

FIGHTING FOREST FIRES



EFFORT TO CHECK THE FLAMES

FOREST fires, the worst enemies to conservation that exist in the nation, have again swept their way through millions of feet of valuable timber and sacrificed the lives of those who went out to fight them and protect their homes and towns from destruction.

The recurrence of these great fires has been so regular as to prepare the country for like disasters almost every year. In 1908 they reached the forests of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, and southern Ontario, wiping out entire towns and killing many settlers. Within a few years great conflagrations have run through the Adirondacks and the forests of the south and southwest.

Is there no way to stop this waste of property, or to protect settlers and small towns in the midst of the woods? The question is asked on every hand; is hurled at the forest service in Washington, and is the subject of general comment in sections where true forest conditions cannot be appreciated.

The forest service experts declare that there are ways to prevent these annual fires; but these methods cannot be employed with any certainty of success with the existing forces of wardens and rangers, or the amount of money now provided by the federal and state governments for forest supervision.

Three things must be accomplished, declare the foresters: the conditions in the woods which help its spread must be done away with, and the people who use and frequent the forests must be educated or forced to give up careless practices in the handling of fire.

Protection the Only Way.

"The first measure necessary for the successful practice of forestry is protection from forest fires," says Henry S. Graves, chief forester of the United States.

To this end the forest service has bent every activity of recent years; yet the fires that have wiped out timber worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in the far northwestern states recently, hardly paused in their course to look at the puny protective efforts of the forest rangers and fire wardens. To stamp out fire, or to prevent it, a force four times as large as that now existing is immediately necessary. This is admitted by Chief Forester Graves. In addition, there is needed money enough to permit the thorough equipment of the forests with well-built roads and trails, over which the firemen can quickly reach a blaze; apparatus near at hand to fight the fires; patrolmen along all railroads to put out sparks; a complete telephone system so that fighters may be hurried to the scene of any fire, and stations at every strategic point in the woods, inhabited by rangers and fire wardens equipped for immediate duty.

Since 1906 the forest service has built 4,850 miles of telephone line through the woods. Yet in many sections of the big forests of the northwest, one watchman has to care for more than 100,000 acres of timber and often without the aid of telephone communication. In Germany there is a fire warden for practically every 1,000 acres of forest.

If thorough communication can be established and fire wardens stationed at frequent intervals, aid may ultimately be close enough to the incipient fires to prevent the outbreak of conflagrations such as have recently devastated the northwestern states. Similar conditions must at the same time be developed in the private forest areas, to insure safety from forest fires.

Protection is the slogan of the forest experts today. They declare it is not surprising that great fires occur, when more than 75 per cent. of the private timber lands of the country have no protection whatever; less than one-fourth enough men and equipment is provided for the national forests, and the user of the forests are only partly educated to the elimination of fire causes.

The Fire Watcher's Work.

"The risk from fires can never be entirely eliminated," say Chief Forester Graves, "for in the forest there is always inflammable material which is very easily ignited. They may, however, be largely prevented, and under efficient organization their damage may be kept down to a very small amount."

It is a picturesque business, that of fire watching, as practised in some of the larger national forests today.

Two or three men in one of the ranger's cabins which have become such an important adjunct of forest guardianship, are near the summit of some peak, from which a view can be had over many miles of woodland.

In the early part of the year, before the rains cease and the ground dries out, these rangers and wardens are employed at ordinary duties through the forest, repairing trails, establishing telephone lines, watching for careless campers and lumbermen, cleaning up dangerous underbrush and the like. As the dry season advances and the conditions develop that are especially favorable to forest fires, these men become the "lookouts" of the forest protection force. Day and night they scan the distant horizon with strong glasses, for traces of smoke or reflected flames. In the woods, from such an eminence, a fire may be seen for miles, and the first traces of it may be detected by these lookouts long before it would be observed from a ranger's cabin much closer to the scene.

Men and Money Needed.

It is to cope with such conditions that the forest service is asking for more men and better organization of the forests. At present the men on the hilltop stations use methods as primitive as those of the Indians to flash the news of a forest fire to distant stations where help can be secured. Often there is no telephone at the mountain lookout station; or no telephone connection to other points where rangers and fire wardens are supposed to be on duty.

Smoke signals such as the Indians used, made with a blanket over a smoldering fire, or pillars of smoke or flame from a number of fires, constitute the methods of communication used by many of the forest ranger stations, and with which all of the men in the woods are expected to be familiar.

The heliograph, flashing the light of the sun; flag signals such as are used in the army, and other systems of signaling, also are used. In some places where a small settlement exists near the fire lookout, a unique means of summoning aid is used. A small windmill is erected at the lookout station, equipped with a revolving ball in which mirrors are set at every angle. The watchman who discovers traces of a distant fire, sets his windmill in motion if the day is bright, and departs at once for the scene of the fire, secure in the knowledge that the signal will call to his aid every man who sees the flashing mirrors.

To get rid of the fire causes is the first lesson taught the forest guardians, and the end toward which the forest service is constantly working. The origins of fires in the woods are roughly classified as follows:

Sparks from locomotives, sparks from sawmills and donkey engines used in forest operations, camp fires not properly safeguarded or extinguished, the burning of brush to clear land, the burning of grass to improve pasture, carelessness of smokers and hunters, incendiarism and lightning.

From the last there can be little protection except equipment to fight the flames as soon as they make their appearance. From every other cause, however, the standing forests of America can be fairly well protected with proper equipment and funds.

Ways of Fighting Blazes.

The firemen of the woods learn that the night is the best time for their fight. The damp air retards the progress of the blaze. A fire that will sweep ten or twelve miles in the day-time will eat its way slowly at night, when there is little breeze and the air is heavy. Then the fire fighters attack it with all the energy they possess, and often bring it within control.

The forest fire will burn up hill with such rapidity that no strategy of the fire fighters can cope with it. Sweeping from the bottom of a canyon, or the foot of a hill, it rushes up the slope like a hot blaze up a chimney, carrying the fire to the top in an incredibly short time. Once at the summit of the hill, the fire burns more slowly descending the other side, and the fire fighters have an opportunity to dig trenches, cut fire lines and prepare other defenses to head it off and stop it.

The source of the greatest danger to forests is the presence of dry tops and piles of brush left by lumbermen and by the windfalls of heavy storms.

JOSH BILLINGS' PHILOSOPHY

Next to the luv ov munny cums the luv ov praze.

There would be no flatters if there waz no listeners.

The wound that fust luv makes iz often healed, but the skar never iz.

Oratory and musik are sunithing alike—sense iz often sakraficed for sound.

There iz a good deal ov art in knowing how to help a man without hurting him.

Most people are more grateful for what they ekspekt to git out ov us, than for what they have had.

The man who sells cheap whisky, and never drinks enny himself, iz one ov the meanest kritters I know ov.

When a man haz just about as mutch vice az virtue in him, he iz az unsartin for milk az a kicking heifer iz.

Thar iz hardly enny thing impossible. The gratest sekrets, when we cum to kno them, prove to be the simplest.

I have seen people so severe in their karakter that their failings waz the only thing about them that waz endurable.

Gravity proves this to me—where thare iz one person so grave bekaueze they kno so mutch, thare are 19 grave bekaueze they kno so little.

Very cunning men allwuss git kaught at last. When a fox gits so full ov mischief that no one can endure him, all turn out and hunt him.

Thar are very fu persons in the world that people will run after. If yu ekspekt to be taken notiss ov, yu hav got to git in front ov folks, and worry them sum.—New York Weekly.

YES

It is not meant half the time it is said.

"Yes" is a simple word spelled with three letters.

It has procured kisses and provoked blows.

It has defeated candidates and elected scoundrels.

It has been used in more lies than any other expression.

It has caused more fights than all the "You're a liars" that ever were spoken.

It has started more dipsomaniacs on their career than all the strong liquor on earth.

It has caused more happiness and more unhappiness than any other word in the language.

It has lost more money for easy lenders than all the holes in all the pockets in the world.

Will it continue to make such a record?

DO YOU KNOW?

Trinity corporation is the wealthiest single church organization in the United States.

The postoffice in Manhattan was erected at a cost between \$6,000,000 and \$7,000,000. It was opened for occupancy on August 25, 1897.

Statens Island is about 13 miles long, 8 miles wide and consists of an area of about 57 square miles. It has a population in excess of 50,000.

The great Washington bridge over the Harlem river is 2,400 feet long, 80 feet wide, cost \$2,680,000, and is built of steel, iron and stone. It is 135 feet above high water mark.

SOCIAL HORTICULTURE

Sowing wild oats.

Cultivating friendship.

Looking after one's stocks.

Weeding out acquaintances.

Raking the servants over the coals.

Harrowing people with one's ill temper.

Digging up the coin.—Boston Transcript.

Planting one's foot down on extravagance.

FLASHLIGHTS

There are mighty few women in the world who think their husbands are paid well enough for the work they do.

The man who praises his wife now and then is apt to be loved more than the man who merely pays her dressmaker's bills.

Money won't buy happiness, but we've never had a creditor who could really be happy without it.—Detroit Free Press.

REFLECTIONS OF A BACHELOR

It takes an awful lot of doctoring to keep truth from going into a decline.

The surest way to be absolutely worthless in a job is to think you're too good for it.

Once in awhile an only child has sense in spite of the fool way its parents treat it.

Pay a woman a compliment and she'd know it was flattery if it was to another woman.

To read one of his love letters a year after he wrote it is beyond the heroism of any man.

Heaps of stale eggs would be fresh if so many people weren't too mean to use them while they are.

It's absolutely impossible, when a woman feels her toe going through her stocking, for her not to suspect everybody knows.

A woman can make an unfulfilled promise go further toward her happiness than a man can an accomplished fact toward his.

A woman wants everybody to believe all the nice things about her husband that she couldn't possibly make herself believe.

When a man is trying to take a nap and the flies bother him he can't get half as mad with them as he can with his wife about it.—New York Press.

Next to having to listen to the average man tell a joke the most horrible torture is to have to let him describe when he made a great hit with it.—New York Press.

MAGAZINE PHILOSOPHY.

A cat in the well is worth two on the fence.

A donkey is never so fast as when he is standing still.

The slogan of the Antitipping society should be, "No quarter!"

The highest type of the utilitarian is the man who serves up the wolf at his door for supper.

The trouble with the average obituary is that it comes too late to help a man to get a good job.

If it be true that necessity knows no law, it is quite evident why some police magistrates are considered necessities.

There are many pleasing sights in this world, but what is more delightful to the eye than a mother-in-law in her own home?

The boy who is bounced for smoking cigarettes realizes at last the truth of the old saying that where there is smoke there is some fire.

Some men are so lazy that they not only do not go to the door when opportunity knocks, but would not answer her if she rang them up on the telephone.

There are people in this world who are utterly devoid of a sense of humor. For instance, we once had a cook in our employ named Ellen Burns, and it never struck her as being in the least degree amusing. Come to think of it, we did not think it so side-splittingly funny ourselves after she had lived up to it consistently for several months, although she eventually left us in a state of spontaneous combustion.—Horace Dodd Gasfit in Lippincott's.

WORDS OF WISE MEN

Virtue is like a rich stone, best plain set.—Hazlitt.

Hope is the most treacherous of all human fancies.—Emerson.

Misfortunes have their dignity and their redeeming power.—Hibbard.

The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money.—Franklin.

I take the true definition of exercise to be labor without weariness.—Johnson.

There is no well doing, no Godlike doing, that is not patient doing.—Timothy Titcomb.

Every unpunished murder takes away something from the security of every man's life.—Daniel Webster.

There is no friendship between those associated in power; he who rules will always be impatient of an associate.—Lucan.

Industry, temperance and piety are the only means of present enjoyment, and the only true sources of future happiness.—Haudon.

NUGGETS FROM GEORGIA

If some folks get to heaven they'll want to pull Lazarus from Father Abraham's bosom and growl because he'd slept so long.

Telling the other fellow to do his duty, and then doing your own, are two things that don't keep company together—all the time.—Atlanta Constitution.

Good Night.

Good night, good night! Ah, good the night!
That wraps thee in its silver light!
Good night! No night is good for me
That does not hold a thought of thee,
Good night!

Good night! Be every night as sweet
As that which made our love complete,
Till that last night when death shall be
One brief "good night" for thee and me.
Good night!

—S. Weir Mitchell.

Archer's Engagement

By CLARISSA MACKIE

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Bert Desmond's hand came down on Archer's shoulder with a resounding slap. "Congratulations you, old man," he exclaimed, heartily.

"Thanks," said the other, with an amused smile; "but what's all this row about, anyway?"

"Your engagement, of course! Blake has told me. She's the—"

"Blake's a silly old chatterbox. I'm not going to marry anybody—you might congratulate me on that fact," interrupted Archer.

"Funny, isn't it," mused Desmond, perplexedly. "Blake told me plain as could be that Archer was engaged to marry—"

Archer interrupted this time with a laugh. "Oh, it must have been my cousin, Tom Archer! Go and congratulate him, Bert—you can't make a mistake; he's always engaged to somebody. Going down to the club house? No? Very well, so long."

Bob Archer went grinning on his way down to the yacht club while Desmond pursued a solitary walk along the board walk that led to the big hotel.

A girl seated in an automobile near by looked toward the shop before which she was waiting with a bored air. Through the folds of the white veil that swathed her face the color in her cheeks burned like a star. Her hands were firmly clinched in her lap and her whole attitude betrayed restrained impatience.

Helen Dale had heard every word of the conversation between the two men. She knew that she was the girl who had been reported engaged to Tom Archer, but to hear her name linked with Bob Archer's had brought her such a pang of exquisite pain that she stood self-revealed on the instant.

So that was the reason she could not fall in love with the dozen men who had succumbed to her beauty and charm! She had claimed for herself coldness, aloofness, indifference to all men—and it was merely because she had given her heart, unasked, into the keeping of Bob Archer.

It was well known that Bob Archer did not care for women. Yachting, tennis and golf and his office satisfied all his cravings. He lived at a club and his vacations were spent in the open, wherever there was good healthy outdoor sport. Helen's tastes were the same, but Archer's companions were mostly men and she had met him seldom, then when he had made one of his infrequent appearances in the ballroom.

And Helen had fallen in love with him, unsought, undesired. A very agony of shame came upon her, but through it glowed a fierce joy that he had declared himself a confirmed bachelor. If he did not care for her there was nobody else.

Then it was that Helen Dale's flirtation with Tom Archer came to an abrupt end.

A few days afterward Helen was swimming far out beyond the float that marked the limit of safe bathing. She was an expert swimmer and rejoiced in the cold salt water, the warmth of the sun on her uplifted face and the soft resistance of the waves against her strength.

Slender, graceful and muscular, she made a pretty sight, her white arms gleaming like marble against the blue sea, her crown of bronze-tinted hair shining in the sunlight. Her eyes were fixed on a distant buoy she had marked for a turning point.

She did not see a man's form dive nearby, nor see his long strokes toward the same goal she was striving for. Helen was almost upon him when her attention was attracted by a low shout of distress, his brown arm shot upward and he sank before her eyes.

It was not until Helen had reached the spot and grasped him firmly by his thick hair that she recognized Bob Archer. In that moment of suspense she forgot her tenderness for him, everything save the fact that he was a human being and that his life was in danger.

The cramp that had seized him had left him only half conscious. His eyes were closed and he did not struggle. Before she could cry for assistance she had been observed from the yacht and a boat was hastily lowered and came to her rescue. She was entirely exhausted with the hard pull. Archer was a heavy man and he had been a dead weight in the one hand she could spare.

Inside the launch she fainted and only revived when a distracted sailor dashed stinging salt water in her face and eyes. Then she sat up and looked anxiously at the inanimate form in the bottom of the boat.

"Is he—?" she asked, fearfully. "I think he'll be all right, miss," said the coxswain reassuringly. "He

must have been took with a cramp, for ordinarily Mr. Archer is a fine swimmer."

Tears of thankfulness forced themselves to Helen's eyes and she made no reply. Once on board the yacht she declined the captain's urgent offers of hospitality. She did accept one of Archer's heavy ulsters and slipped it on.

When she was assured that he was recovering and would soon be up and around, she asked to be taken ashore. The next morning she left the hotel with her mother and returned to her home in the city.

Helen Dale knew that Bob Archer must seek her out and express his gratitude for what she had done; that she might not meet him again she had fled.

Bob Archer awoke to a rather unpleasant realization the morning after the rescue. He who had always been independent of women was indebted to one for his life. He blushed to recollect that a girl had come to his rescue and he cursed his own weakness in succumbing to a mere cramp. But he set forth to the hotel, immaculate in white duck from top to toe, in his heart grateful to the plucky girl who had saved his life.

He recalled Helen Dale as one of many other girls whom he had avoided as mere butterflies. When he inquired for Miss Dale at the office the clerk informed him of her departure. There was no doubt in his mind that she had gone to escape his thanks. Well, she was the right sort—some girls would have been glad of the opportunity to play the heroine.

New York was not far distant, and in the evening of the same day, he presented himself at the Dale house. So unexpected was his coming that Helen was taken by surprise. She came down to find him in conversation with her mother.

"I resolved you should not escape," he said, holding her hand in a warm friendly clasp. "I wonder if you know just how plucky you were yesterday!"

"It was mere chance," evaded Helen, coloring. "Any one else would have done it. It was easy, too, for your boat came quickly to the rescue."

"Nevertheless, if it had not been for you I would have lost my life," insisted Archer.

He remained for the evening, and was surprised at his own pleasure in the occasion.

A day or two afterward he came again and took them for a spin in his new motor car. Then he came again and again. He did not return to Seaside, but his yacht received sailing orders and proceeded to the city, where she lay at his disposal.

When the first crisp autumn winds were blowing Bob Archer awoke to the fact that he could not live happily without Helen Dale for his wife. What an ideal companion she would make—their tastes were similar and their love of the out-of-doors amounted almost to a mania. A honeymoon spent on his yacht—

He clapped on his hat and made his way to the Dale house. Helen was alone in the library, when he arrived, and he sat beside her in the dim firelight room and told her his story. But in spite of the great joy in her eyes she shook her head.

"I know how you feel, Mr. Archer. It is natural that you should mistake gratitude for love, and that you should offer me the life I saved, but—"

Something in the flicker of emotion that crossed her face brought him close beside her.

"Helen, look at me!" he commanded, taking her hands in his.

Slowly she turned until her eyes met his.

"What do you see there, darling—gratitude or love?" he asked, softly.

Her glance fell before his gaze, and for the first time since her heart had gone out of her keeping she was radiantly happy.

"Love," she whispered, softly, and then: "I'm so glad I had the chance to save your life. We might never have known each other, Bob."

She Could, But Wouldn't.

Miss Johnson, an American girl, fair and twenty-five, was traveling in Germany with an elderly friend. One day in Berlin the two ladies had boarded a sight-seeing car and were just comfortably seated when an Englishman of a pronounced sporting type got in and sat down beside the young lady. After staring at her in silence for some time he inquired, insinuatingly:

"Do you speak English, miss?"

"Yes," replied Miss Johnson, without turning her head, "I do, but I don't care to."

And Sidetracks Them.

"Miss Flirty certainly attracts the men."

"Yes, and then she distracts them."