

In this issue **Stories by Prize Winners in \$2000. Fishing Contest**

JULY - 1911

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FIELD AND STREAM

OFFICIAL ORGAN of the CAMP-FIRE CLUB OF AMERICA

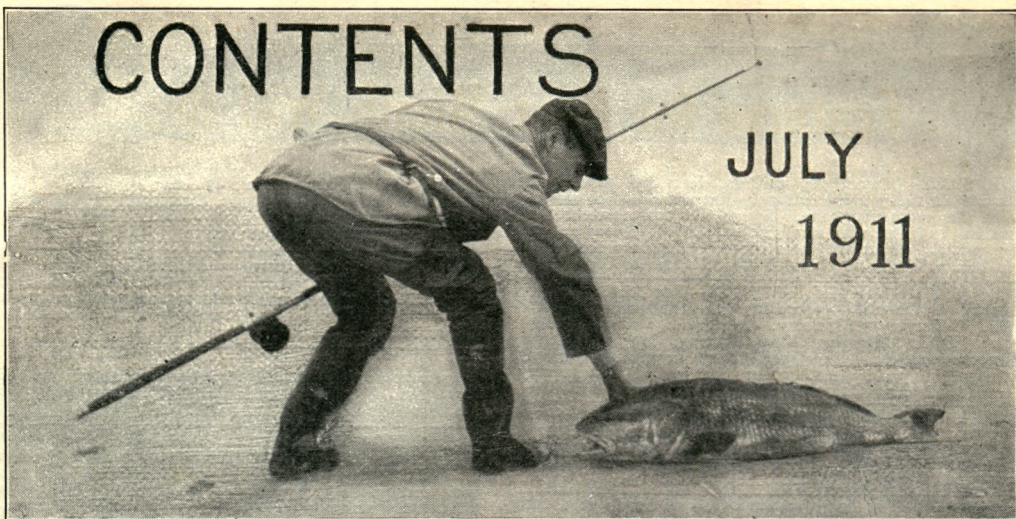


THE WAY OF THE LEAPING TUNA, - - by Chas. F. Holder
AFRICAN BIG GAME EXPERIENCES, - - - by Jas. L. Clark
WHY NOT DRY FLY FISHING? - - - - by E. M. Gill
DOWN AN UNKNOWN JUNGLE RIVER, - - by Zane Grey

V. C.
FORSYTHE
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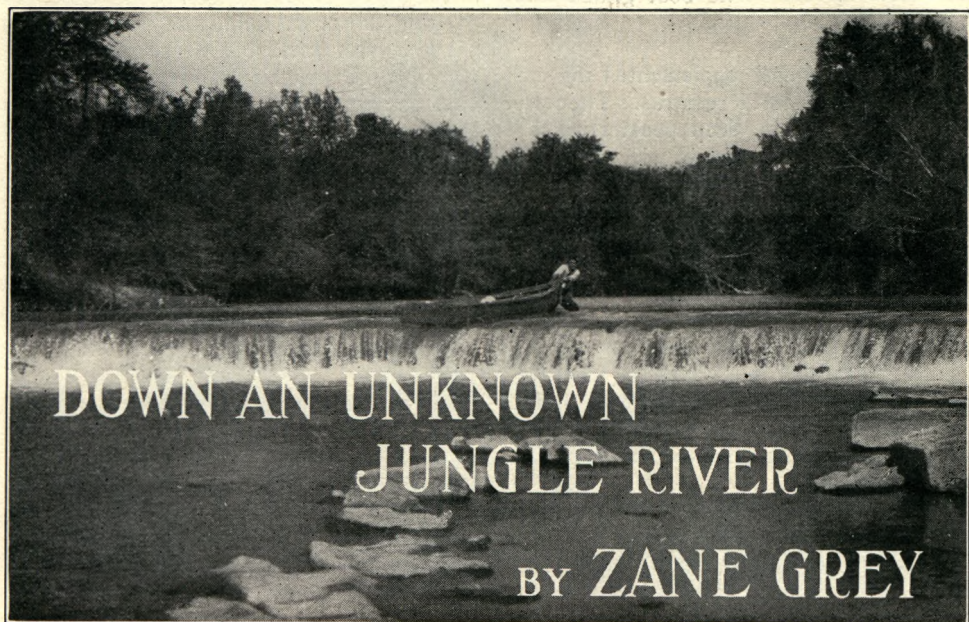
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A thrilling series of adventures with jaguars, wild boars, alligators and tropical snakes, encountered while exploring an unmapped river flowing down through the wildest jungles of Mexico

PART V

CYPRESS ISLAND

PEPE shoved off the oozy mud, and reluctantly, as if he, too, appreciated the nature of upstream travel, he turned the boat and began to row back. As soon as I recovered from my momentary chagrin I thought of the volume of water that rushed down on this side of the island and wondered where it went. That it sank into the earth or had an underground passageway was so improbable that it was not worth considering. I decided there was an outlet which we had missed.

I ordered Pepe to row close to the bank on what I thought was the island side; and as we glided along under the drooping bamboos and the silky curtains of moss George kept calling out: "Low bridge!" There were places where we had to lie flat, and others where Pepe was called upon to use his machete. We disturbed the *siesta* of many aquatic birds. Most of them flew swiftly up or down the stream. But there were many of the

gray-breasted, blue-backed bitterns that did not take to flight. These croaked dismally and looked down upon us with their strange protruding eyes.

"Boys, I hear running water," I said suddenly, and signalled Pepe to stop rowing. "Aha!" there's a current too. See! it's making right under this bank."

Before us was a high wall of broad-leaved vines, so thick that nothing could be seen through them. Apparently this luxuriant canopy concealed the bank. Pepe poked into it with an oar, but found nothing solid.

"Pepe, use your machete and cut a way through. I want to see where this water runs."

It was then that I came to a full appreciation of the wonderful use of a machete. Pepe flashed the long black blade up, down and around, and presently the boat was its own length in a green tunnel. We got through this mass of foliage and, much to our surprise, found no high bank at all, but low flat ground, densely wooded, through which ran a narrow deep out-

let of the stream. The boat glided into it without any guidance.

"Well!"

George and Pepe supplemented my exclamation with fervid remarks. Then we all fell silent. The deep penetrating silence of that jungle was not provocative of speech. The shade was so black that when a ray of sunlight did manage to pierce the dense canopy overhead it resembled a brilliant golden spear. A few lofty palms and a few clumps of bamboo rather emphasized the lack of these particular species in this forest. Nor was there any of the familiar streaming moss hanging from the trees. This glen was green, cool, dark. It did not smell exactly swampy, but rank, like a place where many water plants were growing.

The outlet was so narrow that we were not able to use the oars. Still as the current was swift, we went along rapidly. I saw a light ahead and heard the babble of water. The current quickened. We drifted suddenly upon the edge of an oval glade where the hot sun beat down. A series of abrupt mossy benches, over which the stream slid almost noiselessly, blocked further progress.

The first thing about this glade that I noted particularly, after the difficulty presented by the steep steps, was the number of snakes sunning themselves along the line of our future progress.

"Boys, it'll be fun wading down there, won't it?" I said.

Pepe grumbled his displeasure. He was afraid of snakes, and to judge from the way George began to pop around with his .22 he had no love for them. As for myself, I had doubts about this particular kind of snake. He was short, thick, rather dull brown and the way he disappeared in the stream proved he was a watersnake. If he belonged to the dreaded moccasin family I did not recognize the kinship. Anyway snakes were the least of my troubles.

I walked down through the glade into the forest again, and was overjoyed to hear once more the heavy roar of rapids. I went through to see the gleam of water through the trees.

"All right, boys," I sang out. "There's the river."

We were so immensely relieved that packing the outfit round the waterfalls of the glen was work that we set about with alacrity. Pepe, being barefoot, wasted considerable time looking for snakes down the fern-lined trail we broke. We made our last trip with supplies, and I was about to start back to solve the problem of getting the boat down when Pepe let out a yell that resounded through the sleeping jungle. Parrots screeched and there was a cackling of other birds.

I followed the direction of Pepe's staring eyes and trembling finger. Hanging from a limb of a tree just across the glade was a huge black snake. It was as thick as my leg. I was too frightened to estimate its length. But the branch upon which it poised so gracefully was at least ten feet from the ground.

"Holy smoke!" cried George, diving into the pack for his gun. Pepe began to jabber. I could not understand what he said, but did not need his excitement to tell me that this was a dangerous snake. I had been warned to look out for this fellow.

"Here, George, not your rifle," I said, "you can't hit him with that. Get your shotgun."

But the .16 gauge was clogged with a shell which would not eject. My guns were in their cases. George handed me his .32.

Twice I shot at the head of the snake. It was a slow-swaying mark hard to hit. How wonderfully the snake poised on that limb! He was not coiled round it, but lay over it with about four feet of neck waving, swaying to and fro, and he was watching us with most sinister intent.

It was only natural, however rash, for me to send a bullet through the thick part of its body. Swift as a streak of lightning it darted from the limb.

"Look out, fellows!" I yelled. George ran after Pepe, who had already retreated, and I, catching up the machete, got out of that vicinity with undignified haste. How far we would have run had the snake pursued us was something worth conjecture. But it probably was as badly scared as we were. Cautiously we returned to the glade and found blood stains on the ground under the tree. The snake



"HE WAS WATCHING US WITH MOST SINISTER INTENT"

had disappeared without leaving a trail.

"If I'd had my shotgun ready!" I exclaimed in disgust, and I made a note that as I had come into the jungle to shoot I would do well in the future to be prepared.

"Boys, you drive away those little snakes while I figure on a way to get the boat down," I said.

I went back to the top of the glade, where we had left the boat, but I did not do much figuring till George and Pepe had accomplished the task imposed upon them. Armed with long poles they whacked and threshed and yelled; and everywhere along the wet benches slipped and splashed the brown snakes. Then the boys helped me lower the boat over the first fall. This done I studied the situation before me.

There was a succession of benches through which the stream zigzagged and tumbled. These benches were rock ledges over which moss had grown fully a foot thick, and they were so oozy and slippery that it was no easy task to walk upon them. Then they were steep, so steep that it was remarkable how the water ran over them so smoothly, with very little noise or break. It was altogether a new kind of waterfall to me. But if the snakes had not been hidden there navigation would have presented an easier problem.

"Come on boys, alongside now, and hold back," I ordered, gripping the bow.

Exactly what transpired the next few seconds was not clear in my mind. There was a rush, and we were being dragged by the boat. The glade seemed to whiz past me. There were some sodden thumps, a great splashing, a check—and Lo! We were over several benches. It was the quickest and easiest descent I had ever made down a steep waterfall.

"Fine!" ejaculated George, wiping the ooze from his face.

"Yes, it was fine," I replied. "But unless this boat has wings something'll happen soon."

Below us was a long, swift curve of water, very narrow and steep, with a moss-covered rock dividing the lower end. It bothered me. If we had a repetition of the first descent we might find the boat smashed on that rock. Sending Pepe

below to take his station there and so render less likely the danger of collision, I gave George orders to help me.

Gently, gingerly we started the boat off the bench where it had lodged. George was at the stern, I at the bow, and we were both on the right of the stream. The boat dipped, then—*wheeze!* It dived over the bench. George went sprawling face down into the moss, and I was jerked clear off the bank into the stream. I had the bow rope coiled round my hands. I howled for help and held on for dear life. If I retarded the progress of the boat it was not enough to allow George to catch up with us. He made a valiant effort, but a few leaps and a short dash after us ended in disaster for him. His feet flew up higher than his head; he actually turned over in the air and fell with a great sop. Despite my fear of snakes, and the greater fear for the boat I let out a peal of laughter. Then my mouth filled with nasty water that nearly strangled me. I was blinded, too. My arms seemed to be wrenched out of their sockets and I felt myself bumping over moss-covered rocks as soft as cushions. It was impossible to hold the rope any longer. I lodged against a stone, and the water forced me upon it, where, blinking and coughing, I stuck fast. I saw the boat headed like an arrow for the stone where Pepe stood. He had his hands outstretched to stop it. I feared for his life and would have yelled if there had been time. At the last second Pepe turned tail to get out of the way, but he slipped and fell. The boat shot toward him, and the blunt stern, rising on the swell of water, struck him with a dull thud. Pepe sailed into the air, over the rock, and cleaved the stream in a beautiful dive. The boat slipped over the stone as easily as if it had been a wave, and gliding into the still water below lodged on the bank.

Then I knew the boat was not hurt, nor I, nor the boys. I knew also why the boat had developed such bewildering speed. The current was much swifter than it appeared and the moss on the stones was more slippery than an eel. When I got to the bank there were the boys, Pepe like a drowned rat, and George not recognizable in his coating of slime.



"GEORGE WAS ASSIDUOUSLY FISHING"

I stretched myself on the ground and gave up to riotous mirth.

The boys joined me in a good laugh, and then, seeing that the snakes had reappeared, we lost no time in repacking the boat and proceeding upon our way. Meeting with no further obstacle we drifted out of the shady jungle once more into the sunlit river. Just above the mouth of the little outlet was a roaring rapids that made me catch my breath.

"Mucha malo," remarked Pepe, who meant that it was very bad.

We had half a mile of swift current, and in that distance our clothes dried out in the heat of the sun. The water fairly smoked, it was so hot. Once more we entered a placid aisle over which the magnificent gray-wreathed cypresses bowed, and the west wind waved long ribbons of moss, and wild fowl winged reluctant flight before us.

Beyond the first bend in the river we came upon an island with a narrow shaded channel on one side, a wide shoal on the other. A group of cypresses stood at the upstream end. The instant I saw the island I knew it was the place I had long been seeking to make permanent camp for a few days. We landed to find an ideal camping site. The ground under the cy-

presses was flat, dry and covered with a short turf. Not a ray of sunlight penetrated the foliage. A huge pile of driftwood had lodged against one of the trees, and this made easy the question of firewood. The island was about two hundred yards long and the lower end was hidden from us by a scant growth of willows. Bursting through this we found a shallow weedy flat where great numbers of ducks were sporting and feeding. The stones of the rocky shore were covered with sleeping ducks. Our advent created a commotion; there was a great clapping of wings and squawking. But at least half the number of ducks and waterfowl did not fly. And the best feature of this beautiful island was that we did not see a snake or a tick.

"Boys, this is the place," I said. "We'll hang up here a while."

So we unloaded the boat, taking everything out, and proceeded to make a camp that, compared to our former efforts, was simply a delight. When we got it finished we were unanimous in our expressions of satisfaction. Then Pepe set about leisurely peeling potatoes; George took his gun and slipped off toward the lower end of the island, and I made a comfortable lounging bed under a cypress.

Bing! Bang! went George's gun. A loud whirring of wings followed, and the air was thick with ducks. A flock of teal skimmed the water and disappeared upstream. The shots awakened parrots in the trees, and for a space there was clamour. I saw George wade out into the shoal and pick up three ducks, so evidently he had made a pot-shot. Then he crossed to the opposite bank and, climbing a bare place, stood looking before him. I called to him not to go far, and presently he passed into the bushes out of sight.

I lay back upon my blanket with a blissful sense of rest and contentment. Many a time I had lain so looking up through the broad leaves of a sycamore, or the lacy foliage of a birch, or the delicate criss-cross of millions of pine needles. This overhead canopy, however, was different. Only here and there could I catch little shivers of blue sky. The graceful streamers of exquisite moss hung like tassels of silver. In the dead stillness of noonday they seemed to float, curved in the shape in which the last soft breeze had left them. High upon a branch I saw a red-headed parrot hanging back downward, after the fashion of a monkey. Then there were two parrots asleep in a fork of a branch. It was the middle of the day and all things seemed tired and sleepy. The deep channel murmured drowsily, and the wide expanse of river on the other side lapped lazily at the shore. The only other sound was the mourning of turtle doves, one near and another far away. Again the full richness, the mellow sweetness of this bird's song struck me forcibly. I remembered that all the way down the river I had heard that mournful note. It was beautiful but melancholy. Somehow it made me think that it had broken the dreamy stillness of the jungle noonday long, long before the birth of man. It was sweet but sad and old. I did not like to hear it.

I yielded to the soothing influence of the hour and fell asleep. When I awoke there was George standing partially undressed, and very soberly popping ticks. He had enlisted the services of Pepe, and to judge from the remarks of both they needed still more assistance.

"Say, Garrapato George, many ticks over there?"

"Ticks!" shouted George, wildly waving his cigarette. "Millions of 'em! And there's—ouch! Kill that one, Pepe. Wow! he's as big as a penny. . . . There's game over there. It's a flat with some kind of berry bush. There's lots of trails. I saw cat tracks and I scared up wild turkeys——"

"Turkeys!" I exclaimed, eagerly.

"You bet. I saw a dozen. Gee! they can run. I didn't flush them. Then I saw a flock of those black and white ducks, like the big fellow I shot. They were feeding. I believe they're Muskovy ducks."

"I'm sure I don't know, but we can call them that."

"Well, I'd got a shot, too, but I saw some gray things sneaking in the bushes. I thought they were pigs, so I got out of there quick."

"You mean *javelin*?"

"Yep, I mean wild pigs. Oh! we've struck the place for game. I'll bet it's coming to us."

One of the nicest things about George was his fatalistic anticipation of forthcoming events. He was always expecting something to happen, and most of the time he looked forward with great eagerness.

"We'll hunt, George, ticks or no ticks," I said, and went back to my lounging.

When I came out of that lazy spell George was assiduously fishing, and he remarked on the number of fish breaking water all about us. Where a little while before the river had been smooth, now it was ruffled by ravallo and other fish I did not know. But we could not get them to bite. We tried artificial flies, spoons and minnows, then some of the mullet we had brought along for tarpon fishing farther down, and all kinds of meat baits. With little and big fish capering around under our very noses it was exasperating not to be able to hook one. I shot a small fish, not unlike a pickerel in shape, especially in the long bill mouth, and we baited with that. Still we were not rewarded by a strike. This put me on my mettle so I went to the lower end of the island, and rigging up a minnow tackle

tried to catch some minnows. There were plenty of them, but they would not bite. Finally I began to wade in the shallow water and turn over the stones. I found some snails almost as large as mussels. With these I went back to George and told him to try one.

George complied. No sooner had the bait sunk than he got a strong pull. He jerked up, hooking a fish that made the rod look like a buggy-whip. I tried to get it away from him. But he held on and hauled with all his might. A long finely built fish, green as emerald, split the water with a thump, churned it into foam, then sweeping away in a strong dash broke my rod squarely off in the middle. It was a favorite rod that had served me for years, and I eyed the wreck of it with sorrow, and George with no little disapproval.

"George, you're a grand fisherman, grand—I don't think!" I remarked.

"Those split bamboo rods are no good; they won't hold anything," was George's protest.

By four o'clock, when we sat down to our supper, I was so thirsty that my mouth puckered as dry as if I had been eating green persimmons. This matter of thirst had begun to be serious for me. Twice a day I had boiled a small pot of water, into which I mixed cocoa, sugar and condensed milk, and that was all I drank. In spite of my repeated warnings Pepe and George continued to drink the water unboiled. We opened cans of vegetables and fruit on this occasion, and fared sumptuously. As usual the meal was interrupted. A string of Muskovy ducks sailed up the river. George had a good shot at the tail end of the flock and missed. Then a line of cranes and herons passed along and over our island. When a small bunch of teal flew by, to be followed by several canvas-backs, I got out my hammerless. It was a fine gun, built for trap shooting, and much too valuable for such a trip. My reason for bringing it was because it was a hard shooting gun. My former hunting for wild fowl in Mexico had been a failure, owing to a light field gun. On this occasion I had a variety of shells and chose first to try those loaded with $7\frac{1}{2}$ chilled shot and 26 grains of powder—a trap load.

While Pepe leisurely finished the supper George and I sat upon the bank watching for ducks. Just before the sun went down a hard wind blew for a quarter of an hour, making difficult shooting, but after it died away we had capital sport. Every few moments ducks would whirr by. George's gun missed fire several times and he missed most of the ducks, and those he hit dropped a few feathers and went on.

To my surprise I found the trap load exceedingly deadly, and I could reach ducks sometimes at a distance rudely calculated to be eighty yards. The little brown ducks and teal I stopped as if they had flown against a stone wall. I dropped a couple of the strong-winged canvas-backs in the dead plunge that a sportsman likes. A crippled duck is enough to make a man quit shooting. With six ducks killed I decided to lay aside my gun for that time when Pepe pointed down the river.

"Pato Real," he whispered.

I looked eagerly and saw three of the big black ducks flying as high as the tree-tops and coming fast. Snapping a couple of shells in the gun I stood ready. At the end of the island two of the ducks wheeled to the left, but the big leader came on like a thunderbolt. It seemed to me he made a canvas-back look slow. I caught him over the sights of my gun, followed him up till he was even with me and beyond, then sweeping a little ahead of him I pulled both triggers. He swooped up and almost stopped in his flight while a cloud of black feathers puffed away on the wind. He sagged a little, recovered himself, and flew on as strong as ever. The number $7\frac{1}{2}$ chilled shot were not heavy enough to stop him.

"We'll need a big shot for those ducks and for the wild turkeys, too," said George.

"I've all sizes up to buckshot," I replied. "George, let's take a little stroll over where you saw the turkeys."

Pepe shook his head and said if we wanted to see game at this hour the thing to do was to sit still in camp and watch the game come down to the river to drink, and pointed downstream to a herd of small deer walking quietly out on a bar.

"After all the noise we made!" I exclaimed. "Well, this beats me. George, we'll stay right here and not shoot again to-night. I've an idea we'll see something worth while."

It was Pepe's idea, but I instantly saw its possibilities. There were no tributaries to the river or springs in that dry jungle, and as manifestly the whole country abounded in game it must troop down to the river in the cool of the evening to allay the hot day's thirst. We were perfectly situated for watching the dark bank on the channel side of the island as well as the open bars on the other. The huge cypresses cast shadows that even in daylight effectually concealed us. We put out the camp-fire and, taking comfortable seats in the folds of the great gnarled roots, began to watch and listen.

The vanguard of thirsty deer had prepared me for something remarkable and I was in no wise disappointed. The trooping of deer down to the water's edge and the flight of wild fowl upstream increased in proportion to the gathering shadows of twilight. The deer must have scented us, for they raised their long ears and stood still as statues, gazing across toward the upper end of the island. But they showed no fear. It was only when they had drunk their fill and wheeled about to go up the narrow trails over the bank that they showed uneasiness and haste. This made me wonder if they were fearful of being ambushed by jaguars. Soon the dark line of deer along the shore shaded into the darkness of night. Then I heard soft splashes, and an occasional patter of hard hoofs. The whirr of wings had ceased.

A low exclamation from Pepe brought my attention to interesting developments closer at hand.

"*Javelin!*" he whispered.

On the channel side of the island was impenetrable pitchy blackness. I tried to pierce it with straining eyes, but I could not even make out the shoreline that I knew was only ten yards distant. Still I could hear, and that was thrilling enough. Everywhere on this side, along the edge of the water and up the steep bank, were faint tickings of twigs and soft rustlings of leaves. Then there was

a continuous sound, so low as to be almost inaudible, that resembled nothing I could think of so much as a long line of softly dripping water. It swelled in volume to a tiny roll, and ended in a sharp clicking on rocks and a gentle splashing in the water. A drove of *javelin* had come down to drink. Occasionally the glint of green eyes made the darkness all the weirder. Suddenly a long piercing wail, a keen cry almost human, quivered into the silence.

"Panther!" I whispered instantly to the boys. It was a different cry from that of the lion of the Rockies, but there was a strange wild note that betrayed the species. A stillness fell, dead as that of a subterranean cavern. Strain my ears as I might I could not detect the faintest sound. It was as if no *javelin* or any other animals had come down to drink. That listening palpitating moment seemed endless. What mystery of wild life it meant, that silence following the cry of the panther! Then the jungle sounds recommenced—the swishing of water, the brushing in the thicket, stealthy padded footsteps, the faint snapping of twigs. Some kind of a cat let out an unearthly squall. Close upon this the clattering of deer up the bank on the other side drew our sharp attention. The deer were running, and the striking of little hoofs ceased in short order. We listened intently. From far over the bank came a sound not unlike a cough, deep, hoarse, inexpressibly wild and menacing.

"Tigre!" cried Pepe, gripping me hard with both hands. I could feel him trembling, and had specific proof of how the native of the jungle-belt feared the jaguar.

Again the cough rasped out, nearer and louder this time. It was not a courage-provoking sound, and seemed on second thought more of a growl than a cough. I felt safe on the island, nevertheless I took up my rifle.

"That's a tiger," whispered George. "I heard one once from the porch of the Alamitas hacienda."

A third time the jaguar voiced his advent upon the night scene; and this time if it was not a roar I have never heard one. But I was excited and a little

frightened. I was reminded of my first experience in tarpon fishing, when I knew the tarpon was leaping and could see a silvery blur, but not the fish. I made up my mind to listen with clearer ears; however, the cough or roar was not repeated.

Moreover a silence set in so unbroken that it seemed haunted by the echoes of those wild jungle cries. Perhaps I had the haunting echoes in my mind. I knew what had sent the deer away, and stilled the splashing and creepings—it was the hoarse voice of the lord of the jungle.

Pepe and George, too, were under the spell of the moment. We did not break that charm by talking. Giant fire-flies accentuated the ebony blackness and the low hum of insects riveted the attention on the stillness. A great peace fell upon the jungle world. How wild it was, how wonderful! I understood then, why, in the fever and turmoil of civilized pursuits, I was haunted by wild places. It was simply the longing to go back to some former stage of life's development. It was the intelligence of the developed man feeling the greater happiness of the unthinking savage who lived only in his sensorial perceptions.

The black mantle of night seemed to lift from under the trees, leaving a gloom that slowly paled. Through the dark

branches, low down over the bank, appeared the white tropical moon. Shimmering gleams chased the shadows across the ripples, and slowly the river brightened to a silver sheen.

It only made the island more beautiful, lonely and wild. The thought of leaving it gave me a pang. But I was chained to the haunts of men. The old wild order of life could come to me only in dreams and in fleeting stolen moments such as this, when daring and endurance earned the semblance of a primitive day. It was only a hunting trip, this jaunt of mine to work and fight and kill, yet unquestionably, while it saddened me somehow, it strengthened my hold on better things.

And among them was the feeling of the wild places that I could never see, where the sun shone, the wind blew, the rain fell; where the colors and beauty changed with each passing hour; where myriads of living things strove and died, and wild creatures evolved beings in the image of man; where year after year, century after century night never fell but upon tragedy, and inevitable nature never changed her eternal plan.

Next installment:—Deer and turkey hunting on Cypress Island. First adventures with jaguar.

(To be continued)

