

# THE TRAPPER

MARCH 20.

1892

## OLD PARM. GINNIS

"Now, pups, you see this? You bin on that track afore—yes, you ought to know it, Tige; that was the buck that gin you such a toss las' fall." The old dog danced nervously around in the snow with the hair raised on her back as he spoke, while the pup stood watching the old dog, seemingly waiting for directions. The old man continued:

"Now, Tige, you take the pup an' go 'long steady like—don't you run away from him; he ain't as old an' got the go in him like we have, you know—and foller the buck. I'm thinkin', by the way the track runs, you'll find him down at the ole dam or near there. Circle him back over the barrens, an' don't chase him too fast; an' when he gits back here I'll be here with the old gun. Now, go ahead, and commence your singin' as soon as ye see him."

The dogs, with that wonderful perception and instinct that had been attained through their long companionship with the old man, at the word of command started off with a slow canter, the old dog keeping the trail with head down, while the pup ran alongside and slightly behind, watching every movement of the old one.

After their departure he leaned his rifle and toboggan against a tree and made a short reconnoiter, and finally came back and moved his position a few rods further

north to the foot of a steep incline, a high continuation of the ridge he was already on.

After a lapse of probably twenty minutes, a long, low, penetrating sound, resembling the noise produced from a conch-shell, sounded through the recesses of the forest and reverberated over the hills. A second later a short "yip" of the pup was heard. The baying of the old dog, after the first sound from her, was continued at intervals, at times dying down to almost inaudibility as she went further away or down into some depression or valley.

At the first sound from the dogs, the old man picked up his rifle and stepped forward a few paces near the trunk of an immense pine tree. The view he had from this place gave him a

survey of the whole side-hill, broken only by the immense pines and maples. The expression on his face as the "singing" from the dogs was heard betokened intense excitement; his eyes fairly danced with pleasure, his gun was grasped firmly in his hands, and he stood so quiet in his tracks that not the slightest motion could be detected. Occasionally he would ejaculate to himself, "Isn't that music! Down they go—now they're on Section 19—what's the matter with the pup—ole dog must be goin' too fast fer him—no, that's him again."

and while he was sipping his tea, r  
him with all the choice bits of new

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The hounds now seemed to have the deer turned and on the back track. The baying grew louder and louder, while the "yip" of the pup kept time to the bassoon of his leader. The dogs were now on the opposite ridge, some four or five hundred yards away, following close to the deer. Suddenly the sharp ring of a rifle was heard from that quarter, which



caused the old man to frown and say:

"That's one of ole Buskey's boys. I know it by the whangin' of the gun. They're too lazy to git their own meat, but are takin' an ole man's. If he killed that deer, I'm goin' over to git him—I ain't goin' to be beat out—"

After the shot was fired the dogs for an instant stopped baying, but before the

old man could finish his sentence they commenced again, more furious than ever, and seemingly headed for the ridge. As the old man noticed this, the look of anger left his face, and he assumed the same expression as before.

"Might a' known he'd a' missed him," he whispered to himself.

On the dogs came, closer and closer, but entirely hidden by the foliage. All at once the low hemlock branches parted and an enormous buck, with antlers well laid back, came into view. As he plunged along the side-hill, totally unconscious of any further danger, the old man brought his long rifle up, and steady-ing it only a moment to catch the motion of the deer, fired. The buck fell, got up

again, wavered a moment, and then fell lifeless.

"There is a Christmas dinner fit fer king," said the old man, as he brought the gun down and commenced loading it.

The dogs burst into view, but kept at a respectful distance from the fallen deer until old McGianis came up and bled the animal.

"Well done, pups," he said, patting them caressingly. "An' you, ole dog, are as good as ever, ain't ye? How did the pup do? He did well, didn't he? He kep' up, anyhow. An' didn't I make a good shot—see here! Right through the fore shoulder. The ole man thought he might be losin' his grip, an' that his ole eyes was goin' back on him, but they ain't. I looked down the ole barrel like I did when I was a boy, an', I confess, a might steadier, too." This he said with a self-

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satisfied air as he proceeded to dress the deer as it lay.

A low growl from the old dog caused him to look up from his work, to see approaching him a young man, heavily built, carrying a repeating rifle over his shoulder. The old man, without making any sign of recognition, proceeded with his work.

The young man stood awhile, eying the group, and then said:

"Well, pap, you made a pretty good shot. Is he hit anywheres else?"

"Well, he didn't say anything 'bout it as he com'er long here," said the old man. "But yer might hunt 'round if ye've lost any bullets an' see if ye can find 'em."

"Seems to me yer gittin' mighty peart in yer old days, both in yer langwidge an' yer shootin'."

The old man straightened himself up and said:

"Well, you aren't either! an' what's more, what did you shoot at this buck for? By all the rules of this neck o' country this buck was mine—to hit him or let him go."

"Oh, now don't get mad. I couldn't

help it, pap—honest, I couldn't! but I wasn't huntin', enyhow; I was comin' over to see you an' tell you there's a box over to 'Camp 10' fer you—come up las' night from the railroad on Jim's team."

"A box What—er—kind of box is it?" said the old man, forgetting his anger.

"Why, it's a pine box, like any yuther box, an' it's full of something, an' heavy, too; the boys was wonderin' what was in

it."

The old man said nothing further, not wishing to betray his curiosity, but worked away dressing the deer. The young man laid down his rifle and taking out his knife helped him. When they had finished, the old man bound the carcass on the toboggan, and he and the young man grasped the rope, and started in the direction of White River camp.

"Old McGinnis" or "Pap," as he was called throughout the country, was well known at "Camp 10," and though reti-

cent and uneasy when he was in any company would often call on the cook during the day, and over a cup of tea, he would learn the news from the outer world as it was brought up from the mill by Jim, the teamster, or through the medium of a newspaper, which occasionally found its way thither.

When he arrived with his load of game he was met at the door of the "shanty" by the cook, who, on perceiving the deer, said:

"Just the thing, pap. I've been wantin' some fresh meat fer a Christmas dinner. How the boys will be tickled——"

"Well, hole on, now! You don't git any of this un," said the old man; "this is fer a Christmas present to the old man Carey, what stopped with me a month last fall, an' I want to put my mark on him, an' have Jim take him down on his waggin in the mornin' an' put him on the train."

The cook bustled around, pleased with the chance of entertaining the old man, and while he was sipping his tea, regaled him with all the choice bits of news that

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had been collecting for a week.

"Pap, by the way, there's a box in the bunk-house fer you; you'd better be gittin' it open, an' have some of the boys help you 'pack' it home. What have you been gittin'?"

"Oh, it's mos' likely some traps I ordered o' old man Carey, that's jest gittin' here, but I won't open it; I'll strap it on my sled an' pull it home."

The box was brought out, the deer unloaded and hung up to freeze, and the heavy box placed on the toboggan and fastened securely with a few ingenious twists and knots, and purchasing what few things he desired, he bid them all good-by, and calling the "pups," was soon lost sight of, dragging the box slowly over the snow among the trees.

A few days later a letter arrived for "Mr. Pap McGinnis," with the imprint of "Carey & Co., Importers," in the corner of the envelope. The next day being Christmas, the cook took occasion to deliver the letter, also carrying with him, as a Christmas present to the old man, some choice bits of his cookery. He reached the cabin, and, without knock-

ing, opened the door. There sat the old man in his chair, with a large book in his lap, while in his hands were held a baby's mittens and hood of fine texture but yellowed with age. The box was opened, and its contents of groceries, flannels, blankets, shoes, shawls, tobacco, books, and other things were piled around it. The fire had gone out, and the dogs were shivering in one corner. To the cook's salutation the old man made no response. A closer inspection showed that

the old man was dead. On his lap lay his large Bible, opened to a record sheet, on which was written in a faded, cramped hand:

"Departed this life, June 26, 1840, Mary Jane, the beloved wife of James McGinnis, in the 25th year of her age."

"Died, December 24, 1840, Mary, only child of James McGinnis, aged 6 years."

On the floor at his feet was a little note in a feminine hand, which read:

"December 22. —"

"DEAR PAPA MCGINNIS: Papa was so busy he desired me to get ready what I thought would be nice and send them to you for a Christmas present. I am Mr. Carey's daughter. I got some nice warm things for Mrs. McGinnis and your children. Papa didn't say anything about them, but then he is so busy and can't remember everything. We wish you all a merry Christmas. Your friend,

MARY CAREY."

The allusion to his wife and children had touched a long-silent chord in the old man's heart, and while examining the box he had found the note, and had at once taken down his Bible and turned to the record, where the little baby mittens and hood had lain for years, and while looking at them, fell asleep.

## READY FOR CHRISTMAS CHEER.

Now doth the little urchin  
Drag himself the church in,  
That he may be ready for the Christmas cheer  
Into "innocuous desuetude"  
His zeal is then subdued;  
His revivals come, like Christmas, once a year.

came from the instrument, a varia