

THE RESCUE

THE MOUNTAIN'S FAITH

At eventide, upon a dreary sea,
I watched a mountain rear its hoary head
To look with steady gaze in the near heaven.
The earth was cold and still. No sound was heard
But the dream-voices of the sleeping sea.
The mountain drew its gray cloud-mantle close,
Like Roman senator, erect and old,
Raising aloft an earnest brow and calm,
With upward look intent of steadfast faith.
The sky was dim; no glory-light shone forth
To crown the mountain's faith; which faltered not,
But, ever hopeful, waited patiently.

At morn I looked again. Expectance sat
Of imminent glory on the mountain's brow.
And, in a moment, lo! the glory *came!*
An angel's hand rolled back a crimson cloud.
Deep, rose-red light of wondrous tone and power—
A crown of matchless splendor—graced its head,
Majestic, kingly, pure as Heaven, yet warm
With earthward love. A motion, like a heart
With rich blood beating, seemed to sway and pulse,
With might of ecstasy, the granite peak.
A poem grand it was of Love Divine—
An anthem, sweet and strong, of praise to God—
A victory-peal from barren fields of death.
Its gaze was heavenward still, but earthward too—
For Love seeks not her own, and joy is full,
Only when freest given. The sun shone forth,
And now the mountain doffed its ruby crown
For one of diamonds. Still the light streamed down;
No longer chill and bleak, the morning glowed
With warmth and light, and clouds of fiery hue
Mantled the crystal glacier's chilly stream,
And all the landscape throbbed with sudden joy.

II

THE RESCUE

MUIR was the first to awake
from his trance. Like Schil-
ler's king in "The Diver,"
"Nothing could slake his wild thirst
of desire."

"The sunset," he cried; "we must
have the whole horizon."

Then he started running along the
ledge like a mountain goat, working
to get around the vertical cliff above
us to find an ascent on the other
side. He was soon out of sight, al-
though I followed as fast as I could.
I heard him shout something, but
could not make out his words. I
know now he was warning me
of a dangerous place. Then I came
to a sharp-cut fissure which lay

across my path—a gash in the rock, as if one of the Cyclops had struck it with his axe. It sloped very steeply for some twelve feet below, opening on the face of the precipice above the glacier, and was filled to within about four feet of the surface with flat, slaty gravel. It was only four or five feet across, and I could easily have leaped it had I not been so tired. But a rock the size of my head projected from the slippery stream of gravel. In my haste to overtake Muir I did not stop to make sure this stone was part of the cliff, but stepped with springing force upon it to cross the fissure. Instantly the stone melted away beneath my feet, and I shot with it down towards the precipice. With my peril sharp upon me I cried out as I whirled on my face, and struck out both hands to grasp the rock on either side.

Falling forward hard, my hands struck the walls of the chasm, my arms were twisted behind me, and instantly both shoulders were dislocated. With my paralyzed arms flopping helplessly above my head, I slid swiftly down the narrow chasm. Instinctively I flattened down on the sliding gravel, digging my chin and toes into it to check my descent; but not until my feet hung out over the edge of the cliff did I feel that I had stopped. Even then I dared not breathe or stir, so precarious was my hold on that treacherous shale. Every moment I seemed to be slipping inch by inch to the point when all would give way and I would go whirling down to the glacier.

After the first wild moment of panic when I felt myself falling, I do not remember any sense of fear. But I know what it is to have a thousand thoughts flash through the

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brain in a single instant—an anguished thought of my young wife at Wrangell, with her imminent motherhood; an indignant thought of the insurance companies that refused me policies on my life; a thought of wonder as to what would become of my poor flocks of Indians among the islands; recollections of events far and near in time, important and trivial; but each thought printed upon my memory by the instantaneous photography of deadly peril. I had no hope of escape at all. The gravel was rattling past me and piling up against my head. The jar of a little rock, and all would be over. The situation was too desperate for actual fear. Dull wonder as to how long I would be in the air, and the hope that death would be instant—that was all. Then came the wish that Muir would come before I fell, and take a message to my wife.



ONE OF THE MARVELOUS ARRAY OF LAKES

Suddenly I heard his voice right above me. "My God!" he cried. Then he added, "Grab that rock, man, just by your right hand."

I gurgled from my throat, not daring to inflate my lungs, "My arms are out."

There was a pause. Then his voice rang again, cheery, confident, unexcited, "Hold fast; I'm going to get you out of this. I can't get to you on this side; the rock is sheer. I'll have to leave you now and cross the rift high up and come down to you on the other side by which we came. Keep cool."

Then I heard him going away, whistling "The Blue Bells of Scotland," singing snatches of Scotch songs, calling to me, his voice now receding, as the rocks intervened, then sounding louder as he came out on the face of the cliff. But in me hope surged at full tide. I enter-

tained no more thoughts of last messages. I did not see how he could possibly do it, but he was John Muir, and I had seen his wonderful rock-work. So I determined not to fall and made myself as flat and heavy as possible, not daring to twitch a muscle or wink an eyelid, for I still felt myself slipping, slipping down the greasy slate. And now a new peril threatened. A chill ran through me of cold and nervousness, and I slid an inch. I suppressed the growing shivers with all my will. I would keep perfectly quiet till Muir came back. The sickening pain in my shoulders increased till it was torture, and I could not ease it.

It seemed like hours, but it was really only about ten minutes before he got back to me. By that time I hung so far over the edge of the precipice that it seemed impossible that I could last another second.

Now I heard Muir's voice, low and steady, close to me, and it seemed a little below.

"Hold steady," he said. "I'll have to swing you out over the cliff."

Then I felt a careful hand on my back, fumbling with the waistband of my pants, my vest and shirt, gathering all in a firm grip. I could see only with one eye and that looked upon but a foot or two of gravel on the other side.

"Now!" he said, and I slid out of the cleft with a rattling shower of stones and gravel. My head swung down, my impotent arms dangling, and I stared straight at the glacier, a thousand feet below. Then my feet came against the cliff.

"Work downwards with your feet."

I obeyed. He drew me close to him by crooking his arm and as my head came up past his level he caught

me by my collar with his teeth! My feet struck the little two-inch shelf on which he was standing, and I could see Muir, flattened against the face of the rock and facing it, his right hand stretched up and clasping a little spur, his left holding me with an iron grip, his head bent sideways, as my weight drew it. I felt as alert and cool as he.

"I've got to let go of you," he hissed through his clenched teeth. "I need both hands here. Climb upward with your feet."

How he did it, I know not. The miracle grows as I ponder it. The wall was almost perpendicular and smooth. My weight on his jaws dragged him outwards. And yet, holding me by his teeth as a panther her cub and clinging like a squirrel to a tree, he climbed with me straight up ten or twelve feet, with only the help of my iron-shod feet scrambling

on the rock. It was utterly impossible, yet he did it!

When he landed me on the little shelf along which we had come, my nerve gave way and I trembled all over. I sank down exhausted, Muir only less tired, but supporting me.

The sun had set; the air was icy cold and we had no coats. We would soon chill through. Muir's task of rescue had only begun and no time was to be lost. In a minute he was up again, examining my shoulders. The right one had an upward dislocation, the ball of the humerus resting on the process of the scapula, the rim of the cup. I told him how, and he soon snapped the bone into its socket. But the left was a harder proposition. The luxation was downward and forward, and the strong, nervous reaction of the muscles had pulled the head of the bone deep into my armpit. There

was no room to work on that narrow ledge. All that could be done was to make a rude sling with one of my suspenders and our handkerchiefs, so as to both support the elbow and keep the arm from swinging.

Then came the task to get down that terrible wall to the glacier, by the only practicable way down the mountain that Muir, after a careful search, could find. Again I am at loss to know how he accomplished it. For an unencumbered man to descend it in the deepening dusk was a most difficult task; but to get a tottery, nerve-shaken, pain-wracked cripple down was a feat of positive wonder. My right arm, though in place, was almost helpless. I could only move my forearm; the muscles of the upper part simply refusing to obey my will. Muir would let himself down to a lower shelf, brace himself, and I would get my right hand

against him, crawl my fingers over his shoulder until the arm hung in front of him, and falling against him, would be eased down to his standing ground. Sometimes he would pack me a short distance on his back. Again, taking me by the wrist, he would swing me down to a lower shelf, before descending himself. My right shoulder came out three times that night, and had to be reset.

It was dark when we reached the base; there was no moon and it was very cold. The glacier provided an operating table, and I lay on the ice for an hour while Muir, having slit the sleeve of my shirt to the collar, tugged and twisted at my left arm in a vain attempt to set it. But the ball was too deep in its false socket, and all his pulling only bruised and made it swell. So he had to do up the arm again, and tie it tight to my body. It must have been near mid-

night when we left the foot of the cliff and started down the mountain. We had ten hard miles to go, and no supper, for the hardtack had disappeared ere we were half-way up the mountain. Muir dared not take me across the glacier in the dark; I was too weak to jump the crevasses. So we skirted it and came, after a mile, to the head of a great slide of gravel, the fine moraine matter of the receding glacier. Muir sat down on the gravel; I sat against him with my feet on either side and my arm over his shoulder. Then he began to hitch and kick, and presently we were sliding at great speed in a cloud of dust. A full half-mile we flew, and were almost buried when we reached the bottom of the slide. It was the easiest part of our trip.

Now we found ourselves in the canyon, down which tumbled the glacial stream, and far beneath the ridge

along which we had ascended. The sides of the canyon were sheer cliffs.

"We'll try it," said Muir. "Sometimes these canyons are passable."

But the way grew rougher as we descended. The rapids became falls and we often had to retrace our steps to find a way around them. After we reached the timber-line, some four miles from the summit, the going was still harder, for we had a thicket of alders and willows to fight. Here Muir offered to make a fire and leave me while he went forward for assistance, but I refused. "No," I said, "I'm going to make it to the boat."

All that night this man of steel and lightning worked, never resting a minute, doing the work of three men, helping me along the slopes, easing me down the rocks, pulling me up cliffs, dashing water on me when I grew faint with the pain;

and always cheery, full of talk and anecdote, cracking jokes with me, infusing me with his own indomitable spirit. He was eyes, hands, feet, and heart to me—my caretaker, in whom I trusted absolutely. My eyes brim with tears even now when I think of his utter self-abandon as he ministered to my infirmities.

About four o'clock in the morning we came to a fall that we could not compass, sheer a hundred feet or more. So we had to attack the steep walls of the canyon. After a hard struggle we were on the mountain ridges again, traversing the flower pastures, creeping through openings in the brush, scrambling over the dwarf fir, then down through the fallen timber. It was half-past seven o'clock when we descended the last slope and found the path to Glenora. Here we met a straggling party

of whites and Indians just starting out to search the mountain for us.

As I was coming wearily up the teetering gang-plank, feeling as if I couldn't keep up another minute, Dr. Kendall stepped upon its end, barring my passage, bent his bushy white brows upon me from his six feet of height, and began to scold:

"See here, young man; give an account of yourself. Do you know you've kept us waiting——"

Just then Captain Lane jumped forward to help me, digging the old Doctor of Divinity with his elbow in the stomach and nearly knocking him off the boat.

"Oh, hell!" he roared. "Can't you see the man's hurt?"

Mrs. Kendall was a very tall, thin, severe-looking old lady, with face lined with grief by the loss of her children. She never smiled. She

had not gone to bed at all that night, but walked the deck and would not let her husband or the others sleep. Soon after daylight she began to lash the men with the whip of her tongue for their "cowardice and inhumanity" in not starting at once to search for me.

"Mr. Young is undoubtedly lying mangled at the foot of a cliff, or else one of those terrible bears has wounded him; and you are lolling around here instead of starting to his rescue. For shame!"

When they objected that they did not know where we had gone, she snapped: "Go everywhere until you find him."

Her fierce energy started the men we met. When I came on board she at once took charge and issued her orders, which everybody jumped to obey. She had blankets spread on the floor of the cabin and laid me on

them. She obtained some whisky from the captain, some water, porridge and coffee from the steward. She was sitting on the floor with my head in her lap, feeding me coffee with a spoon, when Dr. Kendall came in and began on me again:

"Suppose you had fallen down that precipice, what would your poor wife have done? What would have become of your Indians and your new church?"

Then Mrs. Kendall turned and thrust her spoon like a sword at him. "Henry Kendall," she blazed, "shut right up and leave this room. Have you no sense? Go instantly, I say!" And the good Doctor went.

My recollections of that day are not very clear. The shoulder was in a bad condition—swollen, bruised, very painful. I had to be strengthened with food and rest, and Muir called from his sleep of exhaustion,

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so that with four other men he could pull and twist that poor arm of mine for an hour. They got it into its socket, but scarcely had Muir got to sleep again before the strong, nervous twitching of the shoulder dislocated it a second time and seemingly placed it in a worse condition than before. Captain Lane was now summoned, and with Muir to direct, they worked for two or three hours. Whisky was poured down my throat to relax my stubborn, pain-convulsed muscles. Then they went at it with two men pulling at the towel knotted about my wrist, two others pulling against them, foot braced to foot, Muir manipulating my shoulder with his sinewy hands, and the stocky Captain, strong and compact as a bear, with his heel against the yarn ball in my armpit, takes me by the elbow and says, "I'll set it or pull the arm off!"



GLACIER—STICKEEN VALLEY

Muir, fresh and enthusiastic as ever, was the pilot of the party across the moraine and upon the great ice mountain

Well, he almost does the latter. I am conscious of a frightful strain, a spasm of anguish in my side as his heel slips from the ball and kicks in two of my ribs, a snap as the head of the bone slips into the cup—then kindly oblivion.

I was awakened about five o'clock in the afternoon by the return of the whole party from an excursion to the Great Glacier at the Boundary Line. Muir, fresh and enthusiastic as ever, had been the pilot across the moraine and upon the great ice mountain; and I, wrapped like a mummy in linen strips, was able to join in his laughter as he told of the big D.D.'s heroics, when, in the middle of an acre of alder brush, he asked indignantly, in response to the hurry-up calls: "Do you think I'm going to leave my wife in this forest?"

One overpowering regret — one

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only—abides in my heart as I think back upon that golden day with John Muir. He could, and did, go back to Glenora on the return trip of the *Cassiar*, ascend the mountain again, see the sunset from its top, make charming sketches, stay all night and see the sunrise, filling his cup of joy so full that he could pour out entrancing descriptions for days. While I—well, with entreating arms about one's neck and pleading, tearful eyes looking into one's own, what could one do but promise to climb no more? But my lifelong lamentation over a treasure forever lost, is this: "I never saw the sunset from that peak."

THE VOYAGE