

Lura of the Northland

A Springtime Romance of the Big Outdoors

By ROBERT E. PINKERTON

CHAPTER I. Left to Perish.

MERTON BOYD loosened his belt and experienced the first sensation of relief in two days. He had found that lightning did not diminish his hunger, and besides it had been decidedly uncomfortable.

But loosening it did not bring new strength, and he still stumbled and dragged his feet as he made his way along the lake shore. Five minutes after he had slipped out several holes in his belt he had forgotten all about it and was again plodding aimlessly, blindly, half-consciously.

He had been in that condition since noon. He had been lost since early the previous morning. Except for a light breakfast, he had had nothing to eat for forty-eight hours, and he had not slept the night before because of the cold.

The sun was within an hour of setting when he struck a trail. For a few yards he walked on. Then the smoother going, by contrast with the rocks and bogs and windfalls and thick brush of the endless hours behind him, brought sudden realization that here was an evidence of the presence of man.

The weariness and the hunger were forgotten. The long hours of the last two days and a night were a nightmare. He was now awake. He ran on, exultant. He grinned so hard the deepening wrinkles cracked his wind-hardened cheeks, and he grinned harder when it hurt.

And then he emerged from the thick brush to the barren shore of a lake. The trail ran out to the water's edge, spread rap-like, and was gone. That was all. Except for a charred stick thrust into the moss, there was no other sign that a man had ever been there.

Merton's spirits fell as quickly as they had soared. The weariness, the hunger, the aching muscles, made themselves felt more keenly than before.

Then he thought of the other end of the trail. He knew now it was only a portage, a trail which might not be traveled again until the next summer. But while there was a chance, he must take it. He turned and walked slowly back.

Once, where the trail dipped into a swamp, he saw the imprint of moccasins. Side by side they were, one larger than the other, but he was so large as the impression his own feet made in the thin coating of mud thawed by the mid-day sun, they appeared so fresh that Merton looked up almost expecting to see some one.

But the footprints were pointed toward the lake he had just left. Whoever had made them had gone on, leaving no other sign.

Slowly Merton went back. He reached the place where he had first struck the trail. From there he walked carefully, watching closely for tracks. Twice more he found them, the small prints and the larger ones, and then again he suddenly came out on the shore of a lake. It was the lake he had followed in the morning. The trail ended where the water began.

The complete hopelessness of his situation struck him with full force. Without food, without even a match, without any knowledge of where he was other than that it was more miles than he knew from civilization, there was nothing to do but wait and die.

Oh, don't think it was so bad. They have food, and the Indians will know how to take care of him.

"Yes, you each had a guide, you know, to do the packing and the paddling."

The girl looked up incredulously from her cooking.

"Do you mean," she asked, "that you had Indians to do your work for you?"

"Of course."

"The girl, after busying herself with the preparation of the meal for five minutes, paused suddenly and asked: 'Where were you doing when we came here?'"

"I had just found this trail. It was the first sign of a human being I had seen since yesterday morning."

"And you had no idea where you were going?"

"None at all. I found this lake last night and have been following it all day."

"The girl poured a handful of tea into a kettle. As she removed it from the blaze and looked at him again, Merton saw that her frank curiosity had given way to cold calculation. There was also a slight doubt in her eyes."

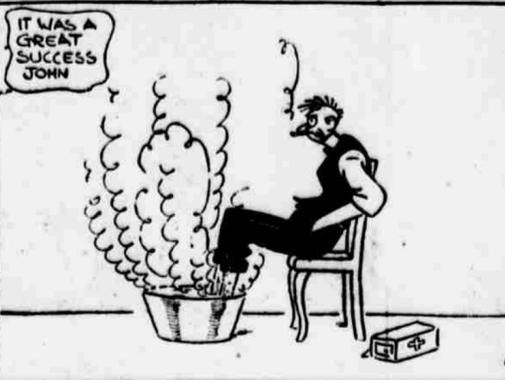
He resented the close scrutiny. He returned the girl's eyes only so coldly as to hurt her. He could not die so miserably. Faith is a wonderful thing—faith and life.

And then they came. He first heard them, the rustling of the spruce needles. He waited eagerly. The brush parted, but Merton did not move from his seat.

For, emerging upon the lake shore, came a girl. Across the top of her forehead was the broad strap of a tomahawk. Suspended from this was a large, bulky pack.

Merton sprang to his feet in amazement. Hat in hand, he stepped forward.

The Day of Rest By Maurice Kettner



IT WAS A GREAT SUCCESS JOHN

REALLY MARVELLOUS!

SO EXALTING!

SO INSPIRING!

HOW IS MR. JOHN?

NOT VERY WELL - HE MARCHED IN THE PREPARATION PARADE AND HIS FEET WERE NOT PREPARED

PERFECTLY BEAUTIFUL!

felt, in the girl's questions and in her frank scrutiny, and undercurrent of suspicion, a doubt of what he would tell her. Further, she had been candid in her questions, but she had not volunteered anything about herself. While he was busy with these thoughts the girl's eyes were completed and the canoe set in the water and loaded.

CHAPTER II. Abandoned—Why? MERTON'S amazement quickly turned to anger, anger and resentment, at this monstrous injustice. What were the girl's reasons for abandoning him to a death by starvation, she had not been fair, had not given him a chance to explain himself.

If a beautiful opera singer were in love with you, if you had all the funds of a bank at your disposal, if the President of a republic were your chum— You might or might not let yourself get into such a mess as did the hero of

A Man of Mark

BY ANTHONY HOPE

Next Week's Complete Novel in The Evening World

It is a story that will set your heart to beating faster, and it is by the man who wrote "The Prisoner of Zenda."

thrown him and Lawrie Saiter had come to the rescue with the pilot Merton join him in the Hudson Bay trip.

But even Marcia Kerr was driven from Merton's mind as the second afternoon wore on. The desire for food, for rest, for warmth, became an obsession. He did not know where he was going, yet instinctively he felt close to the shore. The heat of his breath was so great that only the desire to live brought progress, forced step after step when to move at all meant torture.

When Merton's head did clear he looked anxiously for some sign of the girl in the canoe, or of the "One Post" of which she had spoken. It was in one of these lucid moments that just at dusk when pressing aside some brush, he stumbled over four casks. For an instant he believed that his delirium had returned, but the next moment he saw casks? Then he bent over and felt of them.

The reason for their being there was an inexplicable to Merton as his thoughts turned to the casks, then more closely. There was no label to indicate the nature of their contents. But the last cask he tipped over had been leaking, and he caught the odor of whiskey.

In his perplexity Merton stood up and looked around. The lake was not more than thirty feet from him and, through the brush, he thought he saw a trail. He hurried down to the water and along the shore until he found a portage. And the first thing he saw was the imprint of the girl's and the Indian's moccasins. He stepped quickly into the brush, and the men showed away.

He started he felt a touch on his arm and turned to find that the man in the stern, the young fellow who had favored leaving him, was holding out a paddle. Merton grasped it eagerly, for it was very cold and, despite his weariness, it was necessary that he exercise to keep warm.

The canoe was headed out across the lake as the men spoke. Merton died in silence. No shore was in sight. The sky was clear, but there was no moon. The cold bit more keenly as the miles slipped by. Merton paddled as best his strength permitted, but even then the chill gripped his legs and feet until, in a cramped position they were, he stopped to rest and to warm his numb fingers by thrusting them beneath his coat and under his armpits. He found his paddle coated with ice.

The journey seemed endless to the weakened, bewildered young man. The silence of his companions was as sinister as their breath, as though they would travel thus before he could find a place in which to rest and sleep he did not know. Gradually the cold became a semi-delirium like that of the afternoon.

It seemed hours afterward when the men spoke again. "Better not take a chance, Merton."

"That's what I was thinking," Merton stopped paddling and waited breathless. "Were they going to leave him?"

"That third island from the end, the one next to Porcupine Island. 'We'll stop there,' continued the man in the bow."

"To Merton it was a death sentence. He was to be placed on an island where he would starve. The men would be as good as dead as though they were to shoot him."

The knowledge of what they intended to do paralyzed him. He could not see the way out. He was incapable, in his weakened condition of resistance. Before these two men he was powerless. Apathetically he waited as the canoe was turned to starboard. The men spoke carefully the canoe men brought the craft up beside a flat rock.

"Get in," growled the stern paddler.

Slowly and in great pain Merton crawled ashore. He straightened his numb legs and stood up. His mind refused to work. He felt as if the end had already come.

"Get in," growled the stern paddler. "The men ignored him completely and began to take things from their craft and carry them back to the shore. Several trips back and forth they picked up the paddles."

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