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A FIRE IN THE FOREST.



THE DASH FOR THE LAKE.

I.
OUT from the village and into the pineries,
Galloped we horsemen, galloping fast,
Through the first clearings just shouting,
"Come out of it—
Back to the village!" while hurrying past

II.
Into the close woods that stand like a barrier,
Miles and long miles of fat pines that the fire
Loves to get into for maddest of revelings,
Rolling the strong flames up higher and
higher

III.
Into the sky, till the lake feels the red-
dening,
Ships in the night sail as well as by day
In the glare, and their decks are all whitened
with ashes that
Come from the shore forty long miles
away—

IV.
Yet seem to drop straight from the heavens
above them,
So vast the great flame that ascends with a
roar

To the stars, and curves over the waves in a
hollowing,
Arms o'er the mid-lake and foot on
the shore.

V.
Shall we yet save them with all our mad hur-
rying?
Gallop! ye horses, the fire is behind;
Their camp far within in the heart of the
pinery—
We told them—we told them—but naught
would they mind.

VI.

Lambersmen strong, and they laughed at our prophecies;
The stream was a good one to bring their logs down
To the shore, and swift runs are but scarce on old Michigan,
Sluggish her creeks for the work; so the brown

VII.

Casper he laughed, and old Dick, and young Benjamin,
Sweet-singing Benjie, the youngest by far
In the camps—but a boy; and they shouldered their axes and
Started away with a ringing hurrah

VIII.

To the woods, down that trail that leads further than any one
E'er made a camp yet; it was only a trail
For the Indians to hunt through. They took no precautions,
I'll wager—no clearing; but, clearings would fail

IX.

So deep in the pinery 'less they'd a mile of it.
Over the fire leaps and licks up the ground
Of small clearings like red tongues! I've seen it—I mind how it
Roars as it goes with a terrible sound

X.

Like nothing on earth, for the thunder we know it is
Far, but this roaring is near, and its breath
Hot at our backs, and the birds fly before it like
Leaves, while the poor beasts crouch facing their death

XI.

With a whining we hear for long miles, and the crying of
Wild-cats is like that of children. What! go
Back by this road? Are you crazy? The fire will be
Here in a sheet before long. But you know

XII.

Their boat's at the mouth of the creek; if we reach them in
Time, we can launch it together, sail out
On the lake—yes, the horses will swim. Oh, we're nearing them;
Try all together now—give a long shout

XIII.

To tell them we're coming—they may have gone gathering
Berries, it's dinner-time. What was that, say?
Benjie's a-singing as sure's I'm a sinner, and
Singing a love-song too! That is his way

XIV.

Always, the silly! Yet isn't it singular
Sweet, that lad's voice? Just listen and hear—
"No one to love"—why, what rubbish! when Kitty and
Molly—no matter. But isn't it clear

XV.

Sweet as a—Hark! there is something else echoing
Far through the pines—'tis the fire! It has swept

On like the whirlwind, a mile to the minute since
We left the village! If only they've kept

XVI.

Together so time won't be lost—yes, I see them all
Round the camp-fire. Now, then, boys, take one each
Quick up behind you; don't stop; it's hard galloping
(There comes the roar) if the lake we're to reach

XVII.

Alive.—Ho, there, Casper! Fire in the pinery!
Quick up behind, and we'll try for the boat—
Come, Benjie; don't stop for your traps, men, but listen and—
Ah, you *do* hear it! Say, is she afloat

XVIII.

Or drawn up? What, afloat? Hurrah! that's good news for us;
Had her out yesterday? There, there it comes,
The glare through the trees! Throw off those great boots of yours,
Boys, for the horses are panting.—It hums—

XIX.

Hums like ten million of bees. Oh, the breath of it!
There, did you catch it, as hot it rushed by?
It has gained all at once on us—yes, must have certainly
Jumped that last clearing I counted on. Try

XX.

To favor the horses, sit light, give the reins to them;
Turn your head, Benjie, and breathe to the west.
It's crossed our path, boys; we must gallop right through it—a
Chance for a singeing; but then it's the best

XXI.

We can do; and, indeed, it's the only way left to us.
The flame's but a thin one, just bushes and such,
The trees have not caught yet. Now, shut your eyes, Benjie.—
One breath, men, and then—spur it through! Well, the touch

XXII.

Wasn't pleasant; it's singed all our beards and eyelashes;
But, we are through! What, another? Now spur—
Spur for your lives, men!—That last was a close one; and
Benjie is gasping; my eyes see a blur

XXIII.

Of yellow and red—i'ts the smoke that is blinding them!—
Say, can you breathe, boys?—Ha, there's the lake!
The fire is between us; but, never mind, ride for it—
Ride for it—ride for it! Oh, for the sake

XXIV.

Of our wives who are pious, our mothers who pray for us,
Maybe the saints will decide to fall to

And help us this once; they must come, if they're coming, for
Now is the time to show what they can do,

XXV.

And not when we're burned past all hoping; I'd rather not
Be a burned miracle; but, no complaints I'll make. There now, here it comes—spur!
Hey, how close it was!
Boys, do you know that I think our best saints

XXVI.

Are the horses who've galloped so swift and so knowingly,
Maddened with fear though they were!
There's the boat;
Set the sail!—Yes, the horses will swim along—shore when the
Fire comes too near them. Hurrah! we're afloat!

XXVII.

Sing, Benjie, sing that there's "no one to love" you, lad;
Ah, you young rascal!—Well, take us entire,
We're a gay-looking crowd—all singed and half-choking; but,
Never mind, boys, we are out of the fire.

CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

THE HEIRS OF THE BODLEY ESTATE.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

BY HORACE E. SCUDDER.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEIRS IN COUNCIL.

I WENT to Northumberland Court the next day a little earlier than very strict laws of etiquette demanded, because I wished to begin at the very beginning, and to take a preliminary taste of Mr. and Miss Bodley's company before I should be called on to face the rest of the guests: one, however, was before me. I found him sitting with Mr. Bodley, who introduced him as Mr. Giles Umbelow.

"Mr. Umbelow," said Mr. Bodley, "is not quite so near a connection as yourself, Mr. Penhallow. He belongs to the Simon Bodley stock. Simon was the member of the family who brought some apparent confusion into the genealogy—no offense to you, Mr. Umbelow; you have yourself smiled at Simon Bodley's curious family relations."

"Yes," said Mr. Umbelow, who spoke somewhat cautiously and with a blank look, as if he had once, under great provocation, smiled, "Simon Bodley seems to have done all he could to confuse the succession. It was, however, an only daughter that married George Umbelow, my great-grandfather."

"Just so," said Mr. Bodley. "The line is perfect on which you descend.—But you see, Mr. Penhallow, what you may yourself have noticed in the tables which I showed you last night, that Simon Bodley, who was the youngest of twelve sons, was himself married three times. The first time he married the Widow Mendip, who had three daughters by two previous husbands—I will not now give their names—and by the Widow Mendip he had two sons. The five children,