

# The Man Hunt

By Madison J. Cawein

The woods stretch wild to the mountain-side,  
And the brush is deep where a man may hide.

They have brought the bloodhounds up again  
To the roadside rock where they found the slain.

They have brought the bloodhounds up, and they  
Have taken the trail to the mountain way.

Three times they circled the trail and crossed,  
And thrice they found it and thrice they lost.

Now straight through the trees and the underbrush  
They follow the scent through the forest's hush.

And their deep-mouthed bay is a pulse of fear  
In the heart of the wood that the man must hear.

The man who crouches among the trees  
From the stern-faced men who follow these.

A huddle of rocks that the ooze has mossed—  
And the trail of the hunted again is lost.

An upturned pebble; a bit of ground  
A heel has trampled—the trail is found.

And the woods re-echo the bloodhounds' bay  
As again they take to the mountain way.

A rock; a ribbon of road; a ledge,  
With a pine-tree clutching its crumbling edge.

A pine, that the lightning long since clave,  
Whose huge roots hollow a ragged cave.

A shout; a curse; and a face aghast,  
And the human quarry is laired at last.

The human quarry with clay-clogged hair  
And eyes of terror who waits them there.

That glares and crouches and rising then  
Hurls clods and curses at dogs and men.

Until the blow of a gun-butt lays  
Him stunned and bleeding upon his face.

A rope, a prayer, and an oak-tree near,  
And a score of hands to swing him clear.

A grim, black thing for the setting sun  
And the moon and the stars to look upon.