

she found nothing of him except the musky smell he had left behind him so liberally.

As luck would have it, however, at the foot of the knoll, almost directly beneath the lair itself, she found another intruder. Nosing for roots in the rich earth between the rocks was a black bear. His presence there was quite innocent. His thoughts were far from young lynxes; but to the eyes of the anxious mother he was sniffing his way to the hiding place of her little ones.

Now, the most powerful of lynxes, of course, is no match for a bear; but a mother's a mother—and that makes all the difference in the world. The bear was attentively turning over the moss and sod, unmindful of danger, when a cyclone of claws and teeth and screeches fell upon his neck. Taken so completely by surprise, he fairly bleated, and gave futile clutches over the shoulder with his massive paws, which would have made short work of his audacious assailant could they have fairly reached her. But they touched nothing save a little elusive fur; and the next moment, seized with panic, he wheeled and fled wildly through the cedars. The lynx clung to him, biting and clawing, till a low branch swept her off. Whereupon, after pausing to free her teeth from the long black hairs they had been so diligently collecting, she sped back to the den with her feelings somewhat relieved.

The bear ran on, his panic gradually giving way to indignation till at last the latter conquered. Then he turned and began slowly retracing his steps. He would find his insolent assailant and do her up! But when he reached the knoll he changed his mind once more. After all, was it worth while going out of his way to find her? She seemed to be so elusive. He passed round to the other side of the knoll, and let off his resentment in rending to pieces an old antlog.

To the bear, though so ignominiously routed by his small antagonist, the affair was of no great moment. His hurts were not deep, and they were soon forgotten. But to the mother lynx it was different. Her security was gone. She felt that both the fox and the bear were after her little ones. She no longer dared to hunt at any distance from home; and near home, thanks to her own reputation, it was bad hunting. All she could do was to lie in wait, with infinite patience, for chickadees and wood mice; while her hunger grew, and the supply of precious milk in her breasts began to diminish, and the little ones, whose eyes were now just opening, became more and more insistent in their demands.

ABOUT three days after the episodes of the fox and the bear there came to the knoll an immense cow moose, seeking, as the lynx had done, solitude and security. To the other side of the knoll she came; and had no suspicions of the presence of the lynx, who glared down upon her unseen from a bush screened crevice near the summit. She was black and grim and very formidable looking, the great moose, and could well have smashed the life out of the giant cat with one stroke of her splayed fore hoof. So the lynx had no notion of interfering with her. But she was interested in the errand that brought the dark tree eater to this retreat. And she hopefully licked her whiskered jaws.

About daybreak, on the soft moss at the foot of the rock, the moose gave birth to a long legged, shuddering calf. Forgetful at once of all her suffering, she licked the newcomer long and lovingly till its soft coat was dry and glossy dark; and at last, along in the warm of the day, it staggered feebly to its feet and made its first effort to nurse. It was grotesquely gaunt, and lank, and big headed, and loose jointed; and its sprawling legs were too weak to support its weight long. In two or three minutes it sank down again on the moss, where it lay staring around with mild, incurious eyes while its mother gazed upon it in a tender ecstasy. To her it was the one thing of beauty that the whole green forest held.

Suddenly a faint sound, other than that of rustling leaf and twig, caught her vigilant ear. She turned her head sharply. There among the cedar trunks, not a hundred feet away, was the bear, turning over and munching a cluster of bright yellow fungi. A bear! That was the most to be dreaded of all possible enemies. With a harsh cry, a sort of coughing bellow, she rushed at him.

At sight of this black whirlwind sweeping down upon him the bear was surprised and pained. He was not a very big bear. And she was a very big moose. If capable of reflection,—a point on which doctors differ with some acrimony,—he perhaps reflected that the knoll was not a lucky neighborhood for him. Too many mothers, and hardly enough mushrooms! In any case, he decided to go away at once. And he acted with such alertness upon this wise decision that he managed to keep a certain distance between his hind quarters and those furiously pounding hoofs. He felt that he had reason to congratulate himself.

THE lynx had been watching from her high crevice when the moose made her mad charge upon the bear. Her pale, round eyes flamed. Soundlessly she dropped from her ambush. There was no cry from the feeble victim. The lynx was too expert and too wary a hunter for that. She wanted no struggle that would attract the mother's attention from the pursuit of the bear. So the unfortunate calf, which had only just opened his eyes upon life, went out of it without knowing what had happened to him. Without an instant's delay the lynx began dragging the limp but still quivering prey up the rock. Her only chance was to get it speedily beyond the mother's reach.

The lynx was marvelously strong for a beast of her weight, which was not more than forty-odd pounds, and

ward with a finely calculated effort. Thoroughly deceived, the lynx clung obstinately to her hold, with ears flattening back in angry scorn. But this time she had seriously miscalculated. In the next second one of those huge, battering fore hoofs smote down upon her. It crushed her head right back between her shoulders; and her tense body, suddenly relaxed, slumped forward upon the neck of her victim.

Falling back as before, because it was impossible for her to gain any foothold on that steep, the moose charged once more and repeated her wonderful leap. This time her stroke brought both the bodies tumbling over each other to the ground. The victor, now somber and deliberate in her fury, pawed them carefully apart and proceeded to stamp the carcass of the lynx into the earth. When this was accomplished to her satisfaction, she went and nosed her little one tenderly for several minutes, muttering thickly in her shaggy throat. Then, with drooping head, she stood over it motionless for hours, till the last of the sunset had faded out and all the forest was in blackness. At last the moon got up white above the tree-tops, and ran pale fingers down the face of the rock till they uncovered the grim scene at its base. The moose, as if suddenly pulling herself together to accept the inevitable, lifted her great black head, sniffed the night air with wide nostrils, and made off noiselessly through the cedars.

An hour or two later the bear came cautiously prowling up. Unseen himself, he had seen his late enemy go stalking by, with an air of no more concern in that part of the forest. Much puzzled, he had come to seek a solution of the mystery. He found the solution entirely to his taste. He grunted contemptuously over the pounded remnants of the lynx, and then, well able to appreciate such a dainty, made a hearty meal of young moose meat. He sat down on his haunches and grumbled happily over his repast, perhaps thinking how favored were the bears over all other dwellers of the wilderness. It would have been a sound and true reflection, could he but have made it, and no more than the due of the Power that had been so generous to his kind.



Had Seen His Late Enemy Go Stalking By.

she was desperate with determination. She knew that this prize would keep her from the necessity of leaving the den till her little ones should be past their first helplessness. Nothing should be allowed to snatch it from her! But for all her furious efforts, so unmanageable was that limp form with its long, sprawling legs that her progress up the broken steep was dangerously slow.

Suddenly the moose, realizing that she could not catch the bear, stopped with a wrathful snort. Plowing up the dank moss with her great, outthrust fore feet, she wheeled about to return to her calf. She started back at a shambling trot, suspecting no evil, and satisfied with herself for having so well routed the enemy. Then she marked that the little one was no longer in his place. She gave one mighty leap forward, her wild eyes sweeping the whole base of the rock. And then, looking upward, she saw what had befallen.

As that black bulk of vengeance came thundering toward her, the lynx strained desperately to lift her prize beyond its reach. The steep at this point was too abrupt for any moose to climb; but the frantic mother hurled herself up it so far that her outstretched hoofs struck the rock on each side of the calf's hind quarters. Daunted for the instant, the lynx let go her hold and shrank away with a snarl. But, seeing how far short of her her assailant had fallen, she sprang forward again and sank her teeth into the victim's throat with confident defiance.

FROM that wild leap the mother had fallen back violently on her haunches. Unconscious of the shock, she drew back a few steps, and rushed again to the attack. This time she came on less wildly; and the lynx, glaring down on her over the shoulder of the prey, had no misgivings. But in reality it was now that the wise old moose was most dangerous. Having come triumphant through many seasons, many vicissitudes, she knew how to handle her powers to best advantage; and in that first leap she had seen that her little one was finished past all helping. Revenge was all that she could strive for.

As she charged again she gathered her gaunt legs beneath her at the last of it, and launched herself up-

MEANWHILE, the baby lynxes in their den, now hungry past all caution and mewing harshly, might have been left to a lingering and piteous death. But Nature is seldom so cruel. Stealing through the black shadows and darting across the patches of moonlight came the fox, anxious to see if anything new had happened at the knoll. Peering from a thicket, he marked the bear at his feast, and soon made out to understand. Stealing about to explore the knoll, he presently caught the cries of the kittens. This was a phenomenon not hard for him to interpret. After a prudent investigation he crept into the den. There was some spitting, feeble but courageous, and then the cries of loneliness and hunger

stopped. The fox was too businesslike to play with and torment his victims, as one of the cat family would do; but killed them at once and made haste to carry them off to his den. Though not without a healthy edge to his own appetite, he thought first of his mate and cubs, to which he was untiringly devoted.

The knoll being now no longer occupied by the terrible lynx mother, the lesser folk of the forest began cautiously to revisit it, though they made no long stay in that neighborhood, because they never knew when the den at the summit might attract some dangerous occupant. Before long the bones of those two bodies at the foot of the rock were polished clean and white; and then the place fell deserted except for the chickadees and the woodpeckers.

AS the summer drew to close and the first glimmers of autumn scarlet began to tip the maples, scattering here and there across the wilderness reappeared a few rabbits. Their enemies being now less numerous, they multiplied with amazing rapidity, as if thinking they had the earth to replenish; and soon again tall ears and bulging eyes were flickering through the coverts, sensitive cleft nostrils questioning every air, and fluffy white tails bobbing up out of the gold-brown fern beds. The rabbits did not love the cedar swamp, with its wet moss and black, half hidden pools; but a few of their more adventurous spirits roamed everywhere.

One fresh October morning, when the birch trees were all gold among the gray rocks of the knoll, a roving buck rabbit came to the foot of it and stumbled upon that bunch of white bones. At first he was much frightened, and with two prodigious leaps took hiding in the nearest thicket. But the bones made no hostile move whatever, and presently he felt somewhat reassured. After he had stared at them for sometime he concluded that they were harmless. With uncomprehending curiosity he hopped all around them, and then sat up beside them on his haunches, his long ears erect in foolish inquiry. The last thing he could guess was that he and his kind were responsible for that pile of bleaching bones.