

left lonely. A movement behind him attracted his attention, and looking round he saw the head of an Indian protruding over the bank above, then came another head and another, all staring at him.

"What, ho!" shouted Christopher. The Indians made no answer, but one after another they scattered down the bank, looking at him curiously. Christopher felt that his head was half way on the charger. This witch band would surely murder him for shooting the burro, and he thought it well to explain matters as best he could. He pointed to the dead burro away up the slope, then opening his grip he drew from it fifty dollars, and handed the notes to the nearest brave.

The brave stepped back. "Katawawa," he said simply. Christopher handed the money to the next brave, but he also said "Katawawa," and stepped back. All were peacefully clad and their expressions were by no means murderous.

At length one of the tribe stepped forward. "Where you go now?" he enquired quietly.

"Blowed if I know," said Christopher.

"Where's Wabawaba?"

"He no come back," answered the spokesman. "Him bad Indian."

Christopher thought a moment. "Seems I'm on the rocks," he said presently. "Guess I'd better go back with you, Ol' Chief!"

He linked his arm with that of the spokesman at which a roar of laughter went up, and the Indian proudly freed himself.

But an hour or so later Christopher

eyed, wild haired woman entered the firelight. She paused a moment to look at Christopher, then one of the braves came forward, took her hand disdainfully, and led her to Christopher. "Katawawawa," said the brave, and Christopher remembered that this was the word they had uttered when he offered them the money for the burro.

"Oh!" said the boy, and from his grip beside him he drew the paper bond, offering it to the wild haired woman. She took it without a word, thrust it impatiently into her wallet, then, with an angry word to one of the children, seated herself by the fire, holding her face moodily between her hands.

And suddenly it occurred to Christopher that this woman, Katwa, as he chose to call her, was despised by the rest of the tribe, that she wore different clothing and was treated differently. He began to think now. Why should Katwa accept the money when the rest refused? Why was she so wild eyed and wild haired? What had become of dear old Waba? and what about the woman with the burros?

Christopher did not know. He only knew that later on it was the woman Katwa who took him to a teepee, who made him comfortable on a bed of spruce branches, and who passed her delicate finger over his face in a gentle caress as he fell asleep.

VII

Christopher awoke with thoughts of little Maya-Maya foremost in his mind. Then he recalled the wild eyed woman



Canadians coming out of the line after a raid in the direction of Avion, after being relieved.

was seated by the campfire of Waba's tribe, the event of which he had dreamed.

VI

The boy was utterly mystified. Evidently some plot was developing, but he could not make it out. Having brought him to camp, the braves seemed to have lost all interest in him. He took his place among the squaws and children as though he was part of the furniture. The older boys and girls hung round him with interest and wonder, but one little creature, a pretty, brown skinned, white-toothed, little thing, with immense black eyes, looked at him and laughed. Christopher laughed back. At that the little thing squatted herself at his feet, toyed with his moccasins and stared into his eyes. Then one of the squaws stooped forward and looked into the boy's face, at the same moment touching the small child.

"Maya-Maya!" said the squaw, then Christopher knew that the name of the small child was Maya-Maya, the pride of the teepees.

Pretty little, brown little Maya-Maya! From that moment onward Christopher's feeling of loneliness was dispersed. He had made a friend, he was one of the camp! Already he had ceased to feel the chill of the nights, already he had learnt to eat and enjoy Indian food. Life among the Indians would be fine, he thought; but late that night, just as he was on the point of falling asleep on his log by the camp fire, there was a sudden stir among the Indians. "Katawawawa," muttered an old squaw, and next moment a wild

whom he had last seen by the light of the teepee fire, and the whole mystery of the thing floated back to him. Where was Waba, why had he told him to shoot the burro, why had he disappeared? Who was the woman Katwa, why was she treated with contempt by her tribe, why was she so kind to him? He got up determined to solve the mystery, for outside was noise and bustle and the sun was shining.

Christopher was given a tin mug like the rest, and like the rest he had to help himself to the cooked food. But there was plenty of it, for the Indians were now idling at their summer camp, that is, the braves were idling, while the women made clothing, all sorts of leather goods, fish nets and harness.

Christopher looked round for Katwa, but could see nothing of her, so when little Maya-Maya squatted herself at his feet and smiled at him the boy asked her. Looking about him at the squaws he said, "Katwa-Wawa?" at which the small child pointed gravely in the direction of the hills.

Christopher got up, and strolling to the ridge he saw a herd of burros in the distance, while in the midst of them was a squatting figure wrapped in a blanket, Katwa-Wawa! Then he partly understood. Katwa was the burro woman. She took no part in the camp life, had no husband, no children, but instead she spent her life out on the bleak hills minding the herd, one of the tribe, yet one apart from them. Had she done some dreadful thing that she was treated thus? She was still young and good looking,

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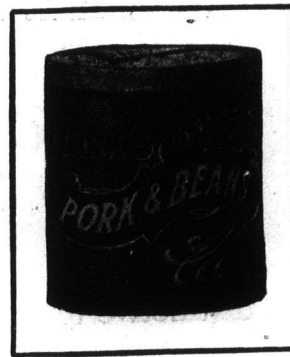


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24

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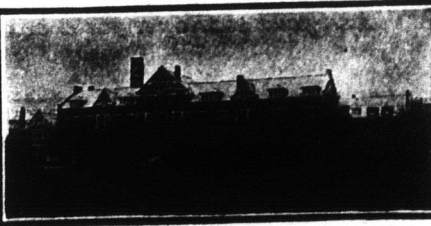
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