

The Old Hermit's Dream.

Tom was up bright and early the first day in May. He had breakfast and was starting off down the road when he saw the hermit and his dog ahead of him. The hermit's steps were slower than usual. Tom wondered where he was bound for. He hoped not too far. He decided to keep the old man in sight. Tom gained on him as the hermit walked slower and slower, pausing once in a while as if to get his breath.

The hermit had reached the foot of Winbeam and kept on walking along the foot of the mountain until he reached the reservoir, and there he stood a while gazing

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north and south over the waters.

Now leaning heavily on his hickory stick the hermit began to slowly climb a steep rocky path above the reservoir. He nodded to Van as he sat down on a flat smooth stone and braced his feet against a boulder below. Van sat down near by. Jack lay down beside his master.

Presently the hermit reached out a thin brown hand and broke off a twig of sassafras and chewed the sweet-scented bark, then he gazed down over the waters again a long time before he spoke.

"I had a strange dream last night," he began at length - "A dream as real as life! It seemed that I awakened from a long deep sleep

to find myself in a world called Solitude, a great primeval forest where mighty trees had stood a thousand years, and strange to say, the place was right here overlooking this valley; then passed before my eyes a panorama of shifting scenes - Indians followed a trail through this dark forest and fished in the clear swift stream below. The smell of the smoke of their camp-fire came to me as I dozed off to sleep again. When I awoke the forest about me was not so dark, - trees had been thinned out. Men with a yoke of oxen were fording the stream. At the head of the valley I saw a bog, calm and a clearing here and there. I was listening to the ringing clang of a forge when I dozed off again. This time when I awakened I saw a bridge

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that spanned the stream, and this whole valley below was farmland. Here and there stood a farm house with a barn close by and the trees up this mountain slope were mighty no longer. I closed my eyes to collect my thoughts, and when I opened my eyes again I saw this reservoir stretching north and south as far as I could see—gone the deep dark forest, gone the Indians, gone the river and river farms— all under the waters of this reservoir."

The old hermit absently broke off another twig of sassafras. He did not speak again, but sat as one in a trance, gazing into the scenes of the past.

Just two weeks after the hermit's last long hike and strange dream - it was early dawn when Zoe nudged Sike awake. "Sike wake up!" she cried. "Jack is barking at our front door. Something has happened to the hermit."

Sike sprang out of bed, pulled his clothes on, ran down stairs and opened the front door. Jack jumped up on him and licked his hands, then barked again, ran down to the gate, then back to Sike, raised his head, pointing his nose north in the direction of his home and barked again. Sike ran to the garage, got into his car, told Jack to jump in, and went at high speed up the road, turned off on the hermit's home road and soon reached the house. Sike found the front door open and walked in. The hermit

lay on his couch in the kitchen.
He looked peaceful. Evidently he
had died in his sleep.

"Stay here Jack - stay by your
master," ordered Sike. "I'll
be back soon."

Jack understood. He lay down
on the floor in front of the couch.