

Victoria!"

"With the thermometer at 87 degrees?" asked the voice, reproachfully. "Oh, madam!"

The old lady turned indignantly to Evan and the girl, who were giggling helplessly.

"It's all very well to laugh," she snorted, angrily, "you haven't the intelligence to understand how deserving dumb animals are of human affection. My Flopsy was so faithful, so high—"

"She *was*!" murmured someone, feelingly. "She was indeed!"

"High spirited, I was going to say," snapped the old lady; "but what's the use of talking to a pack of fools? And you, you jabbering black idiot"—wheeling suddenly on the speechless darkey, "What are *you* staring at?"

She swooped once more upon the odourous Flopsy. But her lamentations were cut short by the emphatic protests of the other passengers, one of whom, valourously advancing with his nose firmly compressed between his thumb and forefinger, seized the deceased by the neck and flung her through the open window.

"This is a Pullman car, madam, not a mortuary chapel. Porter, bring some disinfectant!"

"I've laughed so much," murmured Evan to the girl, "I've got a pain at the back of my neck, and I believe Boadicea's going to have a fit—let's go out on the vestibule."

THIRTY-SIX hours later Evan stood beside the track watching a long line of cars slip leisurely round a curve and disappear. All about him the woods trooped greenly to the verge of the metals. A well-worn trail dipped down to the right of the track, and, following it, Evan found himself on the lip of a wide river, flowing swiftly between curving, wooded shores. He was so intent on the scene before him that he did not see a canoe shoot out from the mouth of a creek on the opposite shore, and started violently when a big, well-remembered voice hailed him with a shout.

Bob Ferguson, dexterously grounding the canoe, stepped ashore, and came towards him with outstretched hands.

"Evan, I'm darned glad to see you, and then some!" he cried. "How are you? You look as fine as silk!"

"I'm all over cinders, Bob. Say, I had a fierce trip up. Travelling all night in a caboose is no cinch. The brakeman had nightmare and punched

my stomach with a mail bag, and the engine-driver borrowed my flask (he said the fireman felt faint) and forgot to return it. My baggage is spread some considerable distance over the landscape, as you will observe. They began firing it out as soon as we slowed down."

Ferguson grinned. "Hump yourself, Jumbo," he said, briefly, to the Swede who had paddled bow, then, turning to Evan, "I've got another canoe cached here. We will get on, and leave Jumbo to collect your traps."

The Big Four was situated on Rice Lake, five miles due north of the railway line. It was quite dark when they emerged from the creek, and saw the camp lights just ahead. Drawing nearer, Evan could distinguish the tents, white, nebulous shapes, huddled at the feet of giant pines, and saw a number of men sitting about the camp fire. One of them was singing in a dirge-like monotone, and the words of the song drifted across,

"And what is her age, Billy Dow, Billy Dow, And what is her age, lovely Billy? She's six times seven and four times eleven—She's a young thing and cannot leave her mammy!"

Presently, swinging alongside a rough landing place, Evan got stiffly to his feet. He stumbled after Ferguson through the darkness along a winding trail that brought them to a clearing. From the open door of a little log shack, light streamed across the trail.

"Welcome, old man," Ferguson cried, warmly. "It's not the Ritz, nor yet the Waldorf, but I think it's a darn sight more comfortable. I call it 'Indayan,' Ojibway for home, you know. Come in."

AND now began for Evan a life of healthy, muscle-making toil, that acted as a tonic to his mind no less than to his body, gradually weeding out a fungus growth of egoism, the natural product of youth coupled with too much money. He became an expert book-keeper. But this took up so little of his time that at his own request Ferguson set him to work with a shift of Swedes who were making a corduroy road across a big muskeg, which would shorten the distance between the camp and the stamp mill by a mile and a quarter. This was at the end of August. September came with misty, mellow mornings that melted into brilliant noons. Only an occasional scurry of falling leaves spoke of autumn and decay. Evan,

whose sporting instincts awoke with the season, persuaded Ferguson to join him in a shooting expedition. But on the very morning they were to start, Dixon, the assayer, who had been East on a holiday, arrived unexpectedly with a quantity of mail which claimed the manager's immediate attention.

"I'm awfully sorry, Evan," he said, regretfully, "but you see it's up to me to get busy with the quills. If I get through to-night, I'll join you at Purgatory Portage to-morrow morning."

So rather than waste a day, Evan packed blanket, bacon, flour, and tea into a canoe and started off alone. Just as he reached the mouth of the creek, Ferguson's big voice came booming across the lake. "Wire from my wife!" he shouted. "Arrives to-morrow!" Evan waved his paddle and shouted back, "Splendid!" sincerely wishing Mrs. Bob at Timbuctoo, or any other region inaccessible to the Big Four. "Spoils everything," he muttered, resentfully, and shot into the creek. But before he had gone twenty yards, another fainter shout hailed him, "Flitters is coming, too!" "Coming, too!" echo answered. "Coming, too!" "Oh, certainly!" thought Evan, wrathfully, "let 'em all come!"

It was very early, and something of the austere beauty of dawn still lingered. Every tree fringing the shores was reflected to the minutest twig and leaf in the glassy surface of the water, where fallen leaves rested delicately, like flights of yellow butterflies. Turning into the Seine, Evan saw that a faint, bluish fringe of mist still encircled the islands, and westward, where a thin line of foam marked the first dip of the rapids, a rainbow made a jewelled arch from shore to shore. "And three months ago," he thought, with deep self-disgust, "I was leading cotillions! Phew!"

It was not till late that night, when smoking peacefully by his camp fire many miles down the river, that it occurred to him to wonder who or what Flitters might be. "Probably that bull pup Bob spoke of," he thought, sleepily. "Queer name for a dog, though. I'll ask Bob, he's sure to turn up to-morrow." Then, having carefully scattered his fire, and gouged out a hollow for his elbow and hip, after the manner of a seasoned woodsman, he rolled himself in his blanket and went to sleep.

For three glorious days he wandered through a watery maze of river, lake, and stream, living on

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EDMONTON has witnessed a number of strange performances since the days of the Klondike rush. Jasper Avenue, the main street, has more than once been an improvised theatre of world-wide interest. Performers at these open-air dramas have come from half the countries of Europe. And the old furpost was very often the scene of weird dramas enacted by the Indians who not so many years ago were the chief citizens of that country.

But it is due to the modern vaudeville manager that Edmonton lately witnessed a vaudeville performance of real native Indians. Some time ago, while visiting Commissioner Race, in charge of the Enoch Indians north of Edmonton, Mr. Charles Gill, of the Pantages theatre circuit, saw a tribal dance. Being of a practical turn, he wanted to know why the red man could not dance as well on stage.

"No reason at all if you can ever get them down to civilization," said the Commissioner.

"Leave that to me," said Gill.

"But we'll have to get permission from Ottawa for the Indians to leave the reservation."

"Well, wire Ottawa."

The result was that after the due exchange of tobacco and diplomacy between the chief and the impresario and the Commissioner, one hundred Enoch Indians packed up war paint and feathers and costumes and hit the trail to Edmonton. Most of them had never been in town before. There was no time for a rehearsal. The stage was set for the dance. Ten thousand people lined Jasper Ave. for a mile to see the parade. All the braves who could not join in the dance sat on the stage in a great semi-circle beating out wild, weird music from the tomtoms. After the performance a number of the performers were photographed in front of the theatre and the tribe hit the trail back to the north country—wondering what on earth it was all about.

REDSKINS DANCE ON THE VAUDEVILLE STAGE



A Few of the Aboriginal Performers Photographed in Front of the Edmonton Theatre.