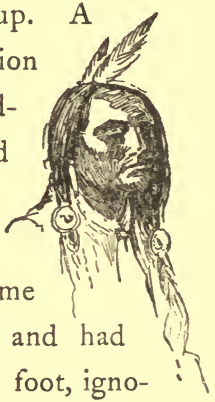
"Ver' far."

In the meantime a little fire had been built, over which already a tin pail was bubbling. After a moment the Indian gave Jimmy a tin cup.

"Drink him," said he.

It was tea, coal-black, red-hot, without sugar and cream. Jimmy had never been

allowed to drink tea at home, but he gulped this down, almost scalding his throat in the process, and at once felt better. While thus engaged, other Indians came through the woods, bearing heavy packs by means of straps passed across their foreheads. Other canoes, managed no less skilfully by women, shot the rapids. Children, half-grown youths, girls, dogs, joined the group. A soft lisp of excited conversation arose. Old Makwa, the Indian who had interrogated Jimmy, told them what he had learned. It was surmised that the boy had become possessed by homesickness and had started for York Factory on foot, igno-



rant of the length of the journey; or perhaps that he had been lost from a party already well on its way toward that distant post. The band had just been in to trade its furs at Chapleau. It could not return south.

Makwa cut the discussion short. There was occasion for haste. He unceremoniously bundled thinly clad little Jimmy in a robe and deposited him gently in the waist of his canoe. The boy was well with them. Later, perhaps, when they returned to Chapleau in the fall —

He thrust the canoe strongly into the current. It shot away. Ah-kik, the bowsman, headed it down-stream. The paddles dipped.

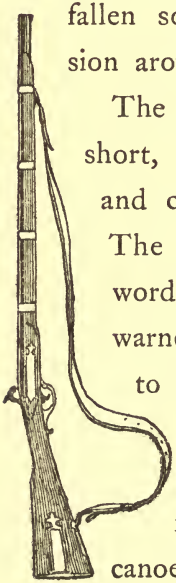
And now indeed, although he did not for a moment suspect the fact, little Jimmy Ferris was setting out on the Long Trail.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

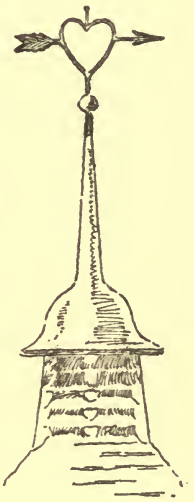
THE rabbit skin was very light and warm and soft. Jimmy snuggled down in it, and half dreamily watched the banks of the river slip past. The tea had made him sleepy. He saw the Magic Forest through a haze, and the great trees and the little trooped by solemnly like an army with banners. Before him the lithe bowsman swung his paddle tirelessly. The whispering *swish swish* of the

water lulled him. At this early moment in a strange adventure little Jimmy might have fallen sound asleep had not a diversion aroused him.



The leading canoe suddenly stopped short, worked noiselessly sideways, and came to rest against the bank. The other canoes joined it. No word was spoken, and Jimmy was warned by an expressive gesture to keep silent. After a moment Ah-kik, the bowsman, drew from a long greasy case a musket bound in brass. The canoe crept forward around the bend.

Not a drip of water broke the absolute stillness. Makwa, although Jimmy could not see him, was still paddling without raising the paddle from the water, and indeed with a barely perceptible motion of the wrists. To the little boy's imagination the craft seemed suddenly to take the character of a wind vane he had watched from his windows, — turning to right, to left, swimming across the cloud-strewn ether as though guided by a will of its own.



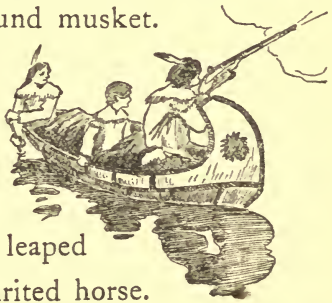
Something exciting was going on. He did not know what it was, but his eyes grew large and bright, and he held himself so still as hardly to breathe.

Now it became evident that the canoe

was quietly but steadily approaching a certain point on the shore where a little sandy beach and a grass plot interposed between the forest and the river. A broad maple tree rose just outside the edge of the woods, under which lay a deep shadow backed by the dusk of the forest. Nearer and nearer the canoe crept. And then suddenly, as though it had been evoked by the wave of a magician's wand, Jimmy saw that the deep maple shadow had a living tenant.

And even then he could not realize that he looked on a deer. This had the graceful shape of the creature, to be sure, but it was so exactly the color of the maple shadow that it seemed to be the unsubstantial ghost of a deer, as tnough one could see through it as through a clouded glass.

The excitement in Jimmy's little breast was intense. His heart thumped, his breath caught in his throat, and in spite of his best efforts he trembled all over as though with a violent chill. Each moment he expected to see the deer run away. But still the canoe slipped silently forward as idly as a leaf wafted thither by the wind. Then all at once, when the prow was actually within a few feet of the bank, Jimmy was conscious of a violent trembling. Makwa had thrust his paddle down to stop the headway. Ah-kik, still unobtrusively, without abrupt motions, raised the brass-bound musket.



A sudden roar broke forth, a cloud of white smoke enveloped the bow, the canoe leaped backward like a spirited horse.

Makwa dropped the paddle aboard with a clatter and stretched his arms. Ah-kik called back something in his natural voice. From around the bend streamed a flotilla of canoes. The everyday sounds after the period of strained silence and patient endeavor seemed almost profane.

Jimmy leaped ashore with his companions, fully prepared to exult over a dead deer.

What was his disappointment to discover only four deep, sharp footprints where the animal had leaped. Evidently the shot had failed.

But Jimmy had still a long way to go before the rudiments of his woodcraft should be complete. He did not know that Ah-kik could tell by the way the deer carried its tail whether or not the animal was

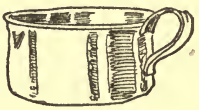
wounded, and how badly. And so he was much surprised when two of the young men returned after some minutes carrying the venison.

In the bustle of making camp Jimmy was for some time unnoticed. Certain of the men cut up dry wood. Old women swiftly built little fires of birch, touchwood, bark,

and twigs. Even the little children busily collected and carried in the wood chopped by the men. The deer was quickly skinned and cut up. Pots bubbled and steamed

over little fires. Dogs yelped with delight as bits of offal were tossed them.

Then when the first tasks were over, he was surrounded. The younger children stared at him wide-eyed, the older teased him; but as he did not understand what they said, this did not worry him in the least. One handsome little fellow slightly older than himself smiled at him, and when Jimmy smiled back, he promptly drove the others away. Then he squatted on his heels at Jimmy's side.



"Minne-qúa-gun," said he, picking up a tin cup. And so Jimmy learned his first Indian word.

In this was a new and delightful occupation. To speak real Indian words was an accomplishment Jimmy would have reverenced in another. And here was a chance to learn for himself. He memorized *tschimon*, the canoe; and *ah-boo-é*, the paddle; and *ah-gáh-quit*, the axe. Then he resolved to find out something useful to himself. He hugged his arms close about his chest, shivered violently, and looked inquiringly toward his companion.

"Kss ina," said the latter at once.

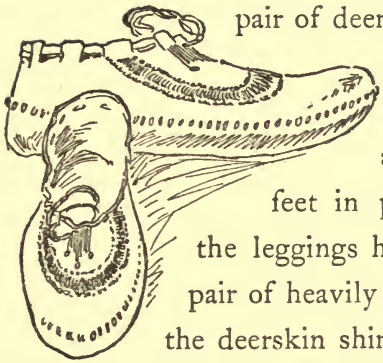
Jimmy immediately ran to old Makwa, who was smoking a pipe on a fallen tree.

"Kss ina," said he, pointing to his thin night-dress and his bare shins. "Kss ina, kss ina!"

Makwa laughed, his fine old face wrinkling in a hundred deep little lines. He called sharply. An old woman came for-

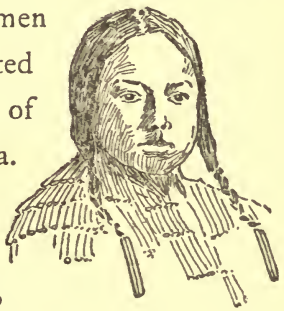
ward. Makwa spoke a few words to her, whereupon she went away for some moments, only to return bearing a bundle wrapped in canvas which she laid at Makwa's feet.

The bundle when opened was found to contain a variety of things. Makwa picked out a little deerskin shirt, a pair of blue leggings made of stroud, two squares of blanketlike material called duffel, and a



pair of deerskin moccasins. The squares he wrapped about Jimmy's feet in place of socks, the leggings he bound with a pair of heavily beaded garters, the deerskin shirt he slipped on deftly, and fastened with a worsted sash. When arrayed in them, the little boy was too happy to sit still.

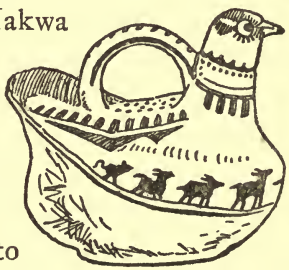
But now the meal was cooked, Jimmy discovered that he was very hungry. He sat with a group of women and children, and accepted thankfully his share of venison, fish, and tea. A little girl sat next to him, a pretty little brown thing with big,



soft eyes. She gazed at him solemnly during the meal.

At last he nodded and smiled at her, whereupon she showed all her teeth in the prettiest fashion in the world. Jimmy, with a full stomach, began to feel very contented. The sun was warm, the people about him looked on him kindly, this open-air meal under the greenwood tree was inexpressibly thrilling to his young imagination.

That afternoon he was given a short paddle and set to work. Nor was the paddling a matter of play merely. When his unaccustomed little wrists and shoulders became very tired, old Makwa sternly forbade him to rest. He was compelled to keep on, although his arms at times seemed ready to



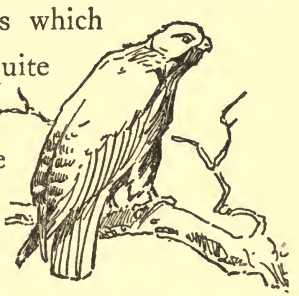
drop off, and his efforts could certainly have added little to the speed of the canoe. However, twice the party disembarked on the beach, drew the canoes up, unloaded all they contained, and set off through the forest, carrying packs. Here, too, Jimmy was given his share to carry, and his thin moccasins were slight protection to his feet, which speedily became bruised and wet. However, the life and mystery so filled Jimmy's mind that he only partly noticed these things.

Of course the trees were still bare of leaves, but the spring was awakening. All sorts of noises sounded through the woods. Jimmy did not know what they were, but little by little he learned from Taw-kwo, the young boy.

"*Bump! bump! bump! bump! br — br-r-r-r!*" boomed a hollow wooden note.

"Penáy," said Taw-kwo. Some days latter a partridge was flushed into a tree. "Penáy," said Taw-kwo again, and so Jimmy knew that penáy was a large bird with a fan-tail whose capture was most desirable, and who made remarkably good eating. But he did not know the English name for it.

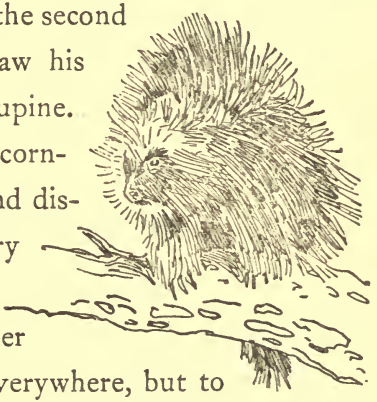
In this fashion he acquired much information about the woods which he would have found quite valueless in the towns, for the simple reason that he would have been unable to tell any one about it.



The hawk, the rabbit, the squirrel, the

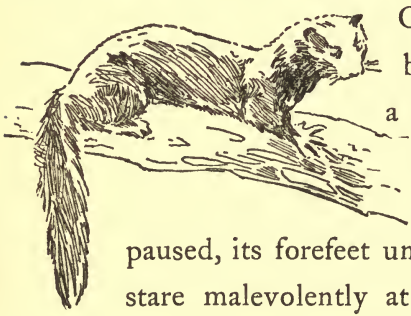
muskrat, the jay, and many others he learned thus. Of course he could not always remember, but Taw-kwo was patient in repeating, and Jimmy was just of the age to learn quickly by absorption.

On the way back through the woods for a second load on the second carry, Jimmy saw his first live porcupine. The beast was scornful and lordly, and disinclined to hurry in the least, after the manner of porcupines everywhere, but to Jimmy a wild animal of this size which would permit itself to be approached, was a brand-new experience. Of course he wanted to kill it. That is invariably the first instinct. But May-may-gwan, the

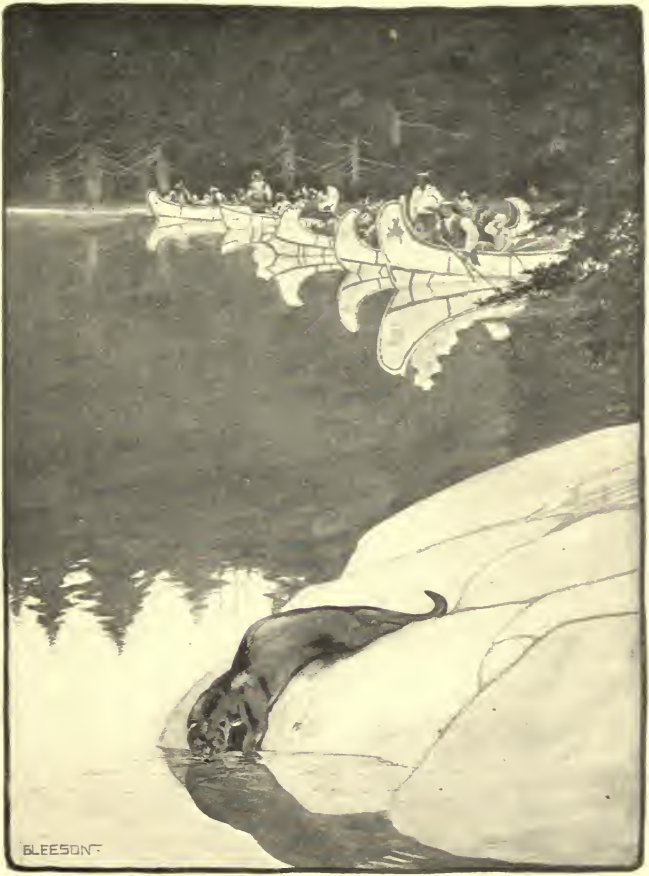


soft-eyed little girl, would not allow him to do so. Jimmy learned thus his lesson in woods moderation, for the woods Indian never kills wastefully.

The rest of the afternoon the canoes floated down the river. The shores glided by silently. Jimmy many times forgot the ache of his shoulders in the excitement of a swiftly vanishing wing, the mysterious withdrawal of some brown spot that, in this manner only, proclaimed itself a forest creature.

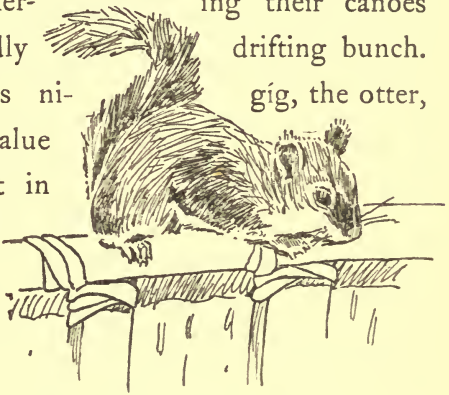


Once a mink bobbed up for a moment on a piece of driftwood, and paused, its forefeet under its chin, to stare malevolently at them as they glided by. Often the muskrats would be seen swimming in arrow-shaped ripples.



"A slim, graceful animal slipped from the rock ledge ahead."

Once a slim, graceful animal of some size slipped from a rock ledge ahead. This the Indians thought important enough to discuss, gathering their canoes into one idly drifting bunch. For it was nigíg, the otter, and the value of his pelt in the winter won him consideration as a personage. Often squirrels crossed the river, steering themselves with their bushy tails. Makwa, noting the interest of the boy, good-naturedly extended his paddle to one of the little animals, whereupon, to Jimmy's vast delight, it scrambled up the paddle to the gunwale within two feet of his hand, where it sat resting



for a moment, and then plunged into the water again.

About the middle of the afternoon the women's canoes were permitted to go ahead for the purpose of making camp, so that by the time the sun was low the men were enabled to draw ashore for the night. A number of little birch-bark shelters were already in place, the tiny fires were winking bravely, the dogs were squatted in a semicircle just at the edge of the brush awaiting their share of the meal.

Jimmy thought he had never seen such funny dogs. Their noses and ears were pointed, their hair long and thick, and

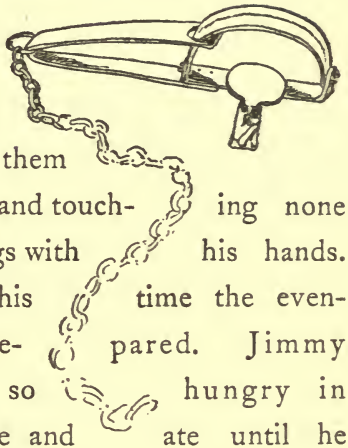
their tails as furry as a fox's brush. He tried to make friends with them, but they snarled at him so savagely that he drew back alarmed. In after days he succeeded in knowing them better, but now they were distrustful. They were more than half wolf, with the wolf's fierce instincts.

But now Taw-kwo touched him on the shoulder, smiling and motioning him to follow. He did so. The two boys picked their way through the brush to the mouth of a little creek flowing into the river. There Taw-kwo unrolled a fine-meshed net he was carrying, fastened one end to a staff which he braced upright in the bottom, waded across and stuck

the other end in a similar manner, so that the mouth of the creek was entirely closed by the net. Taw-kwo did not seem to mind in the least wading in the cold water with his moccasins and leggings on. "Kée-gawns," said he, making with his hand the motion of a fish swimming.

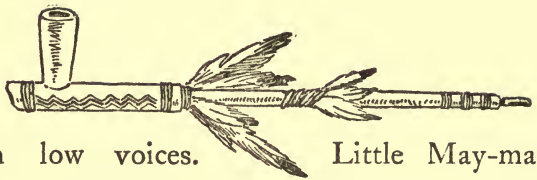
He touched his finger to his lips to enjoin caution. Stealthily he lay on his stomach and crawled to the sharp edge of the bank. Jimmy followed his example and peeped over. Below his eye ran five or six grooves through the thick water-mud which ended in a regular gallery of holes. And just as Jimmy looked, some bright-eyed, solemn, whiskered animal seemed to fade into hiding. "She-shesk,"[1] whispered Taw-kwo. He signed to Jimmy to remain, and returned shortly carrying

[1] Muskrat.



two steel traps. These he set at the mouths of the grooves, covering them craftily with mud, and touching none of the surroundings with his hands.

At camp by this time the evening meal was prepared. Jimmy had never been so hungry in his life. He ate and ate until he could not cram down another mouthful, and he was almost too lazy to move over to the larger fire, or to hang up before the blaze his moccasins and duffels as did the others. The flames leaped, making shadows on the Magic Forest. Over in its depths a night-bird began to moan *whip-poor-will.* The dogs sat on their haunches blinking their eyes. Men smoked and laughed and talked. Women conversed



in low voices. Little May-may-gwan sat beside him and held his hand.

After a long time Taw-kwo led him to a shelter in which was spread six inches of balsam browse. The Indian boy laid out the rabbit-skin robe. The balsam smelled good to Jimmy. His eyes grew heavier and heavier.

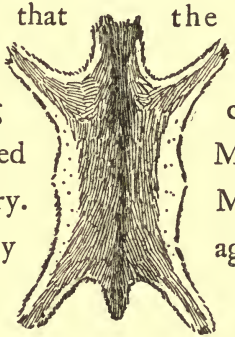
But he was not to sleep yet. Suddenly a tremendous row brought him to his feet. The dogs were clamoring, excited figures were running past the firelight. Jimmy instinctively thrust his feet into his moccasins and followed.

Down through the tangled forest the chase went pell-mell, the dogs always in the lead. Some of the Indians had snatched up

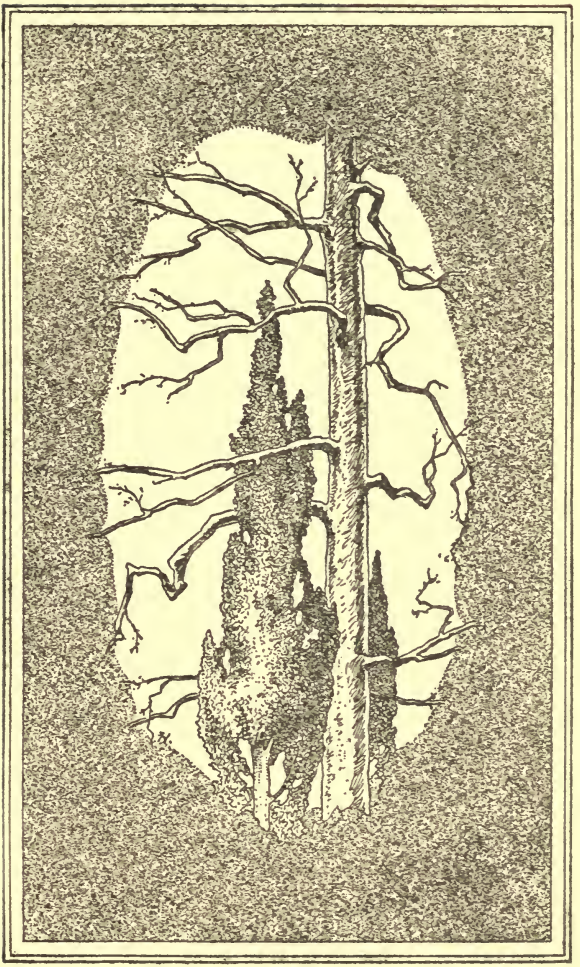
torches. Stumbling, shouting, clambering, breathless, the multitude streamed through the silent dark. Then it bunched at a slim tree about which the dogs were leaping frantically. Jimmy could distinguish a fierce-eyed dark animal, about the size of a dog, crouched in the branches. The little boy was still half asleep. What followed was much confused. Something dislodged the beast. It fell among the dogs. Immediately there was a great fight, in which the Indians seemed to be trying desperately to deliver a telling blow. Then it was all over. Two of the dogs

were dead; from others blood was streaming. One of the Indians was tying a bandage around the calf of his leg.

Back through the ancient forest filed the convoy with its prey. At the fireside Jimmy saw that the beast was powerful, blunt nosed, with long claws, "Swingwadge," replied Makwa to his look of inquiry. Many years after Jimmy again saw one of them stuffed at the Sportsman's Show, and so knew that he had assisted at the killing of a carcajou, the fiercest fighting animal for its size in America. And thus closed what he always thought of afterward as his Wonderful Day.

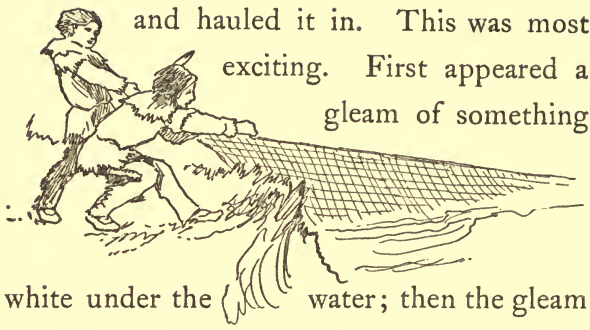


CHAPTER III



CHAPTER III

But if that was the Day of Wonder the one that followed was certainly the Day of Despair. It started out well enough. Jimmy was aroused early in the morning, when the dawn's chill was still in the air, so that for a few moments he was very miserable, but the hot tea and food, combined with a good fire, soon put him in spirits. He and Taw-kwo visited the steel traps and took from them three fine muskrats. Then they unfastened one end of the net



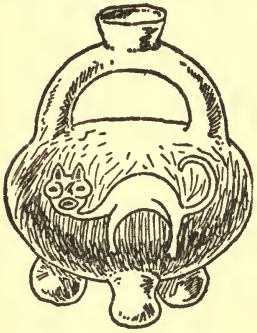
and hauled it in. This was most exciting. First appeared a gleam of something white under the water; then the gleam slowly defined itself. A breathless moment followed. How big was the fish? What kind was it? And then with a flop it was on the bank, beating the ground to the whoops of two enthusiastic boys. Taw-kwo had even produced a short heavy bow and some blunt-headed arrows, when a summons called them to resume the journey.

About ten o'clock a few drops of rain fell. Jimmy thought, of course, the band would seek shelter. It did not. The rain grew heavier, picking the surface of the river. Water ran down Jimmy's

hair, speedily wetting him to the skin. He shivered and looked about with uneasiness on the landscape, rapidly growing sodden. The Indians seemed to mind the downpour no more than did the dogs. But Jimmy suddenly felt very lonely. The romance of the Magic Forest had quite departed, and he began to think of his warm home and his mother and father, and to wonder whether he would ever see them again. After a little he began to cry softly to himself, the tears mingling with the raindrops running down his cheeks. But he was very still about it, for Taw-kwo was in a canoe near him, and little May-may-gwan was paddling solemnly in the bow of another just

behind. The raindrops were coursing down her cheeks, too.

All that day Jimmy's heart grew heavier and heavier. He paddled desperately in order to keep warm and so toward night grew tired also. It was a very blue day.



In the evening he stood by the fire with the Indians and steamed. To his surprise the night was not so bad. The roofs of the shelters had been so slanted that the heat was reflected from them down upon the ground, which speedily dried. It was a little damp, but not all uncomfortable.

And next morning the sun was shining brightly with true spring warmth. Thus Jimmy passed with credit through his trial

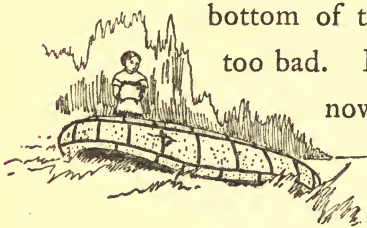
by water. Rain and cold weather were always disagreeable to him, but in time he learned that one forgot all about it once it was finished.

Only twice that day was the regular progress down river interrupted by anything exciting. Long stretches of still water were broken by swift little rapids, where Jimmy had to sit very still, and carries through the woods, where he had to work with the others. He was interested all the time. The most trivial incident was an adventure.

But a little after noon, in shooting a particularly crooked and turbulent rapid, in spite of the best efforts of Makwa and Ah-kik, the canoe scraped sharply against a pointed stone. Instantly the water began to rush in through a jagged hole. By good fortune this was at the foot of the rapid. The Indians paddled desperately

across the pool and grounded just in time. The goods were hastily thrown out and the canoe drawn up on the beach.

Jimmy looked sadly at the rent in the bottom of the canoe. It was too bad. He supposed that now the day's journey would have to be given up.

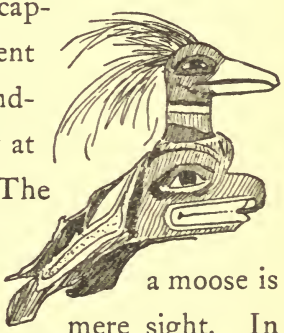


But Makwa disappeared in the woods while Ah-kik built a little fire. The other Indians continued on down-stream. In a moment Makwa returned with a quantity of spruce pitch on a bit of bark. This he cooked over the fire with a little grease. Then with a stick of wood he smeared the melted gum about the hole, laid over it smoothly a bit of sacking, smeared more gum completely to cover the whole affair, and seared it close with a brand from the

"Knee deep in the water stood a cow moose and her calf."

fire. In ten minutes the canoe was as good as ever.

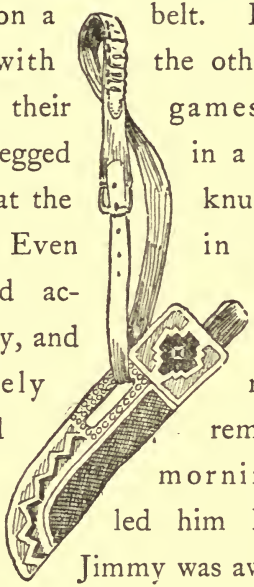
About an hour later Makwa whispered "Moos-wa, moos-wa." Jimmy had learned by now that when Makwa whispered, something interesting was afoot, so he looked with all his eyes. There, not two hundred yards away, knee deep in the water, stood a cow moose and her calf. The great animals, so awkward in captivity but so magnificent in their proper surroundings, stared uncertainly at the gliding canoes. The wind was the wrong way for the scent, and a moose is not easily alarmed by mere sight. In a moment they waded rapidly ashore and disappeared with a long swinging trot, but not before Jimmy had seen well the Roman



nose, the big eyes, the massive shoulders of the animals. As moose to him had always seemed as remote as goblins, this new phase of the Magic Forest filled him with ecstatic rapture. And he was impressed still further by the lesson of woods moderation, for his companions had made no effort to kill the beautiful creatures. For the present there was meat enough.

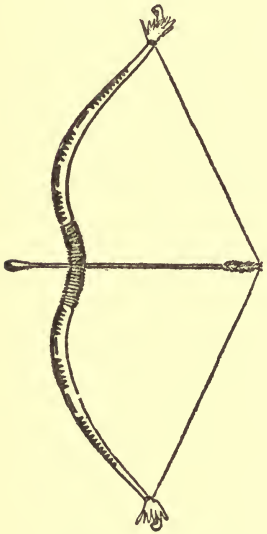
That evening after supper Jimmy made friends. He was not so sleepy as the first evening nor so uncomfortable as the second, so he wandered here and there trying his new Indian words. Especially did the cradles for the Indian babies interest him. Everywhere he

was smiled upon by the kindly people. Some even made him little presents of ornaments. Taw-kwo's father gave him a sheath-knife on a belt. He became acquainted with the other children and joined in their games, sitting gravely cross-legged in a circle, taking his turn at the knuckle bones with the rest. Even in the three days he had acquired a fair vocabulary, and he understood vaguely much more than he could remember.



The next morning a lad of sixteen led him hunting in the woods. Jimmy was awkward but tried hard, and after a number of futile stalks the two succeeded in getting within sight of one of the drumming partridges. The bird was strutting up and down a

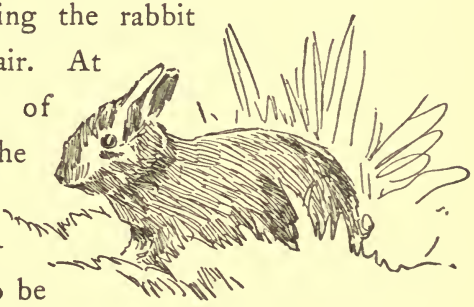
smooth log, puffed out like a turkey-cock, and beating his wings rapidly to produce the hollow wooden drumming Jimmy had been hearing for three days. The Indian lad drew the blunt head of his arrow to the bow. *Rap!* it struck a tree just beyond the partridge's head. The bird flew away.



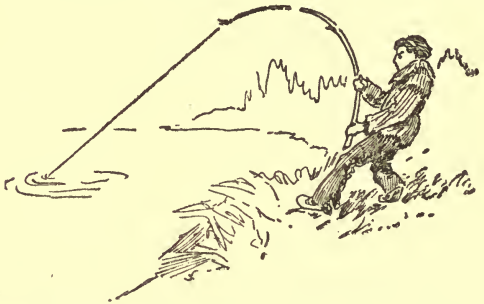
But now for the first time Jimmy felt the joy of the chase. Here was something to work for. He borrowed the bow and the blunt arrows, and at every pause *rap-rap-rapped* the trees with his practice shots. By dint of imitation he succeeded after a little in acquiring a fair accuracy, though of course

he could not beat his Indian friends. Then he set to work to stalk a partridge. Dozens and dozens he frightened away by a clumsy approach. Four times his arrow went wide. But then at last the bird, alarmed by the twang of the bow, raised its head directly into the flying arrow. Jimmy cast his weapon from him, and fell upon the game with shrieks of delight.

Asádi, the older lad, taught him how to spread a horse-hair loop across a rabbit trail, bending down a sapling in such a manner that it would spring straight when disturbed, thus jerking the rabbit into the air. At the foot of some of the waterfalls great fishing was to be



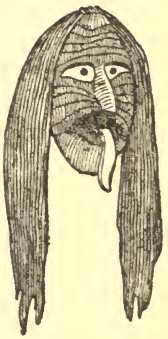
had with the hook and line. A morsel of meat, a bright-colored feather, even a metal button so attached as to whirl was bait enough. There was no waiting. The instant the hook touched the water a dozen swirling fish were after it. Through the long evenings the big fellows could be seen jumping, shooting straight out into the air to fall back with a heavy splash. Once Jimmy



hooked one of these, and had not Asádi been at hand to help him, he would have been pulled overboard. And when at last they succeeded in sliding the monster on to

a flat rock, how beautiful he was with his iridescent eyes and the bright spots of his body.

Not the least interesting of the many wood's puzzles were the numerous footprints to be seen on the wet sand of the beach. Asádi or Taw-kwo or even little Oginik, who was much younger than any of them, could tell him their names, but only long experience taught him what the animals might be like. "Makwa" they described broad heavy prints. "Me-én-gan" said they when shown others smaller and rounder and not so flat. "Bisíw," they replied when he asked about certain padlike signs. But he did not know from that.



However, one day as the canoes were

paddling down a long narrow lake, Ah-kik called his attention to something white a long distance down the shore. The speck of white was moving slowly toward them. In a little while it defined itself as an animal. Everybody sat quite still. The beast was not in a hurry. Sometimes it trotted, sometimes it walked, sometimes it stopped to investigate something on the shore. In the canoes the dogs' backs were all bristling. Soon Jimmy could see that the animal was not white but gray, and that it looked a great deal like the Indian dogs except that it was larger and that it sloped from heavy shoulders to lighter haunches. When just opposite the waiting line of canoes, the Indians raised a mighty yell. Startled, the animal scuddled along the beach like the wind. Point after point it passed, still running, until at last, again as a white speck, it

bobbed out of sight. The Indians laughed consumedly.

"Me-én-gan," explained Ah-kik.

But Jimmy knew also the English name now, for he had often watched the wolves in Bronx Park cages.

Makwa he learned in a manner still more exciting. He and Taw-kwo came on a little open space in the woods one morning. The grass was almost knee high. Suddenly out of it, not ten feet away, a great black bear rose to his hind legs and said *woof!* Now if a human being in a civilized room says woof to you suddenly, you are startled; but when it is a big animal in a wild place, you beat all records on the back

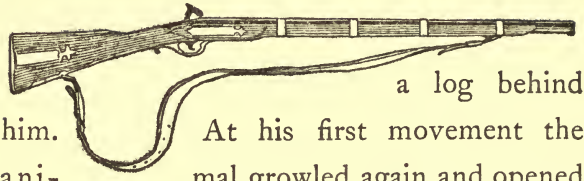
jump. At least, that is what Jimmy did, and he started to run away, but Taw-kwo jumped up and down and waved his arms frantically and shouted, until the bear, who was a peaceful beast, dropped to his four feet and ambled away. "Makwa," said Taw-kwo, when he had got his breath.

But the third was the most exciting of all. That particular afternoon the Indians had gone into camp early, and now the whole band, with the exception of Jimmy and the very youngest children, were off in the woods. Jimmy was trying to make himself an arrow, and was absorbed in the work. Suddenly he heard a strange squeaking noise near at hand, and looked up to discover two large gray kittens tumbling about not three feet away. And then, compelled by some strange hypnotic influence, his glance raised until it rested with a start

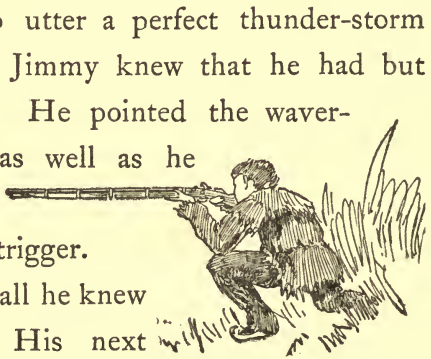
of alarm on the pine shadow at the edge of the woods. A pair of fierce yellow eyes looked into his own. Little by little, he made out a lithe form, pad-like paws, wide whiskers, tasselled ears. And all at once he realized that the beast was angry.

At that moment one of the smaller children discovered the kittens, and immediately toddled forward to investigate such new playmates. A low, rumbling growl broke from the shadow. Like a streak of light the animal sprang. The mere weight of its body knocked the child from its feet. All the others cried out. The beast hesitated, one paw on the pappoose's chest, undecided what to do.

Jimmy was frightened, but he remembered seeing Makwa's gun standing against



a log behind him. At his first movement the animal growled again and opened and shut its claws restlessly. Jimmy moved as cautiously as he could. The little Indian lay quite still. Finally, the long trade gun was in the white boy's hands. He had to rest the but on the ground and use both hands to cock it, and even then it was so heavy that he could just lift it to his eyes. The first movement of the muzzle caused the beast to utter a perfect thunder-storm of snarls. Jimmy knew that he had but a moment. He pointed the wavering barrel as well as he could, and pulled the trigger.



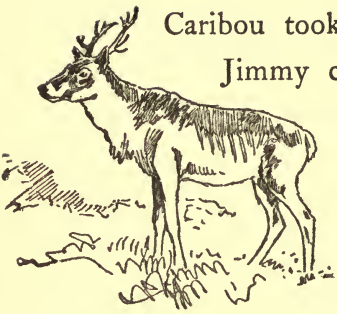
That was all he knew about it. His next

sensation was of water in the face, followed by an increasing ache in the region of his shoulder. The trade gun, unskilfully held, had kicked him about ten feet.

But there was the baby, sound and well; and there was the animal, minus half its head; and there were the kittens, unfortunately killed by the returning dogs; and there was Jimmy with a brand new bit of information, — that bisíw,[1] with the broad, padlike prints, was a huge cat.

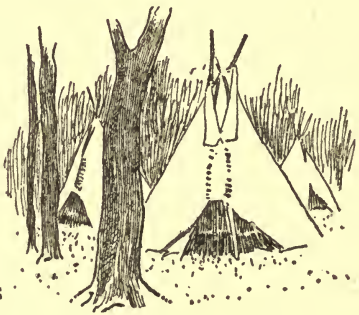
And so the days went by. Sometimes they floated all day; sometimes they struggled through woods; sometimes they toiled painfully through swamps. They endured rain, wind, cold. Always the spring advanced and the freshet waters receded. Young ducks began to be seen. The trees of the forest grew smaller.

[1] Canadian lynx.



Caribou took the place of deer. Jimmy could talk with his friends now, and, by dint of much listening, could understand most of what was said.

At last, after coursing for many miles down a broad swift stream without rapids, they came to where another river joined theirs, and on the point formed by the junction they went ashore and established a permanent camp. First the women pitched the conical teepees with the many poles. Then they built fire-holes and hung kettles. Then they cut quantities



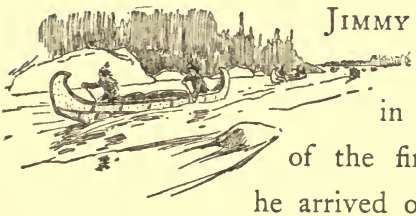
of balsam for the floors and to scatter on the thresholds. And finally they began the construction of a long rectangular lodge of poles and branches and decorated skins.

In the meantime the men were all off hunting, and the boys were conducting an industrious fishery. The spoils were sliced thin, and jerked, or smoked. Then they were laid on scaffolds out of reach of the dogs. In a week the camp was bountifully supplied.

And finally the packs were undone and all the gorgeous beaded and ornamented finery brought out, brushed and aired, after which the entire band settled into what seemed to Jimmy to be an anxious waiting. He asked them about it, and they replied, but the words were of those he had not learned. He only knew that around the lower bend a sentinel always stood. And

one morning early that sentinel fired a shot. Instantly the camp swarmed into view. The men, seizing their guns, ran eagerly to the point. Jimmy followed in breathless excitement.

CHAPTER IV



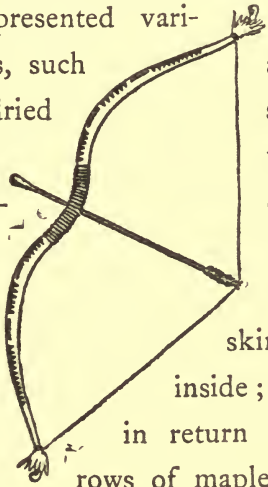
JIMMY ran as hard as he could in the direction of the firing. When he arrived out of breath at the point, he saw in the middle distance a flotilla of canoes working its way slowly against the current. His own friends were busily reloading, and as he watched, another volley rang out, which was immediately answered by the approaching strangers. The disappointing part, however, was that the muskets were all pointed skyward. And in a few minutes, when the new canoes has reached the point, their occupants

stepped ashore and were greeted solemnly with much hand-shaking.

The band consisted of fifty or sixty grown people and a sprinkling of children. They were shorter and broader faced than Jimmy's friends, and, as he soon discovered, talked a different language. The men were immediately conducted to the clearing, while the women began unloading the canoes. In a few hours another camp had been established a hundred feet or so from the old one, and then began an interchange of stately visits between the men, of giggling gossipy meetings by the women, of fights and final reconciliations among the dogs. With the children it was very much the same. At first they circled warily about one

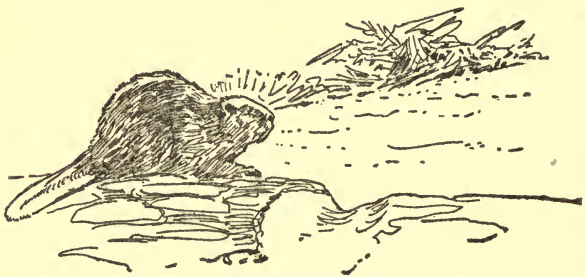
another, then they quarrelled, then they became fast friends.

The Ojibways gave the Crees food from the stores they had accumulated; the Crees in return presented various seaside luxuries, such as smoked geese and dried salt-water fish. Jimmy was delighted to receive from a little Cree boy a pair of stiff moccasins made out of seal-skin, with the fur on the inside; and to be able to give in return two blunt-headed arrows of maple — a wood unknown so far north.



Then followed the long lazy days of the permanent camp. Jimmy and his companions found the pools where there was no current, and there they spent nearly half of

every day in and out of the water. Jimmy was tanned almost to the color of his Indian friends by the hot, north-country sun. They fished in the riffles. They explored the woods roundabout until they knew every inch of it for five miles, and by an infinite patience and many trials, they managed to kill a respectable number of the cock partridges, the spruce-grouse, and the brown ptarmigan. They set their traps for muskrats, and looked with longing eyes on the trails of mink and a certain beaver colony, but the elders sternly forbade them to disturb the fur-bearing animals at this time of



year. But best fun of all was the game of War Party.

Asádi and one of the Cree boys would choose sides. Each boy would be armed with two or three blunt arrows whose points had been padded with moss, bound securely with buckskin. One party would disappear in the woods, and after an interval the other would follow. Then were ambushes, surprises, crafty retreats. The children glided through the forest with all the stealth of the wild animals themselves. They lurked behind logs, watching with keen bright eyes. They tracked the enemy, or covered their own trails in order that they might not be tracked in turn. And at any moment you were likely to be startled by the sharp *twang!* of a bow and bruised

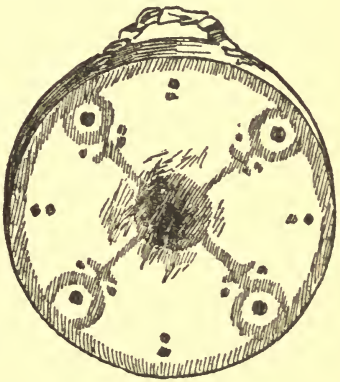
severely by the heavy blow of an arrow. For although the missiles were padded to prevent actual injury, they hurt enough to make it a real object not to be "killed"; for when you were killed, you had to return to camp and play with the little girls.

Of course, Jimmy had neither the inherited nor the acquired skill, so much of his time he spent in camp. But he improved rapidly, and the certainty of being black and blue in a fresh place added excitement to the game. And, oh, glorious thought! twice he "killed" members of the opposing party. Besides which he liked the little girls. When they were not helping their mothers they were very kind to him, and showed him their rag dolls and taught him divers interesting,

"The children glided through the forest."

quiet camp games. Some of them he liked very much.

And in the camp life itself there was always much to attract his attention. The women were making buckskin, were ornamenting with beads various articles of clothing, and the men were conducting, inside the big lodge made of poles and branches, some mysterious and noisy ceremony.



Jimmy never got a glimpse of what was going on inside, but he was content to sit by the hour in the hot sun, listening to the modulated rise and fall of weird minor songs, the clatter of bones, the boom of drums, the shuffle of

hands and feet. Every once in a while one of the men would appear for a moment at the doorway, his gaze exalted, his features painted in brilliant stripes or dots, his form dressed all in fringed buckskin lavishly ornamented with beads. And it was a pure delight at last, when the conjuring was over, to see the strangely clad men come forth into the gathering dusk and file silently to their teepees. Jimmy's little heart always sensed

a thrill at what he somehow dimly felt to be a reincarnation of a glorious past.

Now the days were very long. The sun did not set until nearly nine o'clock. And at night Jimmy was astonished and filled with awe by the brilliant aurora that shot its many-colored flames far over the zenith.

Among the older men of the Cree band Jimmy made no friends. This was natural, for a brave had little time for a child. But of course his presence was remarked by them, and received much discussion.

Now it happened that in the Cree band was a French half-breed, Antoine Laviolette, who in winter was a post-keeper for the Hudson Bay Company, but who in summer preferred

to travel with his savage kinsmen. One evening Jimmy was vastly astonished to be addressed by this man. It was the first English the little boy had heard since old Makwa had questioned him.

"'Ullo!" he said; "how you do?"

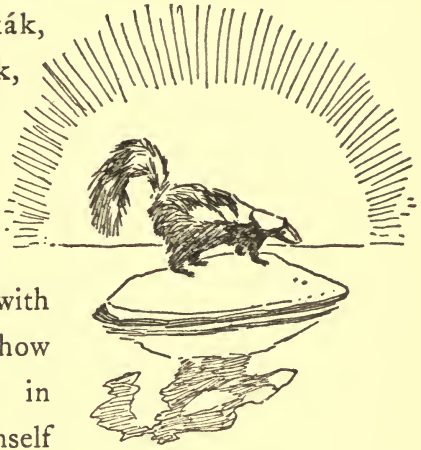
"Hullo!" replied Jimmy.

In ten minutes they were chatting together familiarly. And from that time on, Jimmy had a new interest in the long twilights after the evening meal had been eaten. For Antoine Laviolette was inclined by race to talk, and by nature to talk well, and he liked an appreciative audience.

"Jeemy!" he would call. "Com' here! You evaire hear 'bout dose salt water, how she is come to be no good for drink?"

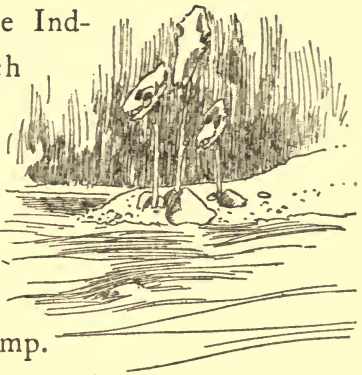
And then Jimmy, wide-eyed, would hear of the Animal Council and its plottings

against Si-kák, the great skunk, and how the carcajou helped to kill him, but was defiled with the oil, and how the carcajou in washing himself tainted the sea-water so that it is unfit to drink. Or he learned why the great Manitou twisted some of the trees so their wood does not split straight, or why the ermine's fur changes from red to white in winter. Or he heard all about Hiawatha, just as you can read about him in Longfellow to



this day, the same legends with the same names. It was all very wonderful to him, and it brought very close to him the animals of the woods. He came to look on them as the Indian does, not as inferior to himself, but merely as different; or, to put it the other way, he grew to consider himself and his companions as animals of another sort, speaking a different language, and living a different life, but not essentially of different race.

So he understood why when a beaver was killed for the Moon Feast, a fillet braided of worsted and doeskin thongs was tied around the animal's tail, and why Ta-wap, the hunter, dressed in his best clothes before going out to kill a bear, and why the cleaned skulls of some beasts were placed on stakes near running water. For though it was necessary that these



creatures die, the Indians did such honors to their spirits.

And now in the Berry Moon a sad event sobered the camp. For little Si-gwan ate of a poisonous mushroom, and in spite of the conjuring and the herbs and the charms, she grew sicker and weaker until she died. Then in the teepee of her people was the sound of wailing. The women let loose their hair and scattered ashes on their heads and raised their voices in lamentations, while Aumick, the little girl's father, painted his face to represent mourning.

The burial services took place in the evening between two great fires. The Indians squatted soberly cross-legged in a circle, all dressed in their finest garments. In the centre was a raised platform of boughs on which lay a birch-bark coffin. Below it sat the bereaved family, their hair and garments in disorder, their eyes downcast. Jimmy huddled near his friend, Antoine Laviolette. In the stillness, the awe of dark and of firelight and of dancing shadows and of a grave, silent people overflowed his little heart.

After a long interval old Makwa advanced to the centre of the circle.

"Oh, Wábisi, my little sister," said he, addressing the mother, "it is not well that

"Old Makwa advanced to the centre of the circle."

you grieve. For if our daughter had grown, she would many times have been hungry and cold and weary. But now where she has gone there is no hunger nor cold, and there is no weariness. Therefore you should be glad." He stooped and slashed his knife twice through the birch bark of the coffin. "Oh, Kitche manito!" he cried, "these places do I cut that our daughter's spirit may come and go as she wills it, that she may visit us sometimes, that she may see our little sister, Wábisi, when she is very sad." Again he turned to the mother. "Our daughter is gone, oh, my little sister," he continued, "but on the day when Pau-guk[1] takes

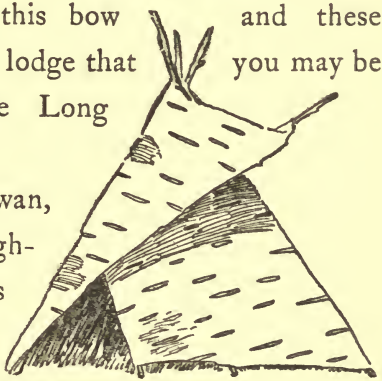
[1] The Death Spirit.

you, then you shall see her again. But she will be all changed, and you will not know her, but when you enter that Land of the Hereafter, then you must sing always this little song, and so she shall know you." In a surprisingly clear and true tenor old Makwa chanted a weird minor air with tearful falling cadences. "And when she hears that song," he went on, "then she will answer it with this." He sang through another little song. The long-drawn plaintive chords gripped Jimmy's throat so that he sobbed aloud. "And in that way you shall know one another."

The young men bore the coffin to a grave that had already been dug a short distance away in the pine groves. After the earth had been filled in, three of the women knelt and deftly put together

a miniature wigwam of birch bark, complete in every detail. Then old Makwa began again to speak, addressing the grave in a low tone of confidence.

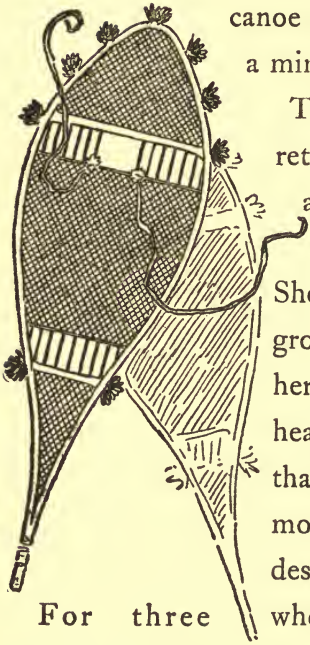
"Oh, Si-gwan, our little daughter," said he, "I place this bow and these arrows in your lodge that you may be armed on the Long Journey.



"Oh, Si-gwan, our little daughter, I place this knife in your lodge that you may be armed on the Long Journey.

"Oh, Si-gwan, our little daughter, I place these snow-shoes in your lodge that you may be fleet on the Long Journey."

And in like manner he deposited in the little wigwam extra moccasins, a model

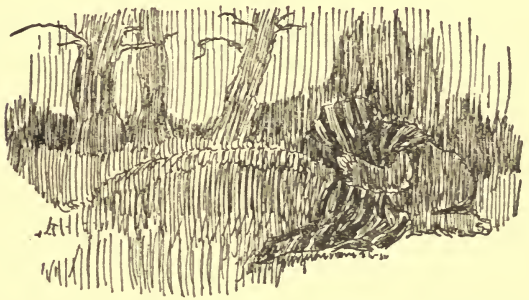


canoe and paddle, food, and a miniature robe.

Then quietly they all returned to camp, — all but Wábisi, the bereaved mother. She huddled on the ground by the grave, her blanket over her head. Jimmy dreamed that night of the silent, motionless figure of desolation.

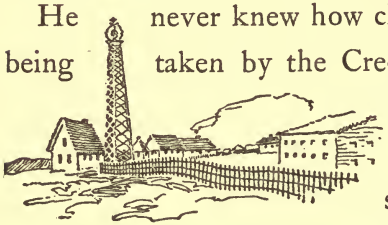
For three whole days and nights the Indian woman mourned her child, then arose and went about her ordinary duties with unmoved countenance. And the little grave was left to the sun and snow and rain and the mercy of an all-explaining, all-forgetting Nature.

And now the time had come, at the latter end of the Berry Moon and just before the Many-Caribou-in-the-Woods Moon, to break up the permanent camp. The Crees had to return to Moose Factory at the Hudson Bay, thence to set out for their winter trapping grounds; the Ojibways were now to retrace their steps to Chapleau for the purpose of receiving their



treaty money from the Canadian government. Jimmy was not aware of the meaning of this, nor that when once the canoes should breast the current, he would be

headed toward the railroad again. He only knew that a move was imminent, and was glad of it. The home camp was fun, but the adventures of travelling were better.



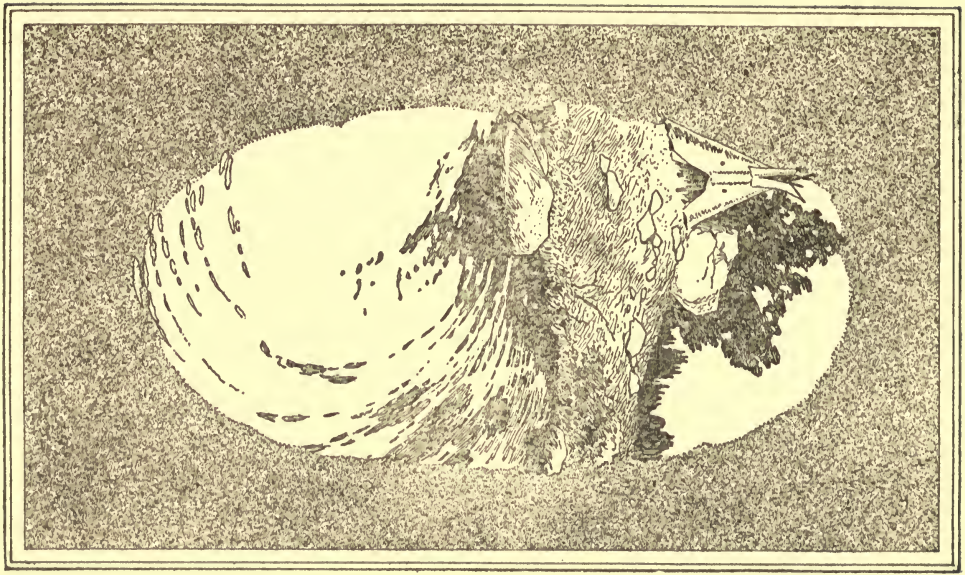
He never knew how close he came to being taken by the Crees many, many miles farther north to his supposed home at York Factory on the shores of the Hudson Bay. Antoine Laviolette was the lucky element in that. He it was who told the headmen that the child was not a *ságanash*,[1] as they had supposed, but a *kitch-mókamen*,[2] who lived far south of the Ojibway country. So when the time came to part, Jimmy remained with his old friends.

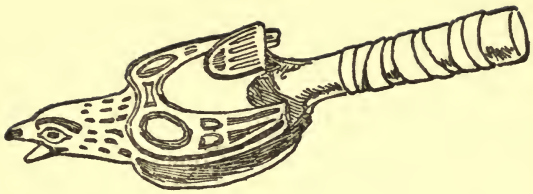
The Ojibways broke camp first, as they had the longer journey to go. When the

[1] Englishman. [2] Big knife, *i.e.* American.

canoes were all loaded, the Crees came down to wish them a good journey. And then, after the little craft were actually afloat, a dozen young boys dashed into the water for the purpose of dropping presents of fish, game, and ornamented work into the boats of the departing tribe. They waited thus until the latest possible moment in order that the recipients of the gifts might not feel called on to return something of equal value. A volley of musketry was answered by another from the canoes. The flotilla moved slowly forward against the current.

CHAPTER V

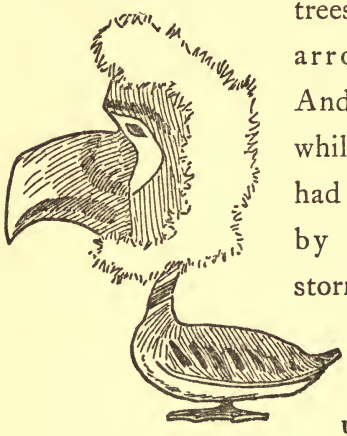




CHAPTER V

DAY after day the Magic Forest slipped by. The going was often very difficult against the current, and sometimes Jimmy, with the others, had to step out in the shallow water of a riffle for the purpose of helping along the canoe. Or again the Indians had to push for many miles with poles, or they even had to turn themselves into tow horses and pull while one of their number steered. The banks of the river were stony and sometimes abrupt; or swampy with deep entangling grasses. When Jimmy had to walk, which was frequently, he found it very hard to keep up, and by night he was completely tired out.

But as compensation, the waters swarmed with young ducks, full grown but as yet unable to fly; and the woods teemed with young partridges which would sit still in trees while he shot arrow after arrow. And every once in a while, where the trees had been blown flat by some old-time storm or burned out by fire, the children would come upon a patch of the delicious wild raspberries, hanging in clusters ready to be stripped into the hands. Then they would stuff themselves and fill bark *mokoks*[1] to carry to the canoes. The big black bears were often to be encountered

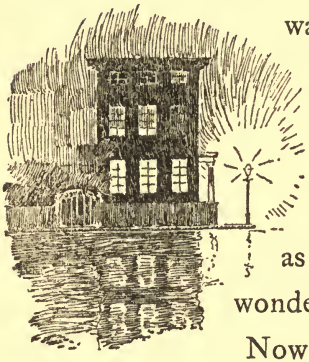


[1] A sort of Indian box.

"Jimmy learned that a bear with cubs is not to be trifled with."

in these berry patches. At first Jimmy used to be frightened, but after a little he imitated his companions, who merely raised a shout to scare the beasts away. Once, however, they did not attempt this, but dropped below the cover of the bushes and sneaked cautiously out of range. And Jimmy learned that a bear with cubs is not to be trifled with.

Jimmy by now was thoroughly accustomed to his new life. He spoke the Ojibway fluently, if not always with absolute correctness in the flexible verb forms, and understood all that was said to him. He liked the other children, and was accepted by them as one of themselves. If occasionally he felt slightly homesick, some new incident of the rapidly changing life drove the feeling almost immediately from his heart. He was not selfish, or without affection, but



was simply a natural, healthy boy, keenly alive to everything about him, and entirely happy as long as the novelty and the wonder lasted.

Now the stream narrowed and became more often broken. One day the band did nine separate portages. The next it glided out into a series of long narrow lakes connected by threads of water that were hardly more than good-sized brooks. Finally, it arrived at a foam-flecked pool at the foot of a rapid.

"Here is where we found you," Makwa told him.

Jimmy looked. It all came back to him

vividly — the cold, the awakening to boulder hills and wraith forest, the struggle through the woods, the Indian canoes leaping down the rapid. And then his mind followed the natural sequence still farther. He felt the sway and rattle of the train, the good-night kiss on his lips, his mother's caressing voice.

"Is it far to New York?" he asked Makwa again.

And Makwa, who had been told some things, though vaguely, by Antoine Laviolette, answered him as before, "Very far." But beyond that he said nothing, for he knew that now the little boy must leave them, and his heart was sad.

An Indian, or indeed any north-country *voyageur*, for that matter, does not like to arrive at his journey's end late in the afternoon. It takes away from the impressive-

ness of the occasion. Often he prefers to go to camp within fifteen minutes of his destination rather than miss the pomp of an observed entry into town. So in the present instance. Makwa and his people pitched camp just within the fringe of the woods beyond which lay Chapleau and the Canadian Pacific Railroad. But to Jimmy the place looked no different, no nearer civilization than had the point at the junction of the two rivers some hundreds of miles farther north.

But that night, — after he had rolled himself in his rabbit-skin robe, — contrary to his usual custom he did not at once fall asleep. The fire danced with the shadows. Jimmy stared at them wistfully. The thoughts evoked by Makwa's simple words

would not be downed. For the first time his heart turned with all its power toward the home he had so mysteriously left. One after another the details of it rose before his mind — the soft bed, the dainty room, the toys, the quiet servants, the warmed apartments, and above all his beautiful young mother who loved him so deeply. Jimmy swallowed hard. He would like to see them all again. Out in the Magic Forest a little owl was blowing its tin trumpet,

ko-ko-ko-oh! it cried. The shadows danced, growing huger and more fantastic before the boy's blurred vision. By and by they faded. Jimmy had fallen asleep. But,

just as four months before, he left consciousness bearing a great longing in his heart. Then it had been the vision of the Long Trail, bodied by wistful musings through a snow-stained window; now it was a dream of home.

A little after two o'clock Jimmy threw aside the cover and sat up. Swiftly, yet with movements precise in their certainty, he dressed himself in his day garments. With equal precision he took his way out of the sleeping camp. A voice hailed him. He answered with perfect coherence. In a moment he had gained the clearing, and in a moment more was trudging down the broad, dusty street of the little frontier town. Straight ahead he walked,

his eyes fixed, between the rows of houses. At the foot of the street he turned sharply to the left, mounted accurately a little wooden platform, and turned in the direction of a flaring train just bearing down on the primitive station. A sleepy agent spoke to him. Again he answered, but his reply was lost in the roar of the train. In the confusion Jimmy clambered aboard, turned to the right, went directly to Lower 7, parted the curtains, and fell back on the empty berth with a sigh of relief. When the train pulled out a moment later, Jimmy was curled up in a comfortable little ball, his arm tucked under the pillow, and his eyes fast shut.

He was finally awakened by a shaft of sunlight that struck him squarely in the face. His first impression was that he had

been allowed to sleep very late, for it had been the custom of his Indian friends to turn out before the sun had risen above the forest trees. Then his consciousness brought to him a regular *clinkety*-clank, *clinkety*-clank. In very terror he shut his eyes tight again.

After a few moments he ventured to peep. Above him was a dull, polished surface in which dimly he made out his own figure. To the right were two darkened squares about whose edges streamed the sun. To the left swayed in irregular motion the folds of curtains. And the mattress on which he lay swayed, too, in time to the metallic noises of a train's motion.

Gradually Jimmy took it all in. He was aided in this experience by that of the morning so long ago when he had as mysteriously found himself on the boulder-

strewn hillside. The wand of enchantment had waved again. He was back in the train. Of course his father and mother must be near.

He parted the curtains and looked out directly into the face of the negro porter. The latter stared.

"W'at you a-doin' yere?" he demanded.

Then Jimmy swung to the floor, so that not only his head but his buckskin-clad body came into view.

"Foh de Lo'd!" ejaculated the porter.

Jimmy knew exactly what he wanted to say, but the unaccustomed English words stuck in his throat. At last he managed to stammer.

"Where! Mamma?"

The negro porter was still in a collapse of surprise, but the sleeping-car conductor, who had been approaching, took in the situation at a glance. The whole line had been looking for the lost boy during the last five months.

"Is your name Ferris?" asked the conductor, sharply.

Jimmy nodded.

And then there was excitement, you may be sure. Telegrams flew again, but this time they were telegrams of joy. Jimmy's father and mother boarded a west-bound train.

All the railroad men and the passengers made much of the little boy. They petted him and gave him things to eat and drink and bought him things to wear. But they could not get him to talk.

"Where have you been all this time?" asked the big conductor.

"In fairy land," replied Jimmy, gravely.

A shiny commercial traveller laughed long and loud at this reply and at the boy's serious face. After that Jimmy kept silence. They would not believe, so what was the use in telling them?

And late one afternoon two people jumped eagerly aboard the train, and gathered Jimmy up in a great hug composed of

laughter and of tears, and so his little heart overflowed, and he realized that in spite of the excitement of the Magic Forest, he had wanted his mother all along. So thereafter he journeyed home with his own people.

But here too he was forced to silence.

"Now tell me all about where you have been," said his mother, after they had all calmed down a little.

So Jimmy began to tell them, in fairy-story language, just as Grimm or Andersen would have told of the Ugly Duckling, or some such matter. Mr. and Mrs. Ferris could make neither head nor tail of it.

"But, darling," expostulated Mrs. Ferris, "it couldn't have been that way! When and how did you leave the train?"

"I was trans-ported with a mag-ic wand," explained Jimmy, "and then in the Magic Forest I met Makwa, you see."

However, in spite of his efforts to make every-

thing plain, they insisted on returning again and again to the same point. Jimmy quickly came to his old conclusion, that grown-ups are stupid. Soon he gave it up altogether. They did not believe. What was the use?

So he locked up the story of the Magic Forest in his little heart along with his firm

beliefs in genii and water-babies and brownies and such folk. Try as they might, the grown-ups could never induce him to say another word as to his mysterious five months' experience. To all questions he replied vaguely. The only clews they had were the garments he had worn, and the strange syllables he sometimes used, acciden-

tally in conversation or in naming animals at the zoölogical park. Mr. Ferris caused diligent inquiry to be made, but learned nothing. Makwa and his band had received their annual bounty, and were now far away in the wilds.

And sometimes now, in the twilight,

before Morris, the butler, has come in to light the lamps, little Jimmy tucks his legs under him in the big leather library chair

and dreams of the enchanted months. He sees once more the dark fringe of the forest, the swirl and glitter of the stream, the colors of the Indian encampment; he hears the dash of the rapids, the cries of beasts, the soft lisping chatter of the Ojibway language; he smells the freshness of balsam, the pungent wood smoke, the fragrance of new buckskin. One after another the events of the enchanted months rise before his eyes. He sees them all plainly, but without regret, for he is firmly convinced that they are in the hands of the Magician, and so he does not long for them as we long for past pleas-

ures that might possibly be repeated. But when it is quite dark, and the shadows jump strangely against the black bookcases just as in old times they did against the black forest, visionary things become real, and little Jimmy, staring into the fire, wonders whether he will ever see old Makwa, or Taw-kwo, or Asádi, or pretty little, brown little May-may-gwan again.