

made all the haste possible, for he could tell from the sound that the sportsman was not very far away.

After another 10 minutes of walking—or wading, as he mentally put it—Fred stopped to listen for some sound which would tell him the exact spot occupied by his cousin. Then, fingers in mouth, he gave a long, loud whistle. It was immediately answered by a whistle which was peculiarly Johnny's own. In fact, no other boy in the county could imitate Johnny Brown's whistle-signal.

But the very moment after Fred's ear caught the welcome call he was surprised to hear Johnny's voice crying out lustily: "Who comes there? I'm in danger. A great bear has got me treed. If you are not armed you'd best take to your heels and bring help."

Fred stopped in his tracks. "Treed by a great bear? Why didn't he shoot? Where was Johnny's nerve? Where were his true eye and hand?"

Paying no heed to the warning in his eagerness, he went in the direction of the voice, and soon saw a sight that made him stop to catch his breath and summon courage. There, directly in his path and only a few feet away, was a huge black bear. The creature was walking slowly round and round a very slender tree, in whose top was perched a dark form which proved to be Johnny.

Johnny, who was on the watch for the appearance of the owner of the whistle signal, saw Fred as soon as he came near to the spot of danger. "Go back, Fred," he cried out from his perch. "I'm safe here till you can fetch father to kill this beast that has the drop on me. And don't speak, for I don't want you to have to go up a tree. Then we'd be in a dandy fix, we would. And so long as this old chap has me to hold his attention he'll stay right here. So, don't rouse him by the sound of your voice. Now, go away."

But this was not enough for Fred, who was wondering what Johnny had done with his gun. So, raising his hands as if to take aim, he asked the question by gesture. Johnny understood his cousin's sign query and replied: "Well, I'll have to confess that I took two shots at him and—missed. When I first saw him he was coming at me with anything but a friendly expression, so I up and let fly a ball at his head. I didn't do myself proud, for the old fellow wasn't touched. Then I ran through the underbrush, getting out of his sight. I thought I'd lost him, when, fully fifteen minutes after I'd fired at him, he loomed up right in front of me. I let him have my aim again, but the bullet went wide of the mark once more. It was all up with me then, for I had to reload before I could take another pull at him. He was pretty close to me, but this tree was closer, so I came up into its inviting limbs, where I decided to wait until someone chanced to come along, or till the old brute should tire of walking about at the foot of my tower and looking up savagely at me. As for my gun, it's below there—on the ground. The old bear took a sniff of it a little bit ago."

Fred had withdrawn from the path into a clump of shrubbery, where he was out of the bear's line of vision. He kept one eye on old Mr. Bruin, however, fearing that his nose might tell him there was another enemy near. And he took

pains to be pretty close to a fine, strong sapling with plenty of limbs close to the ground. "Where's your ammunition?" he called out to Johnny, regardless of the latter's warning about his talking.

"It's on the ground in my wallet," said Johnny. Then he added: "Don't do that again, I tell you. Now, go as fast and as quietly as you can for home and fetch daddy here. I don't rest well astride this limb. I'd find home and dinner more to my taste."

But Fred had been thinking over some plan whereby he might relieve his cousin's uncomfortable position more quickly than by returning to the farm, some two or three miles away, and was about to act upon this quickly conceived plan.

He very cautiously gathered a handful of dry bark and dead sticks from the ground at his feet, cut a long branch from a growing bush nearby and on its smaller end tied the dried bark and sticks into a thick mass, using his handkerchief in lieu of a string. When this was fixed to his satisfaction he took from his vest pocket a match, struck it and applied the flame to the broomlike end of the stick. It ignited quickly, a blaze leaping upward. Like a flash of lightning Fred made a dash toward the bear, whirling the blazing stick round and round, its tongue of fire forming a huge circle of flame in the revolution. The old bear's eyes widened with fear as he beheld the awful sight, and he went off through the woods as fast as he could. But in his excitement he did not select his path and found himself entangled in a massive grapevine, through whose meshes he could not go. And as he feared to turn back and face that dreadful thing of fire he kept on trying to thrust his huge body through the trap which held him fast.

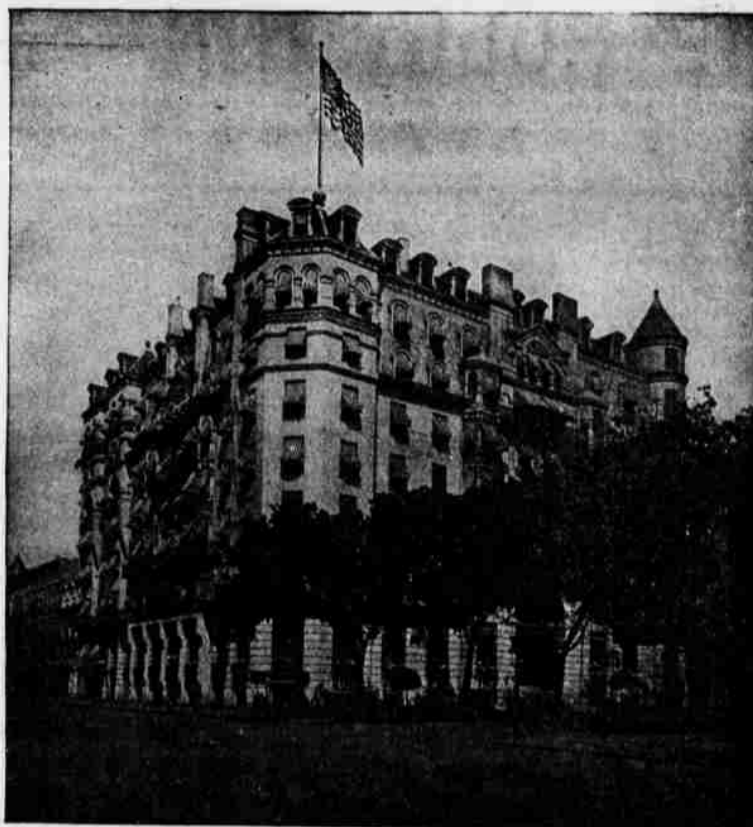
"Quick, your gun! Load and fire!" cried Fred, still brandishing the blazing

(Concluded on page 11)



Tommy's Got a Gun!

Tommy's had a birthday,
Tommy's got a gun,
Tommy's going hunting—
Story's just begun.
Read about it later
In a week or so;
If he shoots an Injun
You shall surely know.



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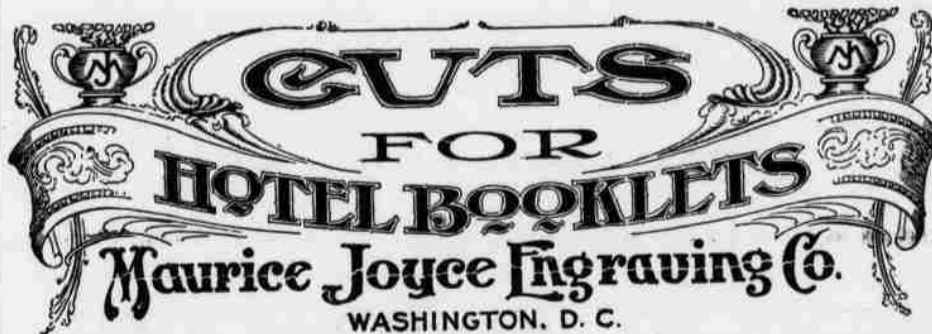
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