FOR THE YOUNGER JUNIORS

SOME SHORT STORIES BY JUNIOR WRITERS

One Winter Night

WALTER J. HELD

The evening was closing in as I followed my sister down the narrow path through the pasture that skirted the creek, where the frogs were beginning their lonesome cries. We had been to visit an old Scotch woman whose farm adjoined ours. As we had stayed a little later than usual we were hurrying home before our mother should become alarmed. My sister walked in advance, as became her three years' seniority, and I, holding on to the hem of her dress skirt, cast watchful eyes to the rear and to the right and left. It was late summer and the wild asters grew on each side of the narrow path nearly as high as my 6 year old head. As we neared our home we could see our cousin, a strong country girl who stopped with us to assist our mother, coming to meet us. She tried to look the same as usual, but our sharp childish eyes noted an ill concealed nervousness on her part. However, I felt very safe in the grasp of Maria's hand, though she was scolding us for overstaying our time.

As we reached the top of a little rise in the ground I was astounded to see a camp fire burning on the other side of the creek by the dam, where the tall old elm trees grew. We could see shadowy forms grouped around. It was our first sight of a campfire and we were greatly excited to see people and horses making themselves at home on our father's land. In answer to our questions, Maria told us that a little while before sunset a band of Indians had sought permission to camp for the night there. They were on their way to a distant agency. They had bought some pork of my father and were now cooking and eating.

We had never seen an Indian, as this part of the northwest had been settled a long time. We watched from our window until sleep overtook us, but the Indians were very quiet. The campfire died down and dim shadowy forms were all stretched out in sleep. In the early morning we heard them galloping by. One dismounted and left the clean white cloth that the salt pork had been wrapped in hanging on a rose bush by the gate.

After that we were not allowed to play very far from the house, and gradually rumors would reach us of Indian uprisings in distant parts of the state. But my father would not credit these stories, pointing out the facts of the thickly settled part we lived in, frequent villages and a railroad within a hundred miles. But my mother, who was of a timid nature, had forebodings, especially at night, for my father's business took him away from home a great deal. As winter settled down with its short, dark day, Mrs. Eppleson, the Scotch neighbor, would come over and stay of nights, so with Maria and our mother we children would feel quite safe.

But there came a never to be forgotten night of terror. It had been cold all day, and no one had passed along the road since early morning. As night closed down, we were glad to gather around the fire and listen to the stories told by Mrs. Eppleson and Maria. It was our mother's habit to take frequent looks out of the windows, so on one of these look out rounds as she emerged from the pantry, she said smilingly, though her face was pale with fear, "girls, I wish you would look out of the pantry window, and tell me what you think that is down by the haystack." We all made a rush for the pantry window, Maria joking, to quell our childish fears. We could see by the faint light made by the snow that lay thick on the ground the dark outlines of the big round haystack looming up, distant from the house about a hundred yards.

At first we could only see the haystack, but as our eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, we could see an object crouching close to the side of the stack. We watched it slowly move, but it would remain still a long while; it seemed about the size of four men keeping very close together. Maria remained at the window to watch, while mother and Mrs. Eppleson consulted what to do, for there was no doubt in their minds but that it was Indians they had to deal with. In about two hours the moon would rise, tnd then, my mother thought, would be the time for their attack. Mrs. Eppleson was a very fearless woman, as was Maria; our mother, though delicate, could be depended upon. There was one gun in the house. My mother took that and the others armed themselves with an ax and hatchet; my sister and I clung to my mother's skirts, and kept very, very still. The women took turns in watching the thing or things change in position. It was an awful strain, watching out of the darkened windows, for the light had been put out, when we first discovered the object. We kept so still that only the popping of the frost in the terrible cold could be heard. I remember holding my doll very close, resolving to sell my life dearly before the Indians should get her. My sister likewise embraced a kitten. The kitten had been embraced so often that it appeared to be a mere rag hanging down from my sister's shoulder. We children, in spite of the awful dread, were drowsy with the stillness and the room was getting cold, as we did not dare to stir the fire.

Finally we were awakened by Maria, who was watching, whispering excitedly, "Oh, aunt, they are coming!" We all crowded to the window, to see what was best to do, but no; they had only moved slowly to the front of the stack, thus bringing themselves a little nearer the house. After straining our eyes a long time, we all agreed that at times one seemed to stand up, and what appeared to be two feathers in his headdress would wave about. The rest of the group seemed to remain crouched down. We were very grateful for this short respite, though even with my childish eyes I could see that my mother would not be able to stand the strain much longer. But presently the sky in the east began to get lighter as the moon arose in splendor. How we strained our eyes, and the poor women grasped their feeble weapons and prayed, for now, according to all accounts, moonrise was the signal for the Indians' attack. As the moonlight grew brighter the shadow of the haystack hid the figures, but as the moon shown on the snow, making it almost as bright as day, what we thought was the dreaded Indians was revealed as only our old, black, longhorned cow. There she stood reaching up higher for a choicer mouthful, and tossing her horns, which to our strained, frightened eyes had seemed a tall Indian with two feathers in his head.

The reaction from fear was so great that we all rushed out, whooping, to put old "bossy" back in the cow stables from where she had broken out. On our father's return he thought it such a good joke on us that ever after, when he saw cattle feeding at a haystack he would look slyly at mother and say, "I think there is going to be another Indian massacre."

Their First Thanksgiving

"I went to a Thanksgiving dinner in Paris last November," said an American who had just returned from a year abroad. "Most of the guests were Frenchmen, Germans, Italians and Russians. The hostess was an American, a New York woman who has been living abroad for several years, and who entertains lavishly in the French capital.

"On the table were all sorts of things to remind one of home. There were lights in pumpkins on the table and all sorts of American dishes, including a turkey, which the hostess announced she herself would carve on the table in the American fashion. But the majority of the guests failed to grasp the significance of the feast, and sat about trying to veil their astonishment at everything, even to the pumpkin pie, which they could be induced to attempt with difficulty. None of the foreigners seemed to know what Thanksgiving was.

"'Zanksgeeveeng fery nice,' remarked a German count on my right, leaning over to me. 'I nefer eat vone before.'"
—New York Sun.

THE WINNERS OF PICTURE PORTFOLIOS

Twenty sets of pictures will be given away each week in this department to the Juniors, boys and girls, who send in the best colored pictures. The drawing opposite may be colored with either paints or crayons and must reach the office by Wednesday afternoon. This contest is open to Juniors 10 years of age and younger. Write your name, age and address in the dotted lines below the picture.

Paints were awarded to the following Juniors who painted the picture in the paper of March 2:

Laura May Orford, 2056 Filbert street, San Francisco.
Kathleen Halloran, 1006 Seventh street, Oakland.
Herbert Tilden Richards, box 122, Sutter Creek.
Maudie Masterson, Belvedere.
Cecilia Carcot, 804 Clement street, San Francisco.
Donaldine Grass, 318 Lincoln avenue, Palo Alto.
Carl Penther, 6286 Herzog street, Oakland.
Sisvan A. Seklemain, box 134, Fresno.
Marguerite Molfino, Benicia.
Leo H. Hoover, 865 Apgar street, Oakland.
Thyra Klitgaard, 498 Duboce avenue, San Francisco.
Madeline Shafford, 2803 Twenty-fourth street, San Francisco.
Eleanor Crittenden, 89 Walnut avenue, Santa Cruz.
Elva Wilson, Dixon.
Bernhardt Jensen, 28 Lenzen avenue, San Jose.
Robert Quigley, Turlock.
Vera Rice, 1204 Jay street, Sacramento.
Idalene Thompson, 55 Lloyd street, San Francisco.
Luck Savage, 2345 Bryant street, San Francisco.
Leona Loftus, 3746 Twenty-fourth street, San Francisco.

Selling a Mountain

So seldom does the sale of a mountain occur that when such is even contemplated it is worthy of record.

The communal council of Veytaux, in Switzerland, has had under consideration for some time a proposal for the purchase of a mountain in the neighborhood.

This mountain is valued at about 275,000 francs ($55,000). It is difficult of access, so it has been proposed to construct one of those wonderful railways to be seen at Pilatus or the R'gi and to establish hotels at the top. Inasmuch as the commune is not wealthy, it is thought that the money received for the mountain would be a veritable windfall.

This is the picture to be colored. Paint it in water colors or crayon and send immediately to the Editor of The Junior Call

NAME..... Age.....

ADDRESS.....