

At the End Of His Rope

Florence Morse Kingsley

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MR. PERCY ALGERNON SMITH, familiarly known as "Cinnamon" Smith, thrust his hands deeper into his trousers pockets. "I am not going," he remarked with an air of decision.

"Not going!" cried the joint proprietors of Lone Pine Camp in a chorus. "Not going! Why?"

Mr. Smith vouchsafed no immediate reply; he had fixed an experienced eye upon the coffee-pot, which at the moment threatened to inundate the camp-fire with its furious contents. "Here, you, Jake," he said peremptorily; "the coffee's boiling over!"

The campers at Lone Pine were on the point of starting out for an all-day's fishing excursion up Sunday Brook. It may as well be explained right here that the party consisted of four undergraduates of C University who were temporarily pursuing their education in the bracing air of the Adirondacks.

That these young gentlemen were thus studiously engaged during that portion of the year commonly exempt from mental pursuits argues nothing. Great minds have ever been remarkable for concentration of purpose; and everybody knows that the late football, rowing, and bicycle seasons were of unusual and engrossing interest. It is to be hoped that a future and more enlightened generation will so arrange the dull and comparatively unimportant scholastic pursuits that they shall not clash with live interests. In a word, to quote from their own forceful if inelegant phraseology Messrs. "Cinnamon" Smith, "Piggy" Brewster, "Herodotus" Jones, and "Tommy" Pettigrew had been "plucked" in their examinations, and were now "cramming" with more or less enthusiasm and diligence under the able direction of Prof. John Gearing.

Mr. Smith's announcement occasioned considerable badinage of a personal and even damaging nature, all of which was received by that young man with commendable stoicism and equanimity.

"Cin's lazy!" drawled "Piggy" Brewster, as he ensconced himself comfortably in the stern of the boat, armed with the lightest paddle

"Cinnamon's going to write to his best girl!" shouted Herodotus Jones, shying a mighty quid of spruce-gum at the auburn head of the young gentleman on the shore. "Do it in poetry on birch-bark, old boy! Little wavelets a-kissin' the beach; green leaves all whisperin' of thee; my heart a-tremblin' with rapture at the call of the lone loon across the moonlit waters! Hey, Cin?"

"Aw get along with you!" growled the recipient of these graceful sallies. "I'm going to bone all day on Greek that's what I'm going to do."

A burst of derisive laughter greeted this saying. Then the boat shot out into the sparkling waters of Beaver Lake, and speedily disappeared behind the wooded island.

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Left to himself, it appeared that Mr. Smith had not remained behind to indulge in solitary ease, for no sooner did the last echo of oars and voices die away than he fell to work with extraordinary energy and diligence. He swept out the camp being not over-particular as to corners gathering in the process a goodly heap of bacon-rinds, egg-shells, torn paper, and tin cans, which he bestowed in the bushes. A motley array of old shoes of various sizes, four and one-half pairs of ragged socks, a nondescript assortment of party-colored garments in various stages of dilapidation were retired, in company with the camp frying-pan, to a dark corner under the bunks, this position being further defended by an artistic arrangement of balsam boughs. As a finishing touch, two pairs of muddy trousers, a half-emptied tin of condensed milk to the wrath and discomfiture of an industrious swarm of Adirondack flies and three dog-eared novels followed the bacon-rinds into the comfortable obscurity of the huckle-berry bushes.

Mr. Smith paused long enough to wipe his heated brow. "It looks pretty slick," he murmured approvingly. "And now for the grub; girls are always hungry."

A rapid but thoughtful investigation of the camp cupboard ensued, with the following-named results: item two small and somewhat wizened lemons; item one damp and dubious paper bag, containing ginger-snaps minus the snap; item one box of marshmallows.

"The lemonade'll be on the Sunday-school-picnic order," meditated the youth, as he surveyed these tempting articles with a doubtful grimace; "and the less said about the snaps the better; but they'll cotton to the marshmallows all right. Jerusalem crickets! there they are now, t'other side of the lake, and I haven't even washed my hands!"

Exactly seven minutes later, Mr. Percy Algernon Smith, arrayed in a golf suit of the latest fashionable cut and an immaculate flannel shirt, set off by a neck-tie of flaming red which, he flattered himself, subdued the tint of his auburn locks to a positive brown sauntered jauntily down to the boat-landing.

"How de do, Miss Daisy! (Jove, but she's a stunner, and no mistake!) Glad to see you, Miss Terrill! Won't you come ashore?"

The elder of the two young persons in the boat hesitated; but the one addressed as Miss Daisy was on her feet in a twinkling.

"Just for an instant, Kate!" she said deprecatingly. "What a *sweet* place for a camp ours isn't nearly so pretty! Lemonade?" went on this sprightly damsel, fanning her flushed face with a big green fan; "yes, indeed, and it's awfully kind of you to think of it Mr. Smith! Aren't you thirsty, Kate?"

The person addressed as Kate looked about her tentatively. "It certainly is a very pretty place," she said sedately; "but we ought not to stop, Margaret."

"The fellows are all off on the trail to Sunday Brook," remarked the astute Mr. Smith, setting out three glasses on the pine board which did duty as a table. "They won't be back before evening. The old man's out bug-hunting."

"Who is the old man?" cried Miss Margaret with an irrelevant gurgle of laughter. "And bug-hunting ugh! Who ever heard of such a thing!"

"Oh, I mean Gearing! He's bossing the cramming for exams," replied Mr. Smith with elegant brevity. "Two lumps of sugar, or three, Miss Daisy?"

"Three, please. Is he married?"

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"Married! Who the old man? Ha! ha! that's a good one! Why, Miss Daisy, Gearing never even looks at anything but books and bugs, and is more afraid of a pretty girl than he'd be of a boa constrictor!"

"The idea! How funny! Kate, do look at that big spool up there on the tree! What is that for, Mr. Smith?"

"That spool? Aw that's another of Gearing's notions. He likes to get off all by himself after his bugs don't want even a guide along to bother him. So he ties up one end of a string in camp and unwinds a monstrous spool as he goes along. When he gets through with his investigations he winds up, and the string brings him into camp again as right as a trivet. See?"

"The very idea!"

"Bright man!" chorused the fair voyagers.

"His spools hold a mile of string, and he generally carries his pockets full of 'em," pursued Mr. Smith, gallantly presenting a toasted marshmallow to each of his guests. "You can bet the fellows don't raise many objections to his travels! I say, Miss Margaret," he added guilelessly, "don't you want some pink water-lilies? I know where there's a grist of 'em beauties too."

"You go, Margaret," said Miss Terrill indulgently; "I'll stop here and rest. I'm too deliciously comfortable to move."

And producing a volume from the pocket of her jacket, the young lady settled back in her luxurious chair cunningly fashioned out of a barrel and a piece of burlap with the air of an experienced chaperon.

Before proceeding further with this narrative, it must be distinctly understood that Miss Katherine Terrill was a young person in whose veins ran certain saving streams of genuine blue blood. Not only was she a Colonial dame by virtue of both lines of descent, but through her maternal grandmother she was still further linked with greatness in a manner which defied question.

To quote the often-repeated admonition of Madam Carter Stockard herself, "You must never forget, my dear Katherine, what your position as a descendant of Col. Brayton Carter, of Virginia, implies."

"I should require a memory as long as that of Methuselah, dear grandmama, if I remembered all that it implies," was the somewhat flippant answer.

"I am grieved and astonished, my dear Katherine," once remarked Miss Penelope Scidmore, principal of the Sadmores Select School for Young ladies, "to learn that *you*, a young person of the most admirable birth and breeding, should for one moment have countenanced such a breach of the proprieties!" Miss Scidmore had made the painful discovery that certain of her "select" young ladies, under the leadership of Miss Terrill, had walked out of the protecting walls of the S. S. S. Y. L. *without a chaperon*; and that, thus alone and unprotected, they had pressed into service a team of horses and an empty hay-wagon which they found on a side street, and had actually taken a ride therein through the principal street of the little towns to the consternation (when he saw them) of the old farmer who owned the wagon, and to the still greater consternation (when she heard of it) of Miss Scidmore.

"*Why*," continued that lady in impassioned tones, "have you thus forgotten what is due to yourself and your family?"

"I am sure I don't know, Miss Scidmore," Katherine had replied with honest contrition; "I just did it!" By which it will be seen that this young lady of high birth was, on occasion, as much the sport of freakish impulse as Katie O'Flarity, the daughter of the gardener at Brayton manor. All this by way of explanation though it is in no

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sense an excuse for what is to follow.

The day was warm, as has been intimated, and the claims of "The Scarlet Doom" on the interest of the reader wavered after a little. Historical novels, dealing with the sanguinary past from a cold-blooded American standpoint, were decidedly out of place thought this sapient young person amid the fresh breezy wilds of the Adirondacks. She dropped the book, to fix her undivided attention upon the antics of a pair of squirrels which were frisking in primal gladness from bough to bough of the big pine. Her eyes followed them with a certain distinct satisfaction in the lawless freedom of these creatures of the wilderness, whose ancestors cast no chilling shadow upon the joyous present.

At this point in the course of her aimless meditations her vagrant fancy was again arrested by the big spool dangling by a scarlet thread from the branch just above her head. As she gazed at this simple object, Miss Terrill completely forgot her position in society and the august character of her lineage. After full five minutes of reflection, which as subsequent events proved might have been spent to better advantage, the descendant of the Brayton Carters deliberately stood up on her chair and detached the big spool from its position.

"This is a cobweb party," she said solemnly; "the scientific old professor and his box of bugs is the prize." With that, this "model of all the proprieties" began to walk away into the woods, winding up the scarlet cord as she went.

From fragrant, low-dropping balsam to white-limbed birch; from sunny knoll, crowded with purple-fruited huckleberries, to solemn stretches of forest, where the winds loitered in the odorous branches of the pines, whispering strange, ancient secrets of earth and sky; through trackless wastes of sweet fern, where the gnats bit fiercely; through dense blackberry thickets, which clutched her savagely in their thorny arms; over fallen logs, half rotted away and carpeted deep with softest emerald mosses; past swampy spots, where the trim boots sank ankle deep in the black mud deeper and deeper into the pathless wilderness led the fine slender clew.

"It's simply barrels of fun!" sighed the bold adventurer, lapsing into the camp vernacular, as she sank breathless on to a bank to rest, "but I believe I'll go back without my prize. It must be nearly dinner-time."

She reached out after a sprig of wintergreen, where gay scarlet berries glimmered like live coals amid the overarching ferns, her brown cheeks dimpling as she reflected upon the undoubted consternation of the water-lily hunters. Then she sprang to her feet with an air of decision. "I must go back at once; we ought not to have stopped at all."

She glanced down at the bulky form of the big brown spool, and the full extent of her folly dawned suddenly upon her. "How can I go back? I've *wound up the cord!*"

It was characteristic of this young person that, preliminarily to a careful consideration of the question, she sank down and laughed till she cried; this to the great astonishment and dismay of divers small woodfolk, who paused in the business of the hour to observe the new and peculiar animal which produced such strange noises.

"I have come a mile," she reflected, sitting up and wiping her eyes; "for this spool is full, and number two hangs in the bushes yonder."

The idea of surprising an elderly student of science at his labors had been gradually growing less and less attractive; and now after a period of serious reflection it ceased to appear either funny or fascinating in the slightest degree.

"He is undoubtedly a person who would be politely, sarcastically, and crushingly disagreeable because I had ventured to meddle with his absurd spools," decided Miss Terrill soberly. "I am very glad that I stopped in time; I

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shall have no trouble in reaching the camp from this point. Of course I shall put the spool exactly where I found it."

She rose slowly to her feet and looked meditatively about her. "I came by that big tree; I remember the dead branch hanging down to the ground."

Ah, foolish maid! keener eyes than those pretty brown ones of yours have been deceived by the wonderful likeness of everything to every other thing in the big woods. The tree with the dead branch certainly led to a perfectly familiar-looking bush; and the bush beguiled the weary little feet to an odorous group of balsams, where bright-eyed squirrels chattered angrily at the wearer of the jaunty red tam. And beyond the balsams there was a cup-like hollow where the beautiful deadly "Fly Amanita" thrust its golden globes through the black-leaf mould. Then the brambles clutched at her with their thorny fingers, and the treacherous mud tried to hold her away from the ripe huckleberries. And all the while the gnats and mosquitoes followed hard after like the hosts of an avenging fate.

But, yes; it was all perfectly plain and not at all far. She would soon catch a sparkle of blue water through the trees, and then dinner and a long, delicious rest in the hammock! The grewsome tales of wayfarers lost and starving in the woods were she decided simply figments of weak and elderly imaginations; mere bugaboos to keep small children within bounds. Any person of sound judgment and educated powers of observation could easily

"Gracious!" Miss Terrill rarely made use of such vulgar exclamations, but the exigency of the occasion wrung it from her lips. The spool was again empty! She looked wildly about her; there was no welcome glimmer of blue water, no pervasive odor of a smoky camp-fire, no dinner, no hammock anywhere in sight.

"Well, there is only one thing to do," decided the girl after a second period of reflection, during which the humorous nature of the adventure did not once recur to her mind. "I will go back to the second spool once more, and try again. One can always do what one must do," she added sententiously, and with the air of one who combats an unpleasant suggestion.

Two hours later, as she wearily retraced her steps for the third time to the spot where the second spool hung in the bushes, the situation had resolved itself in her mind (she had been a "special" in mathematics) into the following concise form:

"Let A represent the camp, and B the position of the second spool, one mile distant from A. How many miles might a person travel in endeavoring to reach A, supposing he started from B in a different direction each time?"

"If the traveler started out from B and traveled in a perfectly straight line each time," she murmured a diagram of the problem presenting itself with appalling distinctness before her mental vision "he might easily travel several hundred miles without reaching A. If he traveled in curved lines as he certainly would why "

The undeniable conclusions were too harrowing to contemplate with calmness, therefore Miss Katherine Carter Terrill sat down upon a mossy log and shed tears for full five minutes. She beheld herself, as it were, the wandering radius of an unknown circle, returning innumerable times to point B. and at last lying cold and unconscious on the forest leaves, the fatal spool clutched tight in her stiffened fingers.

"I shall never find it never!" she wailed, grinding the innocent cause of her misadventure beneath her boot-heels. "But, oh, how can I let that man find me, as he certainly will, if I hold on to this wretched spool! I *can't*, if I have to die of slow starvation and I am so hungry! But suppose I leave the spool here, the unsuspecting old gentleman will wind up to it, and then he will have nothing to go by not even point B!"

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A vision of her oven-revered grandparent wandering gaunt and famished through interminable wastes of desolate forest filled her with a lively anguish.

"No, I must not leave him to perish it would be murder!" she said with a shudder. "I will find him and tell him what I have done."

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John Gearing glanced hastily over the closely written pages of his note-book by the waning light, snapped the cover of his tin specimen case with a well-satisfied air, and rose to his feet.

"It must be getting along toward sunset," he reflected, with a cursory glance at his watch. "Capital day's work, though; I shouldn't like to have missed that scarlet-headed arachnid. As for the coleopteron, I doubt if it has been generally recognized as a genuine crotlylid which it unquestionably is."

He paused to drop a full spool into his pocket and disengage an empty one from the limb of a mighty spruce which stood among its fellows weeping odorous tears of purest gum. The bug-hunter eyed it thoughtfully, a cheerful vision of the camp frying-pan, replete with sizzling slices of fragrant bacon, to be succeeded by a long procession of substantial slapjacks, rising alluringly before him.

"Jove!" he muttered, "I forgot to eat my lunch!"

The reflections of the hungry scientist as he strode rapidly onward winding up his second spool were both comfortable and complacent. "A more useful device to save valuable time than this simple system of spools was never devised," he decided. "At this moment I am approximately one and one-half miles from supper; with no doubtful trail to follow, no delays to puzzle over direction, no uncertainty whatever as to the exact point at which I shall " He stopped short; his keen ear had caught the sound of crackling branches.

"A deer!" he muttered; "and coming right this way!"

Arachnida, coleoptera, spools, and even supper were forgotten on the instant; and the bug-hunter, alert and silent, stood grasping his rifle, his eyes fixed on the low-growing tangle of evergreens from which the suspicious sounds had proceeded. A moment later and he was staring with undisguised amazement at the small figure which limped rapidly toward him.

"You are *not* Professor Gearing I am so glad!" were the astonishing words with which the apparition introduced itself. It pushed back a scarlet tam-o'-shanter from a tangle of brown curls, and continued: "I don't know who you are, but I am Katherine Terrill and I am lost in these dreadful woods. Do take me home!" With that the figure sank back against a tree with a sound suspiciously like a sob.

"I I do not understand," stammered the astounded bug-hunter lamely. "I can take you home, certainly; but I must acknowledge that I am John Gearing."

The wearer of the scarlet tam started up with a hysterical laugh. "Professor Gearing is an old man!" she cried, "and *you* you are quite quite young! I took his spool out of the camp, and I can't find the way back!"

"The spool eh! You don't mean "

"Yes, I do. I took it and wound it up to point B I mean the second spool," faltered the mischief-maker, her cheeks dyed with penitent blushes. "I I was stopping at the camp, you see, for a few moments with a friend, and

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I saw the spool. I can't tell you why I did it." This last with a vain clutch after her vanished dignity. "It it just occurred to me that it might be "

"I hung that empty spool there merely as a tag at the end of my string," remarked John Gearing meditatively. "I certainly "

"Say anything you like to me," interrupted Miss Terrill solemnly; "I deserve it. We shall never get home alive never!"

John Gearing stared at the speaker for a full minute, then he threw back his head and laughed long and loud. "I I beg your pardon, Miss Terrill," he said at length; "but really "

"Oh, yes, you may laugh!" said the young lady with an indignant shrug. "I laughed too at first. But it hasn't seemed a bit funny for at least six hours. I tell you we *can't* get back! We shall starve to death; and it's it's getting dark!"

The bug-hunter was sobered in an instant by the pitiful quiver in the tired voice.

"You don't mean to say that you have been wandering about since morning with nothing to eat?" he asked anxiously.

"Nothing but huckleberries and I loathe huckleberries!"

John Gearing hastily swung his pack-basket to the ground. "These sandwiches" producing a parcel of dubious aspect "have suffered somewhat, I fear, knocking about all day among my traps; but if you will accept them "

"They look perfectly delicious!" declared the young lady with unconcealed delight. "But I shall eat only one it is just possible, you know, that we might in time "

"I beg that you will give yourself no further anxiety on that score!" cried John Gearing confidently. "We are only a trifle over a mile from camp; we'll be there inside of an hour."

The girl shook her head mournfully. "That we are so near is just the most dreadful part of it," she said, winking rapidly to keep back two big tears which were trying hard to pass the barrier of her long lashes. "But if you really think you can find the way, do let us start at once. Of course we can reach the second spool," she added. "I I was frightened when I saw how late it was growing, so I came to meet you. I thought it was my duty to to tell you "

John Gearing surveyed the speaker in puzzled silence. "Do you er mind telling me," he burst out after a long pause, during which the stealthy twilight made perceptible advances, "what that is why you were so sure that I was somebody else at first, you know?"

"What *must* you think of me!" exclaimed Miss Terrill irrelevantly, stopping short in the midst of a vicious tangle of blackberry bushes for no other purpose, it appeared, than to wring her small hands. "It has all been so dreadful that I haven't realized *that!* You must think me bold and meddlesome and and generally horrid!"

"I have thought nothing of the kind!" retorted the bug-hunter with unnecessary warmth. "It was all the fault of those infernal spools! I wouldn't mind this" with a comprehensive wave of the hand which seemed to include all the hostile forces of nature "if it were not for you. I should get into camp all right, some time; but "

"You may think so, but you couldn't," said the girl with a pitying glance at the stalwart figure. "It will be all the harder for you to bear; and when I think that I did it that it is all my fault! But of course I didn't think I could

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never have imagined what a fatal thing I was doing when I touched that spool. No, wait till I have told you all." With that she poured forth the tale of the day's adventures, closing with a statement of the problem which she had spent six unhappy hours in trying to solve.

"Don't you see," she said in a shaking voice, "how utterly improbable it is that we shall *ever* reach point A?"

John Gearing had smiled more than once during this recital; he also frowned as he stared anxiously into the black depths of the forest which shut them in like a wall.

"Miss Terrill," he said gravely, "your conclusions are undeniably logical and unpleasantly correct from your premises; but luckily there, are other factors which you have overlooked, and which must be introduced. One is, that the guides are sure to beat the woods for miles about point A. There is, therefore, not the slightest danger of our becoming either variable or permanent radii of point B. The only question to be considered at present is, shall we make any immediate attempt to solve the problem ourselves? You are already weary, and "

"You might attach a second spool at point B." interrupted the girl, knitting her pretty brows; "our chances would then be multiplied by two."

"But I object to the preliminary division," said John Gearing decidedly; "it simply isn't to be thought of. The darkness has closed in upon us at an unconscionably early hour," he went on rapidly. "I can not understand it, unless, to add to our perplexity, it is about to " A drop of water which landed squarely on the tip of his nose explained the phenomenon.

"It is raining," observed Miss Terrill with the calmness of despair. "But of course that was to be expected. We will go on," she added firmly. "No I am not at all tired, and I am quite accustomed to the woods." This last with a superb gesture of refusal as her victim offered his arm.

Two minutes later her foot slipped on a treacherous log, and with a cry she plunged forward into the darkness.

John Gearing was at her side in an instant. "My poor little girl," he murmured, lifting her with all possible gentleness, "are you much hurt?"

"At all events I have not sprained my ankle," said the girl with a faint laugh. "But I slipped once before to-day, and "

John Gearing groaned. "I shall never forgive myself for my outrageous folly!" he declared savagely, and quite involuntarily he tightened the clasp of his strong arms.

Miss Terrill laughed again in spite of herself. "Put me down, please, Mr. Gearing," she said. "If you should change most of the pronouns in your last statement to the second person, it would be quite what I deserve. I fear I shall have to stop where I am; but you must go on. Please go at once before it gets any darker."

"And leave you here alone?"

"Yes."

By way of answer, John Gearing hastily divested himself of his thick shooting-jacket and wrapped it about his companion with an authoritative firmness which admitted of no question.

"I have four matches and a half, to be exact," he said, after a careful search through his various pockets. "Luckily it hasn't rained long enough to wet the ground; if the fates aren't too unkind we'll have a camp-fire inside of five

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minutes."

A flash, a sizzle, an impatient exclamation announced that match number one had weakly succumbed to the untoward influences of the place and hour. Two, three, and four followed with disheartening unanimity, during intervals plainly occupied in a frantic search for drier material.

"If you only had some paper," ventured a timid voice out of the darkness.

"Of course! Thank heaven you reminded me before I struck that last half match!"

Another moment, and a score of closely written pages treating learnedly of the coleoptera and arachnida of the great northern wilderness were blazing merrily in the midst of a skilfully constructed pile of twigs and branches.

"Wasn't it fortunate you happened to have that paper?" observed Miss Terrill, as she leaned forward to warm her chilled fingers at the now thoroughly established fire.

"Fortunate!" echoed John Gearing, dropping his specimen-box as he stooped to lay another stick on the fire whereat the scarlet-headed arachnid and the coleoptera, one and all, wriggled out and away with joyful haste. "It was by all odds the most fortunate thing I know of."

"Perhaps you will think me a coward," began the girl, after a prolonged pause which the raindrops filled with a soft, insistent murmur. "Do you think it would be very wrong for me that is, for you " She turned her head away from the searching firelight as she continued in so low a voice that John Gearing was forced to bend his tall head to listen "if they find us? You said they would search for us?"

"They will search for us certainly, and find us."

"If they know that is, if you if I must tell them that I took the spool to to find you, I could not face them I could not bear it!"

"Ah, but the fact is that I found you!" said John Gearing in his deepest voice.

"Yes but the spools!"

The bug-hunter leaned forward and deliberately dropped a full half dozen of them into the red heart of the fire.

"There are no spools," he said calmly.

A more unpleasant spot than the virgin forest of the Adirondacks on a wet night it would be difficult to find. Mr. Percy Algernon Smith put this fact more forcibly; he said But why repeat the words of a man who has forced his way through some six or eight miles of soaking coves, pursued all the way by jubilant throngs of mosquitoes his energies being still further taxed by laborious and systematic performance on a big tin horn?

"I say, Jake," he bawled, pausing after a succession of ear-splitting blasts, "d'ye hear anything?"

The guide nodded, "To the west on us," he said, jerking his thumb over his shoulder. "'Tain't fur, neither."

The sagacious reader has already divined that this is only the beginning of the story. Its ending was after the old, old fashion, of which wise people the world over never grow tired, and which in truth is the end or the beginning of every story that is at all worth the telling. In this place it must be set down in just four words afterward they were married.

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It was my good fortune, not many months later, to hear Mrs. John Gearing relate the above romantic circumstances, which she did with the prettiest smiles and blushes imaginable.

In closing she declared solemnly that never in all the course of her existence had such a welcome, glad, cheerful, happy, enlivening, and altogether delightful vision greeted her eyes as the round, freckled face of "Cinnamon" Smith as he burst through the dripping branches on that rainy August night.

But she never so much as mentioned the spools; it was their ashes that told the tale.
