

The Shagganappi eBook

The Shagganappi by Pauline Johnson

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

The Shagganappi eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	8
Page 1.....	9
Page 2.....	11
Page 3.....	13
Page 4.....	15
Page 5.....	17
Page 6.....	19
Page 7.....	21
Page 8.....	23
Page 9.....	25
Page 10.....	27
Page 11.....	29
Page 12.....	30
Page 13.....	32
Page 14.....	34
Page 15.....	36
Page 16.....	38
Page 17.....	40
Page 18.....	42
Page 19.....	44
Page 20.....	45
Page 21.....	47
Page 22.....	49

Page 23.....	51
Page 24.....	53
Page 25.....	55
Page 26.....	56
Page 27.....	58
Page 28.....	60
Page 29.....	62
Page 30.....	64
Page 31.....	66
Page 32.....	68
Page 33.....	70
Page 34.....	71
Page 35.....	72
Page 36.....	74
Page 37.....	76
Page 38.....	77
Page 39.....	79
Page 40.....	81
Page 41.....	82
Page 42.....	83
Page 43.....	84
Page 44.....	85
Page 45.....	87
Page 46.....	89
Page 47.....	91
Page 48.....	92

Page 49.....	94
Page 50.....	96
Page 51.....	98
Page 52.....	99
Page 53.....	101
Page 54.....	102
Page 55.....	104
Page 56.....	106
Page 57.....	108
Page 58.....	110
Page 59.....	112
Page 60.....	113
Page 61.....	114
Page 62.....	116
Page 63.....	118
Page 64.....	120
Page 65.....	122
Page 66.....	124
Page 67.....	126
Page 68.....	128
Page 69.....	130
Page 70.....	132
Page 71.....	133
Page 72.....	134
Page 73.....	136
Page 74.....	138

Page 75.....	139
Page 76.....	140
Page 77.....	142
Page 78.....	143
Page 79.....	145
Page 80.....	147
Page 81.....	148
Page 82.....	149
Page 83.....	151
Page 84.....	153
Page 85.....	155
Page 86.....	156
Page 87.....	158
Page 88.....	160
Page 89.....	161
Page 90.....	163
Page 91.....	164
Page 92.....	165
Page 93.....	166
Page 94.....	168
Page 95.....	169
Page 96.....	171
Page 97.....	173
Page 98.....	174
Page 99.....	175
Page 100.....	176

Page 101.....	178
Page 102.....	180
Page 103.....	182
Page 104.....	184
Page 105.....	185
Page 106.....	187
Page 107.....	189
Page 108.....	190
Page 109.....	192
Page 110.....	194
Page 111.....	196
Page 112.....	198
Page 113.....	200
Page 114.....	202
Page 115.....	204
Page 116.....	205
Page 117.....	207
Page 118.....	209
Page 119.....	211
Page 120.....	213
Page 121.....	215
Page 122.....	217
Page 123.....	219
Page 124.....	220
Page 125.....	221
Page 126.....	223

Page 127.....	225
Page 128.....	226
Page 129.....	228
Page 130.....	230
Page 131.....	232
Page 132.....	234
Page 133.....	236
Page 134.....	237
Page 135.....	238
Page 136.....	240
Page 137.....	241
Page 138.....	243
Page 139.....	244
Page 140.....	246
Page 141.....	248
Page 142.....	249
Page 143.....	250
Page 144.....	251
Page 145.....	253
Page 146.....	255
Page 147.....	257
Page 148.....	258
Page 149.....	260

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
The Shagganappi	1
The King's Coin	18
I	18
II	22
III	25
IV	29
V	32
Hoolool of the Totem Pole	44
The Wolf-Brothers	48
We-hro's Sacrifice	52
The Scarlet Eye	63
THE SCARLET EYE	67
Sons of Savages	68
FIRST, COURAGE	69
SECOND, RELIGIOUS TRAINING	69
TRICKS OF FOOD-GETTING	70
AGE BEFORE LINEAGE	70
Jack o' Lantern	71
I	71
II	74
The Barnardo Boy	78
The Broken String	83
Maurice of His Majesty's Mails	90
The Whistling Swans	97
The King Georgeman	109
I	109
II	113
Gun-Shy Billy	117
The Brotherhood	121
The Signal Code	127
The Shadow Trail	132
THE SHADOW TRAIL	135
The Saucy Seven	137
Little Wolf-Willow	143

Page 1

The Shagganappi

When “Fire-Flint” Larocque said good-bye to his parents, up in the Red River Valley, and started forth for his first term in an Eastern college, he knew that the next few years would be a fight to the very teeth. If he could have called himself “Indian” or “White” he would have known where he stood in the great world of Eastern advancement, but he was neither one nor the other—but here he was born to be a thing apart, with no nationality in all the world to claim as a blood heritage. All his young life he had been accustomed to hear his parents and himself referred to as “half-breeds,” until one day, when the Governor-General of all Canada paid a visit to the Indian school, and the principal, with an air of pride, presented “Fire-Flint” to His Excellency, with “This is our head pupil, the most diligent boy in the school. He is Trapper Larocque’s son.”

“Oh? What tribe does he belong to?” asked the Governor, as he clasped the boy’s hand genially.

“Oh, Fire-Flint belongs to no tribe; he is a half-breed,” explained the principal.

“What an odd term!” said the Governor, with a perplexed wrinkle across his brows; then, “I imagine you mean a half-blood, not breed.” His voice was chilly and his eyes a little cold as he looked rather haughtily at the principal. “I do not like the word ‘breed’ applied to human beings. It is a term for cattle and not men,” he continued. Then, addressing “Fire-Flint,” he asked, “Who are your parents, my boy?”

“My father is half French and half Cree; my mother is about three-quarters Cree; her grandfather was French,” replied the boy, while his whole loyal young heart reached out towards this great man, who was lifting him out of the depths of obscurity. Then His Excellency’s hands rested with a peculiar half fatherly, half brotherly touch on the shoulders of the slim lad before him.

“Then you have blood in your veins that the whole world might envy,” he said slowly. “The blood of old France and the blood of a great aboriginal race that is the offshoot of no other race in the world. The Indian blood is a thing of itself, unmixed for thousands of years, a blood that is distinct and exclusive. Few white people can claim such a lineage. Boy, try and remember that as you come of Red Indian blood, dashed with that of the first great soldiers, settlers and pioneers in this vast Dominion, that you have one of the proudest places and heritages in the world; you are a Canadian in the greatest sense of that great word. When you go out into the world will you remember that, Fire-Flint?” His Excellency’s voice ceased, but his thin, pale, aristocratic fingers still rested on the boy’s shoulders, his eyes still shone with that peculiar brotherly light.

“I shall remember, sir,” replied Fire-Flint, while his homeless young heart was fast creating for itself the foothold amongst the great nations of the earth. The principal of

the school stood awkwardly, hoping that all this attention would not spoil his head pupil; but he never knew that boy in all the five years he had instructed him, as His Excellency, Lord Mortimer, knew him in that five minutes' chat.

Page 2

"No," said the Governor, again turning to the principal, "I certainly do not like that term 'half-breed.' Most of the people on the continent of America are of mixed nationality—how few are pure English or Scotch or Irish—or indeed of any particular race? Yet the white people of mixed nations are never called half-breeds. Why not? It would be quite reasonable to use the term regarding them." Then, once again addressing Fire-Flint, he asked, "I suppose all the traders use this term in speaking of your parents and of you?"

"Of my parents, yes, sir," replied the boy.

"And you?" questioned His Excellency, kindly.

"They call me the 'Shagganappi,'" replied Fire-Flint.

"I am afraid that is beyond me, my boy," smiled His Excellency. "Won't you tell me what it means?" The boy smiled responsively.

"It is a buckskin, a color; a shagganappi cayuse is a buckskin color. They say I look that way."

"Ah, I understand," replied His Excellency, as his eyes rested on the dark cream brown tint of the boy's face. "Well, it is a good name; buckskin is a thing essential to white people and to Indians alike, from the Red River to the Rockies. And the cayuse—well, the horse is the noblest animal known to man. So try to be worthy of the nickname, my boy. Live to be essential to your people like the buckskin; to be noble—like the horse. And now good-bye, Shagganappi, and remember that you are the real Canadian."

Another handclasp and Lord Mortimer was walking away with the principal at his side, who was saying, "Your Excellency, you have greatly encouraged that boy; I think he always felt terribly that he was a half-bree—half-blood. He would have loved to claim either all Cree or all French ancestry."

"He is a fine lad and I like him," returned Lord Mortimer, rather shortly, for he felt a little impatient with the principal, who could so easily have lightened the boy's heart from the very first year he had entered the school, by fostering within him pride of the two great races that blended within his veins into that one mighty nation called Canadian.

But that day proved the beginning of a new life for Fire-Flint; Lord Mortimer had called him Shagganappi in a half playful way, had said the name meant good and great things. No more did the little half-blood despise his own unusually tinted skin, no more did he hate that dash of grey in his brown eyes that bespoke "white blood," no more did he deplore the lack of proper coloring that would have meant the heritage of pure Indian blood. He was content to fight it out, through all his life to come, as "The Shagganappi," and when the time came for him to go to the great Eastern college in Ontario he went

with his mind made up that no boy living was going to shoulder him into a corner or out-do him in the race for attainment.

* * * * *

“Hello, fellows, there is an Indian blown in from the North-West. Cracker-jack of a looking chap,” announced “Cop” Billings to his roommates late one morning, as he burst into the room after his early mile run to find them with yet ten minutes to spare before the “rising bell.”

Page 3

“Shut up, and let a fellow sleep,” growled “Sandy,” from his bed in the corner.

“Indian?” exclaimed young Locke, sitting bolt upright; “this ain’t a Redskin school; he’s got to get put out, or I’m a deader.”

“You’ll be a deader if you try to put him out,” sneered Cop Billings; “first place he’s got an arm like braided whipcord, and he’s got a chin—hanged determined swat-you-in-the-face sort of chin—not a boiled-fish sort of jaw like yours,” and he glared at the unfortunate Locke with sneering disapproval.

“Where’d you see him?” ventured little chunky Johnny Miller, getting into his clothes.

“Saw him in the library as I passed. The Head called me in and—”

“Stow it! stow it!” they all yelled; then Locke jeered, “The Head is never up at six-thirty—we are not rabbits.”

“Just where you get left; the Head was up at five-thirty and went to the station to meet mister Indian.”

“Well, I’ll be jing-banged,” exclaimed Sandy, nearly awake; “what’s the meaning of it all?”

“Meaning’s just this, my son,” replied Cop, getting out of his limited running togs into something more respectable, “that if you chumps guessed all day you’d never strike just how the Indian came to this school. Who do you suppose wrote to the Head recommending him to take the Redskin, and kind of insinuating that the college would do well to treat him properly? None other than His Excellency Lord Mortimer, Governor-General of ‘this Canada of ours.’ Now, Locke, will you act good and pretty, and take your bread and milk like a nice little tootsy-wootsy and allow the Indian to stay?”

“Whew!” bellowed Locke, “I guess I’m it, fellows.”

“Just found it out, eh?” answered Cop; then, as the first bell clanged throughout the building and hustling was in order, he proceeded to explain that as he passed the library door on his way to the baths, Professor Warwick called him in and introduced him to the tall, lithe Westerner, who had wonderfully easy manners, a skin like a tan-colored glove, and whose English was more attractive than marred by a strong accent that sounded “Frenchy.”

“When he found that I was heading for the baths he asked to come, too,” rattled Cop; “been on the train over three days and nights coming from Winnipeg; said he felt grimy, so I took him along. Jingo, you should see his clothes—silk socks, silk shirt, top-coat lined with mink, an otter collar—must have cost hundreds. Says I, ‘Well, pal, your governor must be well fixed.’ Says he, ‘My father is a trapper and trades with the

Hudson's Bay Company. He trapped all these minks, and my other clothes—oh, we buy those at the H.B.C. in Winnipeg.' Wouldn't that phase you, fellows? But I forgot his clothes when I saw him strip. Jiminy Christmas! I never saw such a body. I'm in bully training, but I'm a cow compared to 'Shag.'"

"What a rum name!" said Locke, still a little resentful.

Page 4

"Found out all about that, too," went on Cop. "Seems he has a whole string of names to choose from. Heard him tell the Head that his first name is 'Fire-Flint,' and his last name is 'Larocque.' Seemed to kind of take the Head where he is weakest.

"'If you don't like it,' says the Indian, with a dead-quiet, plumb-straight look at the Head, 'you may call me what the people up along the Red River call me; I'm known there as the Shagganappi—Shag, if you want to cut off part of the word. The other boys may call me Shag if they want to.' Say, fellows, I liked him right there and then. He may chum up with me all he likes, for all his silk socks and shirts."

"What did the Head say?" asked little Johnnie Miller.

"Said he liked the name Shag," replied Cop. "'Then I'm Shag to you, sir, and the others here,' speaks up his Indian nibs. Then he and I struck for the tubs, then they took him to get his room, and I came up here."

As Cop finished speaking the chapel bell sounded and all four boys scrambled down to prayers. As they entered the little sanctuary, one of the masters standing irresolute near the door, beckoned to Cop. "Billings," he whispered, "Will you please go and ask Larocque if he cares to come to prayers? He's in room 17; you met him this morning, I believe."

"Certainly, sir," replied Cop, dashing up the nearest stairway.

"Entrez," replied an even voice to Cop's unusually respectful knock. Then the voice rapidly corrected itself, "Enter, come in," it said in English.

"How about prayers?" asked Cop. "Perhaps you're tired and don't care to come?"

"I'll go," replied the Indian, and followed noiselessly where Billings led.

They entered just as Professor Warwick was beginning prayers, and although the eighty or so boys present were fairly exemplary, none could resist furtive looks at the newcomer, who walked up the little aisle beside Billings with a peculiarly silent dignity and half-indifference that could not possibly be assumed. How most of them envied him that manner! They recalled their own shyness and strangeness on the first day of their arrival; how they stumbled over their own feet that first morning at prayers; how they hated being stared at and spoken of as "the new boy." How could this Indian come among them as if he had been born and bred in their midst? But they never knew that Larocque's wonderful self-possession was the outcome of his momentary real indifference; his thoughts were far away from the little college chapel, for the last time he had knelt in a sanctuary was at the old, old cathedral at St. Boniface, whose twin towers arose under the blue of a Manitoba sky, whose foundations stood where the historic Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet, about whose bells one of America's sweetest

singers, Whittier, had written lines that have endeared his name to every worshipper that bends the knee in that prairie sanctuary. The lines were drifting through his mind now. They were the first words of English poetry he had learned to memorize:

Page 5

"Is it the clang of the wild geese?
Is it the Indian's yell,
That lends to the call of the north wind
The tones of a far-off bell?

"The voyageur smiles as he listens
To the sound that grows apace.
Well he knows the vesper ringing
Of the bells of St. Boniface.

"The bells of the Roman mission—
That call from their turrets twain
To the boatman on the river,
To the hunter on the plain."

"To the hunter on the plain," said Shag's thoughts, over and over. Perhaps the hunter was his trapper father, who with noiseless step and wary eye was this very moment stalking some precious fur-bearing animal, whose pelt would bring a good price at the great Hudson's Bay trading-post; a price that would go toward keeping his son at this Eastern college for many terms. Shag's grey-brown eyes grew dreamy. He saw the vast prairies sweeping away into the West, and his father, a mere speck on the horizon, the ever-present "gun," the silent moccasin, the scarlet sash, the muffled step, all proclaiming "the hunter on the plain."

The prayers were ended and Shag found that he was not really watching his father coming up some prairie trail, but that before him was a different type of man, Professor Warwick, whose studious eyes now required glasses to see through, and whose hand was white and silken in its touch—how hopelessly lost this little man would be should circumstances turn him forth to gain his livelihood at hunting and trapping. Old Larocque himself would hardly be more incongruous teaching in this college. It was this thought that made Shag smile as he rose from his knees, with the echoes of the bells of St. Boniface haunting his heart.

Then the chapel emptied, each boy on breakfast bent. "Cop" Billings still remained at the Indian's elbow, but at the door one or two of the masters stopped to greet the new arrival, and a tall, remarkably handsome lad waited, apparently to speak. He was a boy that anyone would pick from a crowd of fifty—straight, well-built, with fine, strong, thin hands, and a face with contradictory eyes, for they twinkled and danced as if nothing so serious as thoughtfulness ever disturbed them. As the two boys approached him he stepped impulsively forward, extending his hand to Shag with the words, "May I shake hands with you and say hello?"

"Thank you;" replied Shag; "the way you boys are treating me makes me feel less strange."

“Oh, no one feels strange here,” laughed the handsome boy. “You must try and like us. So you’re from Manitoba, are you?”

“Yes, Red River,” answered Shag.

“Father’s been up there, and grandfather, too,” said the other, falling in step with the two boys on their way to the dining-room. “Come up to my ranch some time soon—to-night if you like. Cop will bring you,” he added with a parting nod, as he left them for his own table at the other side of the room.

Page 6

Cop stared hard at his companion. "Thunderation!" he blurted, "but you're the lucky kid!"

"Yes?" questioned Shag. "Never mind the luck, but tell me who that chap is; he's very nice; I like him."

"Like him!" almost yelled Cop; "I should think you would like him! Why, he's the 'Pop!'"

"Pop?" What's that?" said Shag, with a puzzled air.

"Popular, the most popular boy in college—head in everything—clubs, classes, sports. Everybody is dippy over him from the Head right down to 'Infant' Innis, that little geezer in shorts across the table, who is only eleven last birthday. Even Dirty Dick, the gardener, is batty about him; and here he's put himself out to shake your fin, and ask you up to his room—thing he's only done twice since he entered college. You are lucky, kid!"

"Does he think a lot of himself?" asked Shag with some suspicion.

"He? Not much! Just the bulliest old pal in the world. Why, he wouldn't be the 'pop' if he threw on side," asserted Cop loyally.

"You haven't told me who he is yet," said Shag.

"Oh, I forgot," apologized Cop. "It seems so funny that everybody shouldn't know. Why, he's Harry Bennington. You must have heard of Sir George Bennington, big railroad man. Queen Victoria knighted him for some big scoop he made for Canada or the Colonies or something. Well, Hal's his son; but do you suppose that his dad's title makes any difference to Hal? Not much! But Hal's handshake will make a big difference to you in this college, I'll tell you that, Shag. You're made, that's what you are—just made; even Lord Mortimer back of you couldn't give you the place among the crowd here that Hal Bennington's grip did to-day."

Shag did not reply; he was looking across the room at Sir George Bennington's son. He knew the name of the wealthy man whom Queen Victoria had honored, knew it well. His father, Trapper Larocque, had met Sir George in the old pioneer days of the railroad in the North-West. There was a little story about Sir George, well-known in the Red River Valley; Trapper Larocque knew it, the Hudson's Bay Company knew it, Shag knew it, and was asking himself if Hal knew it. Then the boy from Manitoba took the story and locked it within his heart, sealed his lips above it, and said to his soul, "Hal Bennington won't know it from me, nor will anyone else. He's made my first day at this school an easy day; the fight won't be half what I thought it would. I owe much to him, and above all I owe him my silence."

“Coming up, fellows?” asked Hal genially, as Cop Billings stretched his big frame after grind in the evening at recreation hour before going to bed. The word “fellows” embraced him with a look that included Shag.

Page 7

"Thanks, I guess we will," said Cop, and the three boys proceeded upstairs to the private room occupied by Hal and one other, a stocky fellow known as "Shorty" Magee, who was just settling to his letter-writing as the boys entered. He nodded curtly, said "Hello!" rather grumpily, and did not offer to shake hands when Hal introduced Shag Larocque. Shorty always hated to be disturbed at anything, even if it were the irksome weekly letter home. He shoved aside his note-paper, however, and sat with his hands in his trousers pockets, his feet stretched out in front of him, and a tolerant expression on his face.

Hal, always gracious and kindly, seemed more so than ever to-night, evidently trying to make up for his roommate's moroseness by his own geniality. He showed Shag his treasures, his collection of curiosities, his two lynx-skin rugs—animals shot by his father years before—his pet books, and finally came to his photographs.

"This is a splendid one of father," he said enthusiastically; "it was taken when he was a young man surveying out West before they put the railroad through. That group of men to the left are axe-men. It should interest you, for Professor Warwick told me you came here to study surveying."

"Yes," said Shag, "that is my chosen work."

"Then," continued Hal, "that splendid-looking chap on father's right was his guide and personal cook—the one in the blanket coat and sash. He was part French but mostly Indian, I fancy—Why, what's the matter, Larocque?" for Shag had suddenly made some inarticulate exclamation, and had carried the photograph nearer the light.

"That is my father," he said quietly. As he spoke the words he was well aware that they might tell against him some time or other. He knew enough of the civilization of the white people to understand that when two boys attend the same school, one with a titled father and the other with a father who had cooked for the titled one, that things are apt to become strained; but never for one second did he hesitate about claiming the Red River trapper as his sire. He would have despised himself far more than any boy in the school could possibly do now, had he failed to say the words, "That is my father." The attitude of his three listeners was certainly a study. Cop Billings stood staring at him for a moment, then said, "Well, if your dad did cook he gets you far better shirts and socks than mine does me." Shorty Magee uttered the four words, "Cooked for Sir George!" and with an ugly sneer turned again to his letter-writing.

Hal Bennington had sprung forward, tossing his arms about the Indian's shoulders and exclaiming, "Your father! Is French Pete your father? Oh, I'm so glad! Father will be delighted when I tell him. I have heard him say a hundred times that he would never have lived to be 'Sir' George if it hadn't been for French Pete."

“Yes, they call my father French Pete because, although he is nearly all Indian, he speaks French so well,” announced Shag.

Page 8

Then followed a narration of two occasions when Shag's father had saved Sir George's life, once from drowning in the Assiniboine and once from freezing to death on the plains. The recreation interval was all too short for the boys to have their talk out, and when the "good-nights" came Hal wrung Shag's hand with a sincerity and heartiness that brought a responsive thrill into the fingers of the lonely boy who was spending his first night fifteen hundred miles away from home.

"Well," snorted Shorty, as the two boys left for the night, "going to chum around with the son of your father's cook, are you?"

Hal whirled on his heel, his hand clenched, his knuckles standing out white and bony; then he checked the torrent of words that sprang to his lips and answered quietly, "Yes, I am."

"Going to take him to Sir George and Lady Bennington's city residence for the Easter Vac?" sneered Shorty.

The answer came again quietly, "Yes, I am"; then, after a brief interval, "if he will pay me the compliment of coming."

Shorty subsided; he had not expected this, and, truth to tell, he felt at that moment that his sneers had accomplished precisely the opposite effect to what he had intended; but Hal made no comment until just before they got into their beds; then he said evenly:

"Shorty, you and I are room-mates, we have been pals for over a year; we won't discuss Shag Larocque, for I see that we shall never agree about him."

"I hate a mongrel," sniffed Shorty; "this fellow is neither Indian nor white."

"He's more Indian than white, and better for it, too," said Hal; "but, I say, Shorty—what nationality was your father?"

"Irish," said Shorty, with some pride.

"And your mother?" persisted Hal relentlessly.

"Oh, mother's parents were English; she was born here in Canada," replied Shorty a little weakly.

"Oh!" was all Hal said, but it held a world of meaning.

"Now, see here, Hal," began Shorty apologetically, "I know what you are thinking, but I'm British right through and my skin's white, no matter how you take it. I'm white on both sides of the family; I'm not splashed with tinted blood like this fellow from the North-West that's strayed in here; his skin's almost yellow."



"Yes," acquiesced Hal, "his skin is tinted—it is tinted, not tainted. There's a big difference, Shorty. Do you know, I'd give the world if I had as much of a copper-colored tint to my skin as Shag has."

"Rot!" ejaculated Shorty.

"No rot at all," cut in Hal; "I love the Indian people. You call this chap a 'mongrel,' but I tell you he is Indian—anyone can see it, and I know it. His father may have cooked in camp for my father, and did so, but from what my father told me, he, French Pete, was an honest man, and a brave one, too, and his son's good enough for me, and I'm his friend until the last dog's hung."

Page 9

That ended things for the time, for the college bells clanged out “lights out,” and the inmates, both white and Indian, slept.

* * * * *

“Yes, my dear boy,” wrote Sir George, some weeks later, “by all means bring young Larocque home for the Easter vacation; I shall welcome the son of my old friend and guide with the greatest delight. I have frequently told you of French Pete’s heroism and unselfishness, and if by a little hospitality I can show the son what I think of the father, I shall regard it as a privilege. Your dear mother will write you to-night, and will enclose a little note of invitation from us both to your friend ‘Shagganappi’—how that good old North-West word brings back my youth! I think I like your friend, even before I see him, just because he has adopted that name.”

So it was all arranged that Shag should spend the Easter vacation at the palatial home of the Benningtons in Montreal. As Hal was so popular, this holiday invitation was always regarded as the greatest compliment by any boy who was fortunate enough to receive it, but never before had Lady Bennington written personally to invite one of Hal’s friends.

It was such a dear little note, too; Hal never admired his mother quite so much as when Shag handed him the invitation to read. Lady Bennington was famous as one of the few women who always say and do the right thing at the right moment. The note ran:

“Dear Shagganappi,—

“Do come with my boy at Eastertide; we want you—come.

“Your friend, Hal’s mother,

“*Constance Bennington.*”

So Easter found the boys at Montreal, Shag a little shy at first amidst all the grandeur and wealth of Hal’s home, but covering that shyness with a quiet dignity that sat very well on his young shoulders. With a wonderful knack of delicacy, Hal would smooth out any threatened difficulty for the Indian boy—little table entanglements, such as new dishes or unaccustomed foods. But Shag was at times surprisingly outspoken, and the first night at dinner seemingly won Sir George’s heart by remarking when the fruit plates and finger-glasses were served, “Now, Hal, don’t be afraid that I won’t understand this; fortunately I dined on the dining-cars on the way East.” Everyone laughed then, including Shag, and Sir George said, “Then you are better up in things than I was at your age, my boy. I never saw a finger-glass until I was twenty.” So this little confidence put them all on a kind of family footing; and during the rest of his visit Shag was not afraid to ask and learn any of the usages of wealthy city houses and manners that might puzzle him. When he left he had endeared himself to Hal’s parents as no other boy had done before. Lady Bennington especially seemed to have become attached to him. Once when Hal was taking some snapshots of the grounds, she called

Shag to her side, and, placing one hand on his shoulder, asked Hal to photograph them together. Shag almost trembled with pleasure, but his delight knew no bounds when a week after their return to school he received a little copy of the photograph framed in silver and inscribed on the back with "To Shagganappi Larocque, with love from Hal's mother."

Page 10

"I don't know why you and your people are so good to me," he declared to Hal, when they both had duly admired the little picture. Hal stared at him rather oddly, but did not reply, and it was many months before Shag understood what that look meant; but when it was explained the Indian recalled many things that had once perplexed him.

* * * * *

It was late in May when Sir George and Lady Bennington left on their yearly visit to England, leaving Hal with the enviable holiday ahead of him of playing host at their summer residence in the Thousand Islands. He was privileged to ask what boys he liked; he could have his own canoe and sailboat, any of the servants from the city residence that he wished, and just put in one long, golden summer, swimming, boating, rollicking around, getting tanned and healthy. The only stipulation his parents made was that in addition to the crowd of boys asked he must invite one of the masters. It did not matter which one, so what did Hal do but "cheek it up" to the Head, who had no family to summer with, and who usually wandered off to some lonely mountain resort by himself for the entire vacation. Professor Warwick was amazed.

"Why, Bennington," he exclaimed, "what ever do you want an old codger like me for? There's young Graham, almost a boy himself, and Lewes, the science man, a funny chap. I always think Mr. Lewes is more fun than a cage of cats. I'm a dried-up old fellow that most of the boys are afraid of. You won't enjoy yourself with me around all the time."

"We're only afraid of you in classes, sir," laughed Hal; "no one is afraid of you outside. I've heard the boys josh you on the ball grounds and at the sports no end of times. You've just got to come, Professor!" And the old gentleman did go, to the delight of Hal's parents, who left for England perfectly satisfied that the boys would be well looked after if the Professor was an inmate of their island home.

The party was just about the right size; two of the little boys who lived at the Pacific coast were asked, then Shorty and Cop and little chunky Johnny Miller and Shag Larocque—seven all told, including Hal, and eight, counting the Professor, who, on the first night in camp said, a little gravely, "Hal, my boy, it is a great privilege to be the son of a wealthy man. I have never cared for money, but I would like to be in a position where I could have the pleasure of entertaining my friends in this delightful way."

"I hope I appreciate it, Professor," replied the boy. "Dad is always reminding me of the stacks of people not so well fixed as we are. He frequently tells me of the times when he went hungry—really hungry, without twenty-five cents with which to buy a meal, and he says if ever I forget it and try to put on 'side' that he will thrash me within an inch of my life, even after I am twenty-one."

The Professor roared, a regular boyish shout. “And he’d do it, too, I believe,” he chuckled. “That is what makes Sir George so wonderful; with all his wealth he is the same dear old chap he always was. I knew him when he was your age almost—and the only thing about him that has changed is his hair; it is a little thinner now—and grey.”

Page 11

"Yes, dad's a boy yet," smiled Hal, "but I won't give him a chance to lick me on the money score; it's too good fun having you all here, and a royal holiday ahead of us, without hunting for a trimming from dad because I play the la-de-da or think I'm the whole thing."

Shag was thinking hard, but he said nothing; yet, little as he knew of the world, he was quite aware how few boys in Hal's position would act as he had done. Had it not been for Sir George's son what would his life at college have been? He knew Locke never liked him, he knew that Shorty positively disliked him, he knew there was a strong element of prejudice in the school against him, and he knew positively that, were it not for Lord Mortimer's influence and recommendation, he would never have been accepted in this exclusive college as a student. What then did he owe to Hal? Everything, as far as making life in the East bearable, as far as being received on an equality with the other boys went. It was a tremendous debt that he owed this handsome boy who was his host for the summer. But before the holiday was ended Shag paid that debt with all his heart, and almost with his life.

It happened one day from the simple cause that the camp had run short of bread, and one of the youngsters from the Pacific coast, Freddy by name, had volunteered to paddle over to the mainland for it. The sailboat being laid up for repairs, Freddy ran out the light little Peterborough, and was just getting away from the island when Hal descried him and shouted to him to wait. "Think I'd let you go alone in that canoe, kiddie?" he asked. "There's too much wind to-day; look at her sweep down the north channel. Why, she'd turn you round and round like 'Willie waltzing.' Hold on, I'm coming with you." With that he sprang into the canoe and they were away.

It was rather a cold wind for early September, and the two boys were glad to paddle hard to keep their circulation up. Both were in shirt sleeves and both somewhat chilled; but by the time they had reached the mainland they were all tingling with rioting blood and with appetites ready to attack their cargo of bread, even minus the butter. They started back in good shape, although Hal's weather eye observed that the wind was picking up and that they would have to work for it to make the island in good time for supper. All went well for some distance, although sometimes the waves galloped up and slipped over the bow where Freddy knelt, plying his paddle in good form. Out in mid-stream, with both wind and current against him, Hal had considerable difficulty in steering; his strong, muscular arms pulled little Freddy's stroke around, and he bent to the work of "digging potatoes" with a vengeance. The bow with its light boyish ballast would rise and rise again, slapping down on the surface or taking the waves like a cork. Then came a line of combers, one on top of another. The taut little Peterborough rode the first like a shell, the second she dipped, the

Page 12

third she shipped a whole bucketful of water. As it poured over the deck, little Freddy flung himself backward to escape the drenching, the canoe dipped, Freddy landed full weight on the leeward gunwale—and they were over. For the first instant, Hal was conscious of but one thing, that he was being struck through with the chill of the water on top of being in a heat of perspiration with battling the canoe through the waves. Then he came to the surface to see the canoe, turned turtle, floating bottom up three yards away. Then a limp mass of brown clothes and brown curls cannoned into him, and reaching out, he grasped Freddy.

“Don’t get scared, kid,” he gasped, spluttering the water out of his throat; “keep cool and don’t clutch me too tight.” He might as well have spoken to the winds, for little Freddy, chilled through and terror-stricken, was clinging to him like an octopus, impeding his arm and leg action, and almost choking the breath out of his lungs. “Oh, Hal, we’re in mid-stream!” gulped the child; “we’ll be drowned!”

“Not on your life, kiddie!” spluttered Hal. “I’ll get that bally canoe. Only don’t hold on around my neck, that’s a good kiddie. There, that’s better,” as Freddy loosened his fingers from Hal’s shirt collar, and the boy struck out with one arm around the child and the other working for all the grit and muscle there was in it. His magnificent stroke, helped by the wind and current, soon overhauled the canoe. By a supreme effort he clutched the immersed gunwale. With one arm around Freddy he could never hope to right the boat, but even bottom up she was a salvation. “Grip her, kiddie, grip her as I shove you up,” he gasped, “and don’t let go; straddle her and hang on! Promise me you will hang on,—promise me!” he cried.

“I’ll promise,” gulped the child. Then Hal’s powerful arm flung itself upwards, his two hands “boosted,” and Freddy landed on the upturned canoe, gripping it with all fours and coughing the water from his mouth.

Hal made an attempt to climb up, his fingers slipped; then two terrible little demons seemed to grasp the calves of his legs; their fingers ripped the muscles out and tied them into knots, knots that extended to his knees, his hips, his stomach; his fingers weakened with the agony of it—Hal Bennington knew he was going down with cramps.

Away off to the right he thought he heard a voice; it was saying, “Keep up, Hal, keep up, I’m coming!” but he could not answer. With a last effort he literally screamed, “Hang on, Freddy, hang on!” Then he felt numb, very numb, and all was dark.

Professor Warwick had gone out to furl the awnings against the rising wind. His kindly little eyes were peering through their spectacles at sea and sky when suddenly they rested on a frail canoe that was taking an erratic course toward the island. Instantly he

was around at the other side of the cottage. “Boys, boys,” he shouted frantically, “Quick, get out the sailboat, Hal’s canoe is in danger!”

Page 13

"Sailboat!" gasped Cop Billings, springing to his feet; "she's no good; bottom's out, a whole patch of her. She's being repaired." But while he talked he was running wildly to the boathouse followed by all the others. As they reached the little wharf they were just in time to see the combers strike the canoe, to see Freddy start, then to see it capsize. For a moment they were horror-stricken, speechless, then Cop yelled, "He's got Freddy! See, he's got him!" It seemed an eternity before they saw Hal grasp the child, then with more horror they saw the upturned canoe floating away, away, away.

"Boys, boys, can nothing be done to help them?" choked the Professor. "Oh, boys, this is terrible!"

"Who swims?" yelled Shorty, "—swims well, I mean."

"You do," jerked Shag at his elbow, with a face bloodless and drawn. "You're the best swimmer in the school. Will you come with me?"

"Come with you?" yelled Shorty. "Out there? Why, you know as well as I do that I can't swim that far, not nearly that far; neither can you."

"I can, and I will," announced Shag in a strangely quiet voice, while with rapid fingers he stripped off his coat and boots.

"You shan't go alone," shouted Cop, beginning to undress; "I'm with you!"

"No, you don't," said the Indian, gripping him by the wrist. "You can't swim twenty yards—you know you can't; and if you get played out, Cop, I tell you right here that I can't stop to help you; I'm going to help Hal."

"Why can't you try it, Shorty?" roared Cop "Anything rather than let him go alone!"

But Shorty stood resolute. "I tell you I can't swim that far and back, and I ain't going to try it only to get drowned," he snarled; but even as he spoke there flashed past him a lithe, tan-colored body in skintight silken underwear; there followed a splash, and Shag's clean, dark face rose to the surface as he struck out towards the unfortunates.

The Professor was beside himself with horror. "Boys, boys!" he cried aloud, "Hal's going down! Something is wrong; he's sinking!" The words reached Shag's ears and he seemed to leap ahead like a giant fish.

"Heaven help them!" moaned poor Cop. "Oh, what an idiot I was never to practise more!"

"It's awful!" began Shorty.

“Don’t you open your head!” shouted Cop; “if I could swim like you nothing would keep me ashore.”

“Never mind, boys,” moaned Professor Warwick; “don’t quarrel with this tragedy before us. Look, Shag’s simply leaping ahead. There goes Hal again—that’s the second time he’s gone under! Oh, my boy!—my poor Hal!” and the little old man rushed wildly up to the servants’ quarters for the cook and the pantry-boy and ropes—anything, everything that would hold out a hope of rescue.

Page 14

And on against wind and current Shag battled his way; inch by inch, foot by foot, yard by yard he forged forward, until he saw Hal loose his grip and sink, and then rise and fight to reach the canoe again. It was then that Shag raised his chin and shouted hoarsely, "Keep up, Hal, keep up! I'm coming!" the words that faintly reached Hal's ears before the silence and the dark came. Then as he rose from the depths, an unconscious, helpless hulk, a strong tan-colored arm wound around him like a lifebelt, and a well-nigh breathless boy, with almost superhuman strength, flung him, limp and nearly lifeless, across the canoe. The impact almost hurled Freddy from his slender hold, but for a few seconds the two boys were safe. Above the slippery bow poor Shag clasped his arms, allowing his body to drift.

With but this frail anchorage, he well knew that the canoe would never float them all. There was but little of her above the water. The waves were beating hard now; any moment weak little Freddy and unconscious Hal might be swept off. Once, as the fear of losing life gripped him, he began to struggle on to the canoe; then he remembered, and slipped back to float, to cling, to slowly—slowly—await the horrors of the unknown.

For five terrible minutes they drifted, minutes that were an eternity to those on shore, and to those fighting for life in mid-stream. Then around the bend of the island came the thin, shrill whistle of a steam launch as it headed directly for the upturned canoe, the skipper signalling to those on the island that he was hot on the way to the rescue.

Old Professor Warwick wept like a woman when he saw it fly past, and the boys gulped back their breath. They dared not even try to cheer; their voices were strangled in their throats.

"Just in time, and that's all, captain," said the engineer as he brought the launch about. "Better reach for the chap in the water first."

"No," Shag managed to say, "take the kiddie; he's slipping off. I'm good for a minute longer." So they lifted Freddy into the launch, then poor unconscious Hal, and lastly Shag, exhausted but gritty and game to the last.

Hal had been in his own bed for two hours before he spoke, and the first word he said was "Freddy?"

"Freddy's here," trembled Professor Warwick, "here safe and sound, and you're safe, too."

"I dreamt I heard Shag call, call that he was coming to me," said Hal feebly.

"It was no dream, Hal," answered the Professor; "he did call and went to you, saved you, swam out like the prince he is—saved you, Hal, saved you!" Hal started up, his eyes wild with fear.

“Where is he? Where’s Shag?” he demanded.

“Here, Hal,” said the Indian from the opposite side of the room.

Hal stretched out his hand; Shag walked very shakily across and clasped it within his own.

“If you hadn’t been here, Shag, I could never have looked dad and mother in the face again,” he sighed.

Page 15

"But I am here," smiled Shag, "and, what is better, you're here and Freddy, too."

"Yes, but I know the reason that I'm here is that you somehow pulled me out," said Hal. "I had an idea once that Shorty might come, he swims so well; but you came, Shag!" Then he fell asleep; but Shag did not remove his hand, although the boy slept for hours.

* * * * *

Not long after this college opened for the autumn term, and Professor Warwick and his charges were well settled in residence before the old gentleman was obliged to acknowledge that Hal seemed unable to throw off the shock of the accident, or the chill that seemed to cling to him in spite of all care; but he tucked in bravely at his studies, and only the Professor knew that the boy was not his own self.

But a great event was now absorbing the attention of all the faculty and students. His Excellency Lord Mortimer was to visit the city, and had expressed his wish to spend an hour or two at this famous college for boys, so with much delight at the compliment paid, the entire school began to make preparations. A handsome address was prepared, and a programme of sports—for the Governor dearly loved athletic boys. In fact gossip at the capital frequently stated that His Lordship would rather witness a good lacrosse match than eat a good dinner. Such a thing as voting as to who should represent the school and read the address was never even thought of. Hal Bennington was the head boy of the whole college, he was the most popular, the best beloved, he had not an enemy in all the scores of boys within its gates, so of course it was a foregone conclusion.

"I hate the idea of it," asserted Hal. "I hate these public show-offs, besides, I don't feel well. I wish they would make some other chap do it." But neither masters nor boys would take no for an answer. Then disaster threatened, for a week before the event Hal fell really ill; a slow fever seemed to grip him, and if Sir George and Lady Bennington had not been already on the sea on their homeward way, Professor Warwick would have felt very much like cabling them. Hal was utterly disgusted when it was mentioned to him. "Don't you think of it," he growled. "You've done as I wished about not telling them about that bally accident, and don't you hurry them home for me." So the boy was made to stay in bed, and, truth to tell, he was too ill to remonstrate much.

But the night before the viceregal visit Hal knew in his heart that he was too ill to go out and read the address. Late at night he sent for Professor Warwick, told him the truth, and asked him to get substitute.

"My boy, I am more distressed than I can say," began the Professor. "Your illness is worse than any upsetting of arrangements; we are getting a trained nurse for you, and I shall relieve your mind of all worries. We have hardly time now to consult everyone

about a substitute, but if I tell the boys you have appointed a deputy, so to speak, I think they will be satisfied.”

Page 16

"Then let Shag Larocque take my place," decided Hal instantly.

"Very appropriate, too, I should say," replied the Professor spontaneously. "Lord Mortimer has seen Shag and knows him; very appropriate."

So Hal slept that night contentedly, with never a dream of the storm that would burst on the morrow.

The first indication of the tempest was when Locke burst into his room after breakfast, with, "Hal, you *must* be sick! Why, man alive, you are clean batty! Shag read that address—why, it is impossible!"

"And why?" said Hal, glaring at him.

"He can't do it; we won't let him; we won't have that Indian heading the whole school!"

"Who won't?"

"We! we! we!—Do you hear it? *We!*" yelled Locke.

"You and Shorty and Simpson and about two others, I suppose," answered Hal. "Well, he's going to read it; now, get out and shut the door—I feel a draft."

"Well, he isn't going to read it!" thundered Locke, banging the door after himself as he stormed down the hall to the classrooms, where the boys were collecting to arrange details for the day. Hal shivered back into the bedclothes, listening anxiously to various footsteps trailing past. He could occasionally catch fragments of conversation; everyone seemed to be in a high state of excitement. He could hear his own name, then Shag's, then Shorty's, and sometimes Locke's.

"I've evidently kicked up a hornets' nest," he smiled weakly to himself, too tired and ill to care whether the hornets stung or not. Presently Locke returned. "I tell you, Hal, it won't do; that Indian isn't a fit representative of this college."

"The masters won't do a thing; you've got to appoint someone else. You're disgracing the college," said Shorty at the door. "We won't stand for it, Hal; this is no North-West Indian school. We won't have it, I tell you!"

"Shag's going to read that address!" said Hal, sitting up with an odd drawn but determined look around his mouth.

"Well, he isn't!" blurted Shorty. "There's a big meeting in the classroom, and there's a row on—the biggest row you ever saw."

“Shag Larocque read that address!” yelled Simpson from the hall; “not if I know it! He’s not a decent sport, even—he won’t resent an insult. I called him a Red River halfbreed and he never said a word—just swallowed it!”

“Shut that door!” shouted Hal, the color surging into his face, “and shut yourselves on the outside! Go to the classroom, insult him all you like, but you’ll be sorry for it—take my word for it!”

Once more they banged the door. No sooner was it closed than Hal sprang out of bed. His legs shook with weakness, his hands trembled with illness, but he began to get into some clothes, and his young face flushed scarlet and white in turn.

Out in the classroom a perfect bedlam reigned. Dozens of voices shouted, “Shag’s the man for us! Hurrah for Shag!” and dozens replied, “Who will join the anti-Indians? Who will vote for a white man to represent white men? This ain’t an Indian school—get out with the Indians!”

Page 17

Then Shorty took the floor. “Boys,” he yelled, “we won’t stand for it. No Indian’s going to be head of this school, and Shag Larocque isn’t even a decent Indian, he’s a halfbreed, a French halfbreed, he’s—”

The door burst open and Hal Bennington flung himself into the room; his trousers were dragged up over his nightshirt, his feet were in slippers without socks, his hair was unbrushed, his eyes were brilliant with fever, his face was pinched and grey; but his voice rang out powerfully, “Stop it, boys!” He had taken in the situation instantly—the crowd breaking from all rule, two masters endeavoring to restore order, and Shag, alone, terribly alone, his back to the wall, his face to the tumult, standing like a wild thing driven into a corner, but yet gloriously game. “Shorty, how dare you speak of Shag Larocque like that?” Hal cried furiously.

“And how dare you support him?” Shorty flung back. “How dare you ask us to have as our leader a halfbreed North-West Indian, who is the son of your father’s cook?”

“Yes, he is the son of my father’s cook, and if I ever get the chance I’ll cook for him on my knees—cook for him and serve him; he saved my life and nearly lost his own—while you, Shorty, a far better swimmer, would have let me drown like a dog.”

“He’s nothing but a North-West halfbreed,” sneered Shorty, hiding his cowardice behind ill words for others.

“So is my mother a North-West halfbreed, and she’s the loveliest, the grandest woman in all Canada!” said Hal in a voice that rang clear, sharp, strong as a man’s.

There was a dead silence. “Do you hear me, you fellows?” tormented Hal’s even voice again, “you who have of your own free will placed me, a quarter blood, as the leading boy in this school, my mother is a halfbreed, if you wish to use that refined term, and my mother is proud of it. Her mother, my grandmother, wore a blanket and leggings and smoked a red stone pipe upon the Red River years ago, and I tell you my mother is proud of it, and so am I. I have never told you fellows this before—what was the use? I felt you would never understand, but you hear me now! Do you quite grasp what I am telling you—that *my mother is a halfbreed?*”

Shorty’s hand went blindly to his head; he looked dazed, breathless. “Lady Bennington a halfbreed!” was all he said.

“Yes, Lady Bennington,” said Hal. “And now will you let Shag read that address?” But Shag was at his elbow.

“Hal, Hal, oh, why did you tell them?” he cried.

Hal whirled about like one shot. “*Tell them*—what do you mean by tell *them*? Did you know this all along?”

“Yes,” said Shag regretfully. “I always knew that Lady Bennington was half Indian, but I thought that you didn’t, and I promised father that I should never tell when I came down East.” But softly as he spoke, the boys near by heard him. “Do you mean to say,” Locke, gripping Shag’s shoulders in vice-like fingers, “that all this time we have been ragging you and running on you, that you knew Hal’s mother was a half Indian and you never said a word?”

Page 18

"Why should I?" asked Shag, raising his eyebrows.

"Boys," said Locke, facing the room like a man, "we've been—well, just cads. And right here I propose that Shag Larocque read the address to His Excellency to-day."

"And I second the motion," said Shorty—"second it heartily"; then he walked over to Shag.

"I'm not going to ask you to shake hands with me, Larocque," he said; "I've been too much of a cad for that. You must despise me too much to forgive me, despise me for my cowardice in not going with you to help Hal when he was drowning, despise me for my mean prejudices, despise me for—oh, pshaw! I ain't fit to even ask you to forgive me. I ain't fit to even offer you my hand."

"Hold on! hold on!" smiled Shag. "There is nothing to despise in a chap who is big enough to offer an apology. Here's my hand, Shorty. Will you take it at last?"

And Shorty took it.

A few hours later, just before Shag stepped out on the platform to read the address to His Excellency, he paid a flying visit to Hal, who, feeling much better, in fact quite on the mend, was sitting up in bed devouring toast and broth.

"Luck to you, old Shag," he said between mouthfuls.

"Oh, Hal, you've been all the world to me," was all he could reply.

"And you'll be all the world to my dad and mother when they hear what you have done, fishing me out of the drink and saving my life." But Shorty shouting up the hall interrupted them.

"Come on, Shag," he called; then, as he appeared in the doorway, he said bravely, "I haven't been so happy for years; I've been a sneak and now that I say it I feel better. Shag, there isn't a boy living who I consider better fitted to represent this school than you. Do you believe me?"

"I do believe you, and I thank you, Shorty, old chap," said Shag happily, and linking arms they left Hal's room together, for cheers outside were announcing the approach of Lord Mortimer—and the feud was ended forever.

The King's Coin

I

Because the doctor had forbidden Jack Cornwall to read a single line except by daylight, the boy was spending a series of most miserable evenings. No books, no stories, no studies, for a severe cold had left him with an inflammation of the eyes; and, just as he was careering with all sorts of honors through the high school, he was ordered by the great oculist to drop everything, leave school, and—"loaf."

Young Cornwall hated "loafing." His brain and body loved activity. He would far sooner have taken a sound flogging than all the idle hours that had been forced on him to endure. To-night, particularly, time hung very heavy on his hands. He sat for a full hour, his eyes shaded from the lamp, his hands locked round his knee, doing nothing, and finding it most difficult. His father read the

Page 19

newspaper, his mother mended stockings, his little brother pored frowningly over his algebra. Presently Jack's nerves seemed to break. He sprang up impetuously, then, controlling himself, sat down again, and said: "Oh, it is brutal, this sitting around! I don't believe I can stand it much longer. I wish I were out in the wilds, or on the sea, or somewhere where I could work with my hands, if I mustn't use my eyes."

His mother looked up, saying, sympathetically, that it was hard. His father put down the paper, looked at him quizzically for a moment, then, extracting a letter from his pocket, and laying it on the table, said:

"John, did you ever know that your father was a stupid old numskull? Here's news that I have had for three days, and I never thought of you in connection with it. Here's the chance of your life—the very thing you want—a letter from your Uncle Matt. He's going up North, to the end of civilization. Started at his old business of fur-trading again. He says here"—and Mr. Cornwall referred to the letter, reading—"But there's something else taking me north besides otter and mink skins. I'll tell it to you when I return, but just now the secret must be mine alone. I only wish I had some decent chap to go with me; but in this chasing-for-the-dollar age, no one seems to be able to leave their miserable little shops for mere adventures into the wilds. I suppose I'll have to hunt up some strapping boy as a partner, but the trouble is to get one who is strong enough to work and starve alternately; one who will sleep in the open, live on rabbits and beans, let his clothes dry on him when they get wet, and who will keep his mouth shut and his ears open. They aren't making young men like that now, I'm afraid."

"Yes, they are, father! Yes, they are!" cried Jack, springing to his feet, his eyes gleaming with excitement. "Do you think Uncle Matt will take me?"

His father measured him carefully with a very keen eye. "You certainly have great shoulders, my son. Why, I never really noticed them before. You're built like an ox! How old are you?"

"Seventeen next month, and I'm not only built like an ox, I'm as strong as one, and—I think I can keep my mouth shut and my ears open."

"Yes, you can do that if you are your mother's son," said his father, glancing slyly at his mother. Then they all laughed, for Mrs. Cornwall was renowned among her relatives as a silent little woman, who heard everything but who repeated nothing.

That night a telegram was sent to Uncle Matt, and, late the following day, came the reply:

"Sure! Will take Jack gladly. Expect me Saturday. Be ready to start Tuesday. *Matt.*"

Page 20

When Matt Larson arrived he was not at all what Jack expected he would be. In the first place, he was not like one's uncle. Jack had forgotten that his mother had frequently told him that her little brother Matt was only six years old when she was married, and had acted "page" at the wedding. So to-day Matt, who was only twenty-five, looked more like a big brother than an uncle. His eyes, however, were as shrewd as those of a man of forty, and already a fine dusting of grey hairs swept away from each temple. His skin was swarthy from many winds and suns, his nose determined, and his mouth as kind and sweet as Jack's own mother's, but his hands and shoulders were what spoke of his pioneer life. There was something about those strong, clean fingers, those upright shoulders, that made Jack love him at sight.

Matt Larson never dressed like anyone else. Years of exploring the wilds had got him so accustomed to heavy boots and leather knee gaiters, that he never seemed to be able to discard them when he touched town life, which, truth to tell, was as seldom as possible. His suit of heavy, rough tweeds, blue flannel shirt and flowing black silk handkerchief for a tie, never seemed to leave his back, and no one recollected having ever seen him wear a hat. A small, checked cloth cap, flung on the very back of his head, was his only head covering, rain or shine.

"No, don't call me 'uncle,'" he laughed, as Jack greeted him with the respect the relationship demanded. "You and I are just going to be pals. All hands up north call me Larry—I suppose it's short for Larson—so it's Larry to you, isn't it, old man?"

"Yes, Larry," replied Jack, with all his heart warming to this extraordinarily handsome, genial relative, "and I think we will be pals, all right," he continued.

"No 'think' about it; it's a dead sure fact!" asserted Matt Larson, gripping Jack's hand with those splendid, sturdy fingers of his. Then, turning abruptly to his dunnage bags, gun cases, and the general duffle of the "up-norther," he extracted therefrom a most suspiciously-shaped russet leather case, and handing it to Jack, said: "That's yours, boy, never to be used except in emergency, but always to be kept in the pink of condition, ready for instant action."

Jack's poor, weak eyes fairly danced; it was a beautiful new revolver.

"But, unc—I mean, Larry—why do we take revolvers on a fur-trading expedition?" he asked.

Matt Larson shot a swift glance at him, answering quietly, "There are other things up north besides furs."

"Do you mean desperadoes?" questioned Jack.

“Well,” hesitated his uncle, “perhaps I do; perhaps I mean other things, too.” And that was all Jack could get him to say on the subject. But the boy was very proud of his “gun,” and a little curious as to just why his uncle had given it to him, so that night, when they were alone a moment, he said: “Larry, that shooter is—bully! It’s great to have it. I’d rather have it at my hip than be in a position sometime to wish I had it.”

Page 21

"I was there once, and not so very long ago, my boy," said Matt Larson, with a quick frown. Then, half to himself, "But the man in the mackinaw* will never catch me unarmed again."

[A mackinaw is a short, rough coat of material much like a grey horse blanket. It is worn by most lumberjacks, explorers, miners and woodsmen in the regions north of the great Canadian lakes.]

"The man in the mackinaw, eh?" echoed Jack, lifting his eyebrows meaningly.

"Oh, ho, youngster! You're the boy for me!" grinned his uncle. "You're sharp! You've caught on, all right. Yes; he's the man you've got to keep your eyes in the back of your head to watch for. He's a bad lot. He may bother us. Now, are you afraid to tackle the wilderness, since you know there is menace—perhaps danger?"

"I'm not afraid of anything with you, Matt Larson," said the boy, gravely, looking the other directly in the eyes.

"But suppose we should get separated, by some unlucky chance, what then?" asked the man.

"I don't think I would be afraid—I *shall not* be afraid, even then," Jack answered.

"That's the way to talk! Now I know you are game," said Larson, seizing the boy by the shoulders and peering into his eyes. Then they shook hands silently, but it was an unspoken pledge nevertheless.

"The man in the mackinaw," repeated Jack, slowly, as their hands gripped. Then his eyes narrowed down to little slits of light. "I think, Larry, I should know him by instinct."

"You're a wolf on two legs, boy!" replied Larry, with delight. "You have the intuition of the wiser animals. Why have I never really known you before? Why have I not had you?"

"You've got me now, anyway, and you are going to keep me, Larry," said the boy. Then they said good-night with a bond of manly friendship between them that was destined to last throughout their lives.

* * * * *

They left the luxurious sleeping-car of the great Canadian Pacific Railway, at a little settlement on the north shore of Lake Superior. There were but three buildings in the place, all of logs: the railway station, the Hudson's Bay Company's trading post, and "French" Pierre's "bunk and eating-house." The northern forest closed in on all sides, and the little settlement in all amounted to nothing more than a clearing.

The instant they stepped from the car, Matt Larson's eyes swept the platform, alighting with a pleased expression on the figure of a wiry, alert-looking boy of perhaps eighteen, who stepped forward silently, quickly, and laid his hand in Larson's, outstretched to greet him. The boy was Indian through and through, with a fine, thin, copper-colored face, and eyes of very rare beauty. The instant Jack Cornwall saw those eyes, he knew that they could see almost unseeable things. But Matt Larson was introducing them. "Fox-Foot," he said, turning to the Indian, "here is Jack, my own sister's son. He has my confidence. He will know all that I know. You may trust him with *everything*. Jack, old man, this Chippewa boy, Fox-Foot, is my friend and our guide. His canoe is ours for weeks ahead. He knows what I know. You may trust him with *everything*. Shake hands."

Page 22

But the two boys were already shaking hands, friends at once because of their friendship for Matt Larson. Then came the packing of duffle and dunnage bags into the narrow bark canoe beached on the river bank, fifty yards away. A last look at the outfit, to see if there were sufficient matches and other prime necessities, then they were off—off on that strange quest Jack knew so little of. His alert senses had long ago grasped the fact that furs alone were not taking them north, that something unspoken of was the real cause of this expedition; but he was content to wait until the time came when he should be told. His handsome young uncle knelt at the bow thwart, the silent Chippewa boy at the stern. The canoe shot forth like a slender arrow, and the wilderness closed in about them. Just as they rounded the bend of the river which was to shut the settlement from sight, Matt Larson turned his head several times quickly, looking behind them with something of the lightning movement and sharp rapidity of a wild animal. It struck Jack as an odd action, betraying suspicion—suspicion perhaps that they might be followed. That night wisdom came to him. The day had been a heavy one, paddling upstream against a cruel current; and, after they had pitched camp for the night at the foot of an exquisite cascade of water called the Red Rock Falls, and eaten a tremendous supper, Jack strolled to the water's margin to see that the canoe was properly beached high and safe. On the opposite side of the river a slim shadow slipped along—a canoe that contained a single man, who wore a rough coat of indefinite greyish plaid. Jack crept noiselessly up the river bank. "Larry, Fox-Foot," he said in a hoarse, low whisper, "look, look across the river! A canoe, with a man in it—a man in a mackinaw!"

II

Matt Larson sprang to his feet, spitting out a strange foreign word that boded no good to the intruder. His hand leaped to his revolver instantly. Then he swung around to look at Fox-Foot, but the boy had disappeared for a moment. The two stood silent, then Jack's quick eye caught sight of the Chippewa many yards distant crawling on his belly like a snake, in and out among the blueberry bushes upstream. "Foxy's gone for all night; we'll never see him until daylight. He'll watch that canoe like a lynx. He's worth his weight in gold," murmured Matt Larson. Then he added, addressing Jack, "I thought I brought you out here because your eyes were gone smash! Why, boy, you have an eye like a vulture, to make out that canoe and that coat in this twilight."

Jack fairly beamed with pride at this praise. "Larry," he said, "I believe I saw that canoe as much with my brain as with my eyes; besides, my eyes don't hurt unless I strain them."

"Your eyes are bully; we'll take care of them, and of you, too, Jack. You are—yes, invaluable. Well, somebody has got to sleep to-night to be fit to work up-stream to-morrow, so, Jack, you and I shall be the somebodies, for Foxy will never close an eye

to-night. We're safe as a church with that boy a-watch. You must paddle all to-morrow, son, while Foxy sleeps amidships."

Page 23

"I guess I'm good for it. Feel that forearm," answered Jack.

Larry ran his fingers down the tense muscles, then up to the manly shoulder-blades. "Why, boy, you are built like an ox!" he exclaimed.

"Just father's expression!" smiled Jack.

"Well, to bed and sleep now! If you hear any creeping noise in the night it will be Foxy. He'll never let another living soul near us while we sleep," said Larry, as he prepared for his blanket bed.

"What are you thinking of, boy?" he added, curiously.

"I am wondering if by any chance I could possibly be right," replied Jack. "Tell me, Larry, did that man out there, the man in the mackinaw, have anything to do with causing those grey hairs above your ears—did he?"

"You *certainly* have the intuition of an animal," was the reply. "Jack, I love you, old pal; you're white and sharp and clean right through! Yes, he 'powder-puffed' my hair. I'll tell you about it some day. Not to-night. You must sleep to-night, and remember, 'all's well' as long as Foxy's at the helm."

"The man wouldn't shoot Fox-Foot, wouldn't *kill* him, would he, Larry?" came Jack's anxious voice.

"Shoot him! Shoot Foxy!" Then Matt Larson laughed gleefully into his blankets. "Why, Jack, no man living could ever get a bead on Foxy in this wilderness. No man could ever find him or see him, though he were lying right at the man's own feet. I think too much of Foxy to expose him to danger. But the best of it is, you can't put your eye, or your ear, or your fingers on that boy. You can't even *smell* him. He's the color of the underbrush, silent as midnight, quick as lightning. You can't detect the difference between the smell of his clothes and of his skin and burning brushwood, or deer-hide. He can sidle up to the most timid wild thing. Oh! don't you worry, son! Go to sleep; our Fox-Foot is his own man, nobody else's."

"All right, Larry, but I'm here, if anyone wants me," yawned Jack.

And Matt Larson knew in his heart of hearts that Jack Cornwall spoke truly—that he was there to stand by his uncle and Fox-Foot should he be called upon to do so.

Dawn was breaking as they awoke—simultaneously to a slight crackling sound outside. Larry's head burrowed out of the tent.

“Foxy cooking breakfast,” was his cool remark. Then, “Jingo! He’s got a fish—a regular crackerjack! It’s as long as my arm! Ha! there’s a breakfast for you!” But Jack was already up and out.

“Fine luck I have! Big fish!” smiled Fox-Foot, as fresh and alert as if he had had a night in blankets instead of hours of watchfulness. Already half of the freshwater beauty was sizzling in the frying-pan, the Indian lifting and turning it with a long pointed stick. Matt Larson got busy coffee-making. “We’ll pit these two odors one against the other,” he remarked; “though I am bound to admit that the only time a frying fish does really smell good and appetizing is when it has been dead about twenty minutes, and is cooking over a camp-fire.” Then quickly, in a low, tense voice: “Where is he, Foxy? Where did you leave him?”

Page 24

The Indian went on turning the fish, indicating with his head the direction across the river.

“He’s over there, asleep.”

“He may wake at any moment; we must get away at once,” hurried Larry.

“No,” said Fox-Foot, with indifference, “he won’t wake. There is a flower grows here, small seeds; I creep up close, put it in his teapot. He not see me. He boil tea, he drink it; he wake—maybe sundown to-night.”

Larry and Jack looked at each other. Then with one accord they burst into laughter.

“Flower seeds! Where did you learn of these seeds, boy?” asked Larry.

“My mother teach me when I’m small. She said only use when pain is great, or,” he hesitated, then, with a sly, half humorous look, “or when your enemy is great.”

“Beats all, doesn’t it, Jack?” said Larry. “Foxy, you’re a wonder! Did you do anything else to him?”

“No, just to his canoe,” replied the boy. “I wore a hole through the bottom with rocks; he’ll think he did it himself. Takes time mend that canoe; we be far up river by then—far beyond the forks; he not know which headwater we take.”

Matt Larson laid his hand on the straight, jet-black hair. “Bless you, my boy!” he said comically, but his undertone held intense relief, which did not escape Jack’s ears.

The fish and coffee were ready now, and all three waded into that breakfast with fine relish.

Then came the arduous portage around Red Rock Falls, a difficult task which occupied more than an hour. Then away upstream once more, this time Jack paddling bow, with young Fox-Foot, lying on a blanket amidships, wrapped in a well-earned sleep. But once during the entire morning the Indian stirred; he did not seem to awake as other boys do, but more like a rabbit. His eyes opened without drowsiness; he shot to his knees, sweeping the river bank with a glance like the boring of a gimlet. Larry, looking at him, knew that nothing—nothing, bird, beast or man—could escape that penetrating scrutiny. Then, without comment, the boy curled down among his blankets again and slept.

They did not stop for “grub” at midday—just opened a can of pork and beans, finished up the cold fried fish, and drank from the clear blue waters of the river. Then on once more upstream, which now began to broaden into placid lakelets, thereby lessening the current and giving them a chance to make more rapid headway. At four o’clock they

reached the forks of the stream—one flowed towards them from the north, the other from the west.

“Which way?” asked Larson, rousing the Chippewa. The boy got up immediately and took the stern paddle, steering the western course. They had paddled something over two miles up that arm when Fox-Foot beached the canoe, built a fire, spilled out the remainder of the pork and beans, threw the tin can on the bank, then marshalled his crew aboard again, and deliberately steered over the course they had already come.

Page 25

"We lose two miles good work," he explained. "We build decoy fire, we leave tin can, he come; he think we go that way, but we go north." Back to the forks and up the northern branch they pulled, both Larry and Jack not only willing to have done four miles of seemingly unnecessary paddling, but loud in their praise and appreciation of the Indian's shrewd tactics. At supper time Fox-Foot would allow no fire to be built, no landing to be made, no trace of their passing to be left. They ate canned meat and marmalade, drank again of the stream and pushed on, until just at dusk they reached the edge of a long, still lake, with shores of granite and dense fir forest. "Larry and Jack, you sleep in canoe to-night; no camp. Lake ten miles long; no current; I paddle—me," said the Indian, and nothing that Larry could urge would alter the boy's edict.

"Jack, you must wonder what all these precautions are for, yet you never ask," said Larry.

"Because I know," returned the boy. "We are trying to escape the man in the mackinaw. He is following you. He is your enemy."

"Yes, boy, and to-night you shall know why," replied Larry. "You have taken so much for granted, you have never asked a single question; now you shall know what Foxy and I are after."

"You said you were after furs," Jack smiled.

"Yes, but not furs *alone*, my son," said the man. Then leaning meaningly towards the boy he half whispered, "I am after the king's coin—*gold*! My boy, nuggets and nuggets of *gold*, that I prospected for myself up in these wilds two years ago, found *pockets* of it in the rocks, cached it, away, as I thought, from all human eyes, awaiting the time I could safely bring it to 'the front.' I knew of but one being in all the North that I could trust with my secret. That being is Fox-Foot. One night I confided it to him, showing him the map I had made of the lakes and streams of the north country, and the spot where the gold was cached. We were, as I thought, alone in Fox-Foot's log house. That is, alone in speaking English, for his people don't understand a single word that is not Chippewa. We were poring over the map I had made, when something made me look behind me. Against the small hole in the logs that served as a window was a man's head and shoulders—a white man—and he wore a grey mackinaw. Foxy and I were on our feet at once, but the man crashed through the woods and was gone. But he had heard my story, had seen I had a map, and—well, he wants my gold! That is all."

III

"And the grey hair above your eyes, Larry?" asked Jack, in an awed voice.

Page 26

"*That* came the time I mentioned when I gave you your revolver, and you remarked you would hate to be in a position where you might *wish* you had one. I told you I had been there myself. It was last August, on a lonely trail far east of here. I had lain down during the intense heat of the day to sleep, only to wake to see his peering eyes, to feel that my feet were tied together, my hands caught in his vise-like clutch, bound together. Then I was dragged to a tree and lashed to it by yards of leather strapping, and all the time looking into the barrel of his revolver. He searched every stitch of clothing I had on, but he did not find the map. I was not armed, was perfectly helpless, and he left me lashed to that tree, naked all but my trousers and socks. I was there forty hours. The black flies came in swarms, the mosquitoes in thousands, and the second night timber wolves barked in the distance. Towards morning they came nearer, nearer. The agony from the insects made me desperate, but it was the yapping of those wolves that drove me crazy. I chewed through the leather straps binding my shoulder, chewed the shoulder with it, boy, and broke loose, with the blood running from every fly-bite, my eyes blinded with their poison, my throat cracked with thirst. I staggered to the river to drink, drink, drink, to lie in its cool waters, then to drink again, again, again."

Jack's face blanched, his hands turned stiff with cold, at the horror of the tale.

"When I could really see with my eyes," continued Larry, "I discovered, while looking into the still river, that this powder had puffed itself above my ears."

"And the map?" questioned Jack.

"Oh, the map? Well, he didn't get *that*," answered Larry, in something of his natural voice. "You see, I had once an accident, breaking through the ice on the lake. The map got wet and was almost destroyed, so I copied it out on cotton with marking ink, and sewed it inside the lining of my coat, and it did not crackle, as the paper map would have done had he passed his hands over it. Why, he never suspected it was there."

Jack drew a great breath of relief. "I wouldn't care if he did get it, Larry, so long as he left you alive."

"Oh, he's too cowardly to kill a man outright; don't be afraid of that. But he's after the King's Coin, all right," was the reply.

"And he don't get King's Coin, not while I live—me," said the low voice of Fox-Foot, as, with squared shoulders and set teeth, he gripped his paddle firmly and started up the long stretch of Ten-mile Lake.

* * * * *

All that night Larry and Jack slept in the canoe, while the Chippewa boy paddled noiselessly, mile after mile. Above them the loons laughed, and herons called, and in

the dense forest ashore foxes barked and owls hooted. A beautiful bow of light arched itself in the north, its long, silvery fingers stretching and darting up to the sky's zenith. But the Indian paddled on. Those wild sounds and scenes were his birthright, and he knew no fear of them.

Page 27

At daylight he beached the canoe so motionlessly the sleepers never stirred, and he wakened them only when he had the coffee made and a huge pan of delicious bacon fried above the coals. Both of the paleface friends then arose, yawned, stretched, stripped and plunged into the lake, to swim about for a few moments, and then to jump into their shirts and sweaters, and fall upon the coffee and bacon with fine relish.

"I believe," said Jack, devouring his third helping, "that my eyes are better. They don't ache or smart in the least to-day."

"Eye bad?" asked Fox-Foot.

Jack explained.

"I cure, me, if you like. Root good for bad eye grows here, north," said the Chippewa.

"Better let him try," urged Larry. "He knows all these things. His flower seeds have evidently put the kibosh on the man in the mackinaw."

"I get root, you try. No harm," said the Indian. "You scairt put in your eye, then just smell it, and tie round your head."

"I'll try it, by all means," asserted Jack.

So, at noon, while Larry and Jack cooked the dinner, Fox-Foot penetrated the woods, returning with some crooked little brown roots, which he bound about Jack's forehead and made him inhale. They exuded a peculiar sweetish odor, that seemed to wash the eyeball like water, and when the afternoon was half spent, Jack remarked that his eyelids had ceased to smart.

"One week, maybe, be all right," answered the Indian. And his words proved correct. Daily he gathered fresh roots, treating Jack's eyes as skilfully as the oldest medicine man of his tribe could have done, until the poor red rims faded white, and the bloodshot eyeballs grew clear and bluish. Jack was beside himself with gratitude and delight, his one regret being that there was no possible way of mailing a letter to his parents telling them the good news. This week was one of work, sometimes toil. Often they encountered rapids over which they must portage. Once it was a whole mile through brush and rock and deep, soft mosses, but still they struggled on, until one evening, as they pitched camp and lighted their fire, Fox-Foot said coolly:

"You know this place, Larry?"

"No," was the answer, "never saw it before."

"The reason you say that," said the Indian, "is 'cause you come and go over that bluff behind us. Lake Nameless just twenty yards 'cross that bluff."

"*What!*" yelled Larry.

"I bring you in other side. Bluff separate this river and Lake Nameless. There is your cache," laughed Fox-Foot, throwing a pebble and striking a point of red rock ten yards away.

Larry and Jack fairly stumbled over their own feet to get there. Every mark that Matt Larson had left to identify the hiding-place of his treasure still remained undisturbed. The round white pebble placed near the shelving rock, the three-cornered flint, the fine, tiny grey bits of stone set like a bird's eggs in a nest of lichen, the two standing pines with a third fallen, storm-wrecked, at their roots—every landmark was there, intact.

Page 28

Larry almost flew for the pick, and began to hack away at loose rocks, swinging the pick above shoulder as a woodsman swings an axe. Two feet below the surface, the pick caught in a web of cloth. In another minute Larry lifted out an old woollen jersey undershirt, that had been fastened up bag-wise. He snatched his knife, ripped open the sleeves, and the setting sun shot over a huge heap of yellow richness, quarts and quarts of heavy golden nuggets—*the King's Coin*. Larry sat down limply, wiping the oozing drops from his forehead. The two boys stood gazing at the treasure as if fascinated. Then Jack moistened his lips with his tongue, drew the back of his hand across his blinking eyes, moistened his lips again, but no words seemed to come to him. It was Fox-Foot who spoke first. Touching one splendid nugget almost contemptuously with the toe of his moccasin, he sneered "It is the curse of the paleface, this gold. 'Most every white man he sell the soul within his body for gold, gold, but not so Larry. I know him. He prize this thing because it is the reward of pluck, of work, of great patience, of what white men call 'grit.'"

"Thank you, Foxy," said Larry, rising and extending his fine hand, which grasped the Indian's with a warm, true grip. "You mean that—mean it with all your loyal young redskin heart. Yes, boys, I hope it is for the love of pluck, the pride of 'grit,' that I value this thing. I hope it is not greed, not avarice, not—"

"Never!" interrupted Jack's ringing voice. "Never any greed of gold in you, Larry. You best and bulliest of men alive, but I *am* glad the gold is yours. You deserve every ounce of it," and Jack was clinging to his handsome young uncle's other hand with a heartiness that rang as true as the nuggets lying at his feet. Presently he stooped to lift one. Its rugged yellow bulk reflected the dying sun. It was a goodly thing to look at, rare, precious, beautiful. Then he dropped it among its fellows, his fingers curled into his palms. Unconsciously his hands moulded themselves into fists, and each fist rested with a peculiar bulldog movement above each sturdy hip. His eyes met Larry's.

"We'll have a tough fight for it," he said, meaningly, "but that gold is going to get past the man in the mackinaw."

"It certainly will, if you're going to act as you look now," laughed Larry. "Why, boy, you look as if you would stop at nothing to outwit our unpleasant follower."

"I shall stop at very little," said Jack doggedly. "Your gold will get to the front, Larry, if I have full fling in the matter."

"Fling away, son," was the reply. "Only always remember: don't *use* your revolver unless he is killing you."

"Or killing you or Fox-Foot," supplemented the boy.

“Same thing,” said Larry. “We are all one in this matter, but I don’t want you to be sorry in after years that you pulled a gun too quickly, that is all.”

Page 29

"No gun," joined Fox-Foot, slyly. "You leave the man to me. I fix him."

"I guess that's right," answered Larry. "Foxy's the boy to trip up Mr. Mackinaw in his nice little race for what does not belong to him. Now, boys, for supper, but we'll tuck away these pretty little playthings first."

The nuggets were divided into two stout canvas sacks, which were never to leave the lynx eyes of these three adventurers. They were to eat off those sacks, sleep on them, sit on them, think of them, dream of them, work for them, swim for them, fight for them. That was the vow that these three sturdy souls and manly hearts made one to another, before they sat down to bacon and beans, in the vast wilderness of the North, that glorious summer night.

"Downy pillow, this!" growled Larry, as he folded his sweater over a gold sack to get at least a semblance of softness for his ear to burrow into.

"Never mind, Larry, you can swap it for a good slice of 'down' when we get to the front," said Jack from the depths of his blankets. "It strikes me that it will be the cause of your sleeping on 'down' for the rest of your life."

"I shall never sleep or rest for long, son, nor do I want a downy life, but there is a difference between rose leaves and these bulky nuggets prodding a fellow in the neck."

"You sleep on blankets, I sleep on the wampum," said Fox-Foot, extracting with his slim brown fingers the "pillow" from beneath Larry's tired head.

"All right, Foxy," murmured the man, sleepily. "The gold only goes to itself when it goes to you. You're gold right through and through. Good-night."

"Good-night," came Jack's voice.

"How," answered the Chippewa, after the quaint custom of his tribe.

IV

And all night long they slept the hours peacefully away, the strong, athletic, well-knit, muscular white boy, the slender, agile, adroit Indian side by side, their firm young cheeks pillowed on thousands and thousands of dollars' worth of yellow gold.

With the first hint of dawn, Fox-Foot was astir. Before he left the tent, however, he cautiously placed his sack under Larry's blanket, and within the turn of that gentleman's elbow. Once more good luck attended his efforts with rod and line, and he got a dozen trout in almost as many minutes. Larry's nose usually awakened him when it sniffed early cooking, so now he rolled over to pummel Jack, then up to sing and whistle



through his morning toilet like a schoolboy. Breakfast over, they struck camp, Fox-Foot taking command in packing the canoe, giving most rigid instructions as to saving the sacks should there be an upset. Larry took one long, last look at the wild surroundings. The dense pine forest, the forbidding rocks, the silver upper reaches of the river where his fought-for treasure had lain hidden for two years from all human eyes, unknown to any living man save himself. Then the canoe swung into midstream for the return voyage, its narrow little bow facing the south at last.

Page 30

For many days the taut little craft danced merrily, homeward bound. For many nights the three voyageurs camped, slept, and dreamed, with only the laughing loons, the calling herons, the plaintive owls, and distant fox bark to sweep across their slumbers. But as the days went on, the Indian boy grew more wary; his glance seemed keener, his ears forever on the alert; he appeared like a lithe, silent watchdog, holding itself ready to spring, and snap, and bury its fine white teeth in the throat of an enemy to its household. His paddle dipped noiselessly, his head turned rapidly, his eye narrowed dangerously. Larry and Jack saw it all, but they said nothing, only relieved the Chippewa of all the work they possibly could, so that, should necessity demand that Fox-Foot must lose rest and food, he would be well fortified for every tax placed upon him. Jack took to cooking the meals, as a wild duck takes to the water, insisting that Fox-Foot rest after paddling, and the Indian accepting it all without comment, and sleeping at a moment's notice—seemingly storing it up against future needs. But the evening came when the laughing river gurgled into Lake Nameless, and that night they camped below its frowning shores on a narrow strip of beach, where the driftwood of many years and many storms had stranded, seemingly forever. All three had rolled into blankets, with sleep hovering above and about them, when, noiselessly as the dawn, Fox-Foot slipped from his bed like an eel, dipped under the tent, and was gone.

"Larry," whispered Jack, fearfully.

"Yes, boy?" came the reply.

"Did you see that?"

"Yes, boy."

"But—Larry, oh, it's horrible! I hate myself for saying it—but, oh, Larry, he's taken a sack with him. I saw it."

"Yes, boy."

"Listen! Oh, Larry, s-s-h—"

Matt Larson turned on his back, every nerve strung to snapping pitch. Two whispering voices assailed his ears. The horror of them seemed to grip his heart and stop its very beating. Fox-Foot was speaking.

"You's not a good man. I hate you. You's bad all over, but I *have* to trust you. You got me cornered. Here's the gold, same's I promised. You take half. I take half. *You hide it.* Bime-by when I get *them* out of this, I come back, *then* we divide. But you sure *hide it now, hide it.* Good. GOOD."

Then came the reply in English, good English. There was only one voice in all the world that had that hissing, snaky sound, and Larry knew it to his cost. It was the voice of the man in the mackinaw, and it was hissing:

“Bet your life I’ll hide it, Fox-Foot, and you’re a good, decent Indian boy. You shall have half, *sure*, but get both of those *dogs* out of here. Get ’em away, right off.”

“I scairt,” replied the Indian, “I clean scairt. When he finds out, maybe he kill me. I got no knife, no gun—nothing. I scairt.”

Page 31

"Here, take my revolver," replied the man. "And I tell you, Fox-Foot, if they kick up, you put a bullet clean through them, *both* of them."

"Sure. Give me it," said the Indian in a soft, oily voice. Then, "Now, now, I feel safer with *that* inside my shirt."

Matt Larson's face was white as a sheet. He did not care a dollar for his lost gold, but for this Indian boy to fail him—oh, it was heartbreaking! He buried his face in his hands. "Oh, Foxy!" he almost sobbed. "Foxy, my little Chippewa friend, I have tried so hard to treat you square—and—Foxy, you've failed me! You've failed me." And big, burly Jack Cornwall's tear-wet face was lying against Larry's hand, and poor, big, burly Jack Cornwall's voice was catching in his throat as he said:

"Oh, Fox-Foot! Fox-Foot! I'd rather have died than heard this—this from *you*!"

Then came a hurried good-bye between the two creatures outside, and Fox-Foot slipped back into the tent, slipped back noiselessly, snakily as an eel in its own slime.

For a full hour Larry and Jack lay there in the dark, hand gripping hand. One sack of gold had gone, stolen by their trusted friend, who lay near them, a loaded revolver inside his shirt, and a threat on his lips—a threat to kill them both.

At the end of the hour the Indian arose, struck a match, lighted a bit of candle, and taking the revolver from his shirt, examined it closely. Through narrowed lids Larry could see by even that faint light that it was fully loaded.

With a sweet, almost motherly movement, Matt Larson curled his arm around the boy at his side. They at least would face death together. But the Indian was crawling slowly, silently up towards them, closer, closer. At last the slim, brown fingers touched Larry's shoulder, and the soft Chippewa voice whispered:

"Larry, Jack, wake! See, see, the great thing I got. I got *his* revolver. He never harm us now."

Larry sat bolt upright.

"What do you mean, Foxy? What do you mean, I say? What have you done *with my gold*?"

"Gold? Your gold?" exclaimed the Indian boy in surprise. "Your gold? Why, she's all here"; and flinging back his cover blanket he displayed a gorgeous sight. There, in a thick, deep layer, piled on his under blanket, lay every single, blessed nugget belonging to the one sack he had slept on.



“But,” stammered Larry, his eyes popping out of his head in amazement, “but, Foxy, I *heard* you bargain with him, I *heard* you give him the sack of gold.”

“No,” replied the Indian, smiling; “heard me give him the *sack*, the sack filled with stones and pebbles, *not* with gold. But I’ve got his gun, got it *here, here* in my shirt. He is now unarmed. *He can’t shoot you now!*”

Matt Larson held out his arms. “Oh, Foxy, Foxy, forgive me, forgive me! For the moment I mistrusted you, I doubted you, my boy.”

Page 32

"I love you just same as ever; no difference if you did suspect, I no change," said the Indian, as Larry's splendid arms closed about his lithe young shoulders.

Then Jack Cornwall's voice found utterance. "Fox-Foot! Oh, Fox-Foot!" was all he could say, but the Indian boy laid his slim finger across Jack's honest, boyish lips, saying:

"I know. Indian he always know. I love you just same as if you never doubt."

And Jack knew that Fox-Foot spoke the truth.

"But we must go, go at once," continued the Chippewa. "He maybe come back, if he find I cheat him. I bad fellow—me. Long ago, before you come on train, I think maybe he follow us, maybe steal your gold, so I find him, I speak to him with two tongues, one false tongue, one straight tongue. I bargain with him to come to Lake Nameless. I meet him here. We divide your gold, he and I. All the time I make bargain with him I have plan in my heart, just trick to get all his revolver from him, so he can't shoot you, Larry. I know he shoot you if I don't get that gun from him. So—I do all this to-night. I play my trick on him. We save our gold, we save our lives, maybe. So—you understand now? I bad fellow, me, but I am only bad to bad man like him. You understand now? You?"

"Understand?" cried Larry, leaping to his feet. "Understand? Why, Foxy, you're a prince! You're a king! You're the best boy that ever drew the breath of life. You are—"

"Don't stop now to tell me what I am," laughed Fox-Foot. "It is enough that I am your friend, Jack's friend, and the man may be back with his sack of pebbles." Here the Indian sat down in a fit of irresistible laughter. Then, controlling himself, he continued, "We must be away inside ten minutes—quick!"

The other two had long ago grasped the entire situation, and in a twinkling camp was struck, and they were heading for the far shore, Larry paddling bow, the Indian astern, and both working for dear life.

Before daybreak they had reached the outlet of the lake, and, wearied as they were with excitement, haste and continuous paddling, Larry still urged that they proceed. But the Indian would not listen to it. Larry and Jack must sleep, he insisted, or none of them would be fit to face the man should he follow, which he undoubtedly would, as soon as he discovered the trick which had been played on him. So the two palefaces once more rolled in their blankets, not waiting to pitch the tent, and the Indian crouched forward near the water's edge to watch, watch, watch, with sleepless, peering eyes, that nothing, living or dead, could hope to escape.

V

Jack found sleep impossible. "I feel myself such a cad," he began to Larry, "such a sneak ever to have doubted our Fox-Foot; but oh, Larry, things did look so against him."

"They certainly did, son," assented Matt Larson, "and I feel just as caddish as you do—more so, in fact, for I should have known, and you were not expected to. From now on, Jack, let's you and I make it a life rule, no matter how much things look against any chap, not to believe it of him, but just believe the best and the noblest of everybody."

Page 33

"My hand on it!" came Jack's reply, and once more those two fell fast asleep, palm to palm, but with a vastly different emotion from the one they had felt a few hours before.

"He will try once more," said Fox-Foot, as they swallowed a hurried breakfast. "He not quite give up yet. At the head of that first big rapid—you know where we portaged over Red Rock Falls—there's short cut through woods to Lake Nameless. Maybe he catch us there. We there about to-morrow noon. But he can't shoot; his gun here." And the boy tapped his shirt with an air of confidence.

"Yes, thanks to your stratagem, you young schemer," said Larry. "What do you think, Jack? Are you equal to a good tussle with his mackinaw nibs?"

"I'm not only equal, but aching to get at him," responded the boy, with spirit. "I'd give him enough to battle against."

But the man in the mackinaw had to battle against a far more formidable enemy than this little crew of three venturesome stalwarts.

For the next twenty-four hours things went on much as usual, then came the sweeping bend in the river, and the roar of the distant falls. This meant to put ashore and to portage the canoe, duffle, guns and gold bags around to the foot of the falls, for no canoe could possibly live through such a cataract, and there was no record, even among the Indians, of anyone ever having "run" it. All the morning Jack had paddled bow, and worked like a nailer, so the other two lifted the canoe to their shoulders, scrambling up the steep, rocky shores, and leaving Jack to bear the lighter burdens of blankets, tin kettles and one gold-sack.

Following their prearranged plan, Jack left the sack beside the water where he could keep a constant eye on it, while he made several trips up the heights, leaving his various packs on the summit only to return for more. Last of all he shouldered the heavy gold sack, stumbling among the rocks under its weight. As he reached the shore heights he noticed his comrades had already been swallowed up in the woods, canoe and all, but he could hear their voices and their feet crunching through the underbrush.

"Hi, boys, you're doing well!" he called gayly after them, when suddenly a dark circle seemed to wheel about his head, drop over his shoulders, then grip him around the arms. Instantly he felt the rope tighten. Someone had thrown a noose—lassoed him as they lasso cattle on the prairies. In another second he was thrown flat on his back, the gold sack was jerked from his fingers by the concussion, and a dark, evil face was leaning above his own. The man in the mackinaw had caught him at last!

Page 34

Oddly enough in that tense moment he seemed to hear his father's voice saying to him, "Why, boy, you're built like an ox!" The memory was like a match to tinder. He flung his hard young legs about the man's ankles, bringing him down like a dead weight upon his own body. With the wind half crushed out of him, he struggled and rolled to protect his revolver. A dozen times the man snatched, plunged and parried to secure it, and as many times Jack rolled on top of it, keeping it securely in his hip pocket. Not a word was spoken, not a sound uttered. Only those two, the evil, avaricious, brutal man, and the fair, weak-eyed, brave boy, battling, rolling, lunging, each for the mastery. Then something caused the rope to give, the knot slipped, and with a mighty effort Jack wrenched one arm loose, felt for his revolver, drew it, and fired, once, twice, not at his enemy, but straight into the air.

"No, you don't!" snarled the man, reaching for Jack's gun with one hand, and his throat with the other. But with the agility of a cat the boy had thrown the gun directly behind him, where it fell clear of the bank and splashed into the river. The sound fell on Jack's ears like a death knell. He had not thought they were so near the brink. One more struggle and they would both be over. Then his breath left him, squeezed out by the demon hand clutching at his throat.

But those two shots had told their story. With almost stunning horror Larry and Fox-Foot heard them.

"He's got him! He's got Jack!" gasped the Indian, dropping the canoe, and turning with the fleetness of a deer, he disappeared up the portage. Spitting out the strange foreign word he only used in extreme moments, Larry followed hard on his heels.

"He's got him down! He's choking him!" drifted back the Indian's voice, shaking with dismay and rage. Then both would-be rescuers stood stock still, awed by the sight before them. Jack had once again clutched his sturdy legs about the man's knees, twisting him so that the iron fingers relaxed from their grip at the boy's throat. The man was now clutching the gold sack, but with a springy, rapid turn Jack wrenched it free. The two rolled over and over, for a short, sharp struggle, and Larry and the Indian appeared only in time to see the two shoot over the bank. Nothing remained in sight but a single hand clinging to a cedar root that projected from the rocks. It was the work of an instant to reach the hand—Jack's hand, fortunately—to lift him from his perilous position, while all but breathless he gasped, "Save him! save him! He's in the river! He'll go over the falls!"

Then their horrified eyes discovered the man, by this time far out in midstream, drifting more surely, more rapidly every second, towards the rapids.

"Here, take this rope! Save him!" cried the boy, wrenching from his poor bruised sides the very rope his enemy had secured him with.

Page 35

Larry snatched it, crashing down the shore in the vain hope of reaching the drifting body. The canoe was up in the woods where they had dropped it at the sound of Jack's gunshots. He could not begin to get near enough with that twenty-foot rope. There was but one hope left—a huge overhanging pine tree a little above the falls—perhaps he could help the struggling man from its branches. But before he could even reach the tree, let alone crawl out above the river, the dark, drifting mass, with its struggling arms and white face, had already been sucked far past its furthest branches. Beside Jack, whose straining eyes watched for the inevitable end, stood Fox-Foot, his arms folded tightly across his chest, his gaze riveted on the drifting speck. Then both boys shuddered, for the swirling speck seemed suddenly to stand erect, then plunged feet foremost over the brink.

Larry returned very slowly, his legs lagging heavily at every step. All day they searched in the river far below the falls, but not a trace could be found of the man in the mackinaw.

"Is there a particle of chance that the poor fellow *could* escape death?" asked Larry of Fox-Foot that night, when, wearied and thoroughly played out, they pitched their camp for the last night in the forest.

"Yes; one chance in fifty. My father he knows two men escape long time ago."

"It strikes me," said Larry, grimly, "that if there is a ghost of a chance he'll get it."

"I hope so," declared Jack, fervently. "My neck will be purple from his claws for some time yet, but, oh! I *hope* he escaped."

"Yes," echoed Larry, solemnly, "it would be miserable to think that I had secured this gold at the price of a man's life, no matter how degraded that man may be. No, I would not want the gold at that price."

So with this shadow surrounding them, their last day in the wilds was very quiet, and, when at last they paddled into the little settlement, it was with a sigh of both regret and relief that Matt Larson lifted his gold sacks from the canoe.

The Hudson's Bay trader greeted them cordially. "Got any furs for me, Larry?" was the first thing he asked.

Then Matt Larson threw back his head and laughed heartily for the first time in days. He had forgotten all about that old tale that he was going north for "furs." So now he related all his story, showing his gold to the bluff, old, honest trader.

"You're lucky to get it to the front," said that person. "There's been one of our notorious Northern 'bad men' up in the bush for weeks. If you'd come across him now, you would

never have got those nuggets here safely. But you're all right from now on. He drifted in here to-day and took the noon train west."

All three adventurers sprang to their feet.

"*What!*" yelled Larry. "Came here *to-day!* What did he look like?"

"Looked more like mincemeat than any human being I ever saw," replied the trader.

"Tall, dark, evil-looking man. Wore a mackinaw, was wringing wet to the skin, had one arm in a sling made of a wild grapevine, face slit up in ribbons as if he'd been fighting bears, limped as if he had stringhalt. Said he was going to the hospital at Port Arthur."

Page 36

Larry's reply was an odd one. He turned abruptly to Fox-Foot. "Boy," he said, "you're coming East with us to-night. Right now! Don't say 'no,' for I tell you you're coming. After the tricks you played on that villain your life would not be worth the smallest nugget in those sacks if you stayed here. We'll come back after a time, but you are coming with me, *now!*"

Jack Cornwall found he could not speak a word, but just held out both hands to the Chippewa. And that night as the three sat together in the cozy sleeper, while the train thundered its way eastward, Jack wondered why he was so wonderfully happy. Was it because he had proved himself a man on this strange, wild journey? Was it because of those heavy sacks beside him, filled with the King's Coin, which Larry declared he was to share? He could hardly define the reason, until, glancing up suddenly, he found himself looking into a pair of dark eyes of very rare beauty. Then he knew that this strangely happy feeling came from the simple fact that there were to be no "good-byes," that Fox-Foot was still beside him.

A Night With "North Eagle"

A Tale Founded on Fact.

The great transcontinental express was swinging through the Canadian North-West territories into the land of the Setting Sun. Its powerful engine throbbed along the level track of the prairie. The express, mail, baggage, first-class and sleeping coaches followed like the pliant tail of a huge eel. Then the wheels growled out the tones of lessening speed. The giant animal slowed up, then came to a standstill. The stop awoke Norton Allan, who rolled over in his berth with a peculiar wide-awake sensation, and waited vainly for the train to resume its flight towards the Rockies. Some men seemed to be trailing up and down outside the Pullman car, so Norton ran up the little window blind and looked out. Just a small station platform, of a small prairie settlement, was all he saw, but he heard the voices very distinctly.

"What place is this?" someone asked.

"Gleichen, about sixty miles east of Calgary," came the reply.

"Construction camp?" asked the first voice.

"No," came the answer, "*This* line was laid about when *you* were born, I guess."

Someone laughed then.

"But what are all those tents off there in the distance?" again asked the curious one.

"Indian tepees," was the reply. "This is the heart of the Blackfoot Reserve."

Norton's heart gave a great throb—the far-famed Blackfoot Indians!—and just outside his Pullman window! Oh, if the train would only wait there until morning! As if in answer to his wish, a quick, alert voice cut in saying, “Washout ahead, boys. The Bow River’s been cutting up. We’re stalled here for good and all, I guess.” And the lanterns and voices faded away forward.

Page 37

Norton lay very still for a few moments trying to realize it all. Then raising himself on one elbow, he peered out across an absolutely level open prairie. A waning moon hung low in the west, its thin radiance brooding above the plains like a mist, but the light was sufficient to reveal some half-dozen tepees, that lifted their smoky tops and tent poles not three hundred yards from the railway track. Norton looked at his watch. He could just make out that it was two o'clock in the morning. Could he ever wait until daylight? So he asked himself over and over again, while his head (with its big mop of hair that *would* curl in spite of the hours he spent in trying to brush it straight) snuggled down among the pillows, and his grave young eyes blinked longingly at those coveted tepees. And the next thing he knew a face was thrust between his berth-curtains, a thin, handsome, clean-shaven face, adorned with gold-rimmed nose glasses, and crowned with a crop of hair much like his own, and a voice he loved very much was announcing in imitation of the steward, "Breakfast is now ready in the dining-car."

Norton sprang up, pitching the blankets aside, and seized Professor Allan by the arm. "Oh, Pater," he cried, pointing to the window, "do you see them—the Indians, the tepees? It's the Blackfoot Reserve! I heard the trainmen say so in the night."

"Yes, my boy," replied the Professor, seating himself on the edge of his son's berth. "And I also see your good mother and estimable father dying of starvation, if they have to wait much longer for you to appear with them in the dining-car—"

But Norton was already scrambling into his clothes, his usually solemn eyes shining with excitement. For years his father, who was professor in one of the great universities in Toronto, had shared his studies on Indian life, character, history and habits with his only son. They had read together, and together had collected a splendid little museum of Indian relics and curios. They had always admired the fine old warlike Blackfoot nation, but never did they imagine when they set forth on this summer vacation trip to the Coast, that they would find themselves stalled among these people of their dreams.

"Well, Tony, boy, this *is* a treat for you and father," his mother's voice was saying, "and the conductor tells me we shall be here probably forty-eight hours. The Bow River is on the rampage, the bridge near Calgary is washed away, and thank goodness we shall be comfortably housed and fed in this train." And Mrs. Allan's smiling face appeared beside the Professor's.

"Tony," as his parents called him, had never dressed so quickly in all the sixteen years of his life, notwithstanding the cramped space of a sleeping-car, and presently he was seated in the diner, where the broad windows disclosed a sweeping view of the scattered tepees, each with its feather of upward floating smoke curling away from its apex. Many of the Indians were already crowding about the train, some with polished buffalo horns for sale, and all magnificently dressed in buckskin, decorated with fine, old-fashioned bead work, and the quills of the porcupine.

Page 38

An imperial-looking figure stood somewhat back from the others, exceptionally tall, with finely cut profile, erect shoulders, rich copper-colored skin, and long black hair interbraided with ermine tails and crested with a perfect black and white eagle plume; over his costly buckskins he wore a brilliant green blanket, and he stood with arms folded across his chest with the air of one accustomed to command. Beside him stood a tall, slender boy, his complete counterpart in features and dress, save that the boy's blanket was scarlet, and he wore no eagle plume.

"What magnificent manhood!" remarked the Professor. "No college our civilization can boast of will ever give what plain food, simple hours, and the glorious freedom of this prairie air have given that brave and his boy. We must try to speak with them, Tony. I wonder how we can introduce ourselves."

"Some circumstance will lead to it, you may be sure," said Mrs. Allan, cheerfully. "You and Tony walk out for some fresh air. Something will happen, you'll see." And it did.

Crowds of the train's passengers were strolling up and down when the Professor and Norton went outside. "I wish they would not stand and stare at the Indians like that!" remarked the boy indignantly. "The Indians don't stare at us."

"For the best of all reasons," said the Professor. "Indians are taught from the cradle that the worst possible breach of politeness is to stare." And just as they began a little chat on the merits of this teaching, a dapper, well-dressed passenger walked up to the distinguished Indian, and in a very loud voice said, "Good morning, friend. I'd like to buy that eagle feather you have in your hair. Will you sell it? Here's a dollar."

Instantly Norton Allan turned angrily to the passenger. "What do you shout at him for?" he demanded. "He isn't deaf because he's Indian."

"Oh!" said the passenger, rather sheepishly, but in a much lower tone. Then, still raising his voice again, he persisted, "Here's two dollars for your feather."

The Indian never even glanced at him, but with a peculiar, half regal lift of his shoulders, hitched his blanket about him, turned on his heel, and walked slowly away. Just then the train conductor walked past, and the bewildered passenger assailed him with, "I say, conductor, that Indian over there wouldn't take two dollars for that chicken wing in his hair."

The conductor laughed. "I should think not!" he said. "'That Indian' is Chief Sleeping Thunder, and ten miles across the prairie there, he has three thousand head of cattle, eighty horses, and about two thousand acres of land for them to range over. *He* doesn't want your two dollars."

“Oh!” said the passenger again, this time a little more sheepishly than before; then he wisely betook himself to the train.

Meantime the boy with the scarlet blanket had not moved an inch, only let his eyes rest briefly on Norton when the latter had reproved the shouting passenger.

Page 39

"And this," continued the conductor kindly, as he paused beside the boy, "is Chief Sleeping Thunder's son, North Eagle."

Norton Allan stepped eagerly forward, raised his cap, and holding out his hand shyly, said, "May I have the pleasure of shaking hands with you, North Eagle?"

The Indian boy extended his own slim brown fingers, a quick smile swept across his face, and he said, "*You* not speak loud." Then they all laughed together, and the Professor, who had been a silent but absorbed onlooker, was soon chatting away with the two boys, as if he, too, were but sixteen years old, with all the world before him.

That was a memorable day for Norton, for, of course, he met Chief Sleeping Thunder, who, however, could speak but little English; but so well did the friendship progress that at noon North Eagle approached the Professor with the request that Norton should ride with him over to his father's range, sleep in their tepee that night, and return the following morning before the train pulled out.

At North Eagle's shoulder stood Sleeping Thunder, nodding assent to all his son said.

Of course, Mrs. Allan was for politely refusing the invitation. She would not for a moment listen to such an idea. But the Professor took quite the opposite stand. "We must let him go, mother—let him go, by all means. Tony can take care of himself, and it will be the chance of his life. Why he is nearing manhood now. Let him face the world; let him have this wonderful experience."

"But they look so wild!" pleaded the poor mother. "They *are* wild. Fancy letting our Tony go alone into the heart of the Blackfoot country! Oh! I can't think of it!"

Fortunately for her peace of mind the train conductor overheard her words, and, smiling at her fears, said, rather dryly:

"Madam, if your boy is as safe from danger and harm and evil in the city of Toronto as he will be with North Eagle in the prairie country, why, I congratulate you."

The words seemed to sting the good lady. She felt, rather than knew, the truth of them, and the next moment her consent was given.

The face of North Eagle seemed transformed when he got her promise to let Tony go. "I bring him back safe, plenty time for train," was all he said.

Then Sleeping Thunder spoke for the first time—spoke but the one word, "Safe." Then pointing across the prairie, he repeated, "Safe."

"That's enough, my dear," said the Professor firmly. "Tony is as safe as in a church."

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Allan, “the chief means that word ‘safe.’ And as for that boy, I believe he would die before he’d let Tony’s little finger be harmed.”

And as events proved, she was almost right.

Within the hour they were off, North Eagle bareback on a wiry cayuse, Tony in a Mexican saddle, astride a beautiful little broncho that loped like a rocking-horse.

Page 40

At the last minute, Sleeping Thunder was detained by cattlemen, who wanted to purchase some of his stock, so the two boys set out alone. The last good-bye was to the conductor, who, after charging them to return in ample time to catch the train, said seriously to Norton:

“Let nothing scare you, sonny. These Indians *look* savage, in their paint and feathers, but King Edward of England has no better subjects; and I guess it is all the same to His Majesty whether a good subject dresses in buckskin or broadcloth.”

Then there was much waving of hats and handkerchiefs. The engineer caught the spirit of the occasion, and genially blew a series of frantic toots, and with the smile of his father and the face of his mother as the last things in his vision, and with North Eagle's scarlet blanket rocking at his elbow, young Norton Allan hit the trail for the heart of the Blackfoot country.

For miles they rode in silence. Twice North Eagle pointed ahead, without speech—first at a coyote, then at a small herd of antelope, and again at a band of Indian riders whose fleet ponies and gay trappings crossed the distant horizon like a meteor.

By some marvellous intuition North Eagle seemed to know just what would interest the white boy—all the romance of the trail, the animals, the game, the cactus beds, the vast areas of mushrooms growing wild, edible and luscious, the badger and gopher holes, and the long, winding, half obliterated buffalo trails that yet scarred the distant reaches. It was only when he pointed to these latter, that he really spoke his mind, breaking into an eloquence that filled Tony with envy. The young redskin seemed inspired; a perfect torrent of words rushed to his lips, then his voice saddened as he concluded: “But they will never come again, the mighty buffalo my father and my grandfather used to chase. They have gone, gone to a far country, for they loved not the ways of the paleface. Sometimes at night I dream I hear their thousand hoofs beat up the trail, I see their tossing horns, like the prairie grass in the strong west winds, but they are only spirits now; they will never come to me, and I have waited so long, so many days, watching these trails, watching, watching, watching—but they never come; no, the buffalo never come.”

Tony did not speak. What was there to be said? He only shook his head comprehendingly, and bit his under lip hard to keep back—something, he scarcely knew what. But he, too, watched the buffalo runs with longing eyes, hoping, hoping that even *one* glorious animal would gallop up out of the rim of grass and sky. But young North Eagle was right—the buffalo was no more.

Page 41

Tony was just beginning to feel slightly sore in the saddle when the Indian pointed off to the south-west and said, "There is my father's tepee," and within five minutes they had slipped from their mounts, and stood on the Chief's domain. A woman, followed by three children, came to the door. She was very handsome, and wore the beautiful dress of her tribe. Her cheeks were painted a brilliant crimson, and the parting of her hair was stained a rich orange. North Eagle turned and spoke rapidly to her for a moment in the Blackfoot tongue. She replied briefly. "Here is my mother," said the boy simply. "She speaks no English, but she says you are welcome and her heart is warm for you."

Tony lifted his cap while he shook hands. The woman noiselessly put back the door of the tepee and motioned for him to enter. For a moment he thought he must be dreaming. The exterior of the tepee had been wonderful enough, with its painted designs of suns and planets and wolf heads and horses, but the inside betokened such a wealth of Indian possessions that the boy was fairly astounded. The tepee itself was quite thirty feet in diameter, and pitched above dry, brown, clean prairie sod, which, however, was completely concealed by skins of many animals—cinnamon bear, fox, prairie wolf, and badger. To the poles were suspended suit after suit of magnificent buckskin, leggings, shirts, moccasins, all beaded and embroidered in priceless richness, fire bags, tobacco pouches, beaded gun cases, and rabbit robes. Fully a dozen suits were fringed down the sleeves and leggings with numberless ermine tails. At one side of the tepee lay piled quite a score of blankets in mixed colors, a heap of thick furs, pyramids of buffalo horns, and coils and coils of the famous "grass and sinew" lariats for roping cattle and horses.

The contents of that tepee would have brought thousands of dollars in New York City.

Across Norton's mind there flashed the recollection of the passenger offering his paltry two dollars to Sleeping Thunder for the eagle plume in his hair. No wonder the train conductor had laughed! And just here North Eagle entered, asking him if he would care to see the cattle that were ranging somewhere near by. Of course he cared, and for all the years to come he never forgot that sight. For a mile beyond him the landscape seemed blotted out by a sea of gleaming horns and shifting hoofs—a moving mass that seemed to swim into the sky. It was a great possession—a herd like that—and Norton found himself marvelling at the strange fact that he and his parents, travelling in luxurious Pullmans, and living in a great city, were poor in comparison with this slender Blackfoot boy who was acting host with the grace that comes only with perfect freedom and simplicity.

Page 42

The day was very warm, so supper was prepared outside the tepee, North Eagle showing Tony how to build a fire in a prairie wind, lee of the tepee, and midway between two upright poles supporting a cross-bar from which the kettles hung. Boiled beef, strong black tea, and bannock, were the main foods, but out of compliment to their visitor, they fried a quantity of delicious mushrooms, and, although the Blackfeet seldom eat them, Tony fairly devoured several helpings. After supper North Eagle took him again into the tepee, and showed him all the wonderful buckskin garments and ornaments. Tony was speechless with the delight of it all, and even begrudged the hours wherein he must sleep; but the unusual length of the ride, the clear air, and the hearty supper he had eaten, all began to tell on his excitement, and he was quite ready to “turn in” with the others shortly after sunset.

“Turning in” meant undressing, folding a Hudson’s Bay blanket about him, and lying near the open flap of the tepee, on a heap of wolf skins as soft as feathers and as silvery as a cloud.

Night crept up over the prairie like a grey veil, and the late moon, rising, touched the far level wastes with a pale radiance. Through the open flap of the tepee Tony watched it—the majestic loneliness and isolation, the hushed silence of this prairie world were very marvellous—and he loved it almost as if it were his birthright, instead of the heritage of the Blackfoot boy sleeping beside him. Then across the white night came the cry of a wandering coyote, and once the whirr of many wings swept overhead. Then his wolfskin couch grew very soft and warm, the night airs very gentle, the silence very drowsy, and Tony slept.

It was daylight. Something had wakened him abruptly. Instantly all his faculties were alert, yet oddly enough he seemed held rigid and speechless. He wanted to cry out with fear, he knew not of what, and the next moment a lithe red body was flung across his, and his hand was imprisoned in strong, clinging fingers. There was a brief struggle, a torrent of words he did not understand, a woman’s frightened voice. Then the lithe red body, North Eagle’s body, lifted itself, and Tony struggled up, white, scared, and bewildered. The Blackfoot boy was crouching at his elbow, and some terrible thing was winding and lashing itself about his thin dark wrist and arm. It seemed a lifetime that Tony’s staring eyes were riveted on the horror of the thing but it really was all over in a moment, and the Indian had choked a brutal rattlesnake, then flung it at his feet. No one spoke for a full minute, then North Eagle said, very quietly, “He curl one foot from your right hand, he lift his head to strike. I wake—I catch him just below his head—he is dead.”

Again there was silence. Then North Eagle’s mother came slowly, placed one hand on her son’s shoulder, the other on Tony’s, and looking down at the dead reptile, shook her head meaningly. And Tony, still sitting on the wolf skins, stretched out his arms and clasped them about North Eagle’s knees.

Page 43

Mrs. Allan was right—the Indian boy had risked his life to save her son from danger. Rattlesnakes were so rare in the Blackfoot country that it gave them all a great shock. It was almost too tense and terrible a thing to talk much of, and the strain of it relaxed only when the boys were mounted once more, galloping swiftly away toward Gleichen and the train.

But, notwithstanding this fright, Tony left the tepee with the greatest regret. Before going, North Eagle's mother presented him with a very beautiful pair of moccasins and a valuable string of elk's teeth, and North Eagle translated her good-bye words: "My mother says you will live in her heart; that your hair is very beautiful; that she feels the sun's heat in her heart for you, because you do not speak loud to her."

It was a glorious, breezy gallop of ten miles in the early morning, and as they came up the trail Tony could distinguish his mother, already on the watch, waving a welcome as far as her eyes could discern them. Outside the settlement the boys slackened speed, and talked regretfully of their coming separation. North Eagle was wearing an extremely handsome buckskin shirt, fringed and richly beaded. He began unfastening it. "I give you my shirt," he said. "My mother says it is the best she ever made—it is yours."

For a second Tony's thoughts were busy, then, without hesitation, he, too, unfastened his shirt, which luckily was a fine blue silk "soft" one. "And I give you mine," he said simply.

Thus did they exchange shirts, and rode up to the station platform, the Indian stripped to the waist, with only a scarlet blanket about his shoulders, and a roll of blue silk under his arm; the Toronto boy with his coat buttoned up to conceal his underwear, and a gorgeous garment of buckskin across his saddle bow.

The greetings and welcomings were many and merry. Professor and Mrs. Allan were hardly able to take their eyes from their restored son. But the shadow of the coming good-bye hung above Tony's face, and he experienced only one great glad moment on the station platform. It was when Sleeping Thunder came up, and before all the passengers, deliberately took the eagle plume from his hair and slipped it into Tony's hand. Then North Eagle spoke: "My father says you are brave, and must accept the plume of the brave. His heart turns to you. You do not speak loud to him."

"All aboard for Calgary!" came the voice of the train conductor. For a moment the clinging fingers of the Indian and the white boy met, and some way or other Tony found himself stumbling up the steps into the Pullman, and as the train pulled out towards the foothills he stood on the rear platform watching the little station and the tepees slip away, away, away, conscious of but two things—that his eyes were fighting bravely to keep a mist from blinding them, and that his hands were holding the eagle plume of Sleeping Thunder.

Page 44

Hoolool of the Totem Pole

A Story of the North Pacific Coast

The upcoast people called her “Hoolool,” which means “The Mouse” in the Chinook tongue. For was she not silent as the small, grey creature that depended on its own bright eyes and busy little feet to secure a living?

The fishermen and prospectors had almost forgotten the time when she had not lived alone with her little son, “Tenas,” for although Big Joe, her husband, had been dead but four years, time travels slowly north of Queen Charlotte Sound, and four years on the “Upper Coast” drag themselves more leisurely than twelve at the mouth of the Fraser River. Big Joe had left her with but three precious possessions—“Tenas,” their boy, the warm, roomy firwood house of the thrifty Pacific Coast Indian build, and the great Totem Pole that loomed outside at its northwestern corner like a guardian of her welfare and the undeniable hallmark of their child’s honorable ancestry and unblemished lineage.

After Big Joe died Hoolool would have been anchorless without that Totem Pole. Its extraordinary carving, its crude but clever coloring, its massed figures of animals, birds and humans, all designed and carved out of the solid trunk of a single tree, meant a thousand times more to her than it did to the travellers who, in their great “Klondike rush,” thronged the decks of the northern-bound steamboats; than it did even to those curio-hunters who despoil the Indian lodges of their ancient wares, leaving their white man’s coin in lieu of old silver bracelets and rare carvings in black slate or finely woven cedar-root baskets.

Many times was she offered money for it, but Hoolool would merely shake her head, and, with a half smile, turn away, giving no reason for her refusal.

“The woman is like a mouse,” those would-be purchasers would say, so “Hoolool” she became, even to her little son, who called her the quaint word as a white child would call its mother a pet name; and she in turn called the little boy “Tenas,” which means “Youngness”—the young spring, the young day, the young moon—and he was all these blessed things to her. But all the old-timers knew well why she would never part with the Totem Pole.

“No use to coax her,” they would tell the curio-hunters. “It is to her what your family crest is to you. Would you sell your *crest*?”

So year after year the greedy-eyed collectors would go away empty-handed, their coin in their pockets, and Hoolool’s silent refusal in their memories.

Yet how terribly she really needed their money she alone knew. To be sure, she had her own firewood in the forest that crept almost to her door, and in good seasons the

salmon fishing was a great help. She caught and smoked and dried this precious food, stowing it away for use through the long winter months; but life was a continual struggle, and Tenas was yet too young to help her in the battle.

Page 45

Sometimes when the silver coins were very, very scarce, when her shoulders ached with the cold, and her lips longed for tea and her mouth for bread, when the smoked salmon revolted her, and her thin garments grew thinner, she would go out and stand gazing at the Totem Pole, and think of the great pile of coin that the last “collector” had offered for it—a pile of coin that would fill all her needs until Tenas was old enough to help her, to take his father’s place at the hunting, the fishing, and above all, in the logging camps up the coast.

“I would sell it to-day if they came,” she would murmur. “I would not be strong enough to refuse, to say no.”

Then Tenas, knowing her desperate thoughts, would slip, mouse-like, beside her and say:

“Hoolool, you are looking with love on our great Totem Pole—with love, as you always do. It means that I shall be a great man some day, does it not, Hoolool?”

Then the treachery of her thoughts would roll across her heart like a crushing weight, and she knew that no thirst for tea, no hunger for flour-bread, no shivering in thin garments, would ever drive her to part with it. For the grotesque, carved thing was the very birthright of her boy. Every figure, hewn with infinite patience by his sire’s, his grandsire’s, his great-grandsire’s, hands meant the very history from which sprang the source of red blood in his young veins, the birth of each generation, its deeds of valor, its achievements, its honors, its undeniable right to the family name.

Should Tenas grow to youth, manhood, old age, and have no Totem Pole to point to as a credential of being the honorable son of a long line of honorable sons? Never! She would suffer in silence, like the little grey, hungry Hoolool that scampered across the bare floors of her firwood shack in the chill night hours, but her boy must have his birthright. And so the great pole stood unmoved, baring its grinning figures to the storms, the suns, the grey rains of the Pacific Coast, but by its very presence it was keeping these tempests from entering the heart of the lonely woman at its feet.

It was the year that spring came unusually early, weeks earlier than the oldest Indian recalled its ever having come before. March brought the wild geese honking northward, and great flocks of snow-white swans came daily out of the southern horizon to sail overhead and lose themselves along the Upper Coast, for it was mating and nesting time, and the heat of the south had driven them early from its broad lagoons.

Every evening Tenas would roll himself in his blanket bed, while he chatted about the migrating birds, and longed for the time when he would be a great hunter, able to shoot the game as they flitted southward with their large families in September.

"*Then*, Hoolool, we will have something better to eat than the smoked salmon," he would say.

"Yes, little loved one," she would reply, "and you are growing so fast, so big, that the time will not be long now before you can hunt down the wild birds for your Hoolool to eat, eh, little Spring Eyes? But now you must go to sleep; perhaps you will dream of the great flocks of the fat, young, grey geese you are to get us for food."

Page 46

"I'll tell you if I do; I'll tell you in the morning if I dream of the little geese," he would reply, his voice trailing away into dreamland as his eyes blinked themselves to sleep.

"Hoolool, I *did* dream last night," he told her one early April day, when he awoke dewy-eyed and bird-like from a long night's rest. "But it was not of the bands of grey geese; it was of our great Totem Pole."

"Did it speak to you in your dreams, little April Eyes?" she asked, playfully.

"No-o," he hesitated, "it did not really *speak*, but it showed me something strange. Do you think it will come true, Hoolool?" His dark, questioning eyes were pathetic in appeal. He *did* want it to come true.

"Tell your Hoolool," she replied indulgently, "and perhaps she can decide if the dream will come true."

"You know how I longed to dream of the great flocks of young geese flying southward in September," he said, longingly, his little thin elbows propped each on one of her knees, his small, dark chin in his hands, his wonderful eyes shadowy with the fairy dreams of childhood. "But the flocks I saw were not flying grey geese, that make such fat eating, but around the foot of our Totem Pole I saw flocks and flocks of little tenas Totem Poles, hundreds of them. They were not *half* as high as I am. They were just baby ones you could take in your hand, Hoolool. Could you take my knife the trader gave me and make me one just like our big one? Only make it little, young—oh, *very* tenas—that I can carry it about with me. I'll paint it. Will you make me one, Hoolool?"

The woman sat still, a peculiar stillness that came of half fear, half unutterable relief, and wholly of inspiration. Then she caught up the boy, and her arms clung about him as if they would never release him.

"I know little of the white man's God," she murmured, "except that He is good, but I know that the Great Tyee (god) of the West is surely good. One of them has sent you this dream, my little April Eyes."

"Perhaps the Great Tyee and the white man's God are the same," the child said, innocent of expressing a wonderful truth. "*You* have two names—'Marna' (mother, in the Chinook) and 'Hoolool'—yet you are the same. Maybe it's that way with the two Great Tyees, the white man's and ours. But why should they send me dreams of flocks of baby Totem Poles?"

"Because Hoolool will make *you* one to-day, and then flocks and flocks of tenas poles for the men with the silver coins. I cannot sell them our great one, but I can make many small ones like it. Oh! they will buy the little totems, and the great one will stand as the

pride of your manhood and the honor of your old age.” Her voice rang with the hope of the future, the confidence of years of difficulty overcome.

Page 47

Before many hours had passed, she and the child had scoured the nearby edges of the forest for woods that were dried, seasoned, and yet solid. They had carried armfuls back to the fir shack, and the work of carving had begun. The woman sat by the fire hour after hour—the fire that burned in primitive fashion in the centre of the shack, stoveless and hearthless, its ascending smoke curling up through an aperture in the roof, its red flames flickering and fading, leaping and lighting the work that even her unaccustomed fingers developed with wonderful accuracy in miniature of the Totem Pole at the north-west corner outside. By nightfall it was completed, and by the fitful firelight Tenas painted and stained its huddled figures in the black, orange, crimson and green that tribal custom made law. The warmth of the burning cedar knots dried the paints and pigments, until their acrid fragrance filled the little room, and the child's eyelids drooped sleepily, and in a delightful happiness he once more snuggled into his blanket bed, the baby Totem Pole hugged to his little heart. But his mother sat far into the night, her busy fingers at work on the realization of her child's dream. She was determined to fashion his dream-flock of "young" totems which would bring to them both more of fat eating than many bands of grey geese flying southward. The night wore on, and she left her task only to rebuild the fire and to cover with an extra blanket the little form of her sleeping boy. Finally she, too, slept, but briefly, for daybreak found her again at her quaint occupation, and the following nightfall brought no change. A week drifted by, and one morning, far down the Sound, the whistle of a coming steamer startled both boy and woman into brisk action. The little flock of Totem Poles now numbered nine, and hastily gathering them together in one of her cherished cedar-root baskets she clasped the child's hand, and they made their way to the landing-stage.

When she returned an hour later, her basket was empty, and her kerchief filled with silver coins.

On the deck of the steamer one of the ship's officers was talking to a little group of delighted tourists who were comparing their miniature purchases with the giant Totem Pole in the distance.

"You are lucky," said the officer. "I know people who have tried for years to buy the big Pole from her, but it was always 'No' with her—just a shake of her head, and you might as well try to buy the moon. It's for that little boy of hers she's keeping it, though she could have sold it for hundreds of good dollars twenty times over."

That all happened eleven years ago, and last summer when I journeyed far north of Queen Charlotte Sound, as the steamer reached a certain landing I saw a giant Totem Pole with a well-built frame house at its base. It was standing considerably away from the shore, but its newness was apparent, for on its roof, busily engaged at shingling, was an agile Indian youth of some seventeen years.

Page 48

“That youngster built that house all by himself,” volunteered one of the ship’s officers at my elbow. “He is a born carpenter, and gets all the work he can do. He has supported his mother in comfort for two years, and he isn’t full grown yet.”

“Who is he?” I asked, with keen interest.

“His name is Tenas,” replied the officer. “His mother is a splendid woman. ‘Hoolool,’ they call her. She is quite the best carver of Totem Poles on the North Coast.”

The Wolf-Brothers

Leloo’s father and mother were both of the great Lillooet tribe of British Columbia Indians, splendid people of a stalwart race of red men, who had named the boy Leloo because, from the time he could toddle about on his little, brown, bare feet, he had always listened with delight to the wolves howling across the canyons and down the steep slopes of the wonderful mountain country where he was born. In the Chinook language Leloo means wolf, and before the little fellow could talk he would stand nightly at the lodge door and imitate the long, weird barking and calling of his namesakes, while his father would smile knowingly and say, “He will some day make a great hunter, will our little Leloo,” and his mother would answer proudly, “Yes, he has no fear of wild things. No wolf in the mountains will be mighty enough to scare him—our little Leloo.”

So he grew from babyhood into boyhood with a love for the furry-coated wild creatures that prowled along the timber line, and their voices were to him the voices of friends who had sung him to sleep ever since he could remember anything.

But the night of his famous ride up the Cariboo Trail where it skirts the Bonaparte Hills proved to him how wise a thing it was that he had long ago made friends, instead of foes, of the wolves, for if he had feared them, it would have been a ride of terror instead of triumph, as it was his love for them that helped him to do a great, heroic thing which made the very name “Leloo” beloved by every man, both white and Indian, in all the Lillooet country.

It was one day early in the autumn that Leloo’s father sent him down the trail some ten or fifteen miles with a message to the “boss” of the great railway construction camp that the Lillooet Indians would supply fifty men to work on the Company’s roadway. So the boy mounted his pet cayuse and started off early, swinging down the mountain trails into the canyons, then climbing again across the summit, with its dense growth of timber. His little legs were almost too short to grip his horse’s middle as his father could have done, so he went more slowly and carefully over the dangerous places, marking every one in his mind, in case he was late in returning. When he reached the camp the “boss” was absent, and, Indian-like, he would deliver his message to no one else except the man it was intended for, and when the “boss” returned at supper time from far down the

grade, he insisted upon Leloo sharing his pork and beans and drinking great quantities of tea.

Page 49

"Better stay all night, youngster," said the boss kindly; "It's a long ride back, and it's going to be dark."

"No stay to-night," answered Leloo. "Maybe some time I stay, but no to-night."

"Well, you know best, kid," replied the boss. "There's one thing—no harm will ever come to an Indian boy on a mountain trail. But be careful; the canyons are deep, and the trail is bad in spots."

"Me know, me careful," smiled Leloo, and mounting his cayuse, trotted off gayly, just as the sun was lost behind a grim, rocky peak in the west. But the "boss" was right: night comes quickly in the mountains, and this night was unusually dark. Leloo had to ride very slowly, for the narrow trail was a mere ledge carved out from the perpendicular walls of the cliffs, which arose on the left, a sheer precipice hundreds of feet above him, and fell away to the right in a yawning chasm, black, and deep and unexplored. But the sure-footed cayuse stepped gingerly and knowingly, neither halting nor stumbling, and his wise little rider let the animal pick its own way, knowing well that a horse's senses in the dark are more acute than a human's. Presently from far across the canyon arose a weird, prolonged howl. Then from the heights above came an answering one.

"Ah, my brothers!" called Leloo aloud. "You have come to greet me through the night," and his eyes lighted like twin black fires, for he loved these wolves that made their dens and lairs along the Cariboo Trail, and to-night they were to serve him in the oddest fashion that a wild animal was ever called upon to do. As he rode on, he would—just for company's sake—call back to the wolves, answering their cries with such a perfect imitation of their wild voices that they would reply to him, from far below, then again from far above, and Leloo would smile to himself and say, "That is right, O great and fierce Leloos; answer me, for you are my kin and my cousins."

But the trail was growing steeper, narrower every moment, and after a time Leloo forgot to reply to his forest friends, and just rode on, peering through the shadows to avoid the dangers on all sides. Presently a sound that belonged to neither crag nor canyon fell across his quick, Indian ears. It was a man's voice, hushed, subdued, speaking very low, and speaking in English. It said:

"I hear a horse coming."

"Shut up! Don't talk so loud," replied another voice.

"I tell you I hear horses," answered the first voice irritably. "It must be the stage coming. Get ready!"

"You're clean crazy," said the other voice. "The stage makes more noise than that, and I know for sure there's no horseman up the trail to-night. It's some wild animal you hear."

Leloo pulled his cayuse stock still. He did not understand English readily, he was not versed in the ways of the white man, but his wonderful native wit and instinct told him at once that there was something wrong—the wrong things that white men were sent to jail for sometimes. He asked himself, “Why should they hide and whisper?” Only hunters hid and refused to speak aloud. Then he remembered—the stage.

Page 50

How often his father had talked of the great lumps of gold the white men were digging up, two hundred miles north, up the Frozen River—"Cariboo gold," his father had called it, and said that it was sent down in numberless bags to "the front," and the stage brought it. And his father would always finish the tale with, "The white men will risk their lives and kill each other for this gold."

Leloo could never understand it, for he would much rather have a soft wolf skin to lie on, a string of blue Hudson's Bay beads around his dark throat, and fine, beaded moccasins, than all the gold in the world. But while he sat stock still, the voices continued:

"There, it's stopped. I knew it was an animal. The stage won't be along for an hour yet."

"They are white men, but the gold does not belong to them," Leloo told himself. "It belongs to the white men on the stage, or up in the Barkerville gold ledges. These white men here are 'bad medicine.' They shall not find that stage."

But even as he thought it out, the voices began afresh.

"There's something wrong with my gun," said one, "it won't work."

"There's nothing wrong with *mine*," came the sneering reply. "*Mine* will work all right. I'm going to have that gold."

"How much did Jim Orton say there was a-coming down on the stage?" whispered the other.

"Some twenty thousand dollars' worth of nuggets," was the answer. "And you'll use your gun, too, to get it, if you don't turn coward."

Then there was silence. So his father was right. These white men would kill each other for gold—gold that belonged to another, to the men who were working day and night for it up at the ledges, two hundred miles north. Instantly Leloo's plan was formed. He would save the gold for the men who owned it; save the good stage driver from the bullets of these hiding, whispering sneaks and robbers. But how was he to do it? How could he dare to move a step unless to turn backward? Twenty yards ahead of him the two men crouched. Even by their lowered voices he could locate them as hiding behind a giant boulder, some ten feet above the trail. If he was to advance to meet the stage and warn the driver, he needs must pass under their very feet. Was it quite impossible to daringly gallop under their guns and be lost in the darkness before they could recover from their surprise? Leloo could trust his cayuse, he knew. The honest little creature was at this moment standing still as the silence about them. Then acutely across that silence cut the long wail of a lonely wolf wandering across the heights. A very

inspiration seized Leloo. In a second he had flung back his head, and from his thin, Indian boyish lips there issued a weird, prolonged howl. He was answering the wolf in his own language.

Page 51

“Great guns!” ejaculated one of the highwaymen, “that wolf’s right under our feet. There he goes now. I hear him prowling past.” For with the howl, Leloo had started his cayuse gently, and the wise creature was slipping beneath the dreaded boulder almost noiselessly. The boy fairly held his breath. Suppose they should peer through the dark, and see that it was a horse and rider, and no wild animal padding up the trail? Then his wolf friend from the heights answered him, and Leloo once more lifted his head, and the strange half-barking, half-sobbing cry again broke the silence. He was well past the boulder now, ten, twenty, thirty yards, when his innocent little cayuse gave that peculiar snort which a horse always gives when some sudden fear or danger threatens. The animal’s instinct had evidently detected the presence of enemies.

“It’s a horseman, not a wolf,” fairly yelled a voice behind him; but Leloo had already struck the cayuse a smart blow on the flank, at which the animal bunched its four hoofs together, shivered, snorted again, then plunged, galloping like mad down the trail, down, blindly down into the darkness ahead. One, two, three sharp revolver shots rang out behind him, the bullets falling wide of their mark in the blackness of the night, rapidly running feet that seemed to gain upon him, the crash of a falling man, then terrible language—all rang in his ears in quick succession, but the boy never drew rein, never halted. On plunged the horse, heedlessly, wildly, but Leloo stuck to his back, scorning the fear of a horrible death in the canyon below, thinking only of the danger of the treasure-laden stage and of the safety of Big Bill, the driver, whom his father loved, and whom every Indian of the Lillooet tribe respected.

The stones were now rattling from the rush of his horse’s hoofs, and once or twice the boy held his breath, as they swung round a boulder in the dark, and the sturdy animal almost lost its balance. Sometimes he heard the robbers scrambling down the trail far above him, the trail he had already covered, and twice they fired on him; but the kindly darkness saved him. He was nearing the foot of the mountain now, and the cayuse was beginning to heave badly, but Leloo still struck the sweating flanks, and the creature still plunged on, until, finally, in fear and exhaustion, it stumbled. Instantly it recovered itself, but Leloo knew that this was the first sign of the coming end. Then only did he stop. In his mad ride Leloo had been so intently listening for sounds from behind that he never once thought of sounds ahead, and in this pause of the rattling hoofs and flying stones, his ears caught the rumble of wheels coming towards him, the gentle beat of six horses trotting slowly, and the cheery whistle of the big Canadian who drove the Cariboo stage. As Leloo came slowly upon them, the big driver called, “Who’s there—ahead in the trail? Who’s shooting around here?”

Page 52

“Go back, you!” cried the boy. “Two bad men’s up trail. They shoot you. They get gold.”

“Gee whiz!” yelled Big Bill, bringing his six-in-hand to a standstill. “Holdup, eh? I declare, but that’s a narrow escape. I guess Big Bill won’t cross the divide to-night.”

“No, you go back,” reiterated the boy.

“Well, I’ll be blown if it isn’t just a kid!” exclaimed the driver, as Leloo rode up close beside him. “And look at the horse of him, clean played out. I say, boy, no wonder you rode hard, with all that gunning behind you. I’m rather handy with a gun myself, and I never drive the ‘gold’ stage without these two here,” tapping the revolvers in his big belt, “but if our friends up there had got the drop on me first, there’d have been a dead driver, and no gold for the boys in the bank, I’m thinking. What is your name, anyway, boy?”

“Me? I’m Leloo,” the little Indian replied. “My father, he Chief Buckskin, Lillooet tribe.”

“Whew!” gasped Big Bill. “Old Buckskin’s son, eh? Then you’re all right, for Buckskin is ‘white’—all but his skin. You climb up beside me here, and give that poor, busted horse of yours a rest. This outfit is a-goin’ to turn back, and we’ll all sleep at Pete’s place to-night. But how did you get past those sneaking gunners up there? That’s what I want to know.”

And later when Leloo, safely seated beside the big driver, related how he had tricked the scoundrels, Big Bill was as proud as if he had been the boy’s father. “The whole Cariboo trail from end to end shall know of this,” he declared, “know just how you saved me and the miners’ gold.”

“Me no save,” said Leloo, shaking his head with denial. “Not me save, just save by big wolf-brother. He teach me to make his cry, he answer me when I talk his talk to him.”

And it must have been this speech that the big driver told far and wide, for at the next great “potlatch” (feast) given by the Lillooets, the entire tribe conferred the great honor of a new name upon Leloo, the name he had won for himself—“Wolf-Brother.”

We-hro’s Sacrifice

A Story of a Boy and a Dog

We-hro was a small Onondaga Indian boy, a good-looking, black-eyed little chap with as pagan a heart as ever beat under a copper-colored skin. His father and grandfathers were pagans. His ancestors for a thousand years back, and yet a thousand years back of that, had been pagans, and We-hro, with the pride of his religion and his race, would not have turned from the faith of his fathers for all the world. But the world, as he knew

it, consisted entirely of the Great Indian Reserve, that lay on the banks of the beautiful Grand River, sixty miles west of the great Canadian city of Toronto.

Now, the boys that read this tale must not confuse a pagan with a heathen. The heathen nations that worship idols are terribly pitied and despised by the pagan Indians, who are worshippers of "The Great Spirit," a kind and loving God, who, they say, will reward them by giving them happy hunting grounds to live in after they die; that is, if they live good, honest, upright lives in this world.

Page 53

We-hro would have scowled blackly if anyone had dared to name him a heathen. He thoroughly ignored the little Delaware boys, whose fathers worshipped idols fifty years ago, and on all the feast days and dance days he would accompany his parents to the “Longhouse” (which was their church), and take his little part in the religious festivities. He could remember well as a tiny child being carried in his mother’s blanket “pick-a-back,” while she dropped into the soft swinging movement of the dance, for We-hro’s people did not worship their “Great Spirit” with hymns of praise and lowly prayers, the way the Christian Indians did. We-hro’s people worshipped their God by dancing beautiful, soft, dignified steps, with no noisy clicking heels to annoy one, but only the velvety shuffle of the moccasined feet, the weird beat of the Indian drums, the mournful chanting of the old chiefs, keeping time with the throb of their devoted hearts.

Then, when he grew too big to be carried, he was allowed to clasp his mother’s hand, and himself learn the pretty steps, following his father, who danced ahead, dressed in full costume of scarlet cloth and buckskin, with gay beads and bear claws about his neck, and wonderful carven silver ornaments, massive and sold, decorating his shirt and leggings. We-hro loved the tawny fringes and the hammered silver quite as much as a white lady loves diamonds and pearls; he loved to see his father’s face painted in fierce reds, yellows and blacks, but most of all he loved the unvarying chuck-a, chuck-a, chuck-a of the great mud-turtle rattles that the “musicians” skilfully beat upon the benches before them. Oh, he was a thorough little pagan, was We-hro! His loves and his hates were as decided as his comical but stately step in the dance of his ancestors’ religion. Those were great days for the small Onondaga boy. His father taught him to shape axe-handles, to curve lacrosse sticks, to weave their deer-sinew netting, to tan skins, to plant corn, to model arrows and—most difficult of all—to “feather” them, to “season” bows, to chop trees, to burn, hollow, fashion and “man” a dugout canoe, to use the paddle, to gauge the wind and current of that treacherous Grand River, to learn wild cries to decoy bird and beast for food. Oh, little pagan We-hro had his life filled to overflowing with much that the civilized white boy would have given all his dimes and dollars to know.

And it was then that the great day came, the marvellous day when We-hro discovered his second self, his playmate, his loyal, unselfish, loving friend—his underbred, unwashed, hungry, vagabond dog, born white and spotless, but begrimed by contact with the world, the mud, and the white man’s hovel.

It happened this way:

Page 54

We-hro was cleaning his father's dugout canoe, after a night of fish spearing. The soot, the scales, the fire ashes, the mud—all had to be “swabbed” out at the river's brink by means of much water and an Indian “slat” broom. We-hro was up to his little ears in work, when suddenly, above him, on the river road, he heard the coarse voice and thundering whipfalls of a man urging and beating his horse—a white man, for no Indian used such language, no Indian beat an animal that served him. We-hro looked up. Stuck in the mud of the river road was a huge wagon, grain-filled. The driver, purple of face, was whaling the poor team, and shouting to a cringing little drab-white dog, of fox-terrier lineage, to “Get out of there or I'll—!”

The horses were dragging and tugging. The little dog, terrified, was sneaking off with tail between its hind legs. Then the brutal driver's whip came down, curling its lash about the dog's thin body, forcing from the little speechless brute a howl of agony. Then We-hro spoke—spoke in all the English he knew.

“Bad! bad! You die some day—you! You hurt that dog. White man's God, he no like you. Indian's Great Spirit, he not let you shoot in happy hunting grounds. You die some day—you *bad!*”

“Well, if I *am* bad I'm no pagan Indian Hottentot like you!” yelled the angry driver. “Take the dog, and begone!”

“Me no Hottentot,” said We-hro, slowly. “Me Onondaga, all right. Me take dog;” and from that hour the poor little white cur and the copper-colored little boy were friends for all time.

* * * * *

The Superintendent of Indian Affairs was taking his periodical drive about the Reserve when he chanced to meet old “Ten-Canoes,” We-hro's father.

The superintendent was a very important person. He was a great white gentleman, who lived in the city of Brantford, fifteen miles away. He was a kindly, handsome man, who loved and honored every Indian on the Grand River Reserve. He had a genial smile, a warm hand-shake, so when he stopped his horse and greeted the old pagan, Ten-Canoes smiled too.

“Ah, Ten-Canoes!” cried the superintendent, “a great man told me he was coming to see your people—a big man, none less than Great Black-Coat, the bishop of the Anglican Church. He thinks you are a bad lot, because you are pagans; he wonders why it is that you have never turned Christian. Some of the missionaries have told him you pagans are no good, so the great man wants to come and see for himself. He wants to see some of your religious dances—the ‘Dance of the White Dog,’ if you will have him; he wants to see if it is really *bad.*”

Ten-Canoes laughed. "I welcome him," he said, earnestly, "Welcome the 'Great Black-Coat.' I honor him, though I do not think as he does. He is a good man, a just man; I welcome him, bid him come."

Thus was his lordship, the Bishop, invited to see the great pagan Onondaga "Festival of the White Dog."

Page 55

But what was *this* that happened?

Never yet had a February moon waned but that the powerful Onondaga tribe had offered the burnt “Sacrifice of the White Dog,” that most devout of all native rites. But now, search as they might, not a single spotlessly white dog could be found. No other animal would do. It was the law of this great Indian tribe that no other burnt sacrifice could possibly be offered than the strangled body of a white dog.

We-hro heard all the great chiefs talking of it all. He listened to plans for searching the entire Reserve for a dog, and the following morning he arose at dawn, took his own pet dog down to the river and washed him as he had seen white men wash their sheep. Then out of the water dashed the gay little animal, yelping and barking in play, rolling in the snow, tearing madly about, and finally rushing off towards the log house which was We-hro’s home and scratching at the door to get in by the warm fire to dry his shaggy coat. Oh! what an ache that coat caused in We-hro’s heart. From a dull drab grey, the dog’s hair had washed pure white, not a spot or a blemish on it, and in an agony of grief the little pagan boy realized that through his own action he had endangered the life of his dog friend; that should his father and his father’s friends see that small white terrier, they would take it away for the nation’s sacrifice.

Stumbling and panting and breathless, We-hro hurried after his pet, and, seizing the dog in his arms, he wrapped his own shabby coat about the trembling, half-dry creature, and carried him to where the cedars grew thick at the back of the house. Crouched in their shadows he hugged his treasured companion, thinking with horror of the hour when the blow would surely fall.

For days the boy kept his dog in the shelter of the cedars, tied up tightly with an old rope, and sleeping in a warm raccoon skin, which We-hro smuggled away from his own simple bed. The dog contented himself with what little food We-hro managed to carry to him, but the hiding could not keep up forever, and one dark, dreaded day We-hro’s father came into the house and sat smoking in silence for many minutes. When at last he spoke, he said:

“We-hro, your dog is known to me. I have seen him, white as the snow that fell last night. It is the law that someone must always suffer for the good of the people. We-hro, would you have the great ‘Black-Coat,’ the great white preacher, come to see our beautiful ceremony, and would you have the great Onondaga tribe fail to show the white man how we worship our ancient Great Spirit? Would you have us fail to burn the sacrifice? Or will you give your white dog for the honor of our people?”

The world is full of heroes, but at that moment it held none greater than the little pagan boy, who crushed down his grief and battled back his tears as he answered:

“Father, you are old and honored and wise. For you and for my people alone would I give the dog.”

Page 56

At last the wonderful Dance Day arrived. His lordship, the Bishop of the Anglican Church, drove down from the city of Brantford; with him the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and a man who understood both the English and the Onondaga languages. Long before they reached the “Longhouse” they could hear the wild beat of the drum, could count the beats of the dance rattles, could distinguish the half-sad chant of the worshippers. The kind face of the great bishop was very grave. It pained his gentle old heart to know that this great tribe of Indians were pagans—savages, as he thought—but when he entered that plain log building that the Onondagas held as their church, he took off his hat with the beautiful reverence all great men pay to other great men’s religion, and he stood bareheaded while old Ten-Canoes chanted forth this speech:

“Oh, brothers of mine! We welcome the white man’s friend, the great ‘Black-Coat,’ to this, our solemn worship. We offer to the red man’s God—the Great Spirit—a burnt offering. We do not think that anything save what is pure and faithful and without blemish can go into the sight of the Great Spirit. Therefore do we offer this dog, pure as we hope our spirits are, that the God of the red man may accept it with our devotion, knowing that we, too, would gladly be as spotless as this sacrifice.”

Then was a dog carried in dead, and beautifully decorated with wampum, beads and porcupine embroidery. Oh! so mercifully dead and out of pain, gently strangled by reverent fingers, for an Indian is never unkind to an animal. And far over in a corner of the room was a little brown figure, twisted with agony, choking back the sobs and tears—for was he not taught that tears were for babies alone, and not for boys that grew up into warriors?

“Oh, my dog! my dog!” he muttered. “They have taken you away from me, but it was for the honor of my father and of my own people.”

The great Anglican bishop turned at that moment, and, catching the sight of suffering on little We-hro’s face, said aloud to the man who spoke both languages:

“That little boy over there seems in torture. Can I do anything for him, do you think?”

“That little boy,” replied the man who spoke both languages, “is the son of the great Onondaga chief. No white dog could be found for this ceremony but his. This dog was his pet, but for the honor of his father and of his tribe he has given up his pet as a sacrifice.”

For a moment the great Anglican bishop was blinded by his own tears. Then he walked slowly across the wide log building and laid his white hand tenderly on the head of the little Onondaga boy. His kindly old eyes closed, and his lips moved—noiselessly, for a space, then he said aloud:

“Oh, that the white boys of my great city church knew and practiced half as much of self-denial as has this little pagan Indian lad, who has given up his heart’s dearest because his father and the honor of his people required it.”

Page 57

The Potlatch*

["Potlatch" is a Chinook word meaning "a gift." Among the Indian tribes of British Columbia it is used as the accepted name of a great feast, which some Indian, who is exceedingly well off, gives to scores of guests. He entertains them for days, sometimes for weeks, together, presenting them with innumerable blankets and much money, for it is part of the Indian code of honor that, which one has great possessions, he must divide them with his less fortunate tribesmen. The gifts of money usually take the form of ten-dollar bank notes, and are bestowed broadcast upon any man, woman or child who pleases the host by either dancing the tribal dances very beautifully, or else originates an attractive dance of their own.]

Young Ta-la-pus sat on the highest point of rock that lifted itself on the coast at the edge of his father's Reserve. At his feet stretched the Straits of Georgia, and far across the mists of the salt Pacific waters he watched the sun rise seemingly out of the mainland that someone had told him stretched eastward thousands of miles, where another ocean, called the Atlantic, washed its far-off shore, for Ta-la-pus lived on Vancouver Island, and all his little life had been spent in wishing and longing to set his small, moccasined feet on that vast mainland that the old men talked of, and the young men visited year in and year out. But never yet had he been taken across the wide, blue Straits, for he was only eleven years old, and he had two very big brothers who always accompanied their father, old chief Mowitch, on his journeyings, for they were good fishermen, and could help in the salmon catch, and bring good chicamin (money) home to buy supplies for the winter. Sometimes these big brothers would tease him and say, "What can you expect? Your name is Ta-la-pus, which means a prairie wolf. What has a prairie wolf to do with crossing great waters? He cannot swim, as some other animals can. Our parents gave us better names, 'Chet-woot,' the bear, who swims well, and 'Lapool,' the water fowl, whose home is on the waters, whose feet are webbed, and who floats even while he sleeps. No, our young brother, Ta-la-pus, the prairie wolf, was never meant to cross the great salt Straits."

Then little Ta-la-pus would creep away to his lonely rock, trying to still the ache in his heart and forcing back the tears from his eyes. Prairie wolves must not cry like little girl babies—and sometimes when his heart was sorest, a clear, dazzlingly bright day would dawn, and far, far off he could see the blur of the mainland coast, resting on the sea like an enormous island. Then he would tell himself that, no matter what his name was, some day he would cross to that great, far country, whose snow-crowned mountain peaks he could just see merging into the distant clouds.

Then, late in the summer, there came one marvellous night, when his father and brother returned from the sockeye salmon fishing, with news that set the entire Indian village talking far into the early morning. A great Squamish chief on the mainland was going to give a Potlatch. He had been preparing for it for weeks. He had enjoyed a very fortunate fishing season, was a generous-hearted man, and was prepared to spend ten

thousand dollars* in gifts and entertainment for his friends and all the poor of the various neighboring tribes.

Page 58

[*Fact. This amount has frequently been given away.*]

Chief Mowitch and all his family were invited, and great rejoicing and anticipation were enjoyed over their salmon suppers that night.

"You and the boys go," said his wife. "Perhaps you will be lucky and bring home chicamin and blankets. The old men say the winter will be cold. Grey geese were going south yesterday, three weeks earlier than last year. Yes, we will need blankets when the ollalies (berries) are ripe in October. I shall stay at home, until the babies are older. Yes, you and the boys go."

"Yes," responded the chief. "It would never do for us to miss a great Squamish Potlatch. We must go."

Then the elder son, Chet-woot, spoke joyously:

"And, mama,* we may bring back great riches, and even if the cold does come while we are away, our little brother, Ta-la-pus, will care for you and the babies. He'll carry water and bring all the wood for your warmth."

[*The Chinook for father and mother is "papa" and "mama", adopted from the English language.*]

The father looked smilingly at Ta-la-pus, but the boy's eyes, great and dark, and hungry for the far mainland, for the great feasts he had heard so much of, were fastened in begging, pleading seriousness on his father's face. Suddenly a whim seized the old chief's fancy.

"Ta-la-pus," he said, "you look as if you would like to go, too. Do you want to take part in the Potlatch?"

Instantly Chet-woot objected. "Papa, he could never go, he's too young. They may ask him to dance for them. He can't dance. Then perhaps they would never ask us."

The chief scowled. He was ruler in his own lodge, and allowed no interference from anyone.

"Besides," continued Chet-woot, "there would be no one to fetch wood for mama and the babies."

"Yes, there would be someone," said the chief, his eyes snapping fiercely. "*You* would be here to help your mama."

"I?" exclaimed the young man. "But how can I, when I shall be at the Potlatch? I go to *all* the Potlatches."

“So much more reason that you stay home this once and care for your mama and baby sisters, and you *shall* stay. Lapool and little Ta-la-pus will go with me. It is time the boy saw something of the other tribes. Yes, I’ll take Lapool and Ta-la-pus, and there is no change to my word when it is once spoken.”

Chet-woot sat like one stunned, but an Indian son knows better than to argue with his father. But the great, dark eyes of little Ta-la-pus glowed like embers of fire, his young heart leaped joyously. At last, at last, he was to set foot in the country of his dreams—the far, blue, mountain-circled mainland.

All that week his mother worked day and night on a fine new native costume for him to wear on the great occasion. There were trousers of buckskin fringed down each side, a shirt of buckskin, beaded and beautified by shell ornaments, a necklace of the bones of a rare fish, strung together like little beads on deer sinew, earrings of pink and green pearl from the inner part of the shells of a bivalve, neat moccasins, and solid silver, carven bracelets.

Page 59

She was working on a headdress consisting of a single red fox-tail and eagle feathers, when he came and stood beside her.

“Mama,” he said, “there is a prairie wolf skin you cover the babies with while they sleep. Would you let me have it this once, if they would not be cold without it?”

“They will never be cold,” she smiled, “for I can use an extra blanket over them. I only use it because I started to when you were the only baby I had, and it was your name, so I covered you with it at night.”

“And I want to cover myself with it now,” he explained, “its head as my headdress, its front paws about my neck, its thick fur and tail trailing behind me as I dance.”

“So you are going to dance, my little Ta-la-pus?” she answered proudly. “But how is that, when you do not yet know our great tribal dances?”

“I have made one of my own, and a song, too,” he said, shyly.

She caught him to her, smoothing the hair back from his dark forehead. “That is right,” she half whispered, for she felt he did not want anyone but herself to know his boyish secret. “Always make things for yourself, don’t depend on others, try what you can do alone. Yes, you may take the skin of the prairie wolf. I will give it to you for all time—it is yours.”

That night his father also laid in his hands a gift. It was a soft, pliable belt, woven of the white, peeled roots of the cedar, dyed brilliantly, and worked into a magnificent design.

“Your great-grandmother made it,” said the chief. “Wear it on your first journey into the larger world than this island, and do nothing in all your life that would make her regret, were she alive, to see it round your waist.”

So little Ta-la-pus set forth with his father and brother, well equipped for the great Potlatch, and the meeting of many from half a score of tribes.

They crossed the Straits on a white man’s steamer, a wonderful sight to Ta-la-pus, who had never been aboard any larger boat than his father’s fishing smack and their own high-bowed, gracefully-curved canoe. In and out among the islands of the great gulf the steamer wound, bringing them nearer, ever nearer to the mainland. Misty and shadowy, Vancouver Island dropped astern, until at last they steamed into harbor, where a crowd of happy-faced Squamish Indians greeted them, stowed them away in canoes, paddled a bit up coast, then sighted the great, glancing fires that were lighting up the grey of oncoming night—fires of celebration and welcome to all the scores of guests who were to partake of the lavish hospitality of the great Squamish chief.

Page 60

As he stepped from the great canoe, Ta-la-pus thought he felt a strange thrill pass through the soles of his feet. They had touched the mainland of the vast continent of North America for the first time; his feet seemed to become sensitive, soft, furry, cushioned like those of a wild animal. Then, all at once, a strange inspiration seized him. Why not try to make his footsteps “pad” like the noiseless paws of a prairie wolf? “pad” in the little dance he had invented, instead of “shuffling” in his moccasins, as all the grown men did? He made up his mind that when he was alone in his tent he would practise it, but just now the great Squamish chief was coming towards them with outstretched greeting hands, and presently he was patting little Ta-la-pus on the shoulder, and saying, “Oh, ho, my good Tillicum Mowitch, I am glad you have brought this boy. I have a son of the same size. They will play together, and perhaps this Tenas Tyee (Little Chief) will dance for me some night.”

“My brother does not dance our tribal dances,” began Lapool, but Ta-la-pus spoke up bravely.

“Thank you, O Great Tyee (Chief), I shall dance when you ask me.”

His father and brother both stared at him in amazement. Then Chief Mowitch laughed, and said, “If he says he will dance, he will do it. He never promises what he cannot do, but I did not know he could do the steps. Ah! he is a little hoolool (mouse) this boy of mine; he keeps very quiet, and does not boast what he can do.”

Little Ta-la-pus was wonderfully encouraged by his father’s notice of him and his words of praise. Never before had he seemed so close to manhood, for, being the youngest boy of the family, he had but little companionship with any at home except his mother and the little sisters that now seemed so far behind him in their island home. All that evening the old chiefs and the stalwart young braves were gravely shaking hands with his father, his brother Lapool, and himself, welcoming them to the great festival and saying pleasant things about peace and brotherhood prevailing between the various tribes instead of war and bloodshed, as in the olden times. It was late when the great supper of boiled salmon was over, and the immense bonfires began to blaze on the shore where the falling tides of the Pacific left the beaches dry and pebbly. The young men stretched themselves on the cool sands, and the old men lighted their peace pipes, and talked of the days when they hunted the mountain sheep and black bear on these very heights overlooking the sea. Ta-la-pus listened to everything. He could learn so much from the older men, and hour by hour he gained confidence. No more he thought of his dance with fear and shyness, for all these people were kindly and hospitable even to a boy of eleven. At midnight there was another feast, this time of clams, and luscious crabs, with much steaming black tea. Then came the great Squamish chief, saying more welcoming words,

Page 61

and inviting his guests to begin their tribal dances. Ta-la-pus never forgot the brilliant sight that he looked on for the next few hours. Scores of young men and women went through the most graceful figures of beautiful dances, their shell ornaments jingling merrily in perfect time to each twist and turn of their bodies. The wild music from the beat of Indian drums and shell “rattles” arose weirdly, half sadly, drifting up the mountain heights, until it lost itself in the timber line of giant firs that crested the summits. The red blaze from the camp fires flitted and flickered across the supple figures that circled around, in and out between the three hundred canoes beached on the sands, and the smoke-tipped tents and log lodges beyond the reach of tide water. Above it all a million stars shone down from the cloudless heavens of a perfect British Columbian night. After a while little Ta-la-pus fell asleep, and when he awoke, dawn was just breaking. Someone had covered him with a beautiful, white, new blanket, and as his young eyes opened they looked straight into the kindly face of the great Squamish chief.

“We are all aweary, ‘Tenas Tyee’ (Little Chief),” he said. “The dancers are tired, and we shall all sleep until the sun reaches midday, but my guests cry for one more dance before sunrise. Will you dance for us, oh, little Ta-la-pus?”

The boy sprang up, every muscle and sinew and nerve on the alert. The moment of his triumph or failure had come.

“You have made me, even a boy like me, very welcome, O Great Tyee,” he said, standing erect as an arrow, with his slender, dark chin raised manfully. “I have eaten of your kloshe muck-a-muck (very good food), and it has made my heart and my feet very skookum (strong). I shall do my best to dance and please you.” The boy was already dressed in the brilliant buckskin costume his mother had spent so many hours in making, and his precious wolfskin was flung over his arm. The great Squamish chief now took him by the hand and led him towards the blazing fires round which the tired dancers, the old men and women, sat in huge circles where the chill of dawn could not penetrate.

“One more dance, then we sleep,” said the chief to the great circle of spectators. “This Tenas Tyee will do his best to amuse us.”

Then Ta-la-pus felt the chief’s hand unclasp, and he realized that he was standing absolutely alone before a great crowd of strangers, and that every eye was upon him.

“Oh, my brother,” he whispered, smoothing the prairie wolf skin, “help me to be like you, help me to be worthy of your name.” Then he pulled the wolf’s head over his own, twisted the fore legs about his throat, and stepped into the great circle of sand between the crouching multitude and the fires.

Stealthily he began to pick his way in the full red flare from the flames. He heard many voices whispering, “Tenas,” “Tenas,” meaning “He is little, he is young,” but his step only grew more stealthy, until he “padded” into a strange, silent trot in exact imitation of a prairie wolf. As he swung the second time round the fires, his young voice arose, in a thin, wild, wonderful barking tone, so weird and wolf-like that half the spectators leaped up to their knees, or feet, the better to watch and listen. Another moment, and he was putting his chant into words.

Page 62

"They call me Ta-la-pus, the prairie-wolf,
And wild and free am I.
I cannot swim like Eh-ko-lie, the whale,
Nor like the eagle, Chack-chack, can I fly.

"I cannot talk as does the great Ty-ee,
Nor like the o-tel-agh* shine in the sky.
I am but Ta-la-pus, the prairie-wolf,
And wild and free am I."

[*Sun.*]

With every word, every step, he became more like the wolf he was describing. Across his chanting and his "padding" in the sand came murmurs from the crowd. He could hear "Tenas, tenas," "To-ke-tie Tenas" (pretty boy), "Skookum-tanse," (good strong dance). Then at last, "Ow," "Ow," meaning "Our young brother." On and on went Ta-la-pus. The wolf feeling crept into his legs, his soft young feet, his clutching fingers, his wonderful dark eyes that now gleamed red and lustrous in the firelight. He was as one inspired, giving a beautiful and marvellous portrait of the wild vagabonds of the plains. For fully ten minutes he circled and sang, then suddenly crouched on his haunches, then, lifting his head, he turned to the east, his young throat voiced one long, strange note, wolf-like he howled to the rising sun, which at that moment looked over the crest of the mountains, its first golden shaft falling full upon his face.

His chant and his strange wolf-dance were ended. Then one loud clamor arose from the crowd. "Tenas Tyee," "Tenas Tyee," they shouted, and Ta-la-pus knew that he had not failed. But the great Squamish chief was beside him.

"Tillicums,"* he said, facing the crowd, "this boy has danced no tribal dance learned from his people or his parents. This is his own dance, which he has made to deserve his name. He shall get the first gifts of our great Potlatch. Go," he added, to one of the young men, "bring ten dollars of the white man's chicamin (money), and ten new blankets as white as that snow on the mountain top."

[*Friends, my people.*]

The crowd was delighted. They approved the boy and rejoiced to see the real Potlatch was begun. When the blankets were piled up beside him they reached to the top of Ta-la-pus' head. Then the chief put ten dollars in the boy's hand with the simple words, "I am glad to give it. You won it well, my Tenas Tyee."

That was the beginning of a great week of games, feasting and tribal dances, but not a night passed but the participants called for the wild "wolf-dance" of the little boy from the island. When the Potlatch was over, old Chief Mowitch and Lapool and Ta-la-pus

returned to Vancouver Island, but no more the boy sat alone on the isolated rock, watching the mainland through a mist of yearning. He had set foot in the wider world, he had won his name, and now honored it, instead of hating it, as in the old days when his brothers taunted him, for the great Squamish chief, in bidding good-bye to him, had said:

“Little Ta-la-pus, remember a name means much to a man. You despised your name, but you have made it great and honorable by your own act, your own courage. Keep that name honorable, little Ta-la-pus; it will be worth far more to you than many blankets or much of the white man’s chicamin.”

Page 63

The Scarlet Eye

"I tell you that fellow is an Indian! You can't fool me! Look at the way he walks! He doesn't *step*; he *pads* like a panther!"

Billy ceased speaking, but still pointed an excited forefinger along the half-obliterated buffalo trail that swung up the prairie, out of the southern horizon. The two boys craned their necks, watching the coming figure, that advanced at a half-trot, half-stride. Billy was right. The man seemed to be moving on cushioned feet. Nothing could give that slow, springing swing except a moccasin.

"Any man is welcome," almost groaned little Jerry, "but, oh, how much more welcome an Indian man, eh, Billy?"

"You bet!" said Billy. "He'll show us a way out of this. Yes, he's Indian. I can see his long hair now. Look! I can see the fringe up the sleeves of his shirt; it is buckskin!"

"Do you think he sees us?" questioned Jerry.

Billy laughed contemptuously. "Sees us! Why, he saw us long before we saw him, you can bet on that!"

Then Billy raised his arm, and whirled about his head the big bandanna handkerchief which he had snatched from his neck. The man responded to the signal by lifting aloft for a single instant his open palm with fingers outstretched.

"Yes, he's Indian! A white man would have wiggled his wrist at us!" sighed Jerry contentedly. "He'll help us out, Billy. There's nothing he won't know how to do!" And the little boy's eyes grew moist with the relief of knowing help was at last at hand.

Ten minutes more and the man slowed up beside them. He was a tall, splendidly made Cree, with eyes like jewels and hands as slender and small as a woman's.

"You savvy English?" asked Billy.

"Little," answered the Indian, never looking at Billy, but keeping his wonderful eyes on the outstretched figure, the pallid face, of young Jerry, whose forehead was wrinkled with evident pain.

"We have met with an accident," explained Billy. "My little brother's horse loped into a badger hole and broke its leg. I had to shoot it." Here Billy's voice choked, and his fingers touched the big revolver at his belt. "My brother was thrown. He landed badly; something's wrong with his ankle, his leg; he can't walk; can't go on, even on my horse. It happened over there, about two miles." Here Billy pointed across the prairie to where

a slight hump showed where the dead horse lay. "I got him over here," he continued, looking about at the scrub poplar and cottonwood trees, "where there was shelter and slough water, but he can't go on. Our father is Mr. MacIntyre, the Hudson's Bay Factor at Fort o' Farewell."

As Billy ceased speaking the Indian kneeled beside Jerry, feeling with tender fingers his hurts. As the dark hand touched his ankle, the boy screamed and cried out, "Oh, don't! Oh, don't!" The Indian arose, shaking his head solemnly, then said softly, "Hudson's Bay boys, eh? Good boys! You good boy to bring him here to trees. We make camp! Your brother's ankle is broken."

Page 64

"But we must get him home," urged Billy. "We ought to have a doctor. He'll be lame all his life if we don't!" And poor big Billy's voice shook.

"No. No lame. I doctor him," said the Indian. "I good doctor. My name Five Feathers—me."

"Five Feathers!" exclaimed Billy. "Oh, I've often heard father speak of you. Father loves you. He says you are the best Indian in the whole Hudson's Bay country."

Five Feathers smiled. "Your father and me good friends," he said simply. Then added, "How you come here?"

"Why, you see," said Billy, "we were returning from school at Winnipeg; it's holiday now, you know. Father sent the two ponies to 'the front' for us to ride home. Some Indians brought them over for us. It's a hundred and sixty miles. We started yesterday morning, and slept last night at Black Jack Pete's place. We must be a full hundred miles from home now." Billy stopped speaking. His voice simply *would* not go on.

"More miles than hundred," said the Indian. "You got something eat?"

Billy went over to where his horse was staked to a cottonwood, hauled off his saddlebags, and, returning, emptied them on the brown grass. They made a good showing. Six boxes of matches, a half side of bacon, two pounds of hardtack, a package of tea, four tins of sardines, a big roll of cooked smoked antelope, sugar, three loaves of bread, one can of tongue, one of salmon, a small tin teapot, two tin cups, one big knife, and one tin pie plate, to be used in lieu of a frying-pan. "I wish we had more," said the boy, surveying the outfit ruefully.

"Plenty," said the Indian; "we get prairie chicken and rabbit plenty." But his keen eyes scarcely glanced at the food. He was busy slitting one of the sleeves from his buckskin shirt, cutting it into bandages. His knife was already shaping splints from the scrub poplar. Little Jerry, his eyes full of pain, watched him, knowing of the agony to come, when even those gentle Indian fingers could not save his poor ankle from torture while they set the broken bone. Suddenly the misery of anticipation was arrested by a great and glad cry from the Indian, who had discovered and pounced upon a small scarlet blossom that was growing down near the slough. He caught up the flower, root and all, carrying it triumphantly to where the injured boy lay. Within ten minutes he had made a little fire, placed the scarlet flower, stem and root, in the teapot, half filled it up with water, and set it boiling. Then he turned to Billy.

"Sleeping medicine," he said, pointing to the teapot. "He not have pain. You stay until he awake, then you ride on to Fort o' Farewell. You take some food. You leave some for us. You send wagon, take him home. I stay with him. Maybe four, five days before

you get there and send wagon back. You trust me? I give him sleeping medicine. I watch him. You trust me—Five Feathers?”

Page 65

But Jerry's hand was already clasping the Indian's, and Billy was interrupting.

"Trust you? Trust Five Feathers, the best Indian in the Hudson's Bay country? I should think I will trust you!"

The Indian nodded quietly; and, taking the teapot from the fire, poured the liquid into one of the cups, cooling it by dripping from one cup to the other over and over again. Presently it began to thicken, almost like a jelly, and turned a dull red color, then brighter, clearer, redder. Suddenly the Indian snatched up the prostrate boy to a sitting posture. One hand was around the boy's shoulder, the other held the tin cup, brimming with reddening, glue-like stuff.

"Quick!" he said, looking at Billy. "You trust me?"

"Yes," said the boy, very quietly. "Give it to him."

"Yes," said Jerry; "give it to me."

The Indian held the cup to the little chap's lips. One, two, three minutes passed. The boy had swallowed every drop. Then the Indian laid him flat on the grass. For a moment his suffering eyes looked into those of his brother, then he glanced at the sky, the trees, the far horizon, the half-obliterated buffalo trail. Then his lids drooped, his hands twitched, he lay utterly unconscious.

With a rapidity hardly believable in an Indian, Five Feathers skinned off the boy's sock, ran his lithe fingers about the ankle, clicked the bone into place, splinted and bandaged it like an expert surgeon; but, with all his haste, it was completed none too soon. Jerry's eyes slowly opened, to see Billy smiling down at him, and Five Feathers standing calmly by his side.

"Bully, Jerry! Your ankle is all set and bandaged. How do you feel?" asked his brother, a little shakily.

"Just tired," said the boy. "Tired, but no pain. Oh, I wish I could have stayed!"

"Stayed where?" demanded Billy.

"With the scarlet flowers!" whispered Jerry. "I've been dreaming, I think," he continued. "I thought I was walking among fields and fields of scarlet flowers. They were so pretty."

Five Feathers sprang to his feet. "Good! Good!" he exclaimed. "I scared he would not see them. If he see red flowers, he all right. Sometimes, when they don't see it, they not get well soon." Then, under his breath, "The Scarlet Eye!"

"I saw them all right!" almost laughed the boy. "Miles of them. I could see and smell them. They smelled like smoke—like prairie fires."

"Get well right away!" chuckled the Indian. "Very good to smell them." Then to Billy: "You eat. You get ready. You ride now to Fort o' Farewell."

So they built up the dying fire, made tea, cooked a little bacon, and all three ate heartily.

"I'll leave you the teapot, of course," said Billy, taking a dozen hardtack and one tin of sardines. "Slough water's good enough for me."

But Five Feathers gripped him by the arm—an iron grip—not at all with the gentle fingers that had so recently dressed the other boy's wounded ankle. "You not go that way!" he glared, his fine eyes dark and scowling. "Yes, we keep teapot, but you take bread, and antelope, and more fat fish," pointing to the sardines. "Fat fish very good for long ride. You take, or I not let you go!"

Page 66

There was such a strange severity in his dark face that Billy did not argue the matter, but quietly obeyed, taking one loaf of bread, half the antelope, and three tins of the “fat fish.”

“Plenty prairie chicken here,” explained the Indian. “I make good soup for Little Brave.”

“What a nice name to call me, Five Feathers!” smiled Jerry.

“Yes, you Little Brave,” replied the Indian. “Little boy, but very big brave.”

At the last moment Jerry and his brother clasped hands. “I hate to leave you, old man,” said Billy, a little unsteadily.

“Why, I’m not afraid,” answered the boy. “You and father and I all know that I am with the best Indian in the Hudson’s Bay country—we *do* know it, don’t we, Billy?”

“I’ll stake my life on that,” replied Billy, swinging into his saddle. “Remember, Jerry, it’s only a hundred miles. I’ll be there in two days, and the wagon will be here in another two.”

“Yes, I’ll remember,” replied the sick boy.

Then Billy struck rather abruptly up the half-obliterated buffalo trail. Several times he turned in his saddle, looking back and waving his bandanna, and each time the Indian stood erect and lifted his open palm. The receding horse and rider grew smaller, less, fainter, then they blurred into the horizon. The sick boy closed his eyes, that ached from watching the fading figure. He was utterly alone, with leagues of untracked prairie about him, alone with Five Feathers, a strange Indian, who sat silently nearby.

When Jerry awoke, the sun was almost setting, and Five Feathers was in precisely the same place and in precisely the same attitude. Once, in his dreams, wherein he still wandered through fields of scarlet flowers, he watched a bud unfolding. It opened with a sound like a revolver shot, or was it really a revolver? The boy turned over on his side, for a savory odor greeted his nostrils, and he looked wonderingly around. Five Feathers had evidently not been sitting there throughout that long June afternoon, for, within an arm’s length was the jolliest little tepee made of many branches of poplar and cottonwood, sides and roof all one thick mass of green leaves and branches woven together like basketwork, a bed of short, dry prairie grass, fragrant and brown, his own saddlebags and single blanket for pillow and mattress. And on the fire the teapot, steaming with that delicious savory odor.

“What is it?” asked the boy, indicating the cooking.

“Prairie chicken,” smiled the Indian. “I shoot while you sleep.”

So *that* was the bursting of the scarlet bud!

“Very good chicken,” continued the Indian. “Very fat—good for eat, good soup, both.”

So they made their supper off the tender stew, and soaked some hardtack in the soup. It seemed to Jerry a royal meal, and he made up his mind that, when he arrived home, he would get his mother to stew a prairie hen in the teapot some day; it tasted so much better than anything he had ever eaten before.

Page 67

The sun had set, and the long, long twilight of the north was gathering. Five Feathers built up the fire, for the prairie night brings a chill, even in June.

"Did you see them again, the red flowers, while you slept?" he asked the boy.

"Yes; fields of them," replied Jerry. Then added, "Why?"

"It is good," said the Indian. "Very good. You will now have what we call 'The Scarlet Eye.'"

"What's that?" asked Jerry, half frightened.

"It's very good. You will yourself be a great medicine man—what you white men call 'doctor.' You like to be that?"

"I never thought of studying medicine until to-day," said the boy, excitedly; "but, just as Billy rode away, something seemed to grip me. I made up my mind then and there to be a doctor."

"That is because you have seen 'The Scarlet Eye,'" said the Indian, quietly.

"Tell me of it, will you, Five Feathers?" asked the boy, gently.

"Yes, but first I lift you on to bed." And, gathering Jerry in his strong, lean arms, he laid him on the grass couch in the green tepee, looked at his foot, loosened all his clothing, spread the one blanket over him, stirred up the fire, and, sitting at the tepee door, began the story.

THE SCARLET EYE

"Only the great, the good, the kindly people ever see it. One must live well, must be manly and brave, and talk straight without lies, without meanness, or 'The Scarlet Eye' will never come to them. They tell me that, over the great salt water, in your white man's big camping-ground named London, in far-off England, the medicine man hangs before his tepee door a scarlet lamp, so that all who are sick may see it, even in the darkness.* It is the sign that a good man lives within that tepee, a man whose life is given to help and heal sick bodies. We redskins of the North-West have heard this story, so we, too, want a sign of a scarlet lamp, to show where lives a great, good man. The blood of the red flower shows us this. If you drink it and see no red flowers, you are selfish, unkind; your talk is not true; your life is not clear; but, if you see the flowers, as you did to-day, you are good, kind, noble. You will be a great and humane medicine man. You have seen the Scarlet Eye. It is the sign of kindness to your fellowmen."

[Some of the Indian tribes of the Canadian North-West are familiar with the fact that in London, England, the sign of a physician's office is a scarlet lamp suspended outside the street door.]

The voice of Five Feathers ceased, but his fingers were clasping the small hand of the white boy, clasping it very gently.

"Thank you, Five Feathers," Jerry said, softly. "Yes, I shall study medicine. Father always said it was the noblest of all the professions, and I know to-night that it is."

A moment later, Jerry lay sleeping like a very little child. For a while the Indian watched him silently. Then, arising, he took off his buckskin shirt, folded it neatly, and, lifting the sleeping boy's head, arranged it as a pillow. Then, naked to the waist, he laid himself down outside near the fire—and he, too, slept.

Page 68

The third day a tiny speck loomed across the rim of sky and prairie. It grew larger with the hours—nearer, clearer. The Indian, shading his keen eyes with his palm, peered over the miles.

“Little brave,” he said, after some silent moments, “they are coming, one day sooner than we hoped. Your brother, he must have ride like the prairie wind. Yes, one, no, two buckboards—Hudson’s Bay horses. I know them, those horses.”

The boy sat up, staring into the distance. “I don’t know whether I’m glad or sorry,” he said. “Father will be driving one buckboard, I know, and I’d like to see him, but, oh, I don’t want to leave you, Five Feathers!”

“You not leave me, not for long,” said the Indian. “You come back some day, when you great doctor. Maybe you doctor my own people. I wait for that time.”

But the buckboards were spinning rapidly nearer, and nearer. Yes, there was his father, Factor MacIntyre, of the Hudson’s Bay, driving the first rig, but who was that beside him?—Billy? No, not Billy. “Oh, it’s *mother!*” fairly yelled Jerry. And the next moment he was in her arms.

“Couldn’t keep her away, simply couldn’t!” stormed Mr. MacIntyre. “No, sir, she had to come—one hundred and seventeen miles by the clock! Couldn’t trust me! Couldn’t trust Billy! Just *had* to come herself!” And the genial Factor stamped around the little camp, wringing Five Feathers’ hand, and watching with anxious look the pale face and thin fingers of his smallest son.

“Oh, father, mother, he’s been so good!” said Jerry, excitedly, nodding towards the Indian.

“Good? I should think so!” asserted Mr. MacIntyre. “Why, boy, do you know you would have been lame all your life if it hadn’t been for Five Feathers here? Best Indian in all the Hudson’s Bay country!”

“Yes, dearie; the best Indian in all the Hudson’s Bay country,” echoed Mrs. MacIntyre, with something like a tear in her voice.

“Bet your boots! Best Indian in all the Hudson’s Bay country!” re-echoed Billy, who had arrived, driving the other buckboard. But Five Feathers only sat silent. Then, looking directly at Billy, he said, “You ride day and night, too. You nearly kill that horse?”

“Yes, I nearly did,” admitted Billy.

“Good brother you. You my brother, too,” said the Indian, holding out his hand; and Billy fairly wrung that slender, brown hand—that hand, small and kind as a woman’s.

* * * * *

This all happened long ago, and last year Jerry MacIntyre graduated from McGill University in Montreal with full honors in medicine. He had three or four splendid offers to begin his medical career, but he refused them all, smilingly, genially, and to-day he is back there, devoting his life and skill to the tribe of Five Feathers, “best Indian in all the Hudson’s Bay country.”

Sons of Savages

Page 69

Life-Training of the Redskin Boy-child

The redskin boy-child who looks out from his little cradle-board on a world of forest through whose trails his baby feet are already being fitted to follow is not many hours old before careful hands wrap him about with gay-beaded bands that are strapped to the carved and colored back-board that will cause him to stand erect and upright when he is a grown warrior. His small feet are bound against a foot support so that they are exactly straight; that is to start his walk in life aright.

He is but an atom in the most renowned of the savage races known to history, a people that, according to the white man's standard, is uncivilized, uneducated, illiterate, and barbarous. Yet the upbringing of every Red Indian male child begins at his birth, and ends only when he has acquired the learning considered essential for the successful man to possess, and which has been predetermined through many ages by many wise ancestors.

His education is twofold, and always is imparted in "pairs" of subjects—that is, while he is being instructed in the requisites of fighting, hunting, food getting, and his national sports, he takes with each "subject" a very rigid training in etiquette, for it would be as great a disgrace for him to fail in manners of good breeding as to fail to take the war-path when he reaches the age of seventeen.

FIRST, COURAGE

The education of an Iroquois boy is begun before he can even speak. The first thing he is taught is courage—the primitive courage that must absolutely despise fear—and at the same time he is thoroughly grounded in the first immutable law of Indian etiquette, which is that under no conceivable conditions must one ever stare, as the Redskin races hold that staring marks the lowest level of ill-breeding.

SECOND, RELIGIOUS TRAINING

His second subject is religious training. While he is yet a baby in arms he is carried "pick-a-back" in his mother's blanket to the ancient dances and festivals, where he sees for the first time, and in his infant way participates in, the rites and rituals of the pagan faith, learning to revere the "Great Spirit," and to anticipate the happy hunting grounds that await him after death.

At the end of a long line of picturesque braves and warriors who circle gracefully in the worshipping dance, his mother carries him, her smooth, soft-footed, twisting step lulling him to sleep, for his tiny, copper-colored person, swinging to every curve of the dance, soon becomes an unconscious bit of babyhood. But the instant he learns to walk, he

learns, too, the religious dance-steps, Then he rises to the dignity of being allowed to slip his hand in that of his father and take his first important steps in the company of men.

Accompanying his religious training is the all-important etiquette of accepting food without comment. No Indian talks of food, or discusses it while taking it. He must neither commend nor condemn it, and a child who remarks upon the meals set before him, however simple the remark may be, instantly feels his disgrace in the sharpest reproof from his parents. It is one of the unforgivable crimes.

Page 70

TRICKS OF FOOD-GETTING

His third subject is to master the tricks of food-getting. His father, or more often his grandfather, takes him in hand at an early age, and minutely trains him in all the art and artifice of the great life-fight for food both for himself and for those who may in later years be dependent on him. He is drilled assiduously in hunting, fishing, trapping, in game calls, in wood and water lore; he learns to paddle with stealth, to step in silence, to conceal himself from the scent and sight of bird and beast, to be swift as a deer, keen as an eagle, alert as a fox.

He is admonished under no conditions, save in that of extreme hunger or in self-defence, to kill mating game, or, in fact, to kill at all save for food or to obtain furs for couch purposes. Wanton slaying of wild things is unknown among the uncivilized Red Indians. When they want occupation in sport or renown, they take the warpath against their fellow-kind, where killing will flaunt another eagle-feather in their crest, not simply another pair of antlers to decorate their tepee.

With this indispensable lesson in the essentials of living always comes the scarcely less momentous one of the utter unimportance of youth. He is untiringly disciplined in the veneration of age, whether it be in man or woman. He must listen with rapt attention to the opinions and advice of the older men. He must keep an absolute silence while they speak, must ever watch for opportunities to pay them deference.

AGE BEFORE LINEAGE

If he happen, fortunately, to be the son of a chief of ancient lineage, the fact that he is of blood royal will not excuse him entering a door before some aged "commoner." Age has more honor than all his patrician line of descent can give him. Those lowly born but richly endowed with years must walk before him; he is not permitted to remain seated if some old employee is standing even at work; his privilege of birth is as nothing compared with the honor of age, even in his father's hireling.

The fourth thing he must master is the thorough knowledge of medicinal roots and herbs—antidotes for snake-bite and poison—also the various charms and the elementary "science" of the medicine man, though the occupation of the latter must be inherited, and made in itself a life study. With this branch of drilling also is inculcated the precept of etiquette never to speak of or act slightly of another's opinion, and never to say the word "No," which he is taught to regard as a rude refusal. He may convey it by manner or action, but speak it—never.

Page 71

And during the years he is absorbing this education he is unceasingly instructed in every branch of warfare, of canoe-making, of fashioning arrows, paddles and snow-shoes. He studies the sign language, the history and legends of his nation; he familiarizes himself with the "archives" of wampum belts, learning to read them and to value the great treaties they sealed. He excels in the national sports of "lacrosse," "bowl and beans," and "snow snake," and when, finally, he goes forth to face his forest world he is equipped to obtain his own living with wisdom and skill, and starts life a brave, capable, well-educated gentleman, though some yet call him an uncivilized savage.

Jack o' Lantern

I

Everybody along the river knew old "Andy" Lavergne; for years he had been "the lamplighter," if such an office could exist in the rough backwoods settlement that bordered that treacherous stream in the timber country of northern Ontario. He had been a great, husky man in his time, who could swing an axe with the best of the lumbermen, but an accident in a log jam had twisted his sturdy legs and hips for life, and laid him off active service, and now he must cease to accompany the great gangs of choppers in the lumber camps, and do his best to earn a few honest dollars about the settlement and the sawmill. So the big-hearted mill hands paid him good money for doing many odd jobs, the most important of which was to keep a lantern lighted every dark night, both summer and winter, to warn them of the danger spot in the Wildcat river, that raced in its treacherous course between the mill and their shanty homes on the opposite shore.

This danger spot was a perfect snarl of jagged rocks, just below the surface of the black waters that eddied about in tiny whirlpools, deadly to any canoe in summer, and still more deadly in winter, for the ice never formed here as in the rest of the river. Only a thin, deceptive coating ever bridged that death hole, and the man who mistook it for solid ice would never live to cross that river again. So, on the high bank above this death trap old Andy lighted his lantern, year in and year out. Sometimes he was accompanied by his old grey horse, who followed him about like a dog. Sometimes little Jacky Moran, his young neighbor, went to help him on very stormy or windy nights. Sometimes both Jacky and the horse would go, and as a reward for his assistance old Andy would always lift the boy to the grey's back and let him ride home. Then one wet spring old Andy got rheumatism in his poor, twisted legs, and the first night he was unable to leave his shanty Jacky came whistling in at nightfall and offered to take the lantern up stream alone. Andy consented gratefully, and, with the horse at his heels, Jacky set out for the bank above the dangerous spot.

Page 72

"I believe, old Grey, it's the lantern you love as much as you love Andy," laughed the boy as he struck a match and sheltered its flame from the wind. "Here you are following me and the lantern just as if you belonged to us, or as if Andy were here. How's that?" But the old grey only stood watching the lamp-lighting. His long, pathetic face was very expressive, but, try as he would, he could not speak and tell the boy that he had learned to love him as well as Andy. So he only put his soft nose down to Jacky's shoulder, and in his own silent way coaxed the boy to mount and ride home, which Jacky promptly did, bursting into the old Frenchman's shanty with the news that the grey had followed the lantern.

"Don't you believe it, Jacky," chuckled Andy. "The grey loves the lantern, I know, but it's you he's followed. You see that horse knows a lot, and he knows that his old master is never likely to light that lantern again, and he wants you for his master now."

"Well, he may have me," smiled the boy. "We'll just light up together after this." Which they certainly did, for that was the beginning of the end. Andy could never hobble much further than his own door, and Jacky took upon his young shoulders the duties of both lamp-lighting and feeding and caring for his now constant companion, the grey.

"I see your Jacky is helping old Andy since he's been laid up," said Alick Duncan, the big foreman, some weeks later, as he paddled across the river with the boy's father.

"Oh, he likes Andy," replied Mr. Moran, "and he likes the old horse, and he likes the work, too. He feels important every time he lights that lantern to steer the mill hands off danger.

"Speaking of the horse," went on the big foreman, "they're short one up at the lumber camp. The boss sent down yesterday that we had to get him an extra horse by hook or crook. They've started hauling logs. It would be a great thing if Andy could sell that nag at a good figure. It would help him out. He's hard up for cash, I bet. I'll speak to him to-night about it."

At supper Tom Moran mentioned what a fine thing it was for Andy that there was an urgent demand for a horse at the lumber camp; that he could get twice the money for old Grey that the animal was worth. Mrs. Moran agreed that it would be a great help to old Andy, but Jacky's small face went white, he ceased his boyish chatter, and his little throat refused to swallow a mouthful of food.

As soon as he could, he escaped, slipped outside, and made for Andy's shanty as fast as his young legs could carry him. With small ceremony he flung open the door, to find the old Frenchman sitting in his barrel chair, a single tallow candle on the shelf above his head, his ever present pipe between his lips, and his lame leg stuck up on a bench before the tumbledown stove, where a good spruce fire crackled and burned. For the first time the extreme poverty of the place struck Jacky's senses. He realized instantly,

but for the first time, how much in need of money the poor old cripple must be, but, nevertheless, his voice shook as he exclaimed, "Oh, Andy, you won't sell old Grey? Oh, you won't, will you?"

Page 73

"Why not, youngster?" asked a deep voice from the gloom beyond the stove, and Jacky saw with a start that Alick Duncan was already there with his offer to buy.

"Because," began the boy, "because—well, because he helps us, Andy and me; he helps us light up at night." It was a lame excuse, and poor Jacky knew it.

"It appears to me Andy ain't doing much lighting up these days," went on the foreman. "And you know, kid, Andy's old and sick, and money don't come easy to him. If he gets one square meal of pork and beans a day, he's getting more than I think he does. The horse is no use to him now. He can't even pay for its keep when next winter comes. He can't use it, anyhow, and Andy needs the money."

But the boy had now recovered his balance.

"But timber hauling would kill old Grey. He wouldn't last any time at it; he's too old," he argued.

"That's so, sunny," said the foreman; "he sure can't last long at that work, but don't you see Andy will have his money, even if the horse does peg out?"

"But—but Grey will die," said the boy tremulously.

"Maybe," answered the foreman, "but Andy will have something to live on, and that is more important."

"But I'll help Andy," cried the boy enthusiastically. "I'm used to the lighting up now. I can do all the work. Can't the mill hands go on paying him just the same as ever? Can't they, Andy? I'll do the lamp-lighting for you, and we'll just keep old Grey. Won't you, Andy? Won't you?"

The boy was at Andy's shoulder, his thin young fingers clutched the old shirt-sleeve excitedly, his voice arose, high and shrill and earnest.

"Why, boy," said the old Frenchman, "I didn't know you cared so much. I don't want to sell Grey, and I *won't* sell him if you help me with my work for the mill hands."

Alick Duncan rose to his feet, his big, hearty laugh ringing out as Jacky seized his hand with the words, "There, Mr. Duncan, Andy *won't* sell Grey. He says so. You heard him."

The big foreman stooped, picked up the boy, and swung him on his shoulder as if he had been a kitten.

"All right, little Jack o' Lantern, do as you like. We mill hands will go on with Andy's pay, only you help him all you can—and maybe he'll keep the old grey—just for luck."

"I *know* it's for luck," laughed Jacky. "The grey knows so much. Why, Mr. Duncan, he knows *everything*; he knows as much as the mill hands."

"I dare say," said the big foreman, dryly. "If he didn't he wouldn't have even horse sense."

"But why do you call me that—'Jack o' Lantern'?" asked the boy from his perch on the big man's shoulder.

"Because I thought the name suited you," smiled the foreman. "I've often seen the little Jack o' Lantern hovering above the marshes and swales, a dancing, pretty light, moving about to warn woodsmen of danger spots, just as your lantern, Jacky, warns the rivermen of that nasty 'wildcat' place in the river."

Page 74

"But," said the boy, "dad has always told me that the Jack o' Lantern is a foolish light, that it deceives people, that it misleads them, that sometimes they follow it and then get swamped in the marshes."

"Yes, but folks know enough to *not* follow your lantern, boy," answered the foreman seriously. "Your light is a warning, not an invitation."

"Well, the warning light will always be there, as long as I have legs to carry it," assured Jacky, as the big foreman set him down on the floor. Then—"And when I fail, I'll just send the grey."

They all laughed then, but none of them knew that, weeks later, the boy's words would come true.

II

It was late in January, and the blackest night that the river had ever known. A furious gale drove down from the west and the very stars were shut in behind a gloomy sky. Little Jacky Moran trimmed his lantern, filled it with oil, whistled for Grey, and set forth as the black night was falling. The oncoming darkness seemed to outdo itself. Before he was half way up the river, night fell, and he found that he could see but a very few feet before him, although it was not yet half-past five o'clock. At six the men would leave the mill over the river, and, journeying afoot across the ice, would reach home in safety if the lantern were lighted, and if not, any or all of them might be plunged into the treacherous "Wild Cat," with no hope of ever reaching shore alive.

"He called me Jack o' Lantern," the boy said to himself. "It's a dancing, deceiving light, but he'll find to-night that I'll deceive nobody." And through the darkness the child plodded on. Behind him walked the stiff-kneed old horse, solemn-faced and faithful, following the lantern with stumbling gait, his soft nose, as ever, very near the boy's shoulder. The way seemed endless, and Jacky, with stooped and huddled shoulders, bent his head to the wind and forged on. Then, just as he was within fifty yards of the turn that led up to the danger spot, an unusually wild gust swept his cap from his head and sent it bounding off the narrow footpath. Boylike, he reached for it, and failing to recapture it, started in pursuit. In the darkness he did not see the little ledge of earth and rock that hung a few feet above a "dip" on the left side, and in his hurried chase he suddenly plunged forward, and was hurled abruptly to a level far below the footpath. He fell heavily, badly. One foot got twisted somehow, and as he landed he heard a faint sharp "crack" in the region of his shoe. Something seemed to grow numb right up to his knee. He tried to struggle to his feet, but dropped down into a wilted little heap. Then he realized with horror that he was unable to stand. For a moment he was bewildered with pain and the utter darkness, for in his fall the lantern had rolled with him, then gone out. The boy struck a match, and with but little difficulty

Page 75

lighted the lantern. It seemed strange that the gale had ceased so suddenly, until, in looking about, he saw that he was in a hollow, and the wind was roaring above his head. He was quite sheltered where he lay, but his brief gratitude for this gave way to horrified dismay when he discovered that the light, too, was sheltered—that the ledge of earth and rock arose between him and the river bank, that he could never reach the dreaded danger spot with his warning light, and, near to it though he was, the flame was completely obscured from the sight of anyone crossing the ice.

For a moment the situation overwhelmed him. He sat and shivered. The agony of his injured foot was now asserting itself above the first numbness, and the realization that he was failing to warn the mill hands, that he was only a Jack o' Lantern after all, seized on his young heart and brain like a torturing claw. Despair settled down on him, blacker, more terrible than the coming night. He fancied he could hear the mill hands crash through the death hole, and he called wildly, "Help! Oh, somebody help me!" all the time knowing that the shanties were too far away for anyone there to hear, and that the footpath above him was too lonely for any chance lumberman to be taking at this hour. No one ever passed that way but himself, and in the old days Andy and the grey—oh, he had not thought of the grey—where had the animal gone? Instantly he whistled, called, whistled again, and over the ledge above his head looked a long, serious face, with great solemn eyes, and a soft, warm nose. The very sight gave the boy courage, and at his next whistle the old horse carefully picked his way down the bank, and reaching down his long neck, felt Jacky's shoulder with his velvety muzzle.

"Oh, Grey," cried the boy, "you must help me. You must do something, oh, something, to help!" Then he made an attempt to stand, to get on the animal's back, but his poor foot gave out, and he huddled down to the ground again in pitiful, hopeless pain. The horse's nose touched his ear, starting him from a fast oncoming stupor. At the same instant the six o'clock whistle blew at the mill across the frozen river. In a few moments the men would be coming home, crossing the ice, perhaps to their death instead of to the warm supper awaiting them at their shanty homes. The thought of it all gripped Jacky's young heart with fear, but he was powerless to warn them. He could not take a single step, and he was rapidly becoming paralyzed with cold and pain. Once more the soft nose of the old horse touched his ear. With the nearness of the warm, friendly nose, his quick wit returned.

"Grey!" he almost shouted, "Grey-Boy, do you think *you* could take the lantern? Oh, Grey-Boy, help me think! I'm getting so numb and sleepy. Oh, couldn't *you* carry it for me?" With an effort the boy struggled to his knees, and slipping his arms about the neck of his old chum, he cried, "Oh, Grey, I saved you once from dying at the logging camp. They'd have killed you there. Save the mill hands now just for me, Grey, just for Jack o' Lantern, because I'm deceiving them at last."

Page 76

The warm, soft nose still snuggled against his ear. The horse seemed actually to understand. In a flash the boy determined to tie the lantern to the animal's neck. Then, in another flash, he realized that he had nothing with which to secure it there. The horse had not an inch of halter or tie line on him. An inspiration came to him like an answer to prayer, and within two seconds he acted upon it. Ripping off his coat, he flung it over the horse's neck, the sleeves hanging down beneath the animal's throat. Slipping one through the ring handle of the lantern, he knotted them together. The horse lifted his head, and the lantern swung clear and brilliant almost under the soft, warm nostrils.

"Get up there, old Grey! Get up!" shouted the boy desperately, "clicking" with his tongue the well-known sound to start a horse on the go. "Get up! And oh, Grey, go to the danger spot, nowhere else. The danger spot, quick! Get up!"

The animal turned, and slowly mounted the broken ledge of earth and rock. Jacky watched with strained, aching eyes until the light disappeared over the bluff. Then his agonized knees collapsed. His shoulders, with no warmth except the thin shirt-sleeves to cover them, began to sting, then ache, then grow numb. Once more he huddled into a limp little heap, and this time his eyes closed.

* * * * *

"Do you know, father, I'm anxious about Jacky," said Mrs. Moran, as they sat down to supper without the boy. "He's never come back since he started with the lantern, and it's such an awful night. I'm afraid something has happened to him."

"Why, nothing could have happened," answered Mr. Moran. "The lantern was burning at the 'death-hole' all right as we crossed the ice."

"Then why isn't Jacky home long ago?" asked Mrs. Moran. "He never goes to Andy's at this hour. He is always on time for supper. I don't like it, Tom, one bit. The night is too bad for him not to have come directly home. There, hear that wind." As she spoke the gale swept around the bend of the river, and the house rocked with the full force of the storm.

Tom Moran shoved back his chair, leaving his meal half finished. "That's so," said he, a little anxiously, as he got into his heavy coat. "I'll go up shore and see. Oh, there's Alick now, and 'Old Mack,'" as a thundering knock fell on the door. "They said they were coming over after supper for a talk with me." Then, as the door burst open, and the big foreman, accompanied by "Old Mack," shouldered their way into the room, Tom Moran added: "Say, boys, the kid ain't home, and his mother is getting nervous about him. Will you two fellows take a turn around the bend with me to hunt him up?"

“What!” yelled the big foreman. “Our little Jack o’ Lantern out in this blizzard? You better believe we’ll go with you, Tom. And what’s more, we’ll go right now. Hustle up, boys.” And Alick Duncan strode out again, with a frown of anxiety knitting his usually jovial face.

Page 77

"Lantern's there all right," he shouted, as they neared the bank above the danger spot. He was a few yards in advance of Jack's father and "Old Mack." Then suddenly he stood stock still, gave vent to a long, explosive whistle, and yelled, "Well, I'll be gin-busted! Look a' there, boys!" And following his astounded gaze, they saw, on the brink of the river, an old grey horse, with down-hanging head, his back to the gale, and about his neck a boy's coat, from the knotted sleeves of which was suspended a lighted lantern.

Tom Moran was at the animal's side instantly. "His mother was right," he cried. "Something has happened to Jacky." And he began searching about wildly.

"Now look here, Tom," said the big foreman, "keep your boots on, and take this thing easy. If that horse knows enough to stand there a-waiting for the boy, he knows enough to help us find him. We'll just pretend to lead him home, and see what he'll do." And relieving the horse of the lantern, he tied the little coat closer about the long throat, and, using it as a halter, induced the grey to follow him. Down the bank from the danger spot they went, round the bend to the footpath, along the trail for fifty yards. Then the horse stopped. "Come on here! Get up!" urged the big foreman, as he strained at the coat sleeve. But the horse stood perfectly still, and refused to be coaxed further. "I'll bet Jack o' Lantern is around here somewhere. Jack o'—oh, Jack o'!" he shouted, for Tom Moran's throat was choked. He could not call the boy's name.

"Jack o' Lantern—where are you?" reiterated Alick Duncan. But there was no reply.

Meanwhile "Old Mack" had been snooping around the hollows at one side of the trail, and Jacky's father was peering about the ledges opposite. Presently he stopped, leaned over, and with love-sharpened eyesight, saw a little, dark heap far below lying in the snow. "There's something here, boys," he called brokenly.

Alick Duncan sprang to the ledge, looked over, made a strange sound with his throat, and with an icy fear in his great heart, that never had known fear before, he laid his big hand on Tom Moran's shoulder and said, "Stay here, Tom. I'll go. It will be better for *me* to go." And slipping over the ledge, he dropped down beside the unconscious boy. In another minute he was rubbing the cold hands, rousing the dormant senses. Presently Jacky spoke, and with a shout of delight the big foreman lifted the boy in his huge arms, and, struggling up the uneven ledge, he shouted, "He's all O.K., Tom—just kind of laid out, but still in the fight."

With the familiar voice in his ears, Jacky's senses returned, for, lifting his head, he cried, "Oh, Mr. Duncan, did Grey-Boy take the lantern to the danger-spot?"

"Bet your boots he did, son," said Tom Moran, stretching down his arms to help the big foreman lift his burden. "We found him standing still and firm as a flag pole, with that light hoisted under his chin."

Page 78

"Thank goodness!" sighed the boy. "Oh, I was so afraid he'd go home with it, instead of to the river." Then, with a little gasp, "Mr. Duncan, I told you once Grey had as much sense as a man. He saved you."

"No, Jack o' Lantern," said the big foreman gently, as he wrapped his great coat around the half-frozen boy, "no, siree, it was you, and your quick wits, that did it. Old Grey got the lantern habit, but it would have done no good had you not had sense enough to sling the light around his neck; and you leaving yourself to freeze here without a coat—bless you, youngster! The mill hands and this big Scotchman won't forget *that* in a hurry."

And it was on faithful old Grey's back that the injured boy rode home—home to warm blankets, warm supper, and the warm love of his mother, but also to the knowledge that one of the smaller bones in his ankle had broken when he heard that snapping sound. But it did not take so long to mend, after all, and one day in the early spring the big foreman appeared, his shrewd eyes twinkling with fun, although he made the grave statement that Andy had at last consented to sell old Grey.

"It isn't true! It can't be true!" gasped Jacky. "Sell Grey-Boy after what he did to save the mill hands? Oh! I *can't* believe Andy would do such a thing." And his thin little face went white, and his poor foot dragged as he stood erect, as if to fight for the horse's rights.

"But Andy has sold him, nevertheless," grinned Alick Duncan, "sold him to me and the other mill hands, and we're going to give him away."

"Away?" cried the boy, with startled, agonized eyes.

"Yes, lad," answered the big foreman seriously; and placing his strong hand on Jacky's head, he added, "Give him away to the bravest little chap in the world—a chap we all call Jack o' Lantern."

For a moment the boy stood speechless, then held out his arms—for the old grey horse had come slowly up to the shanty, and with downbent head was laying his soft, warm muzzle against Jacky's ear.

The Barnardo Boy

The only thing that young Buckney could say to express his surprise at the wonderful stone buildings was "Blow me!" He had expected to find that the great Canadian city of Montreal would be just a few slab shacks, with forests on all sides, and painted Indians prowling, tomahawk in hand, in search of scalps. When he left the big Atlantic liner with twenty other raw English lads of his own street-bred sort, he thought he was saying good-bye to civilization forever. And here, all around him, arose the massive stone-built

city, teeming with life, with gayety, wealth, and poverty, carriages, horses, motor cars—why, it was just like London, after all! And once more “Buck” said, “Blow me!”

“What’s that he says, father?” asked a slender young lady who had accompanied her father, the great surgeon, to help him select a Barnardo boy to assist the stableman.

Page 79

"Oh, it's an English street expression," smiled the surgeon. "I expect he'll have dozens of queer sayings."

"Never mind," said the young lady; "he has a nice face, and his eyes lock terribly straight at one. I think we'll take him, father?"

Her voice rose in a question, but it took Buck just two seconds to know she need not have asked it. The great surgeon would have taken an elephant if she had expressed a liking for it.

"Keep on the right side of her and you'll stand in wid de old man," whispered the boy next to him.

"Don't yer t'ink I sees dat?" sneered Buck. "Yer must t'ink I lef' my h'yes in Lunnon." And the shrewd young street arab arose to his feet, touched his cap with his forefinger, and said:

"H'all right, sir; I 'opes I'll suit."

That was the beginning of it, yet, notwithstanding Buck had made up his mind that whatever happened he would *make* himself "suit," still he met with a serious discouragement the very next morning, when his unwilling ears overheard a conversation between the surgeon and the stableman. The latter was saying:

"I hope you will excuse me speaking, Doctor, but I think you've made a mistake getting this here green Barnardo boy to help with the horses. They never do know nothin', those English boys, and you can't teach 'em."

"Well," hesitated the doctor, "we'll have to give him a trial, I suppose. Miss Connie took a fancy to him."

"Oh, *Miss Connie*, was it?" repeated the stableman, in quite another tone. "Then that settles it, sir." And it did.

"So I owes dis 'ere 'ome to 'Miss Connie,' does I?" remarked Buck to himself. "Den if dis is so, I's good for payin' of her fer it." Only he pronounced "pay" "py."

But it was a long two years before the boy got any chance to "py" her for her kindness, and when the chance did come, he would have given his sturdy young life to avert it. By this time, much mixing with Canadians had blunted his London street-bred accent. To be sure he occasionally slipped an "h," or inserted one where it should not be, but he was fast swinging into line with the great young country he now called "home." He could eat Indian corn and maple syrup, he could skate, toboggan, and ply a paddle, he could handle a horse as well as Watkins, the stableman, who was heard on several occasions to remark that he could not get along without the boy.

In the holidays, when Miss Connie was home from school, Buck was frequently allowed to drive her, or sit in his cream and brown livery beside her while she drove herself. These were always great occasions, for no refined feminine being had ever come into his life before. If he ever had a mother—which he often doubted—he certainly had no recollection of her or her surroundings. To be sure the women about the “Home” in far-off England were kind and good, but this slim Canadian girl was so different. She looked like a flower, and he had never heard her speak a harsh, unlovely word in all those two years. Once as he stood at the carriage door, the rug over his arm, waiting for Miss Connie to descend the steps for her afternoon drive, an impudent little “Canuck” jeered at him in passing.

Page 80

"Hello, Hinglish!" he yelled. "We're a Barnardo boy, we h'is, fer all our swell brass buttons."

Buck winced. How he hated Watkins on the box to hear this everlasting taunt cast at him. But a sweet voice from the steps called:

"You are quite right, my boy. He is a Barnardo boy. I wish we were all as great and good as Dr. Barnardo. I am proud to have one of his boys in my household."

The young urchin shrank away, abashed, for it was Miss Connie's voice. Buck pulled himself together, touched his hat, and opened the carriage door. But the girl paused on the steps, and her voice was very sincere as she said: "I mean it, Buckney" (she always called him "Buckney"). "I am very proud to have you here."

Buck touched his hat. "Thank you, madam," was all he said, but his young heart sang with gratitude. Would he ever get the chance to show her how he valued her kindness, he wondered. And then—the chance came.

Buck was never a heavy sleeper; his boyhood had been too bedless for him to attach much importance to sleep now. Too often had the tip of a policeman's boot stirred him gently, as he lay curled up near an alley-way in London. Too often had rude kicks awakened him, when down in the "slums" he huddled, numb with cold and hunger. His ears had grown acute, his legs nimble in that dreadful, faraway life, and listening while he slept became second nature. Thus he sat bolt upright in his comfortable little bed above the carriage house when a soft creeping footstep stole up the gravel walk from the stables to the kitchen. The night was very warm, and the open window at his elbow was shutterless. In the dark he could see nothing at first, then he made out the figure of a man, crouching low, and creeping around the kitchen porch to the doctor's surgery window. Immediately afterwards a low, gentle, rasping sound fell on his ears. He had seen enough of crime in the old days to know the man was filing something. Should he awaken Watkins? What was the use? Watkins would probably jump up, exclaiming aloud. He always did when awakened suddenly. Perhaps, after all, he could alarm the family before the man got in. Then, to his amazement, someone opened the window from the *inside*. By this time Buck had got his "night-sight." The man inside was exactly like the man outside, and he had evidently effected an entrance into the house some time during the day when the maids were upstairs, and had probably concealed himself in the cellar. Both wore masks. Instantly Buck was out of bed, dragging on his trousers. Then, barefooted and shirtless, he slipped downstairs, slid the side door open enough to squeeze through, and peered out. All he could see was the last leg of a man disappearing through the window. They were both inside now. Buck knew every room, hall and door in that house, for every spring and fall he had helped the maids "clean house," taking up and laying carpets.

Page 81

The knowledge stood him in good stead now. What window upstairs would be open, he wondered. The bath-room, of course; it was small, but he could wriggle through it, he told himself, or he would break every bone in his body, at least, trying. All this time he was running and crouching along the shadow of the high stone wall, that, bordered with shrubs, made splendid "cover." He reached the kitchen, and, without waiting to think whether it would bear him or not, seized hold of the twisted vine trunks of the old Virginia creeper that partly covered the house from ground to roof. Fortunately they held, and up he went like a young squirrel, his bare toes clutching like claws in the tangle of the stems and twigs. He gained the roof, crawled rapidly along, and reached the bath-room window, only to find he could barely clutch the sill with the tips of his fingers. Standing on tiptoe, he got a little grip, then his bare toes and knees started to work; inch by inch up they went over the rough stone wall, while his hands slipped further and further over the sill, until they could seize the ledge on the inside. Twice his knees slid back, then his toes refused to clutch. They grew wet, and warm, and he knew the sickening slipping back was because of blood oozing from his skin. But he was in the bath-room now, and didn't care. Then, as he flung the door open, the whole downstairs hall was flooded with light, and a strange choking sound came from below. Then the doctor's voice, smothered but audible, begging, "Go back! Go back, Connie! Lock your door!"

"You say one word aloud and I'll fire!" said a low voice, and Buck reached the head of the stairs only to see Doctor Raymond lying half dressed on the floor, his hands tied behind him, and a grasp of strong, dirty fingers on his throat.

"Oh, you're killing him! You're killing my father!" cried Miss Connie, in a half scream, as, too frightened to move, she stood huddled back in a corner, gripping a large cloak about her.

Buck stared at the scene a fraction of a second. He could understand it all. The doctor had been alarmed and had gone downstairs to investigate. Miss Connie had been awakened and had followed her father, thinking probably that he was ill. All this flashed through the boy's mind as he flung out his weaponless hands in despair, but the gesture was the salvation of the household. His fingers touched something cold, hard, polished. It was a huge, heavy, brass bowl that held a fern. How often his strong young fingers had cleaned that bowl with powder and chamois skin, with never a thought that it would serve him well some time! Now he grasped it, and creeping noiselessly around the large, square "balcony" of the upstairs hall, he stood directly above the ruffian whose fingers yet clutched the doctor's throat.

"Catch that girl!" the other man was saying. "She'll scream! Catch her, I say, and gag her!"

Page 82

"Oh, my girl, my little girl! Leave her alone, you demons!" gasped the helpless doctor. But just as the fingers loosed their brutal grasp on the father's throat to reach for the frail, delicate flesh of the daughter's, straight as a carpenter's leaden plumb there crashed on to the top of the assailant's head a huge, polished brass bowl. The man fell, limp, senseless as a corpse. His confederate whirled on his heel, and fired his revolver twice rapidly above his head, just missing Buck.

Connie shrieked, and the next moment the big, unclean fingers had locked themselves about her throat, and she was forced to her knees, while a guttural voice said: "Scream, will you! Well, try it! *This* is what you get!"

For weeks Buck's ears rang with that awful, smothered cry of his young mistress, of the tortured voice of the doctor, helplessly choking, "Oh, my girl! My daughter!" But by this time Buck was three steps from the bottom, and the back of the burglar was toward him as he crouched over the struggling girl, choking the screams in her delicate throat. Like a vampire, Buck sprang from the third stair, landing on the man's back, his legs worked inside the man's elbows, pinioning the scoundrel's arms back like a trussed turkey, his arms went round the bull-like neck, and his tough young fingers closed on a sinewy throat. He clung to the creature's back like an octopus, while they rolled over and over, and the terrified girl struggled up, regaining her breath.

"Quick! quick! Miss Connie! The telephone! The police! Ring! Ring!" Buck managed to shout. Then, "Untie the doctor's hands and feet!"

But the burglar's arms were now gripping behind him, and digging, cruel fingers pierced Buck's flesh. But the boy never relaxed his octopus hold. The tighter the big nails clutched, the tighter his own boyish fingers stiffened on the man's throat.

An eternity seemed to elapse. He saw Miss Connie fly to the telephone, then her weak little hands struggled with the ropes on her father's wrists. But before she could begin to loose them, four gigantic men in blue uniforms were climbing in the open surgery window to encounter a sight not soon to be forgotten. The doctor, bound and bruised, lay on the floor; beside him, a man rapidly regaining consciousness and sitting up in a dazed condition; a young girl, with brutal red marks about her throat; and on the floor at her feet a man with a boy clinging to his back like a barnacle to a boat, his young arms and bare legs binding the fellow like ropes. It took those police officers but the twinkling of an eye to have the two burglars handcuffed and cowed at the point of their revolvers, and to hear the whole story of the rescued doctor.

"But who's this little duffer?" asked the inspector, gazing at Buck. "Why, look at his knees and feet! They're dripping blood!"

“Got that shinning up the creeper and the stone-wall into the bathroom,” said Buck, feeling terribly awkward to be seen in such a plight before Miss Connie. So he stammered out his explanation, from the moment he had awakened to this very instant.

Page 83

"Dropped the Damascus bowl on his head, did you?" gasped the doctor. Then, as he looked at Buck as if he saw him for the first time, he beheld his bleeding feet and torn knees. "Officers," said the great: surgeon, "you asked who he is. He's our boy! He's *my* boy! I never had a son of my own, but—but—Buckney goes to college next year, and he goes as my adopted son. This night has shown me what he's made of."

Then, for the first time in all that dreadful night, Miss Connie gave out. She sat weakly down, crying like a very little child. "Oh, Buckney!" she sobbed, "they told us not to take a Barnardo boy; that they were, half of them, just street arabs; that we—we couldn't trust them. So, sometimes I've been afraid to hope *you* were all right; and now you have probably saved my life."

"No 'probably' about it, Miss Connie," said the officer; "he undoubtedly has saved your life, and the doctor's too. But, come, child, don't cry; get to bed—there's a good little girl. You've had a bad night of it." Then, turning to his men, he commanded: "March those two choice specimens to the police station at once. Well, good-night, doctor! Good-night, Miss Connie." And looking at Buck he said, curiously, "Good-night, youngster! So you're a Barnardo boy, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Buck, lifting his chin a little. "I used to be ashamed of it, but—"

"You needn't be," said the officer. "It's not what a boy *was*, but what he *is*, that counts nowadays. Goodnight! I wish we had more Britishers like you."

Then the door closed and the tramp of the policemen and their prisoners died slowly away in the night.

The Broken String

Archie Anderson was lying on the lounge that was just hidden from the front room by a bend of the folding doors. He was utterly tired out, with that unreasonable weariness that comes from what most of his boy chums called "doing nothing." He had been standing still, practising for two hours steadily, and his throbbing head and weakening knees finally conquered his energy. He flung himself down among the pillows, his violin and bow on a nearby chair. Then a voice jarred on every nerve of his sensitive body; it was a lady's voice in the next room, and she was saying to his mother:

"And how is poor Archie to-day?"

"Poor Archie!" How he hated to be called "poor" Archie!

His mother's voice softened as she replied: "Oh, he's *pretty* well to-day; his head aches and he seems to be weak, but he has been practising all the morning."

“He must be a great care and anxiety to you,” said the caller.

Archie shuddered at the words.

“Only a sweet care,” said his mother. “I am always hoping he will outgrow his delicate health.”

Archie groaned. How horribly like a girl it was to be “delicate.”

Page 84

"I think," went on the caller, raspingly, "that a frail boy *is* a care. One depends so on one's sons to be a strength to one in old age; to help in their father's business, and things like that—unless, of course, one has *money*."

The harsh voice ceased, and Archie felt in his soul that the speaker was glancing meaningly about the bare little parlor of his father's house. He could have hugged his mother as he heard her say: "Oh, well, Trig and Dudley will help their father; and none of us grudge Archie his inability to help, or his music lessons either."

"I should think his violin and his books and lessons would be a great expense to you," proceeded the caller.

"Nothing is an expense that fills his life and helps him to forget he is shut away from the other boys and their jolly sports, just because he is not strong enough to participate in them," replied his mother, with a slight chill in her voice at her visitor's impertinence.

Presently the caller left, and Mrs. Anderson, slipping through the folding doors, saw Archie outstretched on the pillows. She bent over him with great concern; her eyes read every expression of his face, every attitude of his languid body.

"Archie, you didn't hear?" she asked, pleadingly.

"I'm afraid I did, motherette," he said, springing up with unusual spirit.

He stood before her, a head taller than herself, his thin form frail as a flower, his long, slim fingers twitching, his wonderful, wistful eyes and sensitive mouth revealing all the artist nature of a man of thirty, instead of a boy of fourteen. He was on the point of flaring out with indignation against the visitor, but his lack of physical strength seemed to crowd upon him just at that moment. He sank upon the lounge again, and with his face against Mrs. Anderson's arm, said: "Thank you, motherette, for fighting for me. Perhaps even with all this miserable ill-health of mine I can fight for you some day."

"Of course you will, dear," she replied cheerily. "Don't you mind what they say; you know 'Hock' always stands by you, and he's as good as your mother to fight for you."

"Dear old 'Hock!' Decent old 'Hock!'" he said admiringly. "He's the best boy in the world, but he is not *you*, motherette."

"There he is now!" said Mrs. Anderson, as a piercing whistle assailed the window, followed by a round, red face, a skinning sunburnt nose, and an assertive voice, saying, "I'll just come in this way, Arch." And a leg was flung over the window sill. "It's easier than goin' 'round by the door."

"Hock" prided himself on being a "sport," and he certainly looked one: thick-knit legs, sturdy ankles, a short, chunky neck, hands with a grip like a vise, a big, good-natured

dimpling mouth, eyes that were narrow and twinkling, muscles as hard as nails, and thirteen years old, but imagining himself eighteen. He had been christened “Albert Edward,” but fortune smiled upon him, making him the champion junior hockey player of the county, so the royal name was discarded with glee, and henceforth he was known far and wide as “Hock” McHenry.

Page 85

The friendship between Hock and Archie was the wonder of the town. Some people said, "Hock is so coarse and loud and slangy, I don't see how Archie Anderson can have anything to do with him." Others said: "Archie is so frail and sensitive, and so wrapped up in his music, how *can* Hock find anything in him that is jolly, and boyish, and congenial?" But Hock's people and Archie's people knew that one supplied what the other lacked. For so often this conversation between the two boys would be overheard. Archie's plaintive voice would say: "Oh, Hock, it is so good to have you around; you make me forget that I can't play hockey and football with the rest of the kids! You play it for me as well as for yourself. I'm such a dub; laid up sick half the time."

And Hock would frequently be heard to remark: "Say, Arch, do you know if it weren't for you I'd grow into a regular tough. You kind of keep me straight, and—oh, well, straight and all that!"

And so the odd friendship went on, Hock attending his school daily—the acknowledged leader of all the sports and mischief that existed; Archie getting to school about two days out of every five, yet managing through his hours of illness to mount week by week, month by month, up, up, up in his music.

"I won't always be an expense at home, and have dad keep me as if I were a girl," Archie would tell himself on his good strong days when he felt he had accomplished something with his violin. "I can feel the music growing right in my fingers. I feel I'll play to thousands yet—thousands of people and thousands of dollars." Then perhaps a fit of coughing would come on, and the boy would grow discouraged again, but only until Hock appeared on his daily round, and plumping his sturdy person into a chair would tell all the news, and finish with, "Say, Arch, fiddle for a fellow, won't you?"

And while Archie played, Hock would sit quietly looking out of the window, vowing to himself he would give up slang, and go to Sunday-school regularly, and not shoot craps any more behind the barn with boys his father had expressed a wish not to have around the place. In after years Hock knew what made him have these good impulses while he listened to Archie's playing. He knew that a great and beautiful art—the art of music—was inborn in his chum; that the wild, melancholy voice of the violin was bringing out the best in them both.

* * * * *

It was summer time. The little Canadian city where they lived, which stretched its length along the borders of the great lake, became a very popular resort for holiday makers, and many Southerners flocked to the two large hotels, seeking the cooler air of the North. Ball and tennis matches and regattas made the little city very gay, and the season was swinging at its height when one night Hock's burly voice heralded his legs through the window of the Anderson parlor. Evidently he was greatly

Page 86

excited, for he shouted at the top of his lungs that the east end factory was on fire, with a dozen operators cut off from the stairs and elevators, and that his father, who was foreman, was begging on all sides for volunteers to rescue the people from the top story. In the twinkling of an eye Hock was off again with crowds of running men and boys; the fire engines went clanging past with the rattle and roar of galloping horses and shouting men. Never had Archie Anderson felt his frailty as he felt it at this moment. The very news made him almost faint, but he started to run with the crowd until his shortening breath and incessant coughing compelled him to return home, where he flung himself down on the doorstep, burying his throbbing forehead in his hands and saying: "Oh! I'm no good! I can never hope to be a man! I'm not even a boy! I seem to myself like a baby!"

Late at night his father and brothers returned, all begrimed with soot and ashes. They had worked valiantly with the firemen and rescuers, saving life after life. But with all their courage and pluck they could not save big Tom Morris, who perished in the flames just because he insisted upon others and weaker ones being saved first.

For days the town was plunged in gloom. Everyone liked Tom Morris, and everyone's heart ached for his little widow and her three small children, left penniless. Then the only pleasant thing in connection with the disaster occurred. The kindly visitors at the summer hotels began getting up a huge benefit concert, the proceeds of which were to be presented to Mrs. Tom and her babies. Hock heard of it first—nothing ever escaped his lynx-like ears. Astride the window-sill he communicated his gossip to Archie something in this fashion:

"Say, Arch, they're going to have the best performance. Miss Van Alstine from New York is going to sing, and some long-haired fellow at one of the hotels is going to play the piano—they say he's great; and, oh! say, Arch, did you ever hear of a great fiddler named Ventnor?"

"Only the world-renowned Ventnor," said Archie. "Why do you ask, Hock?"

"Well, he's the one! 'Greatest on earth,' they say. Gets thousands of dollars every night he fiddles. He's staying at the Lake View Hotel, and—"

"Ventnor *here!*" fairly screamed Archie. "The *great* Ventnor! Oh, Hock, is he going to play?"

"Yes, he is!" said Hock, smacking his lips together with glee that something had at last taken Archie out of himself and made him forget his frailty, if only for a moment, "Yes, siree," continued Hock. "He's going to play three times. Heard him say so myself when they asked him on the beach this morning. He speaks the tanglest-legged English you

ever heard. He said, 'Me, I holiday; me, I not blay when I holiday.' Then a batch of ladies tried to explain things to him, and when his Russian-Italian-French brain got around things, he up with his hands and ran them through his long grey hair and wagged his head, and said, 'Me, I understand! Me, I don't blay money when I holiday, but me, I blay for unfortunate beeples. I blay dree times.' Oh, it was funny, Arch!"

Page 87

"Funny!" said Archie. "Funny! Hock, I'll knock you down if you call Ventnor 'funny.' Why, it's the most beautiful thing in the world for him to do. Oh, Hock! and to think that at last I will hear him!"

"I never heard tell of him before," observed Hock, with evident pride in his ignorance.

"There's no greater violinist in the world, Hock," replied Archie with enthusiasm. His cheeks were scarlet, his eyes sparkling, his thin hands trembling with excitement.

"Well, I'm not keen on hearing anyone fiddle any better than you do," Hock answered soberly. "Whenever you fiddle you just give me the jim-jams, with the creeps going up and down my back; and what's worse, I always have to blow my nose when you get through."

"What a good chap you are, Hock! You make me believe in myself. Perhaps I really will amount to something some day," replied Archie, warmly.

"Betcherlife!" said the sturdy one. "Well, so-long! I'm glad you'll hear the big violin player, Arch, if you really have been wanting to."

Wanting to! Archie Anderson had longed to hear Ventnor ever since he first drew a bow across the strings. He could hardly wait until the night of the great concert. Owing to the extreme heat of the summer he had been taking his lessons late in the evening, but on this eventful night his teacher, himself anxious to go, told Archie to come at seven o'clock; he could then give him a full hour, and the lesson would be over in plenty of time for them both to attend the concert at half-past eight. The lesson was trying and the excitement was beginning to tell on the boy, so, without returning home, he went straight to the hall, his violin case tucked under his arm. Purposely he had engaged a seat in the very first row; he wanted to watch the great master's marvellous fingers, as well as drink in the music they made. Even at eight o'clock the hall was so packed that he could hardly get through the aisles. The excellence of the programme, as well as the charitable object, had drawn out the entire town, and Archie took his seat fearful that the overpowering summer heat and crowded hall would be his undoing. He did not even hear the opening piano solo by the "long-haired fellow," as Hock had called him, nor did he rhapsodize over handsome Miss Van Alstine, whose wonderful gown and thrilling voice captured the audience. It was only when a slender, dark, elderly man stepped down to the footlights with a violin in his long, thin hands that Archie sat bolt upright, his eyes blazing with excitement, his breath catching in his throat.

The great man's face was fine as an engraving, with a melancholy mouth, and eyes that burned like black fires. He stood a brief second, gave his head, crowned with long, grey hair, a quick, nervous toss, and drew his bow across the strings softly, sweetly, with a heart-breaking sound that fell on his listeners like the sob of a thousand winds. For five minutes he held them spellbound. It was only when he half smiled and stepped into the

stage wings that they realized that it was over. Then with one accord the entire audience broke into a storm of applause—all but Archie, who sat with locked fingers and tense face; for the life of him he could not move a single muscle—he was simply paralyzed with pleasure; at last he had listened to *music*!

Page 88

It was nearing the end of the programme, and Ventnor had stepped forth to play his last number. It was a wild, eerie Hungarian air, that wailed and whispered like a lost child, then mounted up, up, louder, louder, a perfect hurricane of melody, when—suddenly a sharp crack like a pistol shot cut the air. The music ceased—one of the violin strings had snapped. At another time the great man would have finished the number on the three remaining strings, but the heat, the lax practice of a holiday season—something, or perhaps everything combined, for the instant overcame him. He stood like an awkward child, gazing down at the trailing, useless string.

Instantly, Archie's sensitive brain grasped the whole situation. Ventnor's business manager was not with him; he had not brought a second violin. Like a flash Archie whipped his own out of its case. He had just come from his lesson; it was in perfect tune. Before the shy, frail boy knew what he was actually doing he was beside the footlights, handing his own violin up to the great master, whose wonderful eyes gazed down into the small, pale face, and whose hand immediately reached out, grasping the poor, cheap little fiddle that Archie had learned his scales on. The audience broke into applause, but with a single glance Ventnor stilled them, and dashed straight into the melody precisely where he had left off.

Archie could hardly believe his ears. Was *that* his old thirty-dollar fiddle? That marvellous thing that murmured, and wept, and laughed under the master hand! Oh! the voice of it! The voice of it!

They would not let Ventnor go when he smiled himself off the stage. They called and shouted, "Encore!" "Encore!" until he returned to respond—respond, not with his own priceless instrument, but with Archie's, and with a grace and kindness that only a great man possesses. He played a good-night lullaby on the boy's cheap little violin, and, moreover, played it as he never had before. Archie remembered afterwards that he had presence of mind enough to get on his feet when they all sang "God Save the King," but it really seemed a dream that Ventnor was shaking hands with him and saying, "I t'ank you, me; I t'ank you. You save me great awkwardness." And then, before he knew it, he had promised to go to the hotel the next day and play for Ventnor.

All the way home he was thinking, "Fancy it!—I, Archie Anderson, asked to play before Ventnor!" Then came the fuss and the delight of the people at home over his good fortune, but he soon slipped away to bed, exhausted with the evening's events. His mother, coming into the room later to say good-night, saw that close to his bed, on a table where he could reach out and touch it during the night, lay his violin.

"Motherette," he smiled happily, "I feel that it is consecrated."

"Keep it so, little lad of mine. Keep both your music and your violin consecrated."

Page 89

* * * * *

Never had Archie played so well, for all his shyness and nervousness. He seemed to gather something of the great man's soul as he played before him at the hotel the following day.

Ventnor became greatly excited. "Boy, boy!" he cried, "you have a great music in you! You must have study and work, like what is it you Canadians say?—like Sam Hill!"

"Yes," said Archie, quietly; "rainy days and east wind days, when I coughed and could not go to school, I worked, and—well, I just worked."

"Me, I should t'ink you did! Why, boy, I will make you great. I will teach you all this summer."

"I'm afraid father can't afford that," faltered Archie.

"Me, I tell you I holiday now. I take no money in my holiday. I teach you because I like you, me," replied the master, irritably.

"But I can never repay you," answered Archie.

"Me, I will give to the world a great musician; it is you! That's repay enough for me—the satisfaction of making one great violinist. That's repay."

And so it all came about. Day after day Ventnor taught, trained and encouraged Archie Anderson. Day after day the boy drew greater music from the heart of his fiddle. He seemed to stride ahead under the power of the master; and as for Ventnor, he seemed beside himself with joy at what he called his "find." They grew to be friends. Archie confided his great discouragement of ill-health, his inability to attend school.

"Me, I fix all that," answered Ventnor. "Me, I go see to-night your parents. I talk to them." And he did, but his "talk" amazed even the boy. He wanted Archie to go with him to California, where his autumn season began. He wanted to adopt him, to take him away for two years. He gesticulated, and raised his eyebrows, and talked down every objection they had.

"I tell you I want him. I make a virtuoso of him. He is *my* boy. I discover him. He's good boy; he work, work, work. Never do I see a boy work like dat. He is in earnest. Dat is de greatest t'ing a boy can have, to be earnest. It make him a great, good man. He's not selfish either. He not t'ink of himself, only other beeples. I meet with misfortune. I break my string. He lend me his violin. Me, I'm selfish. I don't lend my violin to not a person. No, not even the King of England. Den, too, Archie, his throat and lungs, and his physique, it is not strong, not robust. I take him hot country, warm California. He get strong."

This last argument was too much for Archie's family. They yielded, and when Ventnor left for the West the boy went with him. He never missed a week writing home or to "Hock," and at the end of two years he returned. In his pocket was a signed contract as "first violin" in the finest orchestra of a great Southern city. He had left his cough with his short trousers in California, and had outgrown as much of his frailness as a boy of his temperament ever can. The day he left to fill his engagements the lady called who used to speak of him as "poor Archie, he's such an expense to his parents," and sat talking to Mrs. Anderson in the little parlor. Trig had just secured a "situation," and the caller was asking about it.

Page 90

"Yes," replied Mrs. Anderson, "Trig has done very well. He gets six dollars a week now, and Dudley, you know, gets ten." Then with pardonable asperity she added:

"Archie is doing a little better, however; he's getting seventy-five dollars a week to start on. He has already paid his father back every copper spent on his tuition."

"*Archie! Seventy-five dollars a week!* Why, he is hardly seventeen! How ever did he do it?" exclaimed the visitor.

"Hock, dear loyal old Hock, says it's because Archie is the very best boy in the world," replied Mrs. Anderson, laughingly, "but I say it was the result of a broken string."

Maurice of His Majesty's Mails

Old Maurice Delorme boasted the blood of many nations; his "bulldog" grit came to him from an English sea-captain, a bluff, genial old tar whom he could recall as being his "grand-daddy" sixty years ago; his gay, rollicking love of laughter and song came to him through his half French father; his love of wood and water lore, his endurance, his gift of strategy, were his birthright directly from his Red Indian mother; consequently there was but one place in the world where such a trinity of nationalities could be fostered in one man, but one place where that man could breathe and be happy, and that place was amid the struggling heights and the yawning canyons of the Rocky Mountains.

Years before Canada had constructed her world-famous transcontinental railroad, which now stretches its belt of steel from Atlantic to Pacific, Maurice Delorme set out for the golden West, working his way across the vast Canadian half of the American continent. He had done everything for a living—that is, everything that was honorable, for his British-French-Indian blood was the blood of honest forefathers, and he prided himself that he could directly and bravely look into the eyes of any man living; for, after all, does not dishonesty make the eyes shift and the heart cowardly?

He had trapped for fur-bearing animals on the North Shores; he had twice fought the rebels at the Red River; he had freighted many and many a "prairie schooner" from the Assiniboine to the Saskatchewan; and then, one glorious morning in July, when the hot yellow sun poured its wealth of heat and light into the velvety plains of Alberta, Maurice descried at the very edge of the western horizon a far-off speck of shining white, apparently not larger than a single lump of sugar. As day followed day, and he traversed mile upon mile, more sugar lumps were visible; and, below their whiteness, the grayish distances grew into mountain shapes. Then he realized that at last he beheld the inimitable glory of the Rockies that swept in snow-tipped grandeur from south to north.

Page 91

Then followed the years when he, his wife and a little Maurice lived in the fastnesses of those mighty ranges; when he learned to know and follow the trail of the mountain goat; when the rugged passes grew familiar to him as the little village where he had been born in Quebec; when the countless forests of Douglas fir held no mysteries and no fears for him; and, because he had learned these things, because he was brave and courageous, because his life had been clean and honest, he was selected to carry His Majesty's mails from a primitive "landing" on one of the Kootenay Lakes to the great gold mines, forty miles into the interior, and over one of the wildest, loneliest mountain trails in all British Columbia.

Then it was that, once a month, when the mail came in by the tiny steamer, Maurice Delorme would harness up his six tough little mountain-climbing horses, put on his cartridge belt, tuck a formidable revolver into his hip pocket and a good gun beneath the seat of the wagon, toss in the bags of mail and the express packages, say a laughing good-bye to Mrs. Delorme and little Maurice, and "hit the trail" for the gold mines. How he hated to leave those two helpless ones alone in the vast, uninhabited surroundings! But Mrs. Delorme had the fearless courage and self-reliance of the women of the North, and little Maurice was yearly growing, growing, growing. Now he was ten, now twelve, now fourteen—a sturdy young mountaineer, with the sinews of an athlete, and a store of learning, not from books, for he had never known a school, but from the simple teaching of his parents and the unlimited knowledge of woodcraft, of the habits of wild things, of mountain peaks, of plants, of animals, insects and birds, and of the incessant hunt for food that must always be when one lives beyond the pale of civilized markets.

* * * * *

And then one day, when little Maurice was about fifteen years old, his father staggered into their pretty log home, bleeding, crushed and dazed. The fate of the mountaineer had met him, for, during one of those sudden tempests that sweep through the canyons, a wind-riven tree had hurled its length down across the trail, its rotting heart and decaying branches falling—providentially with broken force—sparing the galloping horses and only injuring the driver—for how he escaped death was beyond human explanation.

Little Maurice was then the man of the house. He helped his brave mother dress the sufferer's wounds, he cared for the horses, he provided wood and water, going about whistling softly to himself and trying to shut his eyes to the fact that the food was growing less and less daily, and that the mail day was drawing nearer and nearer. Of course the steamer would bring flour and bacon and tea but it would also bring the mail and express to be transported to the gold mines. His father would never be well enough to drive the mails up that jagged mountain trail; and, worse than that, his father must have

Page 92

fresh meat broth at once. Little Maurice went into the sick-room, and standing beside the bed looked carefully into the face of old Maurice. The eyes were feverish, the forehead puckered with pain, the hands hot and growing thin. Then he turned away, followed his mother outside, and, after a brief talk with her, he reached up for his father's gun, took the stock of ammunition and dry biscuits, whistled for his dog, and, a moment later, was swallowed up in the forest.

The long day slipped by; hour after hour Mrs. Delorme would go to the door, shade her eyes with her hand, and look keenly up the mountain slopes, with their wilderness of pines. Once she saw a faint, blue puff of smoke, and her quick ear caught the sharp crack of a far-off rifle. Then all was silent for hours. The warm September sun had dropped behind the western peaks, and the canyons were purpling with oncoming twilight, when two quick successive shots broke the evening stillness, and echoed like a salute of twenty-one guns far down the valley. Mrs. Delorme ran once again to the door. The shots could not have been five hundred yards distant, for down through the firs came Royal, the magnificent hound, whining and grinning and licking his mouth with delight, and, behind him, Maurice, shouting that he had killed a deer, and was hungry enough to eat half of it himself.

"And, mother," he cried, "I could have got the game at noon to-day, but Royal and I have been hours and hours closing in on him, getting him into the runway, so that, when I did drop him, it would be near home, for I could never pack his carcass all that way. He must weigh two hundred and fifty pounds. Oh, but he's a fat one. And here are some mountain grouse Roy and I got. Daddy will have all the broth he can drink, and you and old Roy here and I will have some venison steaks for supper!"

So, breathless and proud and excited, Maurice chattered on, preparing a huge knife to quarter the deer, the more easily to pack it home.

There was great rejoicing in the log shack that night. Old Maurice swallowed his bowl of hot grouse soup with relish, and clasped his son's hand with the firm grip one man gives to another. The anxious lines left Mrs. Delorme's face, as she laughed and praised young Maurice's prowess as a bread-winner. Royal stretched his long, lithe legs, yawning audibly with weariness and content as he lay beside the stove sniffing the appetizing smells of broiling steaks, knowing well his share would be generous after his long and faithful hunt and obedience to his young master. And so the little mountain home was well supplied with fresh meat, hot soups, smoked venison hams and dried flitches, until the day of fresh supplies, when the primitive steamer tooted its shrill whistle far down the lake, and Mrs. Delorme, young Maurice and Royal all went down to greet the first fellow-beings they had seen for a month, and to receive and care for seven bags of His Majesty's mails, bound for the distant gold mines.

Page 93

"Why seven bags?" asked Mrs. Delorme of the captain. "We never get more than six."

"The extra is a large consignment of registered mail, madam," he replied. "Big money for the mines, they tell me. You want to keep an eye on that extra bag. Old Maurice doesn't want to lose that."

Then he was told the story of the old driver's accident, and forthwith climbed the steep trail from the landing to the shack to see how things really were. He saw at a glance that Delorme would not be about for some weeks to come; so, after an encouraging word and a kindly good-bye, the captain turned, as he left the door, and, slapping young Maurice on the shoulder in his bluff, hearty way, said:

"Well, kid, I guess you'll have to carry the mails this time. Start good and early tomorrow. I'm a day late bringing them, as it is. The managers of the mines are not the waiting sort, and there's money—money that they need—in that extra bag. Better take a gun with you, boy, and keep a sharp lookout for that registered stuff—mind!"

"Yes, captain," answered young Maurice, very quietly. "I'll land the mail at the mines all right."

And, a few minutes later, the departing whistle of the little steamer was heard far down the lake, as night fell softly and silently on the solitary little mountain home of the Delormes.

* * * * *

In the grey dawn of the next morning Maurice was astir, his horses were being well fed, his mail bags packed securely, his gun looked over sharply. Then came the savory smells of bacon and toast for breakfast, the hurried good-byes, the long, persistent whistle for Royal, the deer hound, his constant chum in all things, then the whizzing crack of the young driver's "blacksnake" whip, a bunching together of the four horses' sturdy little hoofs, a spring forward, and the "mountain mail" was away—away up the yawning canyon, where the peaks lifted on every side, where the black forests crowded out the glorious sunrise, away up the wild gorge, where human foot rarely fell and only the wild things prowled from starlight to daylight the long years through; where the trail wound up and up the steep, losing itself in the clouds which hung like great festoons of cobwebs half-high against the snow line. In all that vast world Maurice drove on utterly alone, save for the pleasant companionship of his four galloping horses and the cheering presence of Royal, who panted at the rear wheels of the mail coach, and wagged his tail in a frenzy of delight whenever his human friend spoke to him. The climb was so precipitous that it was hours before he could reach the summit, and he was yet some miles from being half way when his well-trained eye caught indications of coming disaster. A thousand trivial things announced that a mountain storm was brewing; the clouds trailed themselves into long, leaden ribbons, then swirled in circles

like whirlpools. The huge Douglas firs began to murmur, then whisper, then growl. The sky grew thick and reddish, the gleaming, snow-clad peaks disappeared.

Page 94

Maurice took in the situation at once. With the instinct of a veteran mail carrier, his first care was to roll his mail bags in a rubber sheet, while the registered sack, doubly protected, he never allowed for a moment to leave its station beneath his knees under the seat. These simple precautions were barely completed before the storm was upon him. A blinding flash set his horses on edge, their sensitive nerves quivering in every flank. Maurice gathered the lines firmly, seized his “blacksnake,” and, with a low whistle, urged his animals, that bounded forward, snorting with fear as a crack of thunder followed, booming down the gorges with deafening echoes. In another moment the whole forest seemed alive. The giant pines whipped and swayed together, their supple tips bending and beaten with the fury of the tempest. Above the wild voices of the hurricane came the frequent crash of falling timber; but, through it all, the boy drove on without thought of himself or of shelter, and through it all the splendid animals kept the trail, responding as only the horse can respond to the touch of a guiding rein or the sound of the mountaineer’s whistle. But the end came for Maurice, when, upon rounding an abrupt steep, his four animals reared in terror, then seemed to crouch back upon their haunches. The rude log bridge they should have dashed across was gone—in its place gaped a huge fissure, its throat choked with wreckage of trestle and planking.

The unexpected halt nearly pitched Maurice from the wagon, but he steadied first his nerve, then his hands, then his eyes. Why had the bridge gone down, was his first thought. The storm was of far too brief duration to have done the mischief. Then those keen young eyes of his saw beyond the tempest and the ruined bridge. They saw about the useless supports and wooden props fresh chips from a recent axe. In a second his brain grasped the fact that the bridge had been cut away on purpose. His thoughts flew forward—for what purpose was it destroyed? Like a dream seemed to come the captain’s voice in his ears: “Better take a gun with you, boy, and keep a sharp lookout for that registered stuff—mind!” And he heard himself reply, “I’ll land the mail at the mines all right.”

“And I’ll do it, too!” he said, aloud. Then, above the hoarse voices of the storm, he heard a low, long, penetrating whistle. Quick as a flash the boy realized his position. He snatched the registered mail bag from between his knees. “Royal! Royal! Good dog!” he called, softly, and the poor, wet, storm-beaten creature came instantly, reaching pathetically toward his young master, his forefeet pawing the wagon wheels, his fine, keen nose sniffing at the mail sack upheld by Maurice.

Page 95

"Royal, you must watch!" said the boy. "Watch, Royal, watch!" Then, with a strengthful fling of his arm, he hurled the precious bag of registered mail over the rim of the precipice, far down into the canyon, two hundred feet below. For an instant the dog stood rigid. Then, like the needle to the north, he turned, held his sensitive head high in the air for a moment, sniffed audibly and was gone. Then again came that low, long whistle. The horses' ears went erect, and Maurice sat silent, grasping the reins and peering ahead through the now lessening rain. But, with all his young courage, his heart weakened when a voice spoke directly behind him. It said:

"Who are you?"

He turned and faced three men, and, looking directly into the eyes of the roughest-seeming one of the trio, he replied, quietly:

"I think you know who I am."

"Humph! Cool, I must say!" answered the first speaker. "Well, perhaps we can warm you up a bit; but maybe you can save us some trouble by telling us where old Delorme is."

"At home," said Maurice.

"And you've brought the mail in place of Delorme, I suppose? Well, so much the better for us. I'll trouble you to hand me out that bag of registered stuff."

The man ceased speaking, his hand on the rim of the front wheel.

"I have no registered stuff," the boy answered, truthfully. "Just six common mail bags. Do you wish them? As I am only one boy against three men, I suppose there is not much use resisting." Maurice's lip curled in a half sneer, and his eyes never left the big bully's face.

"A lie won't work this time, young fellow!" the man threatened. "Boys, go through that wagon! go over every inch of it now; you'll find the stuff all right."

The other two men emptied the entire load into the trail, then turned and stared at their leader.

"This is a bluff! Rip open those bags!" he growled. And the next moment the contents of the six bags were sprawling in the mud. They contained nothing but ordinary letters and newspapers.

"Sold!" blurted out the man. "We might have known that any yarn 'Saturday Jim' told us would be a lie. He couldn't give a man a straight tip to save his life! Come on, boys! There's nothing doing this trip!" And, swinging about, he turned up an unbroken trail that

opened on some hidden pass to the “front.” His two pals followed at his heels, muttering sullenly over their ill success.

“No,” said Maurice to himself. “You’re quite right, gentlemen! There’s nothing doing this trip!” But, aloud, he only spoke gently to his wearied horses as he unhitched and secured them to the rear of the wagon, gathered the scattered mail, and then scanned the sky narrowly. The storm was over, but the firs still thrashed their tops in the wind, the clouds still trailed and circled about the mountain summit. For a full hour Maurice sat quietly and thought things. What was to be

Page 96

done? The bridge was gone, the registered mail at the bottom of the canyon, and the day growing shorter every moment. Only one course lay before him. (He would not consider, even for a second, that any way lay open to him behind.) He must get that mail to the mines, or he could never look his father in the face again. He walked cautiously to the brink of the precipice and looked over. It was very steep. Nothing was visible but broken rock, boulders and bracken. No sign of either Royal or the mail bag; but he knew that somewhere, far below, the dog was keeping watch; that his four wise, steady feet had unerringly taken him where his animal instinct had dictated; and Maurice argued that, where his four feet could go, his two could follow. He must recover the bag, select his fleetest horse, and ride bareback on to the mines.

The descent was a long, rough, dangerous business, but Maurice had learned many a climbing trick from the habits of the mountain goat, and at last he stood at the canyon's bottom, a tired, lonely but courageous bit of boyhood, ready to suffer and dare anything so long as he could prove himself worthy of the trust that his father had placed in his strong young hands.

He stood for a moment, awed by the wonder of the granite walls that rose like a vast fortress, towering above him, silent and motionless. Then he gave one clear whistle, then listened. Almost within stone's throw came the response the half-sad, wholly eager whine of a dog. Maurice was beside him in a twinkling, patting and hugging the beautiful animal, who lay, with shining eyes and wagging tail, his forepaws resting on the coarse canvas which bore, woven redly into its warp and woof, the two words: "Canada Mail."

What a meeting it was! Boy and dog, each with a worthy trust, worthily kept. But it was one, two, three hours before Maurice, footsore, exhausted, and with bleeding fingers, followed by Royal, panting and thirsty, regained the trail where the horses stood, ready for the onward gallop, three of them failing to understand why they were to be left in the lonely forest, while the fourth was quickly bridled, packed with the mail sacks and Maurice, and told to "be careful now!" as he picked his way down and around the bridgeless gorge and "hit the trail" on the opposite side.

It was very late that night when the men at the mines heard the even gallop of an approaching horse. Many of the miners had gone to bed grumbling and threatening when no mail had arrived and no wages were paid. The manager and his assistants were still up, however, perplexed and worried that, for the first time, old Maurice Delorme had failed to reach the camp with the company's money bags. But up the rough makeshift of a road came those galloping hoofs, halting before the primitive post office, while the crowd gathered and welcomed a strange trio. The manager himself lifted poor, stiff, tired "Little" Maurice from the back of an equally stiff, tired mountain pony, while a hot, hungry hound whined about, trying to tell the whole story in his

wonderful dog fashion; but, when they did hear the real story from Maurice, there was a momentary silence, then a rough old miner fairly shouted, “Well, by the Great Horn Spoon, he’s old Maurice Delorme’s son all right!” Then came—cheers!

Page 97

The Whistling Swans

For several evenings early in October the North Street boys had been gathering at Benson's to try and organize a club, but the difficulty seemed to be to decide upon what kind of a club would be most interesting. The ball season would soon be over, the long winter would soon be on them, and things wore a pretty flat outlook, unless they could arrange some interesting diversion for that string of dull days, only broken by Christmas holidays. The West Ward fellows had a Checker Club, the Third Form fellows had a Puzzle Club, the Collegiates had a Canadian Literature Club; even the Mill boys down on the Flats had a Captain Kidd Club, proving themselves at times bandits quite worthy the club's name. Only the North Street boys seemed "out of it," but from the way they talked and shouted and wrangled at these preliminary meetings it looked as if they certainly intended to "come in" out of their isolation. But there had been five meetings without any decision having been arrived at. Every boy of the ten present seemed to want a different sort of club. The things that were suggested would have amazed the members of the various other clubs could they have heard them.

Then, one night when the din and confusion were at fever heat, the door suddenly opened and in walked Benson's father.

"Why, what's all this babel?" he exclaimed, as silence fell on the crowd and the boys got to their feet meekly to greet him with polite "good-evenings." "I never heard such a parrot-and-monkey, Kilkenny-cat outfit in all my life! What's up, fellows?"

Benson's father was generally acknowledged to be a "comedian." No one ever saw him in a temper, or heard him speak a sharp word. He had a droll, woebegone face that never smiled, but a face everybody—from the mayor to the poorest mill hand—loved and respected. How often Benson had come in from school, ill-tempered and sour-visaged at something that had gone wrong in the class-room, only to have that droll face of his father's and some equally droll remark upset all his dignity and indignation into laughter and consequent good nature.

"One at a time, boys, just one at a time, or I shall have bustificated eardrums! What is it all about?"

Then they told him, but, it must be confessed, not one at a time.

"A club, eh?" he questioned, straddling a chair and leaning his arms on the back. "What kind of a club, pleasure club, improvement club, sporting club, what?"

"That's the trouble; we can't hit on it!" they chorused.

For a moment he sat silent, his round, childish eyes surveying the world that hung on his very first words.

Page 98

"I saw a queer thing as I came up the street to-night", he began, seemingly having forgotten the subject in hand. "A dray-horse was standing before the mill gates, and frisking about its heels was a dandy little cocker spaniel, prettiest little dog you ever saw. The horse got tired leaning on one leg, I guess, for he shifted his position, and, in bringing down his left hind leg, he just pinned the little cocker's foot to the ground with his big hoof. Cocker yelled. Worst row I ever heard—until I came into this room. But what do you suppose Mr. Horse did? Just lifted gently his left fore-hoof, but the squealing did not stop. Then he lifted his right fore-hoof; still the squealing went on. 'Thinks I,' said the horse to himself, 'it must be my right hind-hoof,' so he lifted that. 'No, sir,' he told himself; 'sure, it's my left-hinder'; and lifting that, he released the poor dog, who dashed around to the horse's head, leaping up to his nose, and saying, 'Thank you!' over and over.* And the big, clumsy dray-horse just drew his long face a little longer, and said: 'Never mind, old chap! I didn't mean to hurt you; I'm sorry.' Then came the drayman out of the mill—a nice, considerate, heart-warm, intelligent human being. Oh, yes! we humans know so much more than animals, don't we, fellows? And because the big, patient, kindly dray-horse had, in its restlessness, moved twenty feet from the spot the driver left him at, that creature that is supposed to have known better, just took his whip and licked and lashed that glorious animal, yelling in a frenzy of temper, 'I'll teach you to move, when I leave you! You—' Well, boys, you nor I don't care to hear all he did say."

[Fact observed by the writer's brother.]

"The brute!" "The big human hulk!" "The sneak!" "And he called himself a man!" were some of the phrases growled out by the indignant boys.

"Yes, a man," continued Benson's father, "so much better than the dray-horse, that knew enough to lift his feet until he lifted the right one. I believe if that horse had the feet of a centipede, he would have gone on lifting them until the dog was released. I tell you, boys, if I could get anyone to help me, I'd start an Animal Rescue Club, to—"

But the good gentleman never finished that sentence. The boys were on top of him, round him, under him, clamoring and shouting for him to organize their club for them, to help them study the habits and ways and "thoughts" of animals, to prevent abuse and cruelty towards them. They voted him in as honorary president, and went home that night the happiest-hearted lot of boys in the country. Just before they dispersed, however, a shy little chap named Jimmy Duffy, who had not much opportunity to speak amid the noise of stronger voices, said:

"But, Mr. Benson, you *do* think the dray-horse thought and reasoned, don't you?"

"Surely he did, boy! And he spoke, too, in his own simple horse-language, though we cannot understand his tongue; but we should," answered Benson's father.

Page 99

It was not very long before the “Animal Rescue Club” of North Street became known far and wide, and its influence began to be felt in all quarters. The unfeeling drayman whose act of cruelty first gave rise to the organization was watched, then reported to police headquarters, from where he received a sound lecture because of various other ill-treatments of his horse, and after a time he began to see his own unkindness through the same spectacles as the “Animal Rescuers” viewed it, and within two months he became a considerate, gentle driver.

“If the club never does another thing but reform that one man, and make him kinder to that big, good-hearted horse of his, it has been organized for some purpose,” commented Mr. Benson, one evening, when he “dropped in” to one of the meetings. “Keep it up, fellows. Our little four-footed animals serve us well, and deserve consideration in return.” And the boys worked hard and faithfully to follow his advice. Homeless cats, stray, mangy dogs, ill-fed horses, neglected cows, street sparrows, pigeons, bluejays, were watched and protected and relieved of their sufferings all that winter through. Finally Benson’s father arranged his evenings so that he could spend an hour with the club at each meeting, which time he devoted to “lecturing” on the habits and haunts of animals and birds. Those lectures were the delight of all, for this happy-hearted, boyish man would, in some marvellous fashion, discover all the humorous habits and comical dispositions and actions of every living thing. The little wiry-haired Irish terrier was a comedian, he declared. The bull-moose was a tragedian, the black bear cub was a clown, the lynx a villain, and the migrating birds a sweet, invisible chorus. Then to each and all he would attach some fascinating story, explaining why they resembled these characters. Often the entire club would be roaring with laughter over animal antics and bird capers, then the young faces would be very serious the next minute over some pathetic, heartbreaking tale of hunted deer-mothers trying to protect their pretty fawns, or some father fox lying dead because a swift bullet had caught him as he raided the poultry yard in the endeavor to seize food for the pretty litter of sharp-nosed little cubs, curled up with their mother in a distant cave.

So the boys listened and learned and laughed, and, as spring crept up the calendar, their only regret at the return of the ball season was that the club meetings would be over until next autumn.

* * * * *

It was late in April when little Jimmy Duffy’s father was called to Buffalo on business. The night before leaving, he said: “It’s most annoying! Here I have to go all that way for just about one hour’s talk with a man; an entire day wasted for the sake of one hour, or—hold on, let’s see, Jimmy. You have never seen Niagara Falls, have you?”

“No, dad,” answered Jimmy, his face eager with hope.

Page 100

"Then you be ready to come with me to-morrow. I'll get through my business by noon, and you and I will just 'do' the Falls until dark, and get home on the late train. How does that strike you?"

But Jimmy was speechless with delight. For years he had longed to see Niagara, but there was a number of older brothers and sisters, and Jimmy's turn never seemed to have come until to-day. But the treat was here at last. A whole day along with his big dad, prowling about Niagara Falls, feasting his eyes upon its wonders, listening to its everlasting roar as it plunges over the heights! Jimmy did not sleep very much that night, and, long before train time, he was up, dressed in his best suit, even got himself a fresh pocket-handkerchief, scrambled through breakfast, then sat fidgeting on the front doorstep, while his father took a leisurely meal, glanced calmly at his watch occasionally, then, pushing back his chair, stepped briskly into the hall, glanced at the weather, got his light coat and hat, said good-bye to Mrs. Duffy, and called out "Now, then, Jimmy!" But Jimmy was already at the gate, having kissed his mother good-bye almost an hour before, and presently they were swinging up to the station at a good gait, Mr. Duffy silent, thoughtful, engrossed in his coming business engagement, Jimmy dancing, whistling, strung up with excitement that bade fair to continue throughout the day.

It took three hours to reach Buffalo. Then poor Jimmy had to sit in a stuffy outer office while his father and "the man" talked on the other side of a glass door. Jimmy thought they would never stop, but in exactly one hour the door opened, and he heard "the man" say:

"Now, Mr. Duffy, will you come to my club and we will have luncheon together?"

"Not to-day, thanks, Mr. Brown. I have my small boy with me, and we're off for the Falls. Jimmy's never seen them yet."

"Well, well!" answered Mr. Brown. "That's nice! Going to be a boy again yourself, eh, Duffy? Well, have a good time, and good luck to you both!" And the glass door closed.

His business ended, Jimmy's father seemed another person. He chatted and talked and laughed with his son, ordered a splendid luncheon for them both, swung aboard the train, and by two o'clock they were standing on the very edge of the precipice, with the glorious Falls of Niagara thundering into the basin at their feet. The column of filmy mist, the gorgeous rainbows, the stupendous cataract, leaping and snarling like a million wolves—it whirled about Jimmy's brain like a wild dream of No Man's Land, and he walked beside his father in a daze of delight. They prowled through the islands, crossed the cobwebby bridges from rock to rock above the Falls, and finally sprawled on a bald ledge of stone that jutted far out into the turbulent river.

“We’ll just rest here a few minutes, James,” said his father, playfully. “Then we must go below the Falls and explore the ice-bridge. I see it is yet in perfect condition. You are fortunate, my boy, to be able to see it. There are some winters that never bring an ice-bridge. Then sometimes it thaws in March, so we are lucky to-day.”

Page 101

About them tossed and tumbled the angry rapids, wrangling and brawling around their granite shores, but, above their conflicting noises arose a far, clear, musical sound, like a hundred throats and lips that whistled in unison.

“What’s that?” exclaimed Mr. Duffy, sitting erect suddenly.

“I don’t know,” said the boy, scanning the tangled waters with his unpractised young eyes.

“There it is again, dad!” he cried. “It is whistling. A great company, somewhere, whistling!” Then, looking quickly skyward, he pointed excitedly upstream, “Look, look! Birds! They are birds! Great white ones, dad! What are they? There’s the whistle again!”

Mr. Duffy shaded his eyes from the sun, and watched; for there, in the smooth waters above the rapids, were settling, one by one, a magnificent host of snow-white swans, their wearied bodies almost drooping into the river, their exhausted pinions dropping, nerveless and trailing, into the dark, deceptive stream, which lured them like a snare to its breast.

“Jimmy, Jimmy!” shouted Mr. Duffy, “they’re swans, and they’re dead played out! They’re migrating north for the summer! I bet they’ve flown a thousand miles! See, boy, they’re spent, dead beat!”

Jimmy fairly held his breath. The magnificent band of birds were slowly floating towards them. Now they could distinguish each regal body, feathered in dazzling white, each bill, scarlet as a July poppy, each gracefully lifted throat. But the majestic creatures floated swiftly and silently on, on, on!

“Father!” The boy’s voice trembled huskily. “Oh, father, you don’t think they are in any danger of going over, do you?” His begging, pleading tones revealed his own childish fears.

“Oh, *surely* not!” answered Mr. Duffy, but his tone lacked confidence. Then, after a brief silence, he almost groaned: “Jimmy, they’re done for! They don’t see their danger, and they’re too tired to rise if they do. Oh, boy, if we could save them!”

But Jimmy stood rigid, staring, his heart slowly breaking, breaking. Anyone could see now that the stately battalion was doomed. With utter unconsciousness they drifted on, exhausted with their far journey from the lagoons and marshes of Chesapeake Bay, where the torrid suns had driven them from their winter haunts, to wing their way to their summer home in the far, white North.

“Oh, Jimmy, the pity of it!” murmured Mr. Duffy. But the boy stood wordless, as the irresistible giant current caught the trusting birds and swept them, with a hideous,

overpowering force, to the very brink of the Horseshoe Fall. The boy, thrilling with the horror of it, shut his eyes, and flung himself, face downward, on the rocks. A strange, inarticulate moan left the man's lips. The boy lifted his head, lifted his eyes, but the river was empty.

Page 102

They ran breathlessly across the cobwebby bridges, around Goat Island, then to the shore, then to the elevator, and descended to the ice-bridge; but, above the angry battle of Niagara, arose the plaintive, dying cries of scores of snow-white birds, the shouts of gathering sightseers. Against the ruthless edges of ice lay, bleeding and broken, what was left of that superb company homeward bound. Their poor, twisted legs, their crushed heads, their flattened bodies, their pitiful, dying struggles, would melt a heart of stone. No more those graceful throats would whistle through the April airs, beneath the early suns and the late morning stars. The sweet, wild chorus was stilled forever.

By the time Jimmy and his father arrived, crowds of people had descended with stones and sticks anything they could lay their hands on—and were beating the remaining spark of life out of the helpless birds, then seizing and quarrelling over the bodies, without one word of pity or regret for the dreadful catastrophe, so long as they could secure the coveted specimens of this rare migratory bird. Then Jimmy noticed that some few had actually escaped injury, but, before he could reach them, older and stronger people had rushed upon the terrified and weakened creatures, and were clubbing them to death.

“Stop it! stop it!” he shouted. “Those birds are not injured! Save them! Let them go!”

“Not if I know it!” yelled back a huge fellow with the face of a greedy demon. “Why, these birds are worth twenty dollars apiece!” he blurted, “and I’m going to have every one of them.”

Down, down, down, went one after another as they tried to rise and spread their magnificent wings, until only one remained. With the quickness of a cat, Jimmy flung his thin little body between the flopping victim and the upraised club.

“You strike that swan if you dare!” he cried, fiercely, glaring up at the would-be murderer with indignant eyes.

“Hello, bantam! You after twenty dollars, too?” sneered the man.

“No; I’m after this swan’s life, and I’m going to have it!” growled the boy. “The bird is mine!”

“Yes, Jimmy,” said his father, approaching sadly. “And it’s the only one that has life. I have counted one hundred and sixteen, either dead or slain.”*

[It is a fact that occurred in April, 1908, that a company of one hundred and sixteen whistling swans were carried over Niagara Falls, and that the only one which escaped the weapons of destroyers was rescued by a little boy, and cared for exclusively by him.]

The boy took off his coat, wrapping it about the superb bird, then carried it carefully to the elevator, and, soon after reaching the summit of the shore, had it fed and tended, then gently crated for shipment home. The tired bird submitted without protest to being measured. From tip to tail it measured fifty-one inches, with the magnificent expansion of wing of eighty-one inches, the only survivor of that glorious white company that was whistling its way to the North. And it was the kindly, boyish hand of little Jimmy Duffy, youngest member of the "Animal Rescue Club," that had saved it from a crueller death than even old, heartless Niagara could have given it, and it was his hands that gently removed the bars of the crate in the Duffys' big backyard.

Page 103

"There, you beautiful thing," he said, as he removed the last slat, "stay with us if you can, but go when and where you want. There are no prisons around here."

But the next morning the swan was still in the yard. The ducks talked to it, but its sad, wondering eyes and listless wings spoke louder than words of its weariness and woe. Scores of boys came to see it that day, and the evening brought Benson's father. After hearing the story all he could say was: "It's a good thing for me that I was not there. I'm a pretty big fellow, and can lick chaps that are even bigger than I am, and if I'd caught that brute killing those uninjured birds, I'd have thrown him into the Whirlpool Rapids, sure as you're born; I'd be in jail now, and probably get hanged in the autumn. Yes, taking it altogether, I'm glad I wasn't there!"

Of course, many of the townspeople were for having Jimmy confine the bird, or at least send it to a museum, or enclose it in a wire netting; but the boy replied:

"No, thanks. I have seen enough of them die, and I don't want my swan to die of a broken heart."

But the swan stayed on day after day, seemingly content and happy. Then there dawned a beautiful day in May. The sun shone hot and level on the little backyard. In the middle of the morning a clear, musical, distinct whistle brought Jimmy running to the side door. The swan's head was uplifted, its crimson beak pointing away from the sun. Presently it spread its regal wings and floated up, up, up. One more clear, lingering whistle, and it was away, while Jimmy watched it with eyes both dumbly sad and unspeakably glad, until it was but a radiant white speck sailing into the north, to search for others of its kind.

The Delaware Idol*

[This tale is absolutely true. The writer's father was the boy who destroyed the Delaware idol, the head of which is at this time one of the treasures in the family collection of Indian relics and curios.]

Young "Wampum" sat listening to the two old hunters as they talked and chuckled, boasted and bragged, and smoked their curious stone pipes hour after hour. He was a splendid boy, this Wampum of the Mohawks, as quick and lithe as a lynx. His face was strikingly handsome, for it lacked the usual melancholy of the redman, having in its place a haughty, daring expression that gave it the appearance of extreme bravery, and even a dash of wild majesty. That he was a favorite with the older men of his tribe was generally acknowledged, for he was a magnificent hunter, an unerring shot, and, best of all, he could go without food for untold hours, always a thing to be very proud of among the Indian people. So the two old hunters told their stories and laughed over adventures with the same freedom as if the boy had not been present.

“Yes,” said old “Fire-Flower,” beginning his story, “that was the strangest bear hunt the Grand River ever saw. These white men think they can come here and kill game, but a bear knows more than a paleface, at least that one did.”

Page 104

“Fish-Carrier,” the other hunter, nodded his head understandingly, refilled his stone pipe, and said tauntingly, “I know some Indians that don’t know as much as a bear.”

Fire-Flower chuckled, passing the insinuation with a knowing smile. “No bear knows more than *this* Indian,” he boasted. “At least no bear I ever came across could outwit me.”

“We’ll hear what you have to tell,” answered Fish-Carrier, with great condescension.

Young Wampum sat erect then. He knew the tale was going to be a good one.

Teasingly, old Fire-Flower took an unnecessarily long time to “light up,” but his two auditors were Indians, like himself, and had patience with his whims. Then the great hunter settled himself, and began his story by shaking his head, boastingly, and chuckling:

“It was two white men, and, as usual, they knew nothing, but they had good guns, and a fine canoe, and they paddled many days to get to the ‘Indian Bush’ to hunt. I was up there, across from the island in the river, when I first saw them, and their faces were paler than any paleface I ever saw before or since. It seems they had pulled up on the shore, built a little campfire to make their tea and to eat, when out of the bush arose a big black bear, gruffing and grunting and eating berries. When they saw it they gave a worse war-whoop than the Cherokees ever did. They reached for their guns, then started to shake and tremble as though the bush ague were upon them. ‘He’s chewing!’ yelled one. ‘He’s chewing at us, he’ll eat us alive.’ But the other put on a face like a great brave. ‘We’ll kill him,’ he said with great boasting. ‘That’s what we came for, to kill bears.’ But just then the bear came towards them, still eating his berries. They were too scared to fire. One just struck him over the head with his gun, then they both turned and made for the canoe. The blow made the bear angry as the Thunder God, and before they could push off shore the bear got his claws on the edge of the canoe, and away they all went sailing into midstream, the palefaces paddling for all their lives, and the black bear clinging on to the canoe. In their fright they had left their guns ashore, and while one paddled, the other beat the bear’s head with the paddle blade. It was then that I first saw them. I stood on the shore with a very sickness from laughter in all my bones.” Here he ceased talking, for Fish-Carrier and Wampum had broken into such bursts of merriment that Fire-Flower was compelled to join them.

“Oh, that I could have seen them, that I could have seen it all!” moaned Fish-Carrier between gasps. “That must have been a thing to make men laugh for many moons.” But Wampum said nothing; it was not the etiquette of his race that he should join in the talk of older men, unasked, but he, too, gulped down his uproarious laughter while Fire-Flower proceeded.

Page 105

"The black bear was getting the best of them, for the beating on the head maddened him. He began to climb up the edge of the canoe, and his great weight was beginning to overbalance it. I called to them, but as I do not speak the white man's language, they did not understand. Fear gripped at their hearts, and, as the bear climbed into the canoe, they leaped into the river and swam for shore, while the canoe drifted slowly down stream, the big black bear seated proudly within it like some great brave who had scalped his enemies."

Another outburst of mirth shook his listeners.

"I am an old man," continued Fire-Flower, "but I have never seen anything which made me laugh so hard, so long, so loud. The palefaces swam back to their camp and their guns, calling out to me over and over to save their canoe for them. So I put out in my own dugout and gave chase. I caught their canoe, overturned it, and into the water rolled the bear. Then as he came at me, catching my canoe in his big claws, I just drowned him the old Indian way."*

[The above incident really occurred on the Grand River, about the year 1850, the writer's father having witnessed it.]

More laughter greeted this. Then young Wampum made bold to speak. "My uncle," he addressed Fire-Flower, "I am but a boy, only beginning to hunt, though the great braves have been kind in giving me praise for what I have done already, but I am full of ignorance when compared to you and the great hunters; so, to help me in the days to come, will you not tell me how you drowned the bear, for I do not know all these things?"

"A fine boy, Wampum is. He knows whom to ask advice and learning from," said Fire-Flower pompously, greatly pleased at the boy's flattery. "It is an easy thing to do, to drown a bear," he said. "The frailest canoe is safe even in the clutches of the fiercest. Just lay your paddle lightly across the bear's neck, back of his ears. He will at once catch at it each side with his claws, and he will pull, pull his own head under water. The more he struggles the deeper he sinks."

"Yes, that is the Indian fashion of killing a bear in midstream," echoed Fish-Carrier, "and it is a great thing for a hunter to know."

"Thank you for telling me," said the boy, rising to take his leave. "I value all this wisdom I can learn from my own people."

"And where do you go now, Wampum?" asked Fire-Flower. "Will you not stay and learn more wise things? You are brave, and we like you to hear us talk."

“And your talk is good,” replied the boy, smiling. “You make me feel like the laughing loon bird, when you tell your tales and smile and laugh yourselves. But I must leave you. I am to drive the missionary to-day. He goes to the Delaware line once more.”

“Ha! The Delawares!” sneered old Fire-Flower. “I like not those Delawares. They worship idols. It is not good to dance around idols.”

Page 106

"Not good," again echoed Fish-Carrier.

"Still the Delawares are not really bad people," said Wampum. "I don't like their hideous idol, and some day I hope to see it cut down," he added earnestly.

"Then it will be a brave man who will do it," asserted Fire-Flower. "The Delawares are a fierce tribe. Their eyes are too black. They cannot be trusted. We Mohawks are brave, but I know of none who would dare cut down that idol."

"I hope the Black Coat* won't try it himself," said Fish-Carrier. "He is a good man. I don't want to see the Delawares kill him."

[*The Indians call missionaries "The Black Coats."*]

"He certainly *will* try it himself," said Wampum. "His heart is set on turning the dark Delaware to his Christianity."

Fire-Flower sneered. "How little those white men know, even such great white men as the Black-Coat!" he remarked loftily. "He thinks because the Mohawks all turned to his Christianity, that he can get the dark Delawares. He seems to think there is small difference in Indians, that they are all alike. He does not know that we Mohawks despise the Delawares because they worship idols. Before we were Christians we worshipped the Great Spirit, the God of all good, but *never* idols. What good can come of people who dance round idols?" and the old hunter wrinkled his very nose in contempt.

Young Wampum knew his place too well to argue with the arrogant old hunter, so he smilingly said good-bye, and leaving them to their pipes and their memories, he set out for the Mission house, from whence he was to drive the Reverend James Nelson over to the "Delaware Line" to have one of his frequent talks with the stubborn old chief, "Single-Pine," who for ten years had held out against Christianity, clinging with determined loyalty to the religion of his forefathers, worshipping the repulsive wooden idol that, even in their old pagan state, the Mohawks so despised. Wampum was a great friend of Mr. Nelson's. He was only a boy of sixteen, but he helped in all the church work, translated Mr. Nelson's speeches from English into Mohawk and the various other Indian dialects spoken on the Reserve, drove him about through the rough forest roads, paddled him down the river, and was the closest companion the good missionary had in all that wild, remote country. Even Wampum's parents were Christian church workers, but, kindly as their hearts were, they, too, shook their heads sorrowfully over the hopelessness of trying to Christianize the dark, idol-worshipping Delawares.

"Ah, Wampum, boy," greeted the missionary as the young Indian presented himself at the mission house, "we have good work before us to-day. I hear the Delawares are having a feast day. They have been dancing about that deplorable idol for two days and

two nights. They tell me that old Chief Single-Pine danced eight hours without ceasing; that they have decorated the idol with silver brooches, wampum beads, every precious thing they possess. It is terrible, and my heart aches, boy, when I think how hopeless it seems. I fear they will be worshipping that wooden thing long after you and I have ceased working for Christ's kingdom."

Page 107

"Mr. Nelson," said the boy, half-shyly. "I don't agree with you. I heard, not long ago, that old Chief Single-Pine said he only kept to the idol because his people did—that he dared not cross them, but that after these ten years of your talking with him, he himself believed in the white man's Christ."

"Oh, Wampum, if I could only believe that! If I could, I would die happy. Who told you this glorious thing?" cried the encouraged missionary.

"A Delaware boy," replied Wampum, "but when he told me he spat, like a snake does venom. He said he and all the tribe hated Single-Pine, for listening to you."

For a moment the missionary was silent, then he arose, the dawn of a majestic hope in his face. "They may hate him," he said, "but they will follow him. He is most powerful. They dare not rebel where he leads. If we have won Single-Pine to Christianity, we have won the whole tribe, Wampum. You have never failed me yet; will you stand by me now? Will you help me in this great work?"

"I will help you, sir," replied the boy, his young face glowing with zeal.

"But," hesitated the missionary, "remember, it is dangerous. They are a fierce, savage tribe, these Delawares. Suppose—" and the good man's voice ceased. He thought of his wife and his two baby girls. Then he shuddered.

Wampum seemed to catch that thought, and instantly a strange inspiration lighted up his wonderful dark face. He set his strong white teeth together, but kept his determination to himself.

As they prepared to leave the Mission house, Wampum hung back a little, and when Mr. Nelson was not looking, he slipped into the woodshed, got the axe, and adroitly hid it under the wagon-seat. He told himself that in case of trouble he would at least have some weapon with which to defend the missionary's life, and fight for his own. Had the man of peace known this, he would have remonstrated, but Wampum, although a Christian, had good fighting Indian blood in his veins, and had no such horror of battle. He was like one of the old Crusaders, ready to fight for his faith, even if the fighting had to be done with an axe.

Long before they reached the Delaware Line, they could hear the sounds of feasting and dancing. It was growing dark, and the great heathen ceremonies were at their height. Many a time had the good old missionary attended these dances, always putting in a word for Christianity whenever he saw a fitting opening, always hoping that the day would come when the hideous idol would be laid low, and these darkened souls brought to the Light of the World. But to-night he felt strangely fearful, almost cowardly, for the whole tribe had gathered to pay tribute to their god, and it is a dangerous thing to belittle the god or the faith of any nation that is in earnest in its belief.

Page 108

Old Chief Single-Pine welcomed the missionary and Wampum graciously, but his people scowled and looked menacingly at the sight of “The Black Coat,” then continued their dancing. The great Delaware idol was there in all its hideousness, life size, in the form of a woman, and carved from one solid block of wood, then painted and stained the Indian copper color. It stood on a slight elevation in the centre of the big log “church,” grotesque and repulsive as an image could well be made. Wampum hated the thing, and found it difficult not to hate these people who worshipped it. His own ancestors had been pagans, but never heathen. They had worshipped a living God, not a wooden one, and the boy turned in sadness, and some horror, from the spectacle of these idolatrous Delawares. Then his eyes lighted with pleasure, for there, near the door, stood Fire-Flower and Fish-Carrier. True, they were not now telling their boastful but harmless tales of mighty hunting and prowess, but their friendly faces still looked laughter-loving and genial, and Wampum moved quickly towards them. “I did not know you ever came here,” he said.

“Not often,” said Fire-Flower. “But you said you were to bring the missionary, so we came.”

Something in his voice gave Wampum a hint that perhaps the loyal old hunters expected trouble, and so had come in case they were needed.

“Thank you,” was all the boy replied, but they knew he understood.

Meanwhile, Mr. Nelson was talking with Single-Pine, who, exhausted with dancing, was allowing himself a brief rest and smoke. “My friend,” began the missionary, “do you really believe in the power of that god of wood?”

The old chief glanced about cautiously, then, lowering his voice, said:

“I am tired, oh, Black Coat, of this thing! I would come to the Christian’s God if I could, but my people will not let me.”

Mr. Nelson grasped the dark fingers resting near his own. “Chief Single-Pine,” he said excitedly, “will you yourself give me leave to do away with this idol? Will you promise me that if I cut it down you will make no outcry—that you will not defend it; that you will not urge your people to rise against me; that you will sit silently, wordlessly; that you will take my part?”

For a moment the old Indian wavered, hesitated, then said desperately, “I promise.”

The missionary arose, removed his hat, and lifting his white face to heaven, prayed aloud, “God help me, make me strong and fearless to do this thing.” But at his side was Wampum, his clinging brown fingers clutching the black-coated arm. He had overheard all the conversation, and his young face took on grayish shadows and lines of anxiety

as he said, “No, no, Mr. Nelson, *not you!* They may kill you. Your wife, your girl babies—remember them. Think of them. This is *my* work, not yours.” Instantly he dashed outside, returning with the axe he had hidden in the wagon. Without a glance in any direction, he strode into the centre of the log lodge, the dark worshippers fell aside, surprised into silence, and the slender Mohawk boy braced his shoulders, lifted his head, and—

Page 109

"Don't, don't, Wampum, boy!" choked the missionary, "It is wild, it is useless. Stop, oh, stop!"

But he might as well have ordered a hurricane to stop. With a splendid sweep of strong young arms, the boy whirled the axe in a circle above his shoulders and brought it down crashing with full force on the idol. The figure split from top to base, the neck was severed, and the painted wooden head rolled ingloriously to the floor. Then, amid a stony silence, more menacing than any words, the boy stood with squared shoulders and uplifted chin, his fierce beauty more imperial, more majestic, than ever before.

For an instant the black eyes of a hundred Delaware warriors glared at him with hate and bloodshed in their depths. Then, with a furious yell, they turned to their chief for his commands, but old Single-Pine sat with bowed head, his face hidden in his hands, his lips silent. A sullen murmur ran through the throng, but they knew their chief had at last taken the great step into Christianity; and while Wampum yet stood alone and unafraid, his axe in his hand, and the head of the ruined idol at his feet, the entire tribe filed past, and one by one shook hands with the white-haired old missionary, for, as faithful followers of their chief, they, too, must embrace the white man's faith.

It was Fire-Flower who spoke first, touching the boy's hand. Wampum started, as if from a dream.

"Boy," said the old hunter, "I have seen no man so brave."

Wampum shuddered. "My uncle," he said proudly, "I have lived among brave people, but—" here he shuddered again, for he was only a boy, after all. "Oh, how black their eyes were, and how they hated me!"

"They never hated you as much as we love you," returned the old hunter. The word "love" had never passed his lips before, and Wampum knew then that not only had his courageous act brought the blessing of the white man's God, but it had won for him the priceless friendship of this stalwart old Indian, whose wisdom and whose laughter would be shared with him through all his coming life.

The good missionary said never a word as they drove home through the dark, but as they parted for the night he laid his hand silently, gently, on the proud, dark young head. No word was spoken, but the boy knew that a blessing was not always expressed in language, and that there are some kinds of courage that do not need scalps at one's belt to show that one has fought a good fight.

The King Georgeman

I

“So the little King Georgeman comes to-morrow, eh, Tillicum?” asked the old Lillooet hunter.

“Yes, comes for all summer,” replied “Banty” Clark, “and I’ve got to be polite and show him around, and, I suppose, stay in the ranch house all the hot weather while his nibs togs up in his London clothes, ‘don’t yer know,’ and drinks five-o’clock tea, and does nothing but stare at the toes of his patent leather shoes. Pshaw! What a prospect! Ever see patent leather shoes, Eena?” asked Banty, with some disgust.

Page 110

"I don't know, me. I think not," replied The Eena.

"You're lucky," went on Banty. "But my cousin's sure to wear them, and they're spoilsport things, I can tell you! No salmon fishing, no mountaineering, no hunting while they're around. But, Eena, why do you call my cousin a King Georgeman?"

"It is the Chinook for what you call an Englishman," replied the Indian.

"Why, what a dandy idea!" exclaimed the boy. "I think I shall like my cousin better because of that Chinook term. I can even go the patent leather shoes; I believe I'd almost wear them myself to be called a King Georgeman."

"You'll like your Ow" (Ow is Chinook for young cousin or brother), encouraged The Eena. "King Georgeman all good sport, all same fine fellows, learn Indian ways quick."

"I hope you're right," said Banty, a little doubtfully, for, truth to tell, he had small liking of the idea of a brand-new English cousin on his hands for the summer, a Londoner at that, who knew nothing of even the English country, let alone the wilderness of mountains, canyons, and the endless forests of British Columbia. Poor Banty had been so accustomed to chum about with the old Lillooet hunter whom he had nicknamed "The Eena" (which is the Chinook for "Beaver") that the thought of a perfect outsider breaking into their companionship for all the holidays was little short of misery.

But the next day when Banty drove down to Kamloops to meet the train, and his cousin stepped from the sleeper on to the station platform, things looked worse than threatened misery. The future loomed before him like a tragedy; he almost groaned aloud, for swinging towards him with a loose-jointed English gait was a tall, yellow-haired chap, the size of a man, with a face sea-tanned between a pink and a brown, his long neck encircled with a very high, very stiff collar, his light grey suit pressed as if it had just arrived from the tailor's, and poor Banty's quick eye flew from the smiling pink face to the faultlessly-trousered legs—horrors! The trousers were *long*. (Banty had at least expected a boy of his own size and age.) But, worst of all, below the trousers gleamed immaculate shoes of patent leather!

"I'm glad Eena didn't come," moaned Banty. "If he'd seen *this*, he would have steered clear of the ranch for weeks." Then, bracing himself like a man, he went forward with outstretched hand to greet his unwelcome relative. The English lad blushed like a girl as he met his Canadian cousin, but his handclasp was decidedly masculine as his soft London voice said: "Awfully good of you to come and fetch me, don't you know. I suppose you're my Cousin Bantmore?"

"Banty," was all the stricken boy could reply.

“Oh, good! I like that, ‘Banty.’ That’s a great name!” exclaimed the tall Britisher. “You’re lucky! What would you do if you were handicapped with a tag like mine—Constantine—with all the dubs at school calling you ‘Tiny’ for short, while you stood a good five feet nine in your socks? Isn’t it dreadful?”

Page 111

Instantly Banty found his heart warming towards this big pink cousin, who bore with such sturdy good humor the affliction of such a terrible name. “It *is* bad,” he assented, “but it might be doctored. Haven’t you got a middle name?”

“It’s worse,” grinned the victim. “It’s St. Ives. I tried it on the second term, and the crowd called me ‘Ivy,’ and one smartie sent me a piece of blue ribbon to tie my yellow curls with—he wrote *that* in an insulting note.”

“What’d you do?” gasped Banty.

“Licked him in full view of the whole school, and he was a senior; trimmed him till he couldn’t see,” was the smiling reply.

“Good boy!” almost shouted Banty. “You’re the stuff for out West. I’m glad you came.”

“I’m glad, too,” answered his cousin, “but I’ll be ‘gladder’ if you will tell me where I can get some togs like yours. I declare, but I like that outfit,” and he looked enviously at Banty’s leather chaps, blue flannel shirt, scarlet silk neckerchief and cowboy hat.

“These duds?” questioned Banty. “Oh, you can get them anywhere. They’d hardly suit you, though.” And he measured the stranger with a critical eye.

“Suit or not, I’m going to have them,” said “Con”—as his genial father called him. “Let’s go right to the shops and get an outfit now.”

So Banty tied up the horses, stowed the luggage away in the afterpart of the trap, and led the way to the trader’s.

When they started for the ranch, Con had, in addition to his English bags, boxes, shawlstraps and portmanteaus, a most beautiful outfit of typical Western finery, a handsome Mexican saddle, a crop, a quirt, fringed gauntlet gloves, chaps, Stetson hat, silk handkerchief, ties, and three pairs of sporting and riding boots.

“We’ll put these patent leathers gently into the river, or on a shelf, until I face the East again,” he said, half apologetically. Then with a quick burst of English simplicity, he said: “Oh, Banty, I want to be one of you!”

“And you’re going to be one of us,” said that sturdy young Westerner. “In fact, Con—well, you just *are* one of us,” he added.

The lanky, pink-faced boy grew pinker.

“I know I’m an awful length and all that,” he said, “but I’m only sixteen, don’t you know!”

Banty grinned. The “Don’t you know,” which at first horrified him, was, oddly enough, growing to be almost fascinating. Banty would have felt himself an awful owl were he to say it, but it somehow suited the tall, pink boy, and did not sound one particle “dudish,” or offensive, and during the ten-mile drive across the Kamloops Hills Banty decided that Con was a first-rate fellow, notwithstanding his abominable clothes and “swagger” English accent. At the ranch house door they were greeted by Banty’s parents and a couple of range riders, and Eena, who, Indian-like, never revealed the fact by word or look that he had observed the patent leather shoes, and the wonderful high collar; who, also Indian-like, in spite of these drawbacks, liked the stranger without cause, a peculiar instinct of liking that came when the young King Georgeman shook hands with him, a wholesome British “shake” that engendered confidence.

Page 112

"You will be tired, Constantine," said Mrs. Clark, with motherly care, "and not accustomed to this extreme heat. Come at once and rest. I have made a great jug of lemonade. Do come in at once."

"If it's all the same to you, aunt, may I have some tea? And do *please* call me 'Con,'" he replied. No shadow of expression crossed The Eena's face, but when Mrs. Clark had led Con indoors, the Indian turned to Banty and remarked quietly, "You're right some ways; he wants tea, and the sun shines in his shoes, but he good King Georgeman all same, I know, me."

"Guess you're right, Eena," said Banty. "There's something about him that's fine, just fine and simple and—English." The Indian nodded and he made but one more comment. "He brave," he muttered.

"How do you know that?" asked Banty.

"The—what you name it? I think you call it *nostril* of his nose long, thin, fine. That shows brave people. When nostril just round and thick like bullet-hole it shows coward."

Banty laughed aloud, but all the same his fingers flew to his own nostrils, and notwithstanding his merriment he was gratified to find fairly long, narrow breathing spaces at the edge of his own nose.

"What queer old ideas your people have, Eena," he commented.

"But it's right, even if queer," smiled the Indian. "You see, maybe this summer, Indian's right about that nose."

But Mrs. Clark and Con were now returning, Con having swallowed his tea, and, looking refreshed by it, he settled himself in a porch chair, stretched out his long legs and thoughtfully regarded the toes of his patent leathers. Banty grinned openly, but The Eena gravely shook his head, and, with the tip of his little finger, touched his own fine, narrow nostril. Banty understood, but then he and The Eena always understood each other, and now the boy knew that the old hunter meant to remind him of the best qualities of his English cousin, and to overlook the little oddities that after all did not carry weight when it came to a boy's character.

"King Georgeman, you come with me to-morrow, me fish, or hunt?" asked the Indian, his solemn eyes regarding Con kindly. Banty explained the term "King Georgeman."

"Indeed I will, if you'll have me!" exclaimed Con, excitedly. "I've bought some decent clothes, and will look fitter in them than I do in these togs. Don't I look bally in them?"

"I not sabe 'bally,' me," answered the Indian.

The pink King Georgeman looked puzzled.

“He means he doesn’t understand what ‘bally’ is,” explained Banty.

Con laughed. “Tell him that *I’m* ‘bally,’ in these clothes; he’ll grasp then what a fearful thing ‘bally’ means.”

It was that remark, “poking fun” at his own appearance, that thoroughly won Banty’s loyalty to his cousin from over seas. A chap that could openly laugh and jeer at his own peculiarities must surely be a good sort, so forthwith Banty pitched in heart and soul to arrange all kinds of excursions and adventures, and The Eena planned and suggested, until it seemed that all the weeks stretching out into the holiday months were to be one long round of sport and pleasure in honor of the lanky King Georgeman, who was so anxious to fall easily into the ways of the West.

Page 113

Just as The Eena predicted, Con proved an able fisherman and excellent “trailsmen.” He could stay in the saddle for hours, could go without food or sleep, had the endurance of a horse and the good nature of a big romping kitten. He was generous and unselfish, but with a spontaneous English temper that blazed forth whenever he saw the weak wronged or the timid terrified.

“I’ll never make a really good hunter, Eena,” he regretted one day, “I can’t bear to gallop on a big cayuse after a little scared jack rabbit, and run him down and kill him when he’s so little and doesn’t try to fight me with his claws or fangs like a lynx will do. It’s not a fair deal.”

“But when one camps many leagues from the ranch house, one must eat,” observed the Indian.

“Yes, that’s the pity of it,” agreed Con, “but it seems to me a poor sort of game to play at.”

Nevertheless he did his part towards providing food when they all went camping up in the timberline in August, and frequently he, Banty and the Indian would go out by themselves on a three or four days’ expedition away from the main camp, “grubbing” themselves and living the lives of semi-savages. And it was upon one of these adventures that the three got separated in some way, Banty and the Indian reaching camp a little before sunset, and waiting in vain for Con’s appearance while the hours slipped by, and they called and shouted, and fired innumerable shots thinking to guide him campwards, while they little knew that all the gold in British Columbia could not have brought Con’s feet to enter that little tent for many days to come; that with all his newborn affection for Banty, Con would make him most unwelcome should chance bring them face to face again.

II

It happened so strangely, so quickly, that Con gave himself no time to think. They had been trailing a caribou, just for sport, for the hunting season was closed, and Con struck into the wrong trail on the return journey. Thinking to overtake the others, he worked his cayuse hard, galloping on and on until the hills and canyons began to look unfamiliar. Feeling that he was lost, he fired his gun, once, twice. Far down in the valley came a response, so he loped down the winding trail until he suddenly came upon a little shack surrounded by fields of alfalfa, and a few cattle grazing along a creek.

As he neared the ranch a shot was fired from the shack window, he jerked his animal up shortly, and was about to wheel and gallop back, when a pitiful groan reached his ears, and a man’s voice begged: “Water, water, for the love of heaven bring me water!” Then,

unfamiliar as Con was to Western life, instinct told him that the revolver shot was meant to call him to some one's aid.

"Coming," he shouted, slipping from his saddle, "buck up, I'll fetch water," but before he could enter the door, a terrible, repulsive face was lifted to the window, and the man almost shrieked:

Page 114

"Don't come in, don't, I say; just hand me some water from the creek. I'm too weak to walk."

"Of course I'm coming in," blurted Con, indignantly. "Why, man, you're dead sick!"

"Don't!" choked the man; "oh, boy, don't come near me, *I've got smallpox.*"

For one brief second Con stood, stiff with horror. "Who's with you, helping you, nursing you?" he demanded.

"No one, I'm alone, alone; oh! water, water," moaned the man.

Con flung open the door. There was no hesitation, no fear, no thought of self; just a great human pity in his fair young face, and a wonderful tenderness in his strong young arms as he lifted the loathsome sufferer from the floor where he had fallen in his weakness, after crawling to the window in that last, almost hopeless effort to call assistance.

On the soiled and tumbled bed he laid the man, who still shrieked: "Go away, go away, you're crazy to come in here!" Then without a word of even kindly encouragement the boy seized a bucket and dashed down to the creek. "It's water, not words, he wants now," he said to himself, running back, and in another moment his good right arm was slipping under the sick man's shoulders, and he was lifting him up and holding to the fever-cracked lips a cup of gloriously cold water.

"Bless you! The dear good God himself bless you! But, oh, boy, go away, go away!" murmured the man, weakly.

"Go away and leave you here alone, perhaps to die? And then have to face my parents and Banty and The Eena, and—and England again and tell what I've done? Not I!" cried the boy, indignantly. "Look at this shack, the state it's in; look at you. How did you come to be here alone?"

"I had a pardner, but he left me, just skinned out, when he suspected what I had," said the man, hopelessly. It was then that Con burst forth in that quick flashing English temper that was always aroused at the sight of injustice, of unmanliness, or of underhand dealings. He was so furious that he took his temper out in cleaning up the shack, and cooking some soft foods for the patient, and every time the wretched man begged him to go away he got so indignant and abusive that the sick one finally laughed outright, thereby lifting them both out of the depths of grey despair.

"That's the way, 'Snooks,'" commented Con. (He had nicknamed his shack-mate "Snooks.") "Just you laugh, it will do you no end of good, don't you know."



But in spite of his heroic attempts at cheering up the sick man, Con was undergoing a frightful experience. In the first place, there were practically no medicines and no disinfectants in the shack. The boy found a cake of tar soap, a bottle of salts, and a package of sulphur. The latter he burnt daily, sprinkling it on a shovel of coals. The tar soap was a blessing both to himself and the patient, and the salts they both swallowed manfully and daily. There was rice, oatmeal, tapioca, jam, tinned stuffs and prunes, and Con knew as little of cookery as he knew of nursing, but he made shift with the little store in hand. Snooks kept alive and the boy remained well. But the nights were long periods of horror. Snooks would become delirious with fever, and the torture of the foul disease would become unbearable.

Page 115

Once they had an out-and-out fight. Snooks, fever crazed, struggled to get out of bed, crying that he was going to sink his agonized body in the creek, and Con gripped the poor abhorrent wrists, forcing the man to his back. Then flinging his whole weight above the prostrate body he held him by sheer force, conquering and saving this life which had no claims on him except that of all common humanity. An onlooker would have thought that the dread disease had no horrors for the boy, but Con was only human, and many a time he fought it out with himself when the terrors of the threatened infection were upon him. Then he would say to himself, "Con, are you going to try and be a gentleman through your whole life, or just be a cad?" Then all thought of quitting would vanish, and back he would go to the shack, to be rewarded by a wonderful look of dog-like gratitude that would shine in Snooks' festered eyes, replacing the haunting fear that always lurked there whenever the boy remained outside any length of time—the fear that Con, too, had gone, as had his "pardner," leaving him forever alone.

"Don't you get scared," Con would say on these occasions. "I'm with you to the finish for good or ill, and it will be for good, I think."

"It sure is for *my* good," Snooks had said once. "If I pull out of this I'll be another man, and it will be owing to having known you, pard. I had forgotten that such bravery and decency and unselfishness existed. I had—"

"Oh, quit it! Stop it!" Con smiled. "This isn't anything—don't you know." But Snooks shook his head thoughtfully, muttering, "I *do* know, and you're making another man of me."

One day, after two weeks had dragged wearily past wherein no human being had passed up the unfrequented trail, Con heard gun shots, distant at first, then nearing the shack. Like a wild being he sprang to the door, hoping some range rider, chancing by, would at least bring food and a doctor, when, to his horror, he saw Banty riding by, almost exhausted, peering to right and left of the trail, searching—searching, he well knew, for his lost cousin. Con made a rapid bolt for a hiding place, but Banty, whose quick eyes had caught sight of the fleeting figure, gave a yell of delight as he leaped from his saddle.

"Don't you come *near* this place! Get out, *get* out, I tell you!" screamed Con, while Banty stood as if petrified, staring wide-eyed at his seemingly insane cousin.

"You come near here and I'll trim you within an inch of your life," Con roared anew, shaking his fist menacingly. "I'll trim you the way I did the fellow who sent me the blue ribbon for my hair. We've got smallpox here. I'm looking after a chap who is down with it. Get us a doctor and beef tea and more tar soap and food, but don't you come an inch nearer, Banty, *don't*. Think of aunt and the people at the ranch. You can't do any good, and I'll go clean crazy if you expose yourself to this. Oh, Banty, get out of this, get out of this, or, I tell you, *honest*, I'll lick you if you don't."

Page 116

Banty was no coward, but Con looked terrifyingly fierce and in dead earnest, and the boy's common sense told him that he could far better serve these stricken shackmen in doing as he was bidden. So after more explanations and instructions, he mounted and rode away like one possessed, Con's last words ringing in his ears: "Don't forget *barrels* of tar soap, and *tons* of tea. I haven't had a drink of tea for ten days."

Late that night a young doctor rode up from Kamloops, and in his wake a professional nurse with supplies of food, medicines, and exquisitely fresh, clean sheets. While the physician bent over the sick man, Con seized a package of groceries and in five minutes was drinking a cup of his beloved English tea, as calmly as if he had been nursing a friend with a headache.

Presently the doctor beckoned him outside. Con put down his cup regretfully and followed.

"Young man," said the doctor, eyeing him curiously, "Do you know who this man is you've been nursing, exposing yourself to death for?"

"Haven't an idea; I call him 'Snooks,'" said Con.

"Much better call him 'Crooks,'" said the doctor, angrily. "You've been risking your life and that pretty pink English skin of yours for one of the most worthless men in British Columbia; he's been a cattle rustler, a 'salter' of gold mines, and everything that is discreditable; it makes me indignant. He tells me he at least had the decency to warn you, when you came here. What ever made you come on—in?"

Con stared at the doctor, a cold, a "stony British" stare. "Why, doctor," he said, "because Snooks has been a—a—failure, I don't see that's any reason why I should be a cad."

The doctor looked at him hard. "I wish I had a son like you," he remarked.

"My father is an army surgeon; he's been through the cholera scourge in India twice. I never could have looked him in the face again if I hadn't seen Snooks through," said Con, simply.

"Well, you can look him in the face now all right, boy!" the doctor replied, gravely. "Say good-bye to your sick friend, for we've brought a tent and you are to be soaked in disinfectants and put into quarantine. No more of this pest-shack for you, my boy."

So Con went back to shake hands with "Snooks," who said very quietly: "I can't even say 'Thank you,' as I want to; I guess the best way to thank a pard is to live it, not speak it. I ain't said a prayer for years till the day you came here, and I've prayed night and day, *real* prayers, that you wouldn't get this disease. Maybe that'll show you, pard, that I've started to be a new man."

“Yes, that shows,” answered Con confidentially, and with another handclasp, he left for his little tent, with a great faith in his heart that the sick man’s prayers would be answered.

At last one joyous day the doctor sent for Banty, who rode over with a led horse, and Con, leaping into the saddle, waved good-bye to Snooks, who, now convalescent, stood in the door of the distant shack. As the boy galloped off up the trail, Snooks turned to the nurse and said:

Page 117

"I'm going to live so that youngster will never regret what he's done. That's about the only reward I can give him."

The nurse looked up gravely. "If I have estimated that boy right," she said, "I think that's about the only reward he would care to have."

That was a great night at the ranch. Most delicious things to eat and drink awaited Con after his long isolation, and Mr. and Mrs. Clark welcomed him as if he had been a son instead of a nephew. The range riders came in, each one getting him to tell of his antics with the sulphur and shovel of coals, over which they roared with laughter. Banty's delight at having his comrade back from danger knew no bounds, and when The Eena appeared Banty flung an arm about Con's shoulders, exclaiming: "Isn't this old chap a splendid King Georgeman, Eena?"

The old hunter replied with much self-satisfaction: "Maybe now you not think old Indian saying so queer. Did I not say, me, that narrow, thin—what you name it,—nostril, shows man that is brave, man that has no fear? Me sabe now. He *not* 'bally.'"

Gun-Shy Billy

"No, sir! Not for me," Bert Hooper was saying. "I won't join the crowd if Billy is going. Do you fellows suppose I'm going to have my holiday all spoiled, and not get any game, all because you want Billy? *He's* no good on a hunting trip. I tell you he's gun-shy."

"That's so," said another boy. "I've seen him stop his ears with his fingers when Bert shot his gun off—more than once, too."

"Ought to be named 'Gussie,'" said Bert. "A great big fellow like Billy, *scared of a gun!* He must be sixteen, and large for his age at that. He's worse than that dog I had last year—don't you remember, boys? He'd follow us for miles through the bush, raise game, point a partridge all right, and the second we shot a gun off—no more dog. All you'd see was a white-and-tan streak with its tail curled under it, making for home."

"Well," said Tommy McLean, a boy who never spoke until all the rest had thrashed a subject out, "I'd rather see a fellow gun-shy than see him a bally idiot with fire-arms. I know when I got my gun, I got a lesson with it. Father gave it to me himself, when I was fourteen, last year. I never saw him look so serious as when he put it in my hands and said, 'Tom,' (he always calls me Tom, not Tommy, when he's in earnest)—'Tom,' he said, 'a gun is a good thing in the right hands, a bad thing in the wrong. A boy that is careless with a gun is worse than a born idiot; a boy that in play points a gun, loaded or unloaded, at any person, place, or thing, should be, and often does, land in prison. A gun is made for three things only: the first, to shoot animals and birds for food alone, not for sport; the second, to defend one's life from the attack of wild beasts; the third, to

shoot the tar out of the enemy when you are fighting as a soldier for your sovereign and your flag.”

Page 118

"Bully for Tommy's father!" yelled Bert. "I hate being lectured, but that sounds like good common sporting sense, and we'll all try to stick by it on this hunting trip."

They were a nice lot of boys, all jolly, sturdy, manly chaps, who, however, seldom included Billy Jackson in their outings, for every holiday seemed to find him too busy to join them. For notwithstanding his unfortunate fear of a gunshot, Billy had always been a great lover of a uniform. As a youngster he would follow the soldiers every parade day, not for the glory of marching in step to the music of the band, but for the chance it gave him to throw back his shoulders, puff out his small chest, and blow on his tin pipe-whistle in adoring imitation of the bugler. He thought there was nothing in the world so important as the bugler. Billy thought it did not matter that the shining little "trumpet" merely voiced an officer's commands. The fact always remained that at the clear, steady notes the soldiers wheeled to do his bidding; that the bugler was a power for courage or cowardice, whichever way a boy was built.

Then, as he grew older, he, too, began to practise on a bugle. He would sit out on the little side verandah, early and late, tooting every regimental call he could remember, until the time came when his perseverance met with reward. He actually found himself installed as bugler to the little regiment of smartly-uniformed men that was the pride of the gay Ontario city that Billy called home.

Then it was that the other boys never got Billy on a holiday. When Victoria Day came the soldiers always went "into camp" for three days, strict military discipline reigned, and Billy must be with his company. When Dominion Day arrived the regiment always visited some distant city to assist in some important patriotic celebration. Thanksgiving Day always found them in the thick of annual drill, and there was sure to be a "sham battle" at which poor Billy had to toot the commands, his eyes blinking and the nerves chasing themselves up and down his back, while the blank cartridges peppered away harmlessly, and the field-pieces roared innocently past his ears.

"The boys" usually came with throngs of citizens to see the "sham fights." They would range themselves on a slope of hills, as near as possible to the "battlefield," and often above the bellowing guns, above the colonel's command, above his own shrill bugle calls, Billy could hear Bert Hooper and Tommy McLean egging him on, sometimes with jeers, sometimes with admiration, telling him to "Look up plucky now, Billy, and don't stop your ears with your fingers!" He used to be astonished at himself that he cared so little whether they teased or cheered. He seemed to care for nothing in all the world but the Colonel's voice and his bugle.

Then the day came when he knew there was something greater than the colonel to be obeyed, something dearer than his bugle to be proud of. For many weeks the newspapers had teemed with little else but news of the South African War. Nothing was talked of in all Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, but the battles, the hardships, the privations, of the gallant British regiments in the far-off enemy's country.

Then came the cry, wrung from England's heart to her colonies, "Come over and help us!"

Page 119

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, sprang to their feet like obedient children, ready and anxious to fight and die for their mother at her first call.

Billy and his father faced each other—one was sixteen, the other forty. They did not stand looking at each other as father and son, but as man and man.

“Billy,” said his father, “you don’t remember your mother; she died while you were still a baby. If she were living, I would not hint of this to you, but—I go to South Africa with the very first Canadian contingent. You are the best bugler in Canada. What do *you* want to do?”

For an instant Billy was speechless. His nerves shook with a boy’s first fear of battle. His old gun-shyness had him in its grip. Then his heart swelled with the pride aroused by his father’s words; he raised his head, his chin, his eyes, and suddenly his look caught a picture hanging in its deep gold frame on the wall. It was a picture of a little old gray-haired woman—a sad-faced old woman dressed in black and wearing a widow’s cap. It was a picture of Queen Victoria.

Then Billy’s voice came.

“I can’t remember ever having heard my mother speak, but”—pointing to the picture—“*she* has been calling me ever since the war began. I know I’m only a big kid, and I can’t fight with the men, but I *can* bugle, and, Dad, you and I’ll go together.”

Once more they looked at each other as man to man. Then Billy’s father shook hands with him—a hard, true, clinging shake—and, without a word, left the room.

Oh, what a day it was for the little city when the picked men of the regiment marched out in their khaki uniforms, halting at the railway station for all the last good-byes before the train pulled them out eastward, to board the transport ships that swung so impatiently in Halifax harbor! The whole town was at the station, every boy in the place shouting and cheering and wishing he were grown up, were clad in khaki, were shouldering an Enfield rifle, and were going to fight for the queen. When it was all over Bert and Tommy stood watching with straining eyes the fast disappearing train, handkerchiefs and caps and hands were waving from every window, faint snatches of cheers, and the tune of “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” came floating backward. But the boys only saw a small blotch of khaki color on the rear platform of the train, and a brilliant point of light where the golden Canada sun flung back its reflections from a well-polished bugle. They watched that light growing less and less in the distance, until it finally faded like a setting star.

* * * * *

Weeks afterwards the newspapers rang with the glory of it all. The fame and the bravery of the Canadian regiments at the terrible battle of Paardeburg was known to all the world. Bert and Tommy and the rest of the boys devoured every line that touched on that wonderful fight, but their pride fairly broke bounds when in the great city papers they read this description:

Page 120

"Throughout the thickest of the fight, a small but noticeable figure held his ground like a rock. It was a stocky little 'Canuck' bugler, whose life seemed almost charmed, so thickly did the Boer bullets pepper about him, leaving him absolutely unhurt."

"That's Billy!" they shouted hoarsely at each other. "Billy, as sure as you're alive!" Then they fairly covered the town with the news, gathering all the boys together in one big rejoicing crowd, telling each other over and over again the story of the battle, and joining in the monster parade, carrying banners, flags, lanterns and torches, to give honor to Canadian pluck and patriotism.

* * * * *

And then, one day, a train came steaming and roaring into the station. The thronging crowds, the gay flags, the merry bands, and the ringing cheers, were a welcome greeting for the little knot of war-worn men who had fought so loyally for queen and country.

"The stocky little Canuck!" as everyone now called Billy Jackson, was almost the last to alight from the train. He looked terribly shy and bashful at the uproarious reception he got; but he stood erect in his faded and patched old khaki uniform, his battered bugle still flashed back the sunlight, and his handgrip was as firm as his father's as the boys crowded up, yelling, "What's the matter with Gun-Shy Billy? *He's all right!*"

But even as they cheered and welcomed him, Billy's eyes grew strangely odd-looking. The shyness and the smile seemed to sink out of them. His glance had caught sight of a slender, black-draped figure standing far back from the welcoming crowd—the figure of a young woman whose fingers clasped the chubby hand of a boy about three years old. For an instant Billy stood voiceless, his eyes staring, his mouth twitching nervously, his hands rigid and icy.

"Come on! Come on, fellows!" shouted the boys, as the crowd surged closer about him, and friendly hands seized him by arm and shoulder.

But he moved not a step.

"Why, Billy, what's up?" exclaimed a dozen excited voices. "Come on! The carriages are waiting to start the parade! The band's getting in line. Hurry up! Hurry up!"

Then Billy spoke. His voice came, shaky, as in the old, gun-shy days; but quietly as he spoke, the words seemed to reach across the whole station platform.

"Boys! Oh, boys! There's poor Jack Morrison's wife and the little lad he sent his love to!"

The crowd hushed its gay clamor and every head turned towards the woman in black and the chubby child. They stood quite alone, silent, white-faced, weary. Jack Morrison was the only one who had not returned with the brave little band of soldiers who had set forth so valiantly months before.

Page 121

"I saw him fall," said Billy hoarsely; "fall, shot in a dozen places. For a moment, boys, I think I failed to bugle. I dropped on my knees and raised his poor face out of the dust. 'Billy,' he said, 'Billy, when you get home, give my love to my wife and little Buddie.' Then he just seemed to sink into a heap, and I sprang up to 'commands.' Boys, through the rest of that fight I could see nothing but Mrs. Morrison's white face, hear nothing but her sobs. Oh, the misery of it all! I seemed to grow into an old man all at once. I could see myself coming home, and all of us here cheering—all but Jack Morrison."

No one spoke. A vast silence fell, and the cheering ceased. Then Billy walked quietly through the crowd, and standing beside the white-faced widow, picked up the child in his strong young arms. He was not used to babies, and looked awkward and stiff and terribly conscious. Then he pulled himself together.

"I have a message for you, Mrs. Morrison, and for this little chap here. I'll come and see you to-morrow, if I may, when all this fuss and flag-waving is over."

The woman looked blankly at him, with eyes that seemed watching for something—something that never came. Billy dared not trust himself to say another word. He finally set the child down and turned away.

In a few minutes the "procession" was in full swing, Billy and his father, in one of the carriages, being driven beneath arches and banners, and handclasped on all sides. Somehow, he got through that uproarious day smiling, but shy as usual, but when night came he was tired and utterly undone, and "turned in" early. But sleep would not come. Then he arose and crept to his little bedroom window, standing there a long, long time alone in the dark—thinking. How glorious it all had been!—the glad, loyal faces of his boy friends, the magnificent welcome home—if only they could have brought Jack Morrison back with them! Oh! Billy would have given up all the glory, the music, the cheers, the banners, to get away from the haunting memory of a woman's white, suffering face and black-robed figure, and the feel of the clinging hands of a tiny fatherless boy! His eyes did not see the homely street at his feet—the dying rockets and fireworks glaring against the sky. He saw only a simple grave in the open veldt in far-away Africa—a grave that he, himself, had heaped with stones formed in the one word "Canada." At the recollection of it, poor Billy buried his aching head in his hands. The glory had paled and vanished. There was nothing left of this terrible war but the misery, the mourning, the heartbreak of it all!

The Brotherhood

"What is the silver chain for, Queetah?" asked the boy, lifting the tomahawk* and running the curious links between his thumb and fingers. "I never saw one before."

[The tomahawk and avenging knife spoken of in the story are both in the possession of the writer, the knife having been buried for seventy-three years on the estate where she was born.]

Page 122

The Mohawk smiled. "That is because few tomahawks content themselves with times of peace. While war lives, you will never see a silver chain worn by an Iroquois, nor will you see it on anything he possesses," he answered.

"Then it is the badge of peace?" questioned the boy.

"The badge of peace—yes," replied Queetah.

It was a unique weapon which the boy fingered so curiously. The tomahawk itself was shaped like a slender axe, and wrought of beaten copper, with a half-inch edge of gleaming steel cleverly welded on, forming a deadly blade. At the butt end of the axe was a delicately shaped pipe bowl, carved and chased with heads of animals, coiling serpents and odd conventional figures, totems of the once mighty owner, whose war cry had echoed through the lake lands and forests more than a century ago. The handle was but eighteen inches long, a smooth polished stem of curled maple, the beauty of the natural wood heightened by a dark strip of color that wound with measured, even sweeps from tip to base like a ribbon. Queetah had long ago told the boy how that rich spiral decoration was made—how the old Indians wound the wood with strips of wet buckskin, then burnt the exposed wood sufficiently to color it. The beautiful white coils were the portions protected by the hide from the flame and smoke.

Inlaid in this handle were strange designs of dull-beaten silver, cubes and circles and innumerable hearts, the national symbol of the Mohawks. At the extreme end was a small, flat metal mouthpiece, for this strange weapon was a combination of sun and shadow; it held within itself the unique capabilities of being a tomahawk, the most savage instrument in Indian warfare, and also a peace pipe, that most beautiful of all Indian treasures.

"It is so strange," said the boy, fingering the weapon lovingly. "Your people are the most terrible on the warpath of all the nations in the world, yet they seem to think more of that word 'peace,' and to honor it more, than all of us put together. Why, you even make silver chains for emblems of peace, like this," and he tangled his slim fingers in the links that looped from the lower angle of the steel edge to the handle.

"Yes," replied Queetah, "we value peace; it is a holy word to the red man, perhaps because it is so little with us, because we know its face so slightly. The face of peace has no fiery stripes of color, no streaks of the deadly black and red, the war paints of the fighting Mohawks. It is a face of silver, like this chain, and when it smiles upon us, we wash the black and red from off our cheeks, and smoke this pipe as a sign of brotherhood with all men."

"Brotherhood with all men," mused the boy, aloud. "We palefaces have no such times, Queetah. Some of us are always at war. If we are not fighting here, we are fighting beyond the great salt seas. I wish we had more of your ways, Queetah—your Indian

ways. I wish we could link a silver chain around the world; we think we are the ones to teach, but I believe you could teach us much. Will you not teach me now? Tell me the story of this tomahawk. I may learn something from it—something of Indian war, peace and brotherhood.”

Page 123

"The story is yours to hear," said the Mohawk, "if you would see how peace grows out of deeds of blood, as the blue iris grows from the blackness of the swamp; but it is the flower that the sun loves, not the roots, buried in the darkness, from which the blossom springs. So we of the red race say that the sun shines on peace alone, not the black depths beneath it."

The Mohawk paused and locked his hands about his knees, while the boy stretched himself at full length and stared up at the far sky beyond the interlacing branches overhead. He loved to lie thus, listening to the quaint tales of olden days that Queetah had stored up in his wonderful treasure-house of memory. Everything the Indian possessed had associated with it some wild tale of early Canadian history, some strange half-forgotten Indian custom or legend, so he listened now to the story of the last time that the ancient Indian law of "a life for a life" was carried out in the beautiful Province of Ontario, while the low, even voice of the Mohawk described the historical event, giving to the tale the Indian term for the word "peace," which means "the silver chain that does not tarnish."

"This was the tomahawk of my grandsire, who had won his eagle plume by right of great bravery. For had he not at your age—just fifteen years—stood the great national test of starving for three days and three nights without a whimper? Did not this make him a warrior, with the right to sit among the old men of his tribe, and to flaunt his eagle plume in the face of his enemy? Ok-wa-ho was his name; it means 'The Wolf,' and young as he was, like the wolf he could snarl and show his fangs. His older brother was the chief, tall and terrible, with the scowl of thunder on his brow and the gleaming fork of lightning in his eyes. This chief thought never of council fires or pipes or hunting or fishing, he troubled not about joining the other young men in their sports of lacrosse or snow-snake, or bowl-and-beans; to him there was nothing in life but the warpath, no song but the war cry, no color but the war paint. Daily he sharpened his scalping knife, daily he polished his tomahawk, daily feathered and poisoned his arrows, daily he sought enemies, taunted them, insulted them, braved them and conquered them; while his young brother, Ok-wa-ho, rested in their lodge listening to the wisdom of the old men, learning their laws and longing for peace. Once Ok-wa-ho had said, 'My brother, stay with us, wash from thy cheeks the black and scarlet; thy tomahawk has two ends: one is an edge, dyed often in blood, but show us that thou hast not forgotten how to use the other end—fill thy pipe.'

"'Little brother,' replied the chief, 'thou art yet but a stripling boy; smoke, then, the peace pipe, but it is not for me.'

Page 124

“Ok-wa-ho felt this to be an insult. It was a taunt on his bravery. He squared his boyish shoulders, and, lifting his narrow chin, flung back the answer, ‘I, too, can use both ends, the edge as well as the pipe.’ The great chief laughed. ‘That is right, Little Brother, and some day the tribe will ask you to show them how well you can use the edge. I shall not always be victor; some day I shall fall, and my enemy will place his foot on my throat and voice the war cry of victory, just as I have done these many days. Hast thou sat among the wise men of our people long enough to learn what thou must do then—when the enemy laughs over my body?’

“‘Yes,’ replied the boy, ‘I am thy nearest of kin. Indian law demands that I alone must avenge thy death. Thy murderer must die, and die by no hand but mine. It is the law.’

“‘It is the law,’ echoed the chief. ‘I can trust you to carry it out, eh, Little Brother?’

“‘You can trust me, no matter how great a giant thy enemy may be,’ answered the boy.

“‘Thy words are as thy name,’ smiled the chief. ‘Thou art indeed worthy of thy eagle plume. Thou art a true Ok-wa-ho.’ Then placing his scalping knife in its sheath at his belt he lifted his palm to his lips, a long, strange, quivering yell rent the forest trails—a yell of defiance, of mastery, of challenge; his feet were upon the warpath once more.

“That night, while the campfires yet glowed and flickered, painting the forest with black shadows, against which curled the smoke from many pipe bowls, a long, strange, haunting note came faintly down on the wings of the water—the dark river whispering past bore on its deep currents the awful sound of the Death Cry.

“‘Some mighty one has fallen,’ said the old men. ‘The victor is voicing his triumph from far upstream.’ Then as the hours slipped by, a runner came up the forest trail, chanting the solemn song of the departed. As he neared the campfires he ceased his song, and in its place gave once again the curdling horror of the Death Cry.

“‘Who is the victor? Who the fallen brave?’ cried the old men.

“‘Thy chief this hour hunts buffalo in the happy hunting grounds, while his enemy, Black Star, of the Bear Clan, sings the war song of the Great Unconquered,’ replied the runner.

“‘Ah, ha!’ replied the old men. ‘Ok-wa-ho here is next of kin, but this stripling boy is too young, too small, to face and fight Black Star. But the law is that no other hand but his may avenge his brother’s death. So our great dead chief must sleep—sleep while his murderer sings and taunts us with his freedom.’

“‘Not so!’ cried the young Ok-wa-ho. ‘I shall face Black Star. I shall obey the law of my people. My hand is small but strong, my aim is sure, my heart is brave, and my vengeance will be swift.’

Page 125

"Before the older men could stay him he was away, but first he snatched the silver chain from off his tomahawk, emptied the bowl of tobacco, destroyed all the emblems of peace, and turned his back upon the council fire. All night long he scoured the forest for his brother's slayer, all night long he flung from his boyish lips the dreaded war cry of the avenger, and when day broke he drank from the waters of the river, and followed the trail that led to the lodge of his mighty enemy. Outside the door sat Black Star of the Bear Clan; astride a fallen tree he lounged arrogantly; his hands, still red with last night's horrors, were feathering arrows. His savage face curled into a sneer as the boy neared him. Then a long, taunting laugh broke over the dawn, and he jeered:

"So, pretty maiden-boy, what hast thou to do with the Great Unconquered?"

"I am the brother of thy victim," said Ok-wa-ho, as he slipped his tomahawk from his belt, placing it on the low bark roof of the lodge, in case he needed a second weapon.

"The Avenger, eh?" scoffed Black Star, mockingly.

"The Avenger—yes," repeated the boy. Then walking deliberately up to the savage warrior, he placed his left hand on the other's shoulder, and, facing him squarely, said: 'I am here to carry out the law of our people; because I am young, it does not mean that I must not obey the rules of older and wiser men. Will you fight me now? I demand it.'

"The other sneered. 'Fight *you*?' he said disdainfully. 'I do not fight babies or women. Thou hast a woman's wrist, a baby's fingers. They could not swing a tomahawk.'

"No?" the boy sneered. 'Perhaps thou art right, but they can plunge a knife. Did thou not lend my brother a knife last night? Yes? Then I have come to return it.' There was a flash of steel, a wild death cry, and Ok-wa-ho's knife was buried to the hilt in the heart of Black Star of the Bear Clan."

Queetah ceased speaking, for the paleface boy, lying at his feet, had shuddered and locked his teeth at the gruesome tale.

"But, Queetah," he said, after a long pause, "I thought this was a story of peace, of 'the silver chain that does not tarnish.'"

"It is," replied the Indian. "You shall hear how peace was born out of that black deed—listen:

"When Black Star of the Bear Clan lay dead at his feet, the centuries of fighting blood surged up in the boy's whole body. He placed his moccasined foot on the throat of the conquered, flung back his head, and gave the long, wild Mohawk war cry of victory. Far off that cry reached the ears of the older men, smoking about their council fire.

“‘It is Ok-wa-ho’s voice,’ they said proudly, ‘and it is the cry of victory. We may never hear that cry again, for the white man’s law and rule begins to-day.’ Which was true, for after that the Mohawks came under the governmental laws of Canada. It was the last time the red man’s native law of justice, of ‘blood for blood,’ was ever enacted in Ontario. This is history—Canadian history—not merely a tale of horror with which to pass this winter afternoon.” Again Queetah ceased speaking, and again the boy persisted.

Page 126

“But the silver chain?”

With a dreamy, far-away look the Indian continued:

“One never uses an avenging knife again. The blade even must not be wiped; it is a dark deed, even to an Indian’s soul, and the knife must be buried on the dark side of a tree—the north side, where the sun never shines, where the moss grows thickest. Ok-wa-ho buried his blood-stained knife, slipping it blade downwards beneath the moss, took his unused tomahawk, and returned to his people. ‘The red man’s law is ended,’ he said.

“‘Yes, we must be as white men now,’ replied the older men, sadly.

“That night Ok-wa-ho beat into this handle these small silver hearts. They are the badge of brotherhood with all men. The next day white men came, explaining the new rule that must hold sway in the forest. ‘If there is bloodshed among you,’ they said, ‘the laws of Canada will punish the evil-doer. Put up your knives and tomahawks, and be at peace.’

“And as the years went on and on, these ancient Indian customs all dropped far into the past. Only one thing remained to remind Ok-wa-ho of his barbarous, boyish deed: it was the top branch of a tall tree waving above its fellows. As he fished and paddled peacefully miles up the river, he could see that treetop, and his heart never forgot what was lying at its roots. He grew old, old, until he reached the age of eighty-nine, but the tree-top still waved and the roots still held their secret.

“He came to me then. I was but a boy myself, but his grandson, and he loved me. He told me this strange tale, adding: ‘Queetah, my feet must soon travel up the long trail. I would know what peace is like before I go on the journey—come, we will unearth the knife.’ I followed where he led. We found the weapon three feet down in the earth, where the years had weighted it. In places the steel was still bright, but in others dark patches of rust covered the scarlet of Black Star’s blood, [Fact.] fresh seventy-three years before.

“‘It is yours,’ said Ok-wa-ho, placing it in my hand. ‘See, the sun shines on it; perhaps that will lessen the darkness of the deed, but I obeyed the Indian law. Seventy-three years this knife has lain buried. [Fact.] It was the last law, the last law.’

“That night Ok-wa-ho began to hammer and beat and mold these silver links. When they were finished he welded them firmly to the tomahawk, and, just before he went up the long, long trail, he gave it to me, saying, ‘This blade has never tasted blood, it will never have dark spots on it like those on the knife. The silver chain does not tarnish, for it means peace, and brotherhood of all men.’”

Queetah's voice ceased. The tale was ended.

"And peace has reigned ever since?" asked the boy, still looking at the far-off sky through the branches overhead.

"Peace has reigned ever since," replied Queetah. "The Mohawks and the palefaces are brothers, under one law. That was the last Avenging Knife. It is Canadian history."

Page 127

The Signal Code

Ever since Benny Ellis had been a little bit of a shaver he had played at "railroad." Not just now and again, as other boys do, but he rarely touched a game or a sport before he would ingeniously twist it into a "pretend" railroad. Marbles were to him merely things to be used to indicate telegraph poles, with glass and agate alleys as stations. Sliding down hill on a bobsleigh, he invariably tooted and whistled like an engine, and trudging uphill he puffed and imitated a heavy freight climbing up grade. The ball grounds were to him the "Y" at the Junction, the shunting yards, or the turn bridge at the roundhouse, for Benny's father was an engineer, who ran the fast mail over the big western division of the new road, where mountains and forests were cut and levelled and tunnelled for the long, heavy transcontinental train to climb through, and in his own home the boy heard little but railroad talk, so he came by his preferences honestly.

"Well, Benny, been railroading to-day?" his father would often ask playfully, on one of the three nights in the week when he was home, with the grime of the engine coal-oiled from his big hands, and his blue over-jeans hanging out behind the kitchen door.

"Yes, daddy," the youngster would begin excitedly, and climbing on to the arm of his father's chair, he would beat his little heels together in his eagerness to get the story out in speech, and proceed to explain how he had built a "pretend" track in the yard with curves and grades, over which his little express cart ran "bully." "And 'round the curves we just signal to the other train and have whistles with real meanings to them, like a really big train."

"Oho! getting up the signal system, are you, now?" his father would grin. "Why, you'll be big enough and wise enough soon to come on Number 27 and wipe the engine or 'fire' for daddy. Won't that be nice?" Then the big man would set the chubby child of six years down on the floor to play, as he winked knowingly at Benny's mother, who nodded a smiling reply.

But it did not take many years to make Benny a pretty big boy, and one of the boy-kind who always start schemes and devices among their schoolfellows. He seemed to be a born leader, with a crowd of other boys always at his heels ready to follow where he ventured, or to mimic what he did. No one ever walked ahead of him, no one ever suggested things to do or places to go, when the engineer's son was around. He was always the vanguard, but fortunately was the kind of boy who rarely, if ever, led his followers into trouble. Finally someone nicknamed him "the Con," as short for "Conductor," for he still played at railroading, and had long since decided that when school days were over he would go as a train hand, and perhaps be lucky enough to be sometimes in his father's crew. It was about this time, when Benny was twelve, that he invented

Page 128

the signal code, and more than once it got “the gang” out of serious trouble. The little divisional town where he lived was shut in between hills so closely that it was a veritable furnace in summer, and all who could went out camping, or built shacks on the Three Islands in the little lake two miles farther down the track. So Benny and his little brother and sister went with their mother to join some neighbors camping, and dad would come down on a hand-car on off nights to get a breath of air, and the coal dust blown out of his keen eyes. It did not take the shrewd engineer long to discover that the boys on the islands had a signal code. One would stand on his boat landing and wave a strip of white cotton into a lot of grotesque figures, and far off on another island some other boy would reply with similar figures, and after much “talking,” the various boys would act with perfect understanding, either meeting out on the lake, in the boats, or going swimming, or building camp fires—it did not matter much what they decided upon, but after these signals they all worked in unison.

And one night something happened of real import. It was just sunset one beautiful August day, and Mr. Ellis, wearied with a long, hard run, lay drinking in the wild beauty of the lonely lake, with its forest-covered shores and its rocky islands. Over on the mainland the McKenzie’s camp gleamed white in the sunset. One could discern every movement in the clear air, although the tents were a full mile, if not more, from where the wearied engineer lay, grateful for the stillness, after hours of the heated convulsions of the great steed he drove, day after day.

“There go the McKenzie boys for a swim, Benny,” called out his father. “Too bad you’re not with them, but you and I’ll go in together here, if you like.”

“All right, dad,” answered Benny, leaving his fishing tackle to watch his young neighbors. Then, “Say, the boys have a dandy beach there. I wish ours was as good. The only trouble is you’ve got to swim around that big rock to it. There’s no climbing over it, and there’s only one resting place on the way, but we always go. It’s great! See, dad, there they go!” as the two white, gleaming young bodies plunged into the lake. No sooner were they well out than right at the base of the rock, and along the very beach they were heading for, came, stealthily and ponderously, a huge black bear and two woolly cubs. Straight for the water’s edge they paddled their way; then stood drinking, drinking, endlessly.

“Great Caesar! Benny, look, look!” yelled Mr. Ellis, sitting upright and rigid. “The boys, the McKenzie boys are heading right round that rock. They’ll head on right into that she-bear!” Benny stood, perfectly voiceless, paralyzed with the sight. “The animal’s savage with heat and thirst. They always are when they have cubs along, and there are those naked boys making straight for her.”

Then he sprang to his feet, yelling at the top of his lungs, "Take care! Go back! Go back!" But the boys still swam on. They either could not hear him, or else his voice carried no warning. "Quick, Benny!" he shouted, "get my revolver on the shelf. I'll get the boat out. We must go to help them. They're dead boys, as sure as anything."

Page 129

But Benny had found his tongue and his wits. "There they go, climbing on to the resting-place. They'll stay a second there, and—"

But at that instant he broke off, and dashing into the shack, seized the white tablecloth, scattering the supper dishes far and wide. With a rush he was at a point of rock which the dying sun flooded with a brilliant red light. In this radiance the boy stood, swinging about his head the white cloth until it circled five times, then dropped to his feet. Seizing it again, he held it at arm's length in his right hand, then dexterously tossed it over his head and caught it in his left.

"Oh, I wonder if they see me!" he cried, shakily, then once more went through the signals. A faint, far whistle reached his ears. Then, in a weakness of relief, he dropped down on the rocks, shouting, "They'll never budge, dad. They understand."

But Mr. Ellis was already in the boat, revolver in hand, and three seconds later he and Benny were pulling for all they were worth towards the shivering swimmers, who crouched on the resting-place, unconscious of why they must remain there, or what danger threatened.

Very little was said until Benny and his dad had them safely in the boat, and had rowed them round the rock and pointed silently at the bear and cubs, which still lapped the water at the edge of the beach. As she caught sight of the boat, the mother growled sullenly, and her red tongue dripped saliva as she started for them until she was breast high in the water. But strong arms pulled the boat out far beyond danger, and the tragedy that might have been was averted by a boy's invention and quick wit. It was very late when the Ellis family had supper that night, but Mrs. Ellis did not mind the broken and scattered dishes when she saw what a rescue Benny had accomplished. They all talked until they were tired, just as the McKenzie boys talked at their camp. Later Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie rowed across the lake in the dark, to tell their gratitude to Benny and his father. But Mr. Ellis would have none of it. "You just owe it to Benny, here," he laughed. "But what he did with that white tablecloth beats me."

"That's part of my signal code," said the boy, a little shyly. "I invented it; it's our Scout Society Code, but I don't mind telling you, after all this, that three circles of any white cloth above one's head means 'Danger,' five circles means 'Great Danger,' and a toss from one hand to the other up through the air means 'Don't move. Stay where you are.'"

"Well, I never knew that child's play would save my boys' lives," said Mr. McKenzie gratefully. "I knew these kiddies had some fool 'code' they played at, but this beats me, as well as you."

"It's no 'fool' code, friend Mack," answered the engineer. "It's what an engine whistle or the swing of a lantern is to us trainmen, and I'm glad our boys play at something so

sensible. It's a mighty good thing once in a while, as we saw to-day—this 'Signal Code.'"

Page 130

* * * * *

It was late in September when the little colony on the lake struck camp and pulled into town. The hunting season was well on, and sportsmen were out after deer and partridge, and Benny and his friends had been fortunate enough to shoot two birds and a jack rabbit. This, of course, meant that every Saturday they took to the woods, with the one little shotgun the crowd possessed, for in the wild, new railway districts it is a good thing for boys to learn to be good shots while yet young. Often in the snowbound winters meat is scarce, and one's food is frequently the result of being a dead shot, so guns in the hands of boys of ten and twelve are nothing unusual. One wonderful autumn day six of "the gang" had prowled the forest for hours, and had succeeded in bugging some plump partridges, and late in the afternoon they all sprawled out in the Indian summer sunshine, finishing the remnants of their luncheon, and looking about the marvellous cavern that, formed by the pine-crowned hills, lay like a cup at their feet. In and out wound the railroad track, a lonely, isolated bit of man's handiwork threading through the vastness of nature. It was the only sign of human life visible, until, after a long, lazy hour, Benny sat up staring with round eyes into the valley below. A thin scarf of blue smoke was indolently curling up from a spot apparently in the forest. He called the attention of the boys to it, and for want of something else to do they lay and watched it. Presently a puff arose more rapidly. Then another.

"That's a real fire, sure enough," said Benny. "Bet you it will burn among the timber for a month this dry season."

"Doesn't look among the timber," said another boy. "Looks as if it was along the track."

"Let's go down there and see," said someone else, and forthwith "the gang" scrambled to their feet, grabbed their gun and ammunition bag and birds, and proceeded to slip and slide and scramble down the steeps, until a half-hour brought them to the railroad, along which they ran towards the direction from where they had seen the smoke. They ran through a big cut, rounded an abrupt curve, and dashed right into a cloud of smoke, while the crackle of flame spit and sparkled, bringing them up short with speechless horror. The huge, wooden railroad trestle spanning Whitefish Creek was in flames. For an instant the entire gang gazed at it dumbly. Then a boy yelled:

"Great Scott, fellows, isn't it good there's no train due? She'd plunge round this curve right into it."

Then Benny Ellis went white. "Who's got a watch?" he asked very quietly.

"My Ingersoll says five-fifteen, and she's right, too," replied Joe McKenzie.

Benny gulped; he seemed to find a difficulty in speaking, but the words finally came. "My dad went down to Grey's Point to bring up a special to-night, the Divisional

Superintendent's private car and some fast freight. They're—they're—they're due about now."

Page 131

"Thanks be! Grey's Point is this side of the trestle. We can stop them," shouted Joe, and without argument "the gang" turned, tearing at a breakneck pace around the curve, and through the cut, in a hopeless effort to make their home town before the special reached it.

Breathlessly they ran for ten minutes, stumbling along the sleepers, recovering, then forging ahead, until, cutting the evening air, came a long, thin whistle, and immediately afterwards the black nose of an engine and a ribbon of smoke rounded a distant curve, and came bearing down on them at the rate of forty-five miles an hour.

"The gang" paused, standing rock still for an instant, then five of them danced up and down, waving their arms wildly, to signal the train to stop. But the sixth boy—Benny Ellis—white as a sheet, was tearing madly at his collar, and dragging off his coat. Then quick as a flash he skinned from his narrow shoulders his blue cotton shirt, faded almost white by the summer suns, and dashing down the track towards the oncoming engine, whirled it high above his head in five distinct circles, while his young voice, hoarse with a frenzy of fear, shrieked, "Father, father! Oh, dad, try to remember. Try, try!"

And from the cab of the great mogul, Engineer Ellis was peering out with his keen eyes piercing the track ahead, his hand at the throttle.

"Jim," he called abruptly to his fireman. There was something in his tone that made Jim fling himself to the window. Then both men exclaimed simultaneously, "It's a hold-up."

"There's six of them, and one's got a gun," gasped the engineer. "We'll have to crowd on steam and rush them, unless they've wrecked the track." Then, as the huge iron monster lifted itself to greater speed, Mr. Ellis saw something like a white flag wave in the air then fall. Once more it circled, one, two, three, four, five times above someone's head, fell again, then was tossed from one hand high in the air and caught in the other.

"Jim, I've seen that signal somewhere. It means something." Then, like a photograph, he seemed to see a lake, two boys swimming, and a black bear and cubs on a far shore, while Benny's voice rang in his ears: "Five circles means 'Great danger,' and a toss from one hand to the other up through the air means 'Don't move; stay where you are.'"

"It's the boys, Jim," gasped the engineer. "There's something wrong." Before the words had left his lips the shrill whistle was shrieking for "brakes"—"double brakes" at that—and the gigantic engine almost leaped from the rails as the halter was thrown about her neck. On she rushed, slipping, grinding, rocking in her restraint. The train crew and passengers in the rear car pitched almost on their faces with the violent checking of speed, until, snorting and pulsing and belching, the great mogul came to a standstill.



“Oh, daddy, you *did* remember, you *did*, after all!” cried a very white-faced little boy who peered up into the cab window with horrified eyes, while his naked shoulders heaved, and his hand clutched a torn, faded blue shirt.

Page 132

"What's the meaning of this nonsense, Ellis?" thundered an angry voice behind him, and the superintendent, black with scowling, glared at first the boy, then the engineer.

"What's this stop for, when you know I haven't a minute to spare getting to Dubuc? You nearly broke my neck, too, downing brakes. What does it mean, I say?"

But when the boys, bold with excitement, dragged the great man around the curve, and pointed to the doomed trestle, with its already falling timbers, it was another story altogether. From the engineer's white lips he listened to the history of Benny's "signal code." Then for a long time the great man stood looking at the burning trestle. Once he muttered aloud, "All our lives, a priceless engine, valuable freight, rolling stock, *all saved!*" Then, whirling rapidly on his heel, he said, "Ellis, we want your boy on the road when he's bigger. The boy who can invent a useful plaything and keep his head in an emergency is the boy we want to make into a man on the great Transcontinental. Will you let us have him?"

"Ask Benny what he wants to do!" smiled the engineer.

"Well, little 'Signal Code' man, what do you want to do?" asked the superintendent.

"Speak, old man."

The boy was looking him directly in the eyes. "Go on the great Transcontinental, if I get the chance," he replied.

"You'll get the chance all right," said the superintendent. "*I'll* see that you get it. Ellis, you may back the train down into town now. There's lots to see to about reconstructing the trestle." Then under his breath he added: "That's the sort of boy we want on the railroad. That's the sort of boy!"

The Shadow Trail

A Christmas Story

Peter Ottertail was a full-blooded Mohawk Indian, who, notwithstanding his almost eighty years, still had the fine, thin features, the upright shoulders, and the keen, bright eyes of the ancient, warlike tribe to which he belonged. He was a great favorite with Mr. Duncan, the earnest Scotch minister, who had made a personal companion of Peter all through the years he had been a missionary on the Indian Reserve; and as for the two Duncan boys, they had literally been brought up in the hollow of the old Indian's hands. How those boys had ever acquired the familiar names of "Tom" and "Jerry" no one seemed to remember; they really had been christened Alexander and Stuart by their own father in his own church. Then Peter Ottertail had, after the manner of all Indians, given them nicknames, and they became known throughout the entire copper-colored congregation as "The Pony" and "The Partridge." Peter had named Alexander, alias

“Tom,” “The Pony,” because of his sturdy, muscular back and firm, strong little mouth, that occasionally looked as if it could take the bit right in its teeth and bolt; and Stuart, alias “Jerry,” was named “The Partridge,” because of his truly

Page 133

marvellous habit of disappearing when you tried to drum him up to go errands or carry wood. Fortunately for the boys themselves, they were made of the good stuff that did not mind nicknames and jests; and when, at the ages of ten and twelve, they were packed off to school in a distant city, they were the very first to tell their schoolfellows Peter's pet names, which, however, never "took root" on the school playground, "Tom" and "Jerry" being far more to the taste of young Canadian football and lacrosse players.

During the school terms, old Peter Ottertail would come to the parsonage every Sunday after church, would dine seriously with Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, and, when saying good-bye, would always shake his head solemnly, and say, "I'll come no more until my Pony and Partridge come home." But the following Sunday saw him back again, and the first day of vacation was not hailed with greater delight by the boys than by their old friend Peter. The nearest railway station was eleven miles distant, but rain or shine, blood-heat or zero, Peter always hitched up his own team and set out hours too early to meet the train. On arriving at the station, he would tie up his horses and sit smoking his black stone pipe for a long time. The distant whistle of the incoming train alone aroused him from rapt thought, and presently his dark old face was beaming on his boys, who always surprised him by having grown greatly during the term, and who made as much fuss and hilarious welcome over him as if Mr. Duncan himself had come to drive them home. So this delightful comradeship went on, year in, year out. The boys spent every day of their holidays in the woods or on the river with Peter. He taught them a thousand things few white boys have the privilege of learning. They could hollow canoes, shape paddles, make arrows and "feather" them, season bows, distinguish poisonous plants from harmless ones, foretell the wind and the weather, the various moons, and the habits of game and fish, and they knew every tale and superstition on the reserve.

One day, just before the Christmas holidays old Peter appeared at the parsonage. Mrs. Duncan herself opened the door, smiling, sweet and a little younger-looking than when he had seen her the previous Sunday.

"Come in! Come in, Peter!" she cried, brightly. "We're all in a turmoil, but happy as kittens! Tom and Jerry are coming to-morrow, and bringing two friends with them, nice boys from Jamaica, who are too far away from their home to return for Christmas. They've never seen snow in their lives until this winter, and we must all try to give the little fellows a good time, Peter. I'm busy already with extra cooking. Boys must eat, mustn't they?"

"Yes, Mis' Duncan," answered the old man, slowly, "and these snow-seers will eat double in the north country. Yes, I'll go and fetch them with my big lumber sleigh, and take plenty of buffalo robes and wolf skins to keep these children of the sun warm."

Page 134

Mrs. Duncan smiled. She could already hear Peter nicknaming the little chaps from Jamaica "The Snow-Seer" and "The Sun Child," in his own beautifully childlike and appropriate fashion. And she was quite right. Peter had hardly shaken hands and tucked the four boys snugly into his big bob-sleigh, before the names slipped off his tongue with the ease of one who had used them for a lifetime.

Tom and Jerry had fully prepared their Southern friends for everything. They had talked for hours with great pride of their father's devotion to his Indian congregation, of their mother's love for the mission, of the Indians' responsive affection for them, of the wonderful progress the Mohawks had made, of their beautiful church, with its city-like appointments, its stained windows, its full-toned organ and choir of all Indian voices, until the Jamaica boys began to feel they were not to see any "wild" Indians at all. Peter, however, reassured them somewhat, for, although he was not clad in buckskin and feathers, he wore exquisitely beaded moccasins, a scarlet sash about his waist, a small owl feather sticking in his hat band, and his ears were pierced, displaying huge earrings of hammered silver. Yes, they decided that Peter Ottertail was unmistakably a Mohawk Indian.

Tom and Jerry had never entertained any boys before, and, after the first day at home, they began to fear things would be dull for their friends at Christmas, who always spent such gay city holidays. They need not have worried, however, for the boys found too much novelty even in this forest home ever to feel the lack of city life. They of course, fell in love with old Peter at once, and not a day passed but all four of them could be seen driving, snowshoeing, tobogganing, skating, with the old Mohawk looming not very far distant; and, as Christmas approached, with all its church interests, they swung into the festivities of the remote mission with all the zest that boys in their early teens possess.

The young Southerners had never visited at a minister's house before, and at first they were very sedate, laughed not too loudly, and carried themselves with the dignity of little old gentlemen; but within a day they learned that, because a man was a great, good, noble missionary, it did not necessarily mean that he must look serious and never enjoy any fun with the boys. Mr. Duncan always made it a rule that no house in existence must be more attractive to Tom and Jerry than their own home, and that it depended very largely upon their father as to whether they longed to stay in their own home and bring their young friends in, too, or whether they longed to go outside their father's house to meet their playfellows. Needless to say that, with such a father, Tom and Jerry had a pretty good time at home, and it was only what they expected when, the day before Christmas, as all four boys were racketing around the kitchen and nearly convulsing Mrs. Duncan with laughter by their antics, while she tried almost vainly to finish cooking the last savory dainties for the morrow, that Mr. Duncan should suddenly appear in the doorway, and say:

Page 135

"Now, boys, to-night will be Christmas Eve. You know in the heart of the forest we can't get much in the way of entertainment, and I don't want our young Jamaica friends to feel homesick for their beautiful, Southern country to-night of all nights. I've racked my brains to think of some amusement after supper this Christmas Eve, but I seem to have failed. Can't you, Tom and Jerry, help me out?"

There was a brief silence; then, of course, the sweet busy mother spoke:

"Peter Ottertail and I have schemed together for that. I have invited him to supper, and we are to have a roaring fire built here in the kitchen, and Peter is to tell the four boys some Indian stories, while you and I, father, finish the Christmas tree in the parlor. What do you think of my idea?"

She need not have asked, for such a clamor of delight went up that her own words were drowned.

"Excellent!" cried Mr. Duncan, when finally he could be heard. "Excellent, for we don't want you young mischiefs in the parlor at all, seeing your presents the day before; and the only one I know who could keep you out is Peter. Splendid idea of yours, Mary. Boys, it's these mothers who have the real Christmas things in their hearts."

"Yes, and in the oven, too!" laughed Mrs. Duncan, extracting therefrom a big pan of deliciously light cake, whose spicy fragrance assailed the boys' nostrils temptingly. "This," she continued, "is to be eaten here in the kitchen to-night. It goes with Peter's stories."

"Jolly!" said someone, and the four youthful voices immediately swung into:

"For mother's a jolly good fellow,
For mother's a jolly good fellow,
For mother's a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny!"

And, joining in the last line, there boomed a fifth voice which sounded suspiciously like Mr. Duncan's.

* * * * *

A crackling wood fire was roaring up the chimney from the large stove in the kitchen. On the spotlessly white pine floor were spread soft, grey lynx skins, one or two raccoon skins with their fluffy, ringed tails, and a couple of red fox pelts. On these sprawled the four boys in various and intricate attitudes. In the corner back of the stove lounged Peter Ottertail, on a single brown buffalo robe. With a bit of sharp-edged flint he scraped tiny curls of shavings from a half-formed ashwood arrow, which, from time to time, he lifted even with one eye to look along its glimmering length toward the light, to

see that it was straight and flawless, his soft, even voice warbling out the strangely beautiful Indian tradition of

THE SHADOW TRAIL

Page 136

"You young palefaces that are within my heart know well what a path through the forest is, or what a track across the valley means, but the Indian calls these footways 'a trail,' and some trails are hard to follow. They hide themselves in the wilderness, bury themselves in the swamps and swales, and sometimes a man or a buffalo must beat his own trail where never footstep has fallen before. The Shadow Trail is not of these, and at some time every man must walk it. I was a very small, very young brave when I first heard of it. My grandsire used to tell me, just as I tell you now, of the wonder country through which it led, of the wise and knowing animals that had their lairs and dens beside it, of the royal birds that had their nests and eyries above it, of the white stars that hovered along its windings, of the small, whispering creatures of the night that made music with their cobweb wings. These things all talk with a man as he takes the Shadow Trail; and the oftener they speak and sing to him, the higher climbs the trail; and, if he listens long enough to their voices, he will find the trail has lifted its curving way aloft until it creeps along the summit of the mountains, not at their base. It is here that the stars come close, and the singing is hushed in the great, white silence of the heights; but only he who listens to the wise animals and the eagles and the gauzy-winged insects will ever climb so high. This is the Shadow Trail the wild geese take on their April flight to the north, as, honking through the rain-warm nights, they interweave their wings with the calling wind. They leave no footprints to show whither they go, for the northing bird is wise.

"This is the Shadow Trail that countless buffaloes thundered through when, hunted by the white men, they journeyed into the great unknown. Wise men who are nearing the height of the trail say they can hear the booming of myriad hoofs, and see the tossing of unnumbered horns as the herds of bison yet travel far ahead. This is the Shadow Trail the Northern Lights dance upon, shimmering and pale and silvery. We Indians call them the 'Dead Men's Fingers,' though sometimes they pour out in great splashes of cold blue, of poisonous-looking purple, of burning crimson and orange. We speak of them then as the 'Sky Flowers of the North,' that scatter their deathless masses along the lifting way.

"And this is the Shadow Trail the red man has followed these many, many moons. His moccasined feet have climbed the heights silently, slowly, firmly. He knows it will lead beyond the canyons, beyond the crests; that behind the mountains it merges into a vast valley of untold beauty. We Indians call it 'the Happy Hunting Grounds.'

Page 137

"Only one person ever returns from the 'Shadow Trail,' and he comes once a year on this night—Christmas Eve. The stars wake and sing as he passes, the Sky Flowers of the North surround him on his journey from the summits to this valley where we live. He is a little Child, who was born hundreds of years ago in a manger beneath the Eastern stars, in the Land of Morning. Many times I have met him on the Shadow Trail, for I have travelled towards its heights for nearly eighty years. Perhaps I shall see the little Child again to-night, for Indian eyes can see a long way. Indian ears catch oftenest the singing of the stars, and the Indian heart both sees and hears."

Peter Ottertail's voice ceased. The boys lay very silent, the soft fur rugs half hiding their rapt faces. No one spoke, for each was watching the "Shadow Trail." Then the deep-toned clock struck one—two—three—four—evenly on to twelve—midnight!

The door opened from the inner hall.

"Merry Christmas, dears! Merry Christmas!" came the hearty, loving voices of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, as they bustled into the kitchen, the boys and Peter all scrambling to their feet to meet them.

"Merry Christmas! And off to bed with the whole lot of you, or we'll have a nice pack of sleepyheads in the morning! Peter, you're surely not going home to-night!" as the old Indian began to get into his overcoat and scarlet sash.

"Yes," he said, "I'll go." And, after gay good wishes and handshakes, the old man went out into the night, perhaps to watch for the Christmas Child coming down the Shadow Trail!

The Saucy Seven

Probably Bob Stuart would never have been asked to join the camping party had he not been the best canoeist in the Club. He was so much younger than the other half dozen that composed the party that his joining was much discussed, but there were no two opinions about Bob's paddling nor yet about his ability to pitch a tent, cast a fly, shoot small game at long range, and, when you are far up North, on a canoe cruise, and have to depend on the forest and river to supply your dinner, you don't sneer at an enthusiastic fisherman or a good shot. So one royal August day Bob found himself on the train with six University graduates, bound for "up North," for a glorious three weeks' outing. Their canoes, tents and duffle were all stored away in the express car ahead. Their cares and their studies were packed away in the weeks left behind, their hearts as merry, their clothes as hideous as a jolly crowd of merry-makers could desire. It was a long, hot, dusty railway journey, but at last the tiny Northern railway station hove in sight, the rasping screech of the sawmill rivalled the shrill call of the locomotive, and

directly behind the little settlement stretched the smooth surface of “Lake Nameless,” ready and waiting to be ruffled by the dip of paddle blades.

Page 138

It does not take long for seven practical campers to get their kit and canoes in shape to pitch canvas for the night, and just as the sun dropped behind a rim of dense fir forest, “the Saucy Seven,” as the boys had christened themselves, lighted their first camp fire and hung their kettle for supper. The two tents were already up, white and gleaming against the lake line, the three cruising canoes were safely beached for the night, blankets were already spread over beds of hemlock boughs, and the goodly smell of frying bacon arose temptingly in the warm, still, twilight air. Seven hungry mouths took a long time to be satisfied, but the frying-pan and the tea-pot were empty at last, and the boys ready to turn in early, after their long journey and busy settling. The first night in camp is always a restless one. The flapping tent, the straining guy ropes, the strange wild sounds and scents seem to prop your eyelids open for hours. The night birds winging overhead, the far laugh of loons across the waters, the twigs creaking and snapping beneath the feet of little, timid animals, the soft singing of the pines above the canvas, these things get into one’s blood, one’s brain, and almost before you know it the night is gone, and a whole chorus of song arises with the coming of day. There is nothing in all the world more enjoyable than tumbling from your blankets, to unlace the “flap” of the tent, to fling it wide and step out into the soft grey world before sunrise, to swallow whole breaths of fresh, sweet morning air; then to plunge into a still, cool lake, and drive sleep from the corners of your eyes, as the winking sun drives night from the forest. Then another enjoyable thing is to have Tom, Dick or Harry hustle about and get the kettle boiling and fish frying while you are yet plunging about like a frog, and by the time you have rushed ashore, and into your shorts and sweater and “wigwam” shoes, the aforesaid pleasant persons have breakfast ready, and you come around just in time to make away with vast bowls of coffee, and unlimited fish and toast.

This is all very well, if you have the whole lake and its outletting river all to yourselves, with no one to scare the fish and game, and none to trespass on your camp ground; but picture to yourselves the consternation that assailed the boys when, the following night, the train brought in another camping crowd, that trailed up the shore with a great deal of fuss, and pitched camp directly across the point from them—a crowd of at least ten men. No rollicking boys there, all big, full-grown men with beards and whiskers, with a dozen gun cases, stretcher camp beds, and some scarlet velvet rugs—actually *rugs*. The boys just stood and stared, then sneered.

“Nice ‘Saucy Seven’ those chaps will make of our holiday,” groaned one of the grads. “‘Sorry Seven,’ we’d better call ourselves, I say, and to-morrow I’m for moving, striking camp at daylight and getting away from that gang that camps with *rugs*.” The last word took on the expression of an article of actual disgrace. “Hello! They’re running up the colors,” interrupted Bob. “It’s a Union Jack, all right. Perhaps they’re not such rummies, after all.”

Page 139

Then, after much peering and squinting, they made out that the biggest tent stretched directly at the base of the flagstaff, and contained the despised scarlet rugs, which the boys were still jeering at when they noticed a little canoe, singly manned, put out from the rocky ledge and make swiftly towards them. The Saucy Seven unbent sufficiently to all go in a body to the landing. Their minds were fully made up to invite the intruder to “shinny on his own side,” and not come “moseying” around the camp, when the canoeist beached his bow and sprang lightly ashore. He was a very handsome young man, clean shaven and merry-eyed, and, touching his cap lightly, he said in a tremendously English voice:

“Beg pardon, gentlemen, sorry to trouble you, but His Excellency, the Governor-General, presents his compliments, and would you kindly lend him a can of condensed milk? Our cook seems to have forgotten everything. We haven’t a drop for our coffee.”

The Saucy Seven raised seven disgraceful-looking caps, but only one spoke. It was the biggest grad. “Why, we’re honored. We had no idea who it was.”

“Oh, that’s all right,” answered the Englishman. “You know His Excellency goes camping for a day or two every year, just for the fun and fish and things.”

“Fish? Does he like fish?” asked Bob. Then, without waiting for a reply, he disappeared, only to return with the can of condensed milk and three splendid four-pound bass he had landed for their own supper. He looked shyly at the young aide-de-camp, handing him the can, and said, “Will you present our compliments to His Excellency, and ask him to accept these for supper?”

“Delighted, I’m sure,” said the officer. “He’s fond of bass. Thanks for the milk, gentlemen. Perhaps we can help you out some time.” And in another minute the canoe was skimming away towards the point, where the Union Jack hung idly against a background of firs, but just before the Englishman was out of hearing the big grad yelled, “Tell the Governor-General that the fish were caught and sent by Bobbie.”

“All right,” came faintly across the distance, with a wave of the smart little cap, and a bright backward smile from the handsome Englishman.

The Saucy Seven looked at each other, then the big grad simply expressed things in one explosive “Well!”

“No, I don’t think we’ll move to-morrow,” said one.

“Move from here!” said another.

“Well, I’m a frazzle,” added a third.

“The Governor-General of all Canada,” gasped another.

“And borrowing milk from us!” chimed in two more.

“No fish for supper,” said Bob, “and my fault, too, but I’ll get some for breakfast, or my name’ll be Dennis.” And he did get fish for breakfast, which was evidently more than His Excellency did, for about sunset the following evening a guide came paddling over with a large, square envelope directed to

Page 140

Mr. "Bobbie."

Inside was this note, written in a small, firm hand:

"Lord Dunbridge presents his compliments to Mr. 'Bobbie,' and thanks him for the enjoyable fish dinner tendered him last evening. And would Mr. Bobbie kindly do him an additional favor? Would he come at six o'clock to-morrow morning to assist a poor fisherman who has had no luck to-day?"

That night Bob was a regular hero around the camp fire. The boys sang, "He's a jolly good fellow," and a dozen other gay choruses, while Bob looked to his tackle and bait, and gathered all the courage he could muster to meet the great man in the morning. He need not have trembled—it was no ordeal—for as he paddled up to the big camp a quiet-looking gentleman with an iron gray moustache and kindly, genial eyes, stepped down to the landing and held out his hand, and said, "Good-morning, Bobbie. I hope we shall be friends. I have been most unlucky; not a fish yesterday. We'll have to do better than that, won't we?"

"Yes, sir—Yes, Your Excellency," said Bob, slowly trying to get his nerves steady.

"I'm afraid my guides are very little good," said Lord Dunbridge, as he carefully settled himself in the canoe. "They both profess to know these waters, but they don't seem to be able to find any good fishing pools."

"I can do better than that," ventured Bob. "I have been around these lakes every summer that I can remember. If, Your Excellency, you don't mind, we'll paddle across to the outletting river. It's full of rapids, and below them we'll find fish."

"Then we'll go there," replied His Excellency.

For one whole hour the great man and the great fisherman had sport that a king might envy. Side by side they sat, or stood, baiting or reeling in the heavy, gleaming bass, chatting, boasting, and eager for game. It was a great morning's catch. A dozen noble fish testified to their skill, when the pair, overcome with hunger, were compelled to put up their rods and make for the camp and breakfast.

"We have had a glorious morning, haven't we, Bob?" said the Governor. "I feel like a boy again, a boy playing truant, a boy who has ran away from his big school of politicians at Ottawa, just to get a few days' fishing and—and—oh, well, get away from it all."

There was a brief silence, then Lord Dunbridge continued, "Bob, you're a boy; so was I once, but I think you'll understand. You Canadian boys do seem to grasp things, some way or other. My boyhood was not quite as jolly as yours is—not so independent. You see, we always had tutors and things to look after us and keep us shut in, as it were,



and I never knew, as I dare say you do, the pleasure of getting about by myself, and—” His voice trailed off as if he were thinking of something else. Suddenly he seemed to awaken, and, removing his cap, let the keen morning air blow across his long, fine hair—dark hair touched about the temples with gray. Then he smiled down at the sunburnt boy at his side, and said, as if he feared to be overheard, “Bob, I’d give five dollars to be a boy like you to-day, and be able to run those rapids in a canoe. Would it be safe?”

Page 141

"I've done it twenty times, Your Excellency," said Bob, eagerly, "and in this same old canoe here. I know every shoal, every rock, every bar in the river. Oh, sir, that *is* sport, the very best sport I know of!"

The spirit of the thing seemed to take hold of Lord Dunbridge, "Perhaps, Bob," he exclaimed, with a dashing enthusiasm, "perhaps, Bob, some day you and I will—"

"Yes, sir, I think I know," interrupted Bob, as the other hesitated; then, in a half whisper, "I'll bring you through safely, sir, any time you want to go."

"And you quite understand, Bob, you are to say nothing about that canoe trip we're to have, don't you?" said His Excellency, as they parted at the Governor's landing.

Bob lifted his cap, saying very quietly, "Very well, sir, no one shall know." Then he paddled slowly, very slowly, away. His thoughts were busy. Here was he, Bob Stuart, an obscure boy from an obscure Ontario town, holding in common a secret with the Governor-General of all Canada, a secret that not even the Prime Minister at Ottawa knew. Then came the horror, the fear of an accident. Suppose something happened to the canoe. Suppose she split her bow on a rock. Suppose His Excellency "lost his head" and got nervous. Suppose a thousand things. But Bob put it all resolutely behind him. He felt his strong young muscles, his vital fingers, his pliant wrists. Yes, it was a great thing to be a boy—a boy whose great pride had always been to excel in typical Canadian sports, to be the "crack" canoeist, and to handle a paddle with the ease of a professional. It was worth everything in the world to recall the time when someone had tauntingly said, "Oh, Bob Stuart's no good at cricket and baseball. Why, he can't even play tennis. All he can do is to potter at his old Canuck sports of paddling a canoe and swinging a lacrosse stick." And Bob had laughed with satisfaction, and said, good-naturedly, "You bet! You're right. I'm for our national games every time." And now had come the reward; he was to run the rapids with the representative of the throne of Great Britain in the bow of his canoe.

Two days later came the summons, and early the next morning Bob was supposed to set forth again to take His Excellency fishing. The viceregal staff, aides and guides saw them depart, never dreaming for a moment that they were really runaways bound for a royal holiday. Bob hardly realized it himself until, at the head of the rapids, they unshipped all unnecessary tackle and prepared to make the run. They hauled a big rock aboard, placing it astern to trim Bob's light weight to balance Lord Dunbridge's. "Now," said the boy, "when I yell for you to paddle port or starboard, you had better work for all you're worth, Your Excellency, or we may grind on the rocks."

Page 142

“Good,” replied the Governor. “You can depend on me, Bob.” His Excellency knelt low on his heels forward of the bow thwart. Bob knelt high, with the stern thwart just catching his seat. He felt his strong ashen paddle carefully, stowed an extra blade “handy,” said, “Now, then,” and the little canoe shot out into the middle of the placid river. Far in the distance the rapids frothed and curled, their song rippling backwards like a beckoning hand. On either side fir forests crowded to the rocky edges, that broke like cruel granite jaws against the waters. Immediately ahead the stream twisted into circles, those smooth, deadly circles that herald the coming tumult. Bob’s strong young arms grew taut, their sinews like thin cords of steel. There was not a tremor in his entire body. He knelt, steady and calm, his keen, narrow eyes fixed plumb ahead, alert and shrewd as an animal. He felt his fingers grip the paddle with a strength that was vise-like, grip, and cling, and command. The canoe obeyed even his thought, obeyed the turn of his smallest finger, obeyed, steadied itself, stood motionless for a second, then lifted its nose and plunged forward. The spray split in two, showering the gunwales, then roared abaft, and—they were in the thick of the fight.

“Do you want me to paddle?” shouted back Lord Dunbridge.

“No, I can pilot her all right,” came the response through the wind that almost shrieked Bob’s voice away. The rocky ledges of shores were crowding closer now. The firs, dark and melancholy, were frowning down; sharp crags arose like ragged teeth; to right, to left, ahead, and between them the river boiled and lashed itself into fury, pitching headlong on and on down the throat of the yawning channel. The tiny canoe flung between the rocks like a shuttle. Twice its keel shivered, rabbit-wise, in the force of crossing currents; once, far above the tumult, came a wild, anxious voice from the shore, but neither Bob nor his passenger gave heed. The dash of that wildcat rapid left no second of time for replying or turning one’s eyelid; it was one long, breathless, hurling plunge, that got into their blood like a fever. Then presently the riot seemed all behind them. The savage music of the river grew fainter and fainter, the canoe slipped through the exhausted waters silently as a snake. A moment more, and the bow beached on a strip of yellow sand, secure, steadfast, triumphant. The glorious cruise was over.

A little group of scared, white-faced men huddled together on shore, the handsome young aide-de-camp reaching down his eager hands, which shook with anxiety. “Oh, Your Excellency,” he exclaimed, “how *could* you run such a risk, and with only this boy to pilot you?”

“Bob and I ran away,” said Lord Dunbridge, as, breathless but happy, he sprang from the canoe. “We ran away for a little holiday just by ourselves. I would not have missed it for the world.” Then, more seriously, he added, “Gentlemen, if I could think that my Prime Minister and the Government at Ottawa could steer the Ship of State as splendidly as Bobbie steered that canoe, I would never have another wrinkle on my forehead or another grey hair on my head.”

Page 143

Little Wolf-Willow

Old Beaver-tail hated many things, but most of all he hated the North-West Mounted Police. Not that they had ever molested or worried him in his far corner of the Crooked Lakes Indian Reserve, but they stood for the enforcing of the white man's laws, and old Beaver-Tail hated the white man. He would sit for hours together in his big tepee counting his piles of furs, smoking, grumbling and storming at the inroads of the palefaces on to his lands and hunting grounds. Consequently it was an amazing surprise to everybody when he consented to let his eldest son, Little Wolf-Willow, go away to attend the Indian School in far-off Manitoba. But old Beaver-Tail explained with rare appreciation his reasons for this consent. He said he wished the boy to learn English, so that he would grow up to be a keen, sharp trader, like the men of the Hudson's Bay Company, the white men who were so apt to outwit the redskins in a fur-trading bargain. Thus we see that poor old Beaver-Tail had suffered and been cheated at the hands of the cunning paleface. Little Wolf-Willow was not little, by any means; he was tall, thin, wiry, and quick, a boy of marked intelligence and much ability. He was called Little Wolf-Willow to distinguish him from his grandsire, Big Wolf-Willow by name, whose career as a warrior made him famed throughout half of the great Canadian North-West. Little Wolf-Willow's one idea of life was to grow up and be like his grandfather, the hero of fifty battles against both hostile Indian tribes and invading white settlers; to have nine scalps at his belt, and scars on his face; to wear a crimson-tipped eagle feather in his hair, and to give a war-whoop that would echo from lake to lake and plant fear in the hearts of his enemies. But instead of all this splendid life the boy was sent away to the school taught by paleface men and women; to a terrible, far-away, strange school, where he would have to learn a new language and perhaps wear clothes like the white men wore. The superintendent of the school, who had persuaded old Beaver-Tail to let the boy come, brought him out from the Crooked Lakes with several other boys. Most of them could speak a few words of English, but not so Little Wolf-Willow, who arrived from his prairie tepee dressed in buckskin and moccasins, a pretty string of white elks' teeth about his throat, and his long, straight, black hair braided in two plaits, interwoven with bits of rabbit skin. A dull green blanket served as an overcoat, and he wore no hat at all. His face was small, and beautifully tinted a rich, reddish copper color, and his eyes were black, alert, and very shining.

The teachers greeted him very kindly, and he shook hands with them gravely, like a very old man. And from that day onward Little Wolf-Willow shut his heart within himself, and suffered.

Page 144

In the first place, the white people all looked sick to him—unhealthy, bleached. Then, try as he would, he could not accustom his feet to the stiff leather shoes he was induced to wear. One morning his buckskin coat was missing, and in its place was a nice blue cloth one with gleaming golden buttons. He hated it, but he had to wear it. Then his green blanket disappeared; a warm, heavy overcoat in its place. Then his fringed buckskin “chaps” went; in their place a pair of dreadful grey cloth trousers. Little Wolf-Willow made no comment, but he kept his eyes and ears open, and mastered a few important words of English, which, however, he kept to himself—as yet. And then, one day, when he had worn these hated clothes for a whole month, the superintendent who had brought him away from his father’s tepee sent for him to come to his little office. The boy went. The superintendent was so kind and so gentle, and his smile was so true, that the boy had grown somewhat attached to him, so, without fear of anything in the world, the little Cree scholar slipped noiselessly into the room.

“Ah, Little Wolf-Willow,” said the superintendent, kindly, “I notice that you are beginning to understand a little English already.” The boy smiled, and nodded slightly. “You are very quick and smart, my boy, quick as a lynx, smart as a fox. Now tell me, are you happy here? Do you like the school?” continued Mr. Enderby.

There was a brief silence, then a direct, straight look from the small Cree eyes, and the words, “I like you—me.”

Mr. Enderby smiled. “That’s good; I like you, too, Little Wolf-Willow. Now tell me, do you like your new clothes?”

“No good,” said the boy.

Mr. Enderby looked grave. “But, my boy, that is what you must wear if you are to be educated. Do you know what the word ‘education’ means? Have you ever heard the teachers or boys here use it?”

“White man, English,” came the quick reply.

“That’s it; you have described it exactly. To become educated you must try and wear and do what the white people do—like the English, as you say,” Mr. Enderby went on. “Now what about your hair? White men don’t wear long hair, and you see all the Cree boys in the school have let me cut their hair. Wouldn’t you like to be like them?”

“No; hair good,” said the boy.

“Well, how about a ‘white’ name?” asked Mr. Enderby. “The other boys have taken them. Wouldn’t you like me to call you John? I’d like to.”

“Me Wolf-Willow, same grandfather,” came in tones of pronounced decision.

“Very well, Little Wolf-Willow, you must do as you like, you know; but you said when you came in that you liked me, and I like you very much. Perhaps some day you will do these things to please me.” Then Mr. Enderby added softly to himself, “It will all come in time. It is pretty hard to ask any boy to give up his language, his clothes, his customs, his old-time way of living, his name, even the church of his fathers. I must have patience, patience?”

Page 145

"You speak?" asked the boy.

"Just to myself," said Mr. Enderby.

"I speak," said the little Indian, standing up and looking fearlessly into the superintendent's face. "I speak. I keep hair, good. I keep name Wolf-Willow, good. I keep skin Indian color. I not white man's skin. English skin no good. My skin best, good."

Mr. Enderby laughed. "No, no, Little Wolf-Willow, we won't try to change the color of your skin," he said.

"No good try. I keep skin, better skin than white man. I keep skin, me." And the next instant he was gone.

Miss Watson, the matron, appeared at the door. "What have you done to Little Wolf-Willow?" she asked in surprise. "Why, he is careering down the hall at a breakneck speed."

"I believe the child thought I was going to skin him, to make a white boy out of him," laughed Mr. Enderby.

"Poor little chap! I expect you wanted to cut off his hair," said Miss Watson, "and perhaps call him Tom, Dick, Harry, or some such name."

"I did," answered the superintendent. "The other boys have all come to it."

"Yes, I know they have," agreed Miss Watson, "but there is something about that boy that makes me think that you'll never get his hair or his name away from him."

And she was right. They never did.

It was six years before Little Wolf-Willow again entered the door of his father's tepee. He returned to the Crooked Lakes speaking English fluently, and with the excellent appointment of interpreter for the Government Indian Agent. The instant his father saw him, the alert Cree eye noted the uncut hair. Nothing could have so pleased old Beaver-Tail. He had held for years a fear in his heart that the school would utterly rob him of his boy. Little Wolf-Willow's mother arose from preparing an antelope stew for supper. She looked up into her son's face. When he left he had not been as high as her ear tips. With the wonderful intuition of mothers the world over, she knew at the first glance that they had not made him into a white man. Years seemed to roll from her face. She had been so fearful lest he should not come back to their old prairie life.

"Rest here," she said, in the gentle Cree tongue. "Rest here, Little Wolf-Willow; it is your home."



The boy himself had been almost afraid to come. He had grown accustomed to sleeping in a house, in a bed, to wearing shoes, to eating the white man's food; but the blood of the prairies leaped in his veins at the sight of the great tepee, with its dry sod floor spread with wolf-skins and ancient buffalo hides. He flung himself on to the furs and the grass, his fingers threading themselves through the buckskin fringes that adorned old Beaver-Tail's leggings.

"Father," he cried out, in the quaint Cree tongue, "father, sire of my own, I have learned the best the white man had to give, but they have not changed me, or my heart, any more than they could change the copper tint of my skin."

Page 146

Old Beaver-Tail fairly chuckled, then replied, between pipe puffs, "Some of our Cree boys go to school. They learn the white man's ways, and they are of no more use to their people. They cannot trap for furs, nor scout, nor hunt, nor find a prairie trail. You are wiser than that, Little Wolf-Willow. You are smarter than when you left us, but you return to us, the old people of your tribe, just the same—just the same as your father and grandfather."

"Not quite the same," replied the boy, cautiously, "for, father, I do not now hate the North-West Mounted Police."

For answer, old Beaver-Tail snarled like a husky dog. "You'll hate them again when you live here long enough!" he muttered. "And if you have any friends among them, keep those friends distant, beyond the rim of the horizon. I will not have their scarlet coats showing here."

Wisely, the boy did not reply, and that night, rolled in coyote skins, he slept like a little child once more on the floor of his father's tepee.

For many months after that he travelled about the great prairies, visiting with the Government Indian Agent many distant camps and Cree lodges. He always rode astride a sturdy little buckskin-colored cayuse. Like most Indian boys, he was a splendid horseman, steady in his seat, swift of eye, and sure of every prairie trail in all Saskatchewan. He always wore a strange mixture of civilized and savage clothes—fringed buckskin "chaps," beaded moccasins, a blue flannel shirt, a scarlet silk handkerchief knotted around his throat, a wide-brimmed cowboy hat with a rattlesnake skin as a hatband, and two magnificent bracelets of ivory elks' teeth. His braided hair, his young, clean, thin, dark face, his fearless riding, began to be known far and wide. The men of the Hudson's Bay Company trusted him. The North-West Mounted Police loved him. The white traders admired him. But, most of all, he stood fast in the affection of his own Indian people. They never forgot the fact that, had he wished, he could have stayed with the white people altogether, that he was equal to them in English education, but he did not choose to do so—he was one of their own for all time.

But one dreadful night Corporal Manan of the North-West Mounted Police rode into barracks at Regina with a serious, worried face. He reported immediately to his captain. "A bad business, captain," he said, coming to attention, "a very bad business, sir. I have reports from old 'Scotty' McIntyre's ranch up north that young Wolf-Willow, that we all know so well, has been caught rustling cattle—cut out two calves, sir, and—well, he's stolen them, sir, and old Scotty is after him with a shot-gun."

"Too bad, too bad!" said the captain, with genuine concern. "Young Wolf-Willow gone wrong! I can hardly believe it. How old is he, Corporal?"

"About sixteen or seventeen, I should say, sir."

“Too bad!” again said the captain. “Well educated; fine boy, too. What good has it done him? It seems these Indians *will* cut up. Education seems to only make them worse, Corporal. He’ll feel arrest less from you than most of us. You’ll have to go. Start early, at daylight, and bring him in to prison when you return.”

Page 147

“/?” fairly shouted Corporal Manan. “/ arrest young Wolf-Willow? No, sir! You’ll have to get another policeman.”

“You’ll do as you receive orders,” blurted the captain, then added more graciously, “Why, Manan, don’t you see how much better it is to arrest him? Scotty is after him with a shotgun, and he’ll kill the boy on sight. Wolf-Willow is safest here. You leave at daylight, and bring him in, if you have to handcuff him to do it.”

Corporal Manan spent a miserable night. Never had a task been so odious to him. He loved the bright, handsome Cree boy, and his heart was sore that he had gone wrong, after giving such promise of a fine, useful manhood. But the white settlers’ cattle must be protected, and orders were orders—a soldier must obey his superior officer. So, at daybreak, the fastest horse in the service was saddled, and Corporal Manan was hard on the trail of the young Cree thief.

But Little Wolf-Willow knew nothing of all this. Far away up the northern plains a terrible bit of news had come to him. At the Hudson’s Bay post he had been told that his old grandfather had been caught stealing cattle, that the North-West Mounted Police were after him, that they would surely capture him and put him in Regina jail. The boy was horrified. His own old grandfather a thief! He knew that old warrior well enough—knew that he was innocent of intentional crime; knew that, should the scarlet-coated police give chase, the old Indian would never understand, but would probably fire and kill the man who attempted to arrest him. The boy knew that with his own perfect knowledge of English, he could explain everything away if only he could be at his grandfather’s in time, or else intercept the police before they should arrest him. His grandfather would shoot; the boy knew it. Then there would be bloodshed added to theft. But Big Wolf-Willow’s lodge was ninety miles distant, and it was the middle of a long, severe winter. What was to be done? One thing only—he, Little Wolf-Willow, must ride, ride, ride! He must not waste an hour, or the prison at Regina would have his grandfather, and perhaps a gallant soldier of the king would meet his death doing his duty.

Thrusting a pouch of pemmican into his shirt front, and fastening his buckskin coat tightly across his chest, he flung himself on to his wiry little cayuse, faced about to the north-east, and struck the trail for the lodges of his own people. Then began the longest, most terrible ride of his life. Afterwards, when he became a man, he often felt that he lived through years and years during that ninety-mile journey. On all sides of him stretched the blinding white, snow-covered prairie. Not a tree, not an object to mark the trail. The wind blew straight and level directly down from the Arctic zone, icy, cutting, numbing. It whistled past his ears, pricking and stinging his face like a whiplash. The cold, yellow sunlight on the snow blinded him,

Page 148

like a light flashed from a mirror. Not a human habitation, not a living thing, lay in his path. Night came, with countless stars and a joyous crescent of Northern Lights hanging low in the sky, and the intense, still cold that haunts the prairie country. He grudged the hours of rest he must give his horse, pitying the poor beast for its lack of food and water, but compelled to urge it on and on. After what seemed a lifetime of hardship, both boy and beast began to weaken. The irresistible sleepiness that forebodes freezing began to overcome Little Wolf-Willow. Utter exhaustion was sapping the strength of the cayuse. But they blundered on, mile after mile, both with the pluck of the prairies in their red blood; colder, slower, wearier, they became. Little Wolf-Willow's head was whirling, his brain thickening, his fingers clutching aimlessly. The bridle reins slipped from his hands. Hunger, thirst, cold, exhaustion, overpowered both horse and rider. The animal stumbled once, twice, then fell like a dead weight.

* * * * *

At daybreak, Corporal Manan, hot on the pursuit of the supposed young cattle thief, rode up the freezing trail, headed for the north-east. A mile ahead of him he saw what he thought was a dead steer which the coyotes had probably killed and were eating. As he galloped nearer he saw it was a horse. An exclamation escaped his lips. Then, slipping from his own mount, stiff and half frozen himself, he bent pityingly above the dead animal that lay with the slender body of an Indian hugging up to it for warmth.

"Poor little chap!" choked the Corporal. "Poor Little Wolf-Willow! Death's got him now, I'm afraid, and that's worse than the Mounted Police."

Then the soldier knelt down, and for two long hours rubbed with snow and his own fur cap the thin, frozen face and hands of the almost lifeless boy. He rolled the lithe young body about, pounding it and beating it, until consciousness returned, and the boy opened his eyes dully.

"That's better," said the Corporal. "Now, my lad, it's for home!" Then he stripped himself of his own great-coat, wrapped it snugly about the young Indian, and, placing the boy on his own horse, he trudged ahead on foot—five, ten, fifteen miles of it, the boy but half conscious and freezing, the man tramping ahead, footsore, chilled through, and troubled, the horse with hanging head and lagging step—a strange trio to enter the Indian camp.

From far off old Beaver-Tail had seen the approaching bit of hated scarlet—the tunic worn by the North-West Mounted Police—but he made no comment as Corporal Manan lifted in his strong arms the still figure from the saddle, and, carrying it into the tepee, laid it beside the fire on the warm wolf skins and buffalo hides. It took much heat and

nourishment before Little Wolf-Willow was able to interpret the story from the Cree tongue into English, then back again into Cree, and so be the go-between

Page 149

for the Corporal and old Beaver-Tail. "Yes, my grandfather, Big Wolf-Willow, is here," said the boy, his dark eyes looking fearlessly into the Corporal's blue ones. "He's here, as you see, and I suppose you will have to arrest him. He acknowledges he took the cattle. He was poor, hungry, starving. You see, Corporal, he cannot speak English, and he does not understand the white men or their laws. He says for me to tell you that the white men came and stole all our buffaloes, the millions of beautiful animals that supplied us with hides to make our tepees, furs to dress in, meat to eat, fat to keep us warm; so he thought it no harm to take two small calves when he was hungry. He asks if anyone arrested and punished the white men who took all his buffaloes, and, if not, why should he be arrested and punished for doing far less wrong than the wrong done by the white man?"

"But—but—" stammered Corporal Manan, "I'm not after *him*. It is *you* I was told to arrest."

"Oh, why didn't I know? Why didn't I know it was I you were after?" cried the boy. "I would have let you take me, handcuff me, anything, for I understand, but he does not."

Corporal Manan stood up, shaking his shoulders as a big dog shakes after a plunge. Then he spoke: "Little Wolf-Willow, can you ever forgive us all for thinking you were a cattle-thief? When I think of your grandfather's story of the millions of buffaloes he has lost, and those two paltry calves he took for food, I make no arrests here. My captain must do what he thinks best."

"And you saved me from freezing to death, and brought me home on your own horse, when you were sent out to take me to prison!" muttered the boy, turning to his soldier friend with admiration.

But old Beaver-Tail interrupted. He arose, held out his hand towards the once hated scarlet-coated figure, and spoke the first words he had ever voiced in English. They were, "North-West Mounted Police, good man, he. Beaver-Tail's friend."