AMERICAN UNION.

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1903 February 1903

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Post-Office Bulletin.

Mails Close.

8 00 a m; D & C R R for Points North.
8 10 a m; Q A R R for Points West.
9.45 a m; Q A R R for Points East.
11:45 a m; Steamer for River Points.
1:00 p m; Stage for Preston.
1:00 p m. D & C R R for Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R for Points West.
6:20 p m. Q A R R for Points East.

Mails Arrive.

8:25 a m; Q A R R, from Points East.
10:10 a m; Q A R R, from Points West.
11:00 a m; Stage, from Preston.
11:30 a m; Steamer, from River Points.
11:45 m; D & C R R, from Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R, from Points East.
3:34 p m; Q A R R, from Points West.
7:45 p m; D & C R R, from Points North.

GENERAL DIRECTORY.

County Officials.

Judges of the Circuit Court—James A. Pearce, Chief Judge; Edwin H Brown and William R Martin, Associates Terms—jury, 1st Monday in April and October; non-jury, 2d Monday in January, 4th Monday in June.

Clerk of the Circuit Court—Charles W. Hobbs.

County Commissioners—James B. Wright, President; Wesley Jarrell and Daniel J. Zacharias.

Treasurer and Clerk to the Commissioners Charles H. Whitby.

Judges of the Orphans' Court—John A. Sigler, Chief Judge; Thomas L. Day and Jesse T. Dennis Associates.

Register of Wills, Robert J. Jump.

School Commissioners—Thomas W. Jones, President; Henry C. Fisher and Albert W. Sisk.

School Examiner and Secretary—W. S. Crouse.

State's Attorney—Albert G. Towers.

Sheriff—Isaac L. Dukes.

Professional and Business Cards.

ALBERT G. TOWERS.
State's Attorney for Caroline County,
Denton, Md.

T. PLINY FISHER,
LAW AND COLLECTIONS,
Denton, Md.

OSCAR CLARK,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
Denton, Md.
Collections and all professional business promptly attended to.

HARVEY L. COOPER,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
Denton, Md.
Close attention will be given to all business entrusted to my care.

HENRY K LEWIS, TALBN GOLDSBOROUGH
LEWIS & GOLDSBOROUGH,
ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW,
Denton, Md.
Will practice in the Courts of Caroline, Talbot and Queen Anne's Counties.

N. ALEX. HUTSON,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.
Denton, Md.
Will practice in the Courts of Caroline and adjacent counties. Pensions a specialty.

DR. SHERIDAN P. MANSHIP,
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON,
Denton, Md.
Residence Cor. 7th and Main Sts.

DR. ENOCH GEORGE,
PHYSICIAN, SURGEON & GYNÆCOLOGIST,
Denton, Md.

DR. P. R. FISHER,
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON,
Denton Md.

DR. ALEX. HARDCASTLE,
PHYSCIAN AND GYNECOLOGIST
Denton, Md.
Office Hours from 8 to 9 a.m.; 6 to 7 p.m.

JOHN W. CLARK,
AUCTIONEER,
Box 88, Denton, Md.
Will sell property in Caroline or any of the adjoining counties.

C. P. DUNNING,
CONSTABLE AND COLLECTOR,
Denton, Md

F. P. COVEY,
DEALER IN
Bone Phosphate and Lime.
Agent for the ÆTNA LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.
and Auctioneer,
AGNER, MARYLAND

FRED. R. OWENS,
ATTORNEY AT LAW,
Denton, Md.

WM. H. DEWEESE,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
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E. M. BAKER,
MERCHANT TAILOR,
1209 Light St., Baltimore, Md.

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The World Loves

A WINNER

So It Is Said

And we are trying to win you by fair dealing.

WE are now snugly fixed in the building formerly occupied by Wm. E Greenly, pretty well loaded up with all good things such as are useful in all families. It is useless to enumerate them, instead, we invite you to call and see.

CHECK SYSTEM

Then we are using the Check System with all who deal for cash, which entitles them to something of value in their family. Come and learn of this.

Full line of Groceries, sold as low as any can sell them. Finest line of Confectionery in the county either at wholesale or retail prices.

We call attention of merchants to the fact that we sell them as low as they can buy in the city, and save them freight; think of this. Finest line of Canned Goods you can select from.

One thing more. The Gold Medal Bakery is now turning out the best Bread, Cakes, Pies, Buns, etc., ever offered. Baked fresh daily. New line of goods. We hope to see you coming.

BUTTER AND EGGS TAKEN at market prices. Very truly,

FIELD & WILLIS
PROPRIETORS
GOLD MEDAL BAKERY
DENTON, MARYLAND

LOOK

We have just received a car load of

HIGH LIFE AND WHITE ROSE

Flour which we are selling at $4 00 and $4 25 per Barrel. Made from Spring Wheat and cannot be excelled. Try it and you will be convinced. While coming to see, bring your produce and receive best market prices.

We are also headquarters for prime clover seed, $6 90 a bushel.

J. W. STONEBRAKER,
TWO JOHNS, MD.
ALBERT HOWARD, Manager.

FINE Groceries

AT OUR NEW STAND

Corner of Main and Fifth Streets.

We are nicely fitted up for the accommodation of our customers with new goods of all kinds, and are prepared to serve you at short notice.

GROCERIES, PROVISIONS

are our specialties, and we are keeping up our reputation for handling the best

NOTIONS AND RIBBONS

For the accommodation of our lady friends we are giving special attention to this department and invite an inspection of our stock.

OYSTERS & LUNCH

A cozy lunch room adjoins our store where Oysters are served in all styles, and a full meal or lunch can be prepared at short notice.

MRS. JULIA DAY
DENTON, MD.

For the Spring Trade.

Strawberry Plants, thirty varieties; also Raspberry, Blackberry and Dewberry Plants; Apple, Peach, Pear, Plum and Ornamental Trees. 50,000 Early Cabbage Plants.

A. G. GELLETLY.
2-5] Williston, Md.

J. W. JOHNSON,
CONSTABLE AND COLLECTOR,
Concord, Md,

Colds

"I had a terrible cold and could hardly breathe. I then tried Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, and it gave me immediate relief."
W. C. Layton, Sidell, Ill.

How will your cough be tonight? Worse, probably. For it's first a cold, then a cough, then bronchitis or pneumonia, and at last consumption. Coughs always tend downward. Stop this downward tendency by taking Ayer's Cherry Pectoral.

Three sizes: 25c., 50c., $1. All druggists.

Consult your doctor. If he says take it, then do as he says. If he tells you not to take it, then don't take it. He knows. Leave it with him. We are willing.
J. C. AYER CO., Lowell, Mass.

ANOTHER HERO.

Let me tell you of a hero who has never
marched away,
With gay flags above him flying, to be
fearless in the fray:
He has never heard the rattle of the
rifles or the roar
Of the havoc-dealing cannon as the shells
go screaming o'er—
He is not a gallant soldier, and the world
knows not his name,
But, unlaured, unapplauded, he's a
hero, just the same.

Ah, the turkey was delicious that they
piled upon his plate,
And his sisters and his brothers chattered gayly as they ate.
With a thoughtful face he gently pushed
his white meat all aside
And he nibbled at the gizzard and a
wing, unsatisfied:
Then he slipped his bunch of raisins in
his pocket on the sly
And was sorry that he couldn't hide
away his piece of pie.

At the corner by the alley, where the
wind howled all the day,
Sat a pale boy at a window while his
mother sewed away,
And he held a bunch of raisins and a
wishbone that was bare,
Tasting still the tender white meat that
had clung so lately there.
I have told you of my hero; men may
never give him fame,
But I think he has a tablet up in heaven,
just the same.
—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

ON THE ISLAND.

By S. Rhett Roman.

THE water rippled in small waves, broke into a narrow line of foam, ran up a short way on the wide grey beach, then slid back into the ocean, to begin again its monotonous back-and-forth movement until, the tide turning, the wavelets would swell into breakers and thunder and roll on the hard sand.

A young woman, who seemed more suited to Trouville or Bar Harbor than to this wild, solitary spot, sat on the upturned keel of a boat, shipwrecked and buried in the shingle, just beyond the reach of the tides, half a century ago, and whose dimensions could not be guessed at, by the small portion still visible above the shifting, heavy white sand, and looked seaward musingly.

Marjorie Stanford pushed back the straw hat which had been shading her face, and let the setting sun shine full upon her, and the sea breeze blow at will among the light strands of curling bronze-brown hair escaped from the comb which held their rich masses in place on the shapely head, held as as a deer does when startled. Marjorie by all the rights of laws divine and indestructible, should have had some one by her side. Some one in masculine attire, having a sufficient amount of good looks, youth and brains, to correspond with those which a bountiful Providence had so liberally vouchsafed her. But she was alone. There was not a sign of life anywhere near. The long beach ran out on one side bare and solitary, curving off into a dim line and melting into the tints of sky and water. On the other, it ended abruptly where an arm of the sea separated the island from one closer in shore, on which cottages shone like white specks in the distance, and the walls of the old fort were barely visible.

Looking around at the immensity of the ocean, and the complete loneliness of the scene, Marjorie laughed ruefully, and thought what her numerous friends elsewhere would say could they but see her sitting on the rotten hull of an old wreck in this desolate place, with only the sea and a few sea gulls for company.

For Marjorie Stanford had been a bright and particular star in the firmament of fashion, under her aunt's, Mrs. Will Stanford's, guidance for various seasons, and had tasted the sweets of a varied and brilliant life in big cities and capitals, both at home and abroad.

Hers had been a great social success, and she had reigned royally over that small circle which rules the world and its rulers.

By reason of her very remarkable beauty, and that charm which American women possess par excellence, Marjorie had grown accustomed to the fascinations of life led by the women of fashion of our day, and the ceaseless adulation which surrounded her. The contrast was sharp with her present existence.

A white-breasted sea gull, curious to ascertain what this motionless figure so out of keeping with the serenity of the landscape, the sea beating its everlasting tattoo on the lonely shore, could be, circled down and rested on the swing of the billows, while gazing at Marjorie in fearless astonishment.

"Oh, you dear, free thing! How good it must be to soar off when the whim strikes you. To select your own resting place; not to be forced to count with accident, duty, pride, nor any other silly sentiment, but to ——"

The seabird, as if in answer, rose up with a sweep of its pinions, and giving a shrill cry, called its mate. From a far distance the bird winged its way shoreward, and meeting, they both settled down on the gently heaving waters of the channel, as it swept out seaward.

Marjorie laughed softly, but there was mingled regret and longing in her voice.

"You silly things! so, you are hampered by ties and shackles? You were not satisfied with the glorious right to live, each your own lives as you pleased, giving account to none, and responsible only to yourselves for what you pleased to do? You must needs fasten your own existence to that of another, and forever forswear the right to order your own destiny, live your life on your own lines, and for your own gratification?"

The sun slanting from the west must have sent a message to the sea gulls, for rising suddenly, and shaking the salt brine from their long pinions, they went swiftly seaward until they were swallowed up in the blues and greys of sky and water.

"Not being human, they may be good companions," Marjorie mused. "He may be so absorbed in the pleasing occupation of catching fish, that she may be relieved of his company most of the time, and she may find much pleasure in looking after the children. Perhaps they are a newly-married couple, they seem so fond of each other. He evidently can't do without her—for the time being. Very shortly, ca changera, unless they are quite different from us. Come, Turk, let us have a stroll and see if we can be good company for each other."

A big Newfoundland, who had been lying on the sand, got up and majestically paced by her side, while they strolled down the beach, and the evening light faded.

When it was quite dark they turned into a road, built high and firm with beaten shells, which ran towards a clump of wind-swept trees quite a distance back from the coast line of the island.

They sheltered, or rather surrounded a large, rambling, weather-beaten house, evidently inhabited, for lights streamed out from the open doors and windows, into the mild spring air. On its deep veranda sat an elderly gentleman in an armchair, clearly a confirmed invalid, whose thin, clear-cut features bore just enough resemblance to the contour of Marjorie's face, to proclaim him her father.

But it was a querulous and an evil face, one from which all kindliness—if there had ever been any—and intellectuality, were gone, extinguished and worn out by constant suffering and years of ill-health, which peered out at Marjorie.

"Late, as usual. Your society manners, I presume. You forgot I was waiting and it is past tea time," he said, with snarling emphasis, as she came up the steps.

"Late! Oh, no. There's quite half an hour yet before tea. I was walking on the beach with Turk," she answered, pleasantly.

Throwing her hat on the hall table, Marjorie went indoors to see about those ever-recurring, small duties, the prelude of the last dull meal of each day, cheerless occupations which brought neither pleasure nor a restful peace to those on the island.

What had brought Marjorie there? A curious, persistent thought, that whether he wished it or not, she, his daughter, should tend the querulous recluse, growing more morose yearly, who had sent her off, first to school, then to her aunt, seeming glad to be rid of a responsibility which was solely his, after the death of her mother, long years ago.

There were letters on the table. She read:

"Dear Marje—When am I to expect you back? It is simply absurd, your burying yourself alive in this barbaric way. Nor does William want you. I know him of old. He was always selfish and self-centered. Never gave a thought to anybody but himself. He is accustomed to Ann Dawson's care of him, and she knows his whims and crochets, and they both would be better pleased without you, I feel convinced.

"As for your sacrificing yourself, and shutting up yourself on that dismal island just to see that William's milk gruel is all right, and to let him sneer and growl at you, it is sheer Quixotic nonsense! You will grow thin and pale and old, and William will not even be grateful. I tell you I know him, child. We were brought up together, and a leopard does not change his spots, remember.

"The danger is, he may get used to seeing you around the house and refuse to consent to your leaving later on. He is as capricious as he is despotic. As it is, he doesn't care just now whether you leave him or not, and I know Ann Dawson would like you out of her way. So for heaven's sake pack your trunks and join me at once. Before going abroad we can spend a week or two in Canada. I know some one who is inconsolable at your sudden flight just at present. But you are well acquainted with 'notre monde,' and you know how many consolers crop up when the sufferer owns a few millions. Already Jeannie Carston thinks she is in your shoes. This century is too busy and overcrowded with play and pleasure as well as work to let people think much and long over any one thing or person. Write or wire me when to expect you. Now, for the heaven's sake, Marjorie, be sensible and come at once. Lovingly,

"CARRIE STANFORD."

"We will do our shopping in Paris."

Marjorie put it down with a smile and a sigh and took up another, whose strong, firm handwriting disclosed its masculine authorsrip. It read:

"You can have no conception of how much you are missed. If you had you would care at least a trifle for those you left so abruptly to shut yourself up on that horrible island. Your aunt has described it to me. If you are determined to remain there, I will run down to see you. Unless you positively object you may see me at any time should I learn that you have made up your mind to remain there. I am not writing what I think or feel, only what I propose doing. Faithfully,

"ANDREW PERRINGTON,"

A sharp voice calling, broke in on Marjorie's musing, as she slowly folded the letter and slipped it in its envelope.

And while sitting at table with her father, and listening to his querulous complaints, and usual abuse of his manager, who was "a d——m fool and knew nothing about Sea Island," so he declared, although the continuous successful results obtained from the fields stretching far back inland seemed to prove the contrary, Marjorie's thoughts were occupied with several queer conundrums. Why was she so averse to seeing Andrew Perrington? Of course he was a charming fellow. But Fannie Carston was welcome to the succession if she desired it—and the owner of those several millions.

Then again, being of better service, and quite undesired, why did she permit in cutting herself off from the enjoyable life she was accustomed to, and lead that of an anchorite, on this solitary sea girt island? Looking critically at her father, he seemed to be pathetically worn, and even in his grim snarling humor there was a suffering which appealed to her powerfully.

Marjorie was discovering strange and unsuspected depths to her nature, one she had hitherto thought quite absorbed in her idle, pleasurable life, in cotillons and chiffons.

Marjorie stopped to caress Turk, and glancing up found William Stanford's eyes fixed on her with a look she had not seen there before.

Marjorie's smile back had in it the charm so few could resist, and although her father rose and went slowly out of the room without speaking, she felt as if the horrible solitude surrounding her was broken.

"My poor darling, you must go without me this year," she wrote her aunt. "It may be that I am not wanted here, but I can make his life more tolerable, even against his will, and I will try the venture. The sea view is gorgeous. Turk and I luxuriate in the surf, and I am making quite a number of friends—among the sea gulls. Remember me when you are in the Paris shops. Elise has my measurements, you remember. The day may come when I will emerge from these solitudes and fly back to the dearest aunt in the world. Fondly.

"MARJORIE."

And Marjorie also answered the other letter.

"No, I cannot possibly go back to my dear, joyous life of pleasure and freedom, nor must you come here. Later you will be glad I am unkind and unappreciative to-day. It is quite solitary, but the sea and the winds are my friends, and the waves sing grand anthems, and I am always busy. Don't try to remember and you will soon forget. Yours, with many pleasant recollections,

"MARJORIE STANFORD."

The days and the weeks passed. Then months and years.

Marjorie's father, old and decrepit but not feeble, clings to her with a tenacious, exactiig affection which demands her presence day and night.

Beautiful, but graver, with a spiritualized expression not hers in the days of her social triumphs, Marjorie's many cares and occupations make hers a busy life indeed. Her moments of recreation are those when, slipping away, she goes slowly along the beach with Turk for a companion, when the tide is low, and her friends, the sea gulls, circle over the water or dip in the waves.

The post brought announcement cards on Tiffany paper. The marriage of Miss Fannie Carston to Mr. Andrew Bryon Perrington.

A slow flush spread over Marjorie's face as she read.—N. O. Times-Democrat.

Couldn't Be Bought.

It happened in the south—not the new south, but the old south, where they lived in the same old way, relates the Brooklyn Eagle.

The enterprising yankee thought he saw some "opportunities."

"This looks like good land," he commented.

"It is," replied the native, carelessly.

"But the people here don't make the most of it."

"They don't," admitted the native.

"I could make three times as much out of it as they do."

"You could if you could get it."

"Can't I get it?"

"Well, hardly."

"Not if I pay twice what it's worth to the present owners?"

"You couldn't buy it for ten times what it's worth to them."

"Why not?"

"Stranger," said the native, wearily, "you don't seem to quite get the hang of things here. If they sold they'd have to move away, wouldn't they?"

"Of course."

"Well, they're too lazy to move."

Entitled to Another Degree.

Prof. Simon Newcomb is unquestionably the oldest and most eminent of living American scientists. The degree of doctor of philosophy was conferred upon him recently by the University of Christiana. Previous to this he had received similar degrees from 12 different institutions including a D. D. from Yale, Columbia and Harvard.

An associate, complimenting him upon his honors, was surprised to learn that the professor still desired another degree to satisfy his ambition.

Curiosity drew forth the following explanation from Prof. Newcomb:

"Another degree should be conferred upon me for the remarkable feat performed in remembering all of my degrees."

A Dental Comment.

The wild wind blew o'er the Klondike vale,
Biting and blustering, fierce and cold.
The dentist smiled as he viewed the gale—
"The teeth of the storm have been filled
with gold."
—Judge.

Suspicious Symptoms.

Tiffington—I'm getting old.
Widdleton—Oh, no.
Tiffington—Yes, I am. I've begun to think that I look young for my years.
—Brooklyn Life.

NECESSARY EVILS.

We sometimes think that toil's a curse;
And yet conditions might be worse—
Is gilded ease a pleasure?
I think at times we all would shirk,
But while we're hale and stout it
Is not so bad a thing to work—
What should we do without it?

And money—that's just shining dross,
The root of sin and sorrow.
Too eagerly we mourn its loss,
To gain, steal, beg and borrow.
It's sordid, wretched, worthless trash,
There's little room to doubt it,
Still, it is good to have some cash—
What should we do without it?

And love is cause of ills untold;
It makes us lots of trouble,
In some respects it's worse than gold—
An iridescent bubble.
And still it raises us above
Our baser selves. To scout it
Is foolish, so we'll cling to love—
What should we do without it?
—Chicago Daily News.

The Swamp Tiger.

By Lewis B. Miller.

I HAVE worked at handle-making so long that the swampers down about where I live call me "Ax-handle Ike." But my chief occupation is trapping—trapping coon and mink and otter. All the swampy country of southeast Missouri still abounds in fur-bearing animals.

Besides my trapping and handle making, I usually try to preach on Sundays. My handle-making goes on all the year round, but trapping begins and ends with cold weather. Nature never clothes an animal with good fur except when it's absolutely needed.

When I have accumulated a considerable stock of furs and handles, I get somebody to haul me and them to the river or to the railroad, and then I run up to St. Louis and sell my stock. I have been going to St. Louis for years now, and the shops and factories that use my handles know they can depend on them.

There's still some large game in the swamps—deer and turkey and bear, and a good many panthers. I remember one time when a big panther came up out of the swamps and terrorized a whole settlement for a few months. That brute caused as much trouble and excitement as any four-legged thing I ever got acquainted with. Because he was so big and fierce we usually called him the tiger—the swamp tiger.

It happened a good many years ago, when I was a boy, living with my uncle on a tongue of land that ran out several miles into the swamps. The upland was too rocky and the swamp too sloppy to cultivate. But the few families that lived there were settled along the edge of the ridge, and had little farms between the two.

One day toward fall my aunt sent me over to Simpson's to borrow some bacon. I was still going barefoot, and had my trousers rolled nearly up to my knees, I recollect. I was seventeen years old, and as big as I am now. But everybody that felt like it went barefoot there in warm weather, even men 80 years old.

I crossed the ridge to Simpson's, and after talking with the boys till rather late, I borrowed a side of bacon—middling, we called it—and started for home, carrying it on my back. The middling was long and wide, but thin and rather light. Our gaunt, slab-sided swamp hogs never make thick meat. The bacon had been hanging in Simpson's smokehouse by two hickory withes, and I was carrying it by the same withes, one over each shoulder. There was a piece of tow cloth wrapped around it to keep it from greasing my shirt.

Dusk caught me three-quarters of a mile from home, and I heard what I thought was a woman calling. I didn't recognize the voice, but I had no doubt that it was Aunt Mat screaming at me. I had tarried longer at Simpson's than I ought to have done, and I felt certain she had got out of patience and started after me.

"Yes'm. I'm a-coming!" I shouted back. Then I hitched the bacon a little higher and hurried along the rocky road at a trot. The screams sounded angry—Aunt Mat didn't have a very gentle voice when she was out of temper.

Before long I heard another scream. Looking down toward the swamp, I saw not Aunt Mat, but some big animal coming up the open slope to meet me. He looked like a cat, but a cat as big as a cow. The curve of the land made it impossible for me to see him while he was on the ground, but whenever he jumped I could see him plainly enough. Every jump must have carried him eight or ten feet into the air; and now and then he would stop and give one of those loud, womanish screams.

I started to run back along that rocky road as fast as I could. I couldn't step far enough. My hat flew off, but it never occurred to me to drop the bacon. Not far back the road forked. One fork crossed to Simpson's, the other led up our side of the ridge to Uncle Jimmy White's. It was two miles back to Simpson's, and only a mile to where White lived. So I took the fork to Uncle Jimmy's.

I don't recollect feeling that bacon touch me after I got well under way. I guess it stood out straight behind, I flew so fast. The country was partly covered with scattering bushes, and the road was rocky and soon got dark; but little time did I lose for rocks or darkness.

The panther kept right after me. Every scream sounded nearer. If I hadn't had half a mile the start, the brute would have caught me. As it was, the moment I jumped Uncle Jimmy's fence the tiger screamed not 60 feet behind.

Any other time I wouldn't have dared to go near Uncle Jimmy's without calling, "Hello!" He had the fiercest dog in the neighborhood—a dog that would try to drag a man off his horse. But this time that dog didn't even growl; he was cowering against the wall, shivering and whining like a frightened puppy.

As I cleared the fence I saw light shining through the cracks. I made a straight dash for the clapboard door. And when the latch broke and the door flew in, I went through like a rock out of a sling.

Inside I stubbled my toe and tumbled sprawling on the floor. The middling flew over my head. Uncle Jimmy afterward told everybody that the whole side of bacon hit the farther wall so hard that it left a greasy picture of itself on the logs. Uncle Jimmy was a great joker.

The old man and his wife were frightened out of their wits. They had heard the screams, and thought for a few moments that the tiger had broken in on them. They were just getting ready for him. Uncle Jimmy was loading his rifle as fast as he could, and Aunt Polly, his wife, was trying to light a pine knot at the fire.

While I was scrambling to my feet, Uncle Jimmy sprang forward, slammed the door shut and propped it with a stick of wood, but not before that dog of his had sneaked in and crawled under the bed.

Scarcely was the door shut when the tiger let out another scream, close by. Uncle Jimmy was running about the room, dragging his rifle by the muzzle. He had a bullet rammed down, and was searching every shelf in the cabin for a box of caps. Pretty soon the panther screamed again, behind the cabin now. Afterward we heard another scream, farther off.

By this time Uncle Jimmy had found his caps, and Aunt Polly had her pine-knot blazing. When they were both ready, Uncle Jimmy threw open the door, and after looking about cautiously, cocked his rifle and stepped out. I offered to carry the torch, but I wasn't very sorry when Aunt Polly insisted that she knew better how to hold it.

Uncle Jimmy tramped about the yard, with his wife at his heels, holding the pine-knot above her head. If the tiger was near, the torch would make his eyes shine, and Uncle Jimmy would put a bullet right between them. He was a dead shot.

I stood in the door, rubbing my back. The man with his gun and the woman with her torch moved slowly round the cabin. Once Uncle Jimmy thought he discovered the tiger's eyes, but before he could take aim they disappeared. It wasn't long before we heard a scream down in the woods. The beast was going away.

I stayed in the cabin a while; then Uncle Jimmy took his rifle and escorted me and my bacon home. I was afraid to go by myself.

That was the first time the swamp tiger had been seen or heard on Chinkapin Ridge; but it wasn't the last time by any means. Even we boys were afraid to go far to gather nuts, and the women and children hardly dared poke their heads outdoors. The men carried guns, especially at night. The tiger didn't show himself in broad daylight, although he was seen occasionally at dusk.

Meanwhile he was living on the fat of the land. He had feasted on our hogs and calves, and he even dragged down and killed two full-grown cows. He was a giant of his kind, and his size made him fearless.

We didn't know what became of the tiger during the daytime, but we supposed he must retreat into the swamp. One day Tim Watson saw him lying on top of a big log in the woods, asleep in the sunshine. Tim had his rifle, but instead of blazing away, he stole off and went for help. When he got back with several men and dogs, they caught a glimpse of the tiger as he jumped off the log and disappeared. The dogs growled and turned their hair the wrong way; but they wouldn't follow the trail. Trust a dog to know what not to attack!

Things went on from bad to worse along Chinkapin Ridge. Every morning some animal was missing, and the half-devoured remains were generally found. One evening at dusk the tiger dashed up to Mason's cow-pen, grabbed a rooting pig, and carried the squealing thing off under its owner's eyes. Three different men tried to kill the big brute when he came prowling around their houses at night, but their shots didn't take effect; and the belief got abroad that the panther's skin was too thick and tough for an ordinary rifle-bullet to penetrate. That made him more dreadful than ever. Several times parties gathered to hunt him down; but the dogs either wouldn't or couldn't follow a cold trail.

Along in December the first light snow fell. That was the signal for a general gathering. All the men on Chinkapin Ridge, and all the boys big enough to use guns, came together for a rousing hunt. My uncle was in the party, and so was I. Every fellow had tried to get the gun with the biggest bore. And I remember that we were all bragging about what terrific loads we had put in. Some had rammed down two or three big balls or slugs, and others enormous charges of buckshot. I was carrying a musket loaded with balls.

It wasn't long after noon when we started out, and an hour or two later we struck the trail, made in the snow the night before. He printed the biggest panther tracks I ever laid eyes on.

Our party followed the trail round and round over the country. By and by we came to where the tiger had killed a hog. From there the tracks led down into the woods and through the woods into a ravine, and up the ravine to its head, where they disappeared into a hole under some rocks.

Besides the tracks leading in there were others leading out. But we felt pretty sure that the tiger was in his lair. The dogs wouldn't go near the hole and they didn't bark. But they kept their backs bristled and watched the hole and growled. Somebody got a long stick and poked it into the hole, but he jumped back suddenly, for a warning growl came from under the rocks.

Now we knew that the tiger was at home, and every man and boy of us—there were 12 or 15 in all—cocked his gun and pointed it at the hole. We expected the tiger to come out, and stood ready to make short work of him, but he didn't show himself; and before we could devise any way to stir him out night came on.

"Let's smoke him, boys," somebody proposed. And while some of us stood guard around the tiger's den the others went to piling dead brush against the hole. When there was a good-sized pile we set fire to it.

The snowy brush burned slowly and smoked a great deal. As the fire began to crackle the tiger began to growl, and when the smoke worked into the hole he growled louder. My uncle called out:

"Be ready, boys! It's either come through that brush pile or suffocate; and he'll come through the brush pile."

We backed off several yards, and every gun was aimed at the point where the tiger was expected to appear. It was dark by this time—pitch dark everywhere except around the fire. For a time we could hear the tiger growling under the rocks.

We waited and waited, but still he didn't show himself. The fire burned among the loosely piled brush until the whole pile was ablaze. Finally somebody, Simpson, I believe it was, spoke up:

"He's smothered to death, boys. That's why we don't hear him any more. No animal could live in that hole with that fire in the mouth of it. He was so afraid of the fire that he would rather suffocate than come through it."

After standing guard a while longer, we all agreed that the tiger must be dead. None of us knew that there was a little cave under those rocks.

Now we closed up around the fire and stood with our gun stocks on the ground, warming ourselves. We felt jolly over getting rid of our troublesome, dangerous enemy, and were going to pull straws for the skin. In fact, Simpson was arranging the straws, when suddenly something happened to the fire. As nearly as I can describe it, that blazing brush heap exploded!

There was a roar behind it, and the next moment the brush was flying, and the panther's frightful form came crashing through. As the big, savage brute burst out of the fire he knocked one man down, and two or three more fell over one another trying to get out of the way. I jumped back to dodge the flying fire and stumbled over a dog.

The dog howled and as I tumbled backward the hammer of my musket struck something and the old musket exploded with a roar. The load of nails went off through the woods, but I thought I was killed.

The second leap carried the tiger away from the fire and another carried him into the darkness. About this time the men recovered from their panic and began to shoot; and they kept banging away down the ravine. The heavily loaded guns spurted fire and roared till every report seemed to split the very trees as it went echoing through the woods.

When the excitement was past we gathered around the fire again. Most of us felt rather sheepish over the escape of the tiger; but several declared that he must be mortally wounded and that we'd find him dead somewhere. But as we couldn't track him in the dark, we all returned to our homes.

The next morning we came back and took up the trail. We found several badly scarred trees; but there wasn't any blood on the snow, or any other evidence that the tiger had been hit. In fact, there was pretty good evidence that he wasn't hurt at all, for we tracked him as far as we could into the swamp, and the last we saw of his trail he was still going, 15 feet at a jump. He must have been pretty badly scorched and he was certainly badly scared.

For a year we half expected him to come back, but he didn't, and after that night we never heard of him again. I suppose his experience with the fire convinced him that life on the uplands wasn't very attractive. So he went back to his native swamps and stayed there.—Youth's Companion.

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