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TWO KNAPSACKS:

A NOVEL OF CANADIAN SUMMER LIFE.

BY J. CAWDOR BELL.

CHAPTER III—(Continued).

AS the travellers approached the rising ground, which the dominie had perceived, the lawyer remarked that the hillocks had an artificial look.

"And they are undoubtedly artificial," replied Wilkinson.

"This is the township of Nottawasaga, once inhabited by the Tobacco tribe of the Hurons, who had many villages, and grew tobacco and corn, besides making beads, pipes, and other articles, for sale or barter. They made their pipes out of the Trenton sandstone. A great many village sites and ossuaries have been found in the township, the latter containing thousands of skeletons. They have all been opened up by the settlers for the sake of the copper kettles and other objects buried in them. These long, narrow hillocks are earthworks, the foundation of a rude fortification or palisade round a village. The Archaeological Reports of the Canadian Institute contain very full and interesting accounts of the explorations made in this very region. We are on historic ground, Corry."

"Poor old Lo!" ejaculated the lawyer; "whatever is that dog after? Hi, Muggins, Muggins!"

But Muggins would not leave the earthwork into which he was digging with rapidly moving forepaws. As Coristine remarked, it was a regular Forepaugh's circus. When the pedestrians came up to him, he had a large hole made, in apparently fresh dug earth, and had uncovered a tin box, japanned above. This the pair disinterred with their walking-sticks, amid great demonstrations from the terrier. The lawyer opened it judicially, and found it to contain a lot of fragments of hard limestone, individually labelled. Looking over these, his eye rested on one marked P. B. Miss Du Plessis, lot 3, concession 2, township of Flanders. Others were labelled T. Mulcahy, S. Storch, R. McIver, O. Fish, with their lots, concessions and townships, and the initials F. M. and P.

"What is the import of this?" asked the schoolmaster.

"Import or export, it's the Grinstun man, the owner of this sagacious dog, that buried this box till he had time to bring a waggon for it. These are samples of grindstone rock, and, if I am not a Dutchman, F means fair, M, middling, P, poor, and P. B., prime boss, and that is Miss Du Plessis. Gad! we've got her now, Jewplessy, Do Please, Do Please-us, are just Du Plessis. It's a pleasant sort of name, Wilks, my boy?"

"What are you going to do with this treasure trove, might I ask?" inquired the dominie.

"Bury it," replied the lawyer.

"I trust you will make no unfair use of the information it contains, part of which was confided to me privately, and under seal of secrecy, by Mr. Rawdon?"

"Now, Wilks, howld your tongue about that. I ask you no questions, you tell me no lies nor anything else. If you think I'm going to see a girl cheated, just because she is a girl, you don't know your friend. But you do, you honest old Wilks, don't you now?"

"Very well, only remember I breathed no hint of this in your ear."

"All right, old man," answered Miss Du Plessis' self-constituted advocate, as he shovelled the earth in over the tin box. "Muggins, you rascal, if you dig that up again, I'll starve you to death."

The pedestrians deserted the archaeological find, and trudged away into the north-west.

"Wilks, my dear, I feel like the black crow," said Coristine, as they journeyed along the pleasant highway.

"Like what?" asked the dominie, adjusting his eyeglass.

"Like the crow, don't you know?"

Said one black crow unto his mate,
What shall we do for grub to ate?

Faith, it'll be an awful thing if we're going to die of starvation in the wilderness."

"I thought you were a botanist, Corry?"

"So I am, in a small way."

"Then, what bushes are those in that beaver meadow?"

In another minute, the lawyer, closely followed by Muggins, was in the meadow, exclaiming "Vaccinium Canadense! Come on, Wilks, and have a feast." Muggins was eating the berries with great satisfaction, and Coristine kept him company. The dominie also partook of them, remarking: "This is the whortleberry, or berry of the hart, vulgarly called the huckleberry, although huckle means a hump, which is most inappropriate."

"That reminds me of a man with a hump, though there wasn't much heart to him," said Coristine, his mouth full of fruit. "He undertook to write on Canada after spending a month here. He said the Canadians have no fruit but a very inferior raspberry, and that they actually sell bilberries in the shops. As a further proof of their destitution, he was told that haws and acorns are exposed for sale in the Montreal markets. Such a country, he said, is no place for a refined Englishman. I don't wonder my countrymen rise up against the English."

"You forget, Corry, that I am English, and proud of my descent from the Saxon Count Witikind."

"Beg your pardon, Wilks, but you're a good English-

man, and I never dreamt your progenitor was that awful heathen:—

Save us, St. Mary, from flood and from fire,
From famine and pest, and Count Witikind's ire.

As the Englishmen said, there is no need to hask 'ow the hell got into your name."

"Corry, this is most unseemly. I wonder you are not ashamed to speak thus, with that innocent dog beside you."

"O, dad, he's heard worse things than that; haven't you now, Muggins? Trust him to live with a cad of a Grinstun man, and not to pick up bad language."

"Ullo, there, you dog-stealers!" fell upon the ears of the berry-pickers like a thunder-clap. They looked up, and saw a neat waggonette, drawn by a team of well-kept bay horses, in which, on a back seat, sat Mr. Rawdon and a little girl with long fair hair. On the front seat were two well-dressed women, one of whom was driving; the other wore a widow's cap, and had a gentle, attractive face. The waggon stopped for them to come on to the road, which, leaving their berries, they did, taking off their hats to the ladies as they approached.

"We did all we could, Mr. Rawdon, to make your dog go back to the hotel, but he insisted on following us," said Wilkinson, apologetically.

"All very fine, my beauty, you 'ooked 'im and got 'im to shew you ware this 'ere box was. I'm hup to your larks, and you such a hinnocent too!"

Wilkinson was indignant, and denied having anything to do with the box.

"Be careful what you say, Mr. Rawdon," said Coristine, "I'm a lawyer, and may make a case, if you are not judicious in your language."

"Oh come hoff, I don't mean no 'arm; it's just my fun. 'Ave you any hobjection to give these 'ere gents a lift, Mrs. Thomas?"

"None, whatever," replied the lady who was driving.

"Then, if you don't mind, I'll get him halongside hof your sister hin front, hand leave them to keep company with little Marjorie 'ere," said the working geologist; and climbed over into the front seat outside of the attractive widow. Still, the pedestrians hesitated, till Mrs. Thomas, a by no means uncomely woman, said: "Get in, gentlemen, we shall be pleased to have your company." This decided them. They sprang into the waggon, one on each side of the little girl called Marjorie. The horses trotted along, and Muggins hovered about them, with an occasional ecstatic bark.

"I like you and your little dog," said Marjorie to Coristine, who replied: "God bless you for a little darling." After this interchange of confidence, they became great friends. Wilkinson found himself somewhat left out, but the Grinstun man threw him an odd bone, now and then, in the shape of a geological remark, keeping clear, however, of grindstones.

"What's your name, Marjorie?" asked the lawyer.

"My name is Marjorie," she replied.

"Yes, but what's your other name?"

"Marjorie Carmichael."

"Is that your father's name?"

"No, my papa's name is Captain Thomas."

"And has he got a ship on Lake Simcoe?"

"Yes, how did you know? He's got a ship, and a lumber yard, and a saw mill, and a farm, and a lot of things. Saul is on the farm, and Mr. Pratt works the mill, and Gudgeon looks after the yard, and Sylvanus is on the boat."

"Who is Saul?"

"He's the father of Sylvanus and Timotheus. Only Timotheus doesn't work for us. He wouldn't say his catechism on Sundays, so Saul said he had to go. I don't wonder he wouldn't say his catechism, do you? It speaks about God's getting awful angry and cursing. God doesn't get angry with little boys and girls and curse them, does he, Mr. What's your name?"

"My name is Coristine, but the name my little sister would have called me, if I had had a little sister like you, would be Eugene. No, I never read that God cursed any little girls and boys, nor anybody, not even the devil."

"And he's very very bad, isn't he? My cousin Marjorie Carruthers, that I'm called after, says Timotheus should have learned his catechism; but she doesn't think God curses children. Then I said he oughtn't to learn what isn't true."

"O my darlint, but it's right you are. I wish I had you up on the dais at the Synod, to teach the bishops and all the clergy. Is she a nice little girl, your cousin Marjorie?"

"She's nice, but she isn't little, not a single bit. She lives away away in Toronto, and teaches school. Now, put your head down and I'll whisper something in your ear."

Coristine put his head down beside the long, fair curls, and Marjorie whispered, pointing a finger at the same time towards the widow: "That's my Aunt Marjorie, and she's Marjorie's mother."

"Where is cousin Marjorie now?"

"She's up at Uncle Carruthers', along with Miss Du Plessis. Do you know Miss Du Plessis? Oh, she's lovely, and, do you know?—put down your head again—that ugly little man sitting by Auntie says he's going to marry her. Isn't it too bad?"

"Infernal little beast! O, my dear Marjorie, I beg your pardon. I was thinking of that rascal of a mosquito on your hand—there, he's dead! Yes, it would be too bad, but she'll never marry such a man as that."

"Perhaps she'll have to, because she's very poor, and he says he's going to make heaps and heaps of money. People shouldn't marry for money, should they?"

"No, dear, they should marry for love, if they marry at all. Will you marry me when you grow to be a young lady?"

"No, you'll be too old then. Put your head down. You go and take away Miss Du Plessis from that naughty, bad little man, and I'll love you, O, ever so much."

"But perhaps she won't have me."

"Oh, yes she will, because you would look very nice if you would take that black stuff that scratched me off your face."

"I will, I'll get a clean shave at Collingwood this very night."

"Then I'll get Auntie to write to Marjorie and tell her that my own Prince Charming, with a clean shave, is coming to take Cecile away from the ugly little rich man that says: 'An' 'ow is my young friend?' Won't that be nice?"

"Oh, please don't tell your aunt to write that."

"But I will, so there!"

The waggonette was now in the midst of a rather pretty village situated on a branch of the Nottawasaga River, and came to a stand still opposite the post office.

"If you gentlemen have business in the village, you can get out here," said Mrs. Thomas, "but, if not, we shall be pleased to have you dine with us."

The pedestrians thought of their last tavern experience, and felt disposed to accept the hospitable invitation, but Marjorie clinched their resolution by saying: "Eugene is coming to dinner with me, and his friend may come too," at which everybody laughed. The waggon moved on for another half mile, and then stopped in front of a pretty and commodious frame house, painted white, with red-brown doors and window frames and green shutters. Porch and verandah were covered with Virginia creeper, climbing roses and trumpet honeysuckle. Mr. Rawdon looked after himself, but Wilkinson and Coristine helped the ladies and the little girl to dismount, while an old man with a shock head, evidently Saul, took the horses round. Muggins greeted the whole party with a series of wiggles and barks, whereupon the Grinstun man gave him a savage kick that sent the dog away yelping.

"I said you were a naughty, bad, cruel man to my own self and to people I like," said Marjorie with indignation, "but now I say it right out to you, and for everybody to hear that wants to—a nasty, ugly, cruel little man!"

The working geologist was very angry and got very red in the face. Had he dared, he would probably have kicked the girl too. Policy compelled him to keep his temper outwardly, so he turned it off with a laugh, and said: "You don't know that little beast has I do, Marjorie, or you wouldn't go hand take 'is part. Of all the hungrateful, treacherous, sneakin', bad-'earted curs that ever gnawed a bone, 'e's the top-sawyer."

"I don't believe it," answered Marjorie stoutly, and with all the license allowed to a late and only child.

When the ladies took off their bonnets and rejoined their guests in the parlour, the pedestrians were much struck with their appearance and demeanour, especially in the case of Mrs. Carmichael, than whom no lady could have been more gentle mannered and gracious. She had evidently had enough of Mr. Rawdon, for she turned in the most natural way to Wilkinson and engaged him in conversation on a variety of topics. The schoolmaster found her a charming talker and an interested listener. Marjorie and Coristine sat on a sofa with Muggins between them, while the working geologist banged about some photographs on a centre table. At dinner, to which Mrs. Thomas soon summoned them, Coristine had the post of honour with Marjorie to his right. Mrs. Carmichael sat at the foot of the table with Wilkinson by her side, and Rawdon was at Mrs. Thomas' left. While doing justice to an excellent repast, the lawyer informed his hostess that he was not an entire stranger to her family, and gave an account of his passage in the *Susan Thomas* from Belle Ewart to Barrie. He also referred to Sylvanus and Timotheus, and dwelt upon the excellent service rendered by the latter. The Grinstun man disliked the turn things were taking, as he felt himself out in the cold, for the widow absorbed the dominie, and Marjorie would not look at him.

When dessert came on the table, he turned to the schoolmaster and rudely interrupted his conversation, saying: "Look 'ere, Mr. Favosites Wilkinsonia, I don't see as you've hany call to keep hall the widder's talk to yourself. I move we change places," and he rose to effect the change.

"Really," said Wilkinson, with offended dignity, "I am not accustomed to anything of that description at a dinner party where there are ladies; but, if it's Mrs. Carmichael's desire that we should interchange seats, I am ready to comply."

Mrs. Carmichael evidently did not relish being called "the widder," nor the society of Mr. Rawdon, for she answered, "Certainly not, Mr. Wilkinson," and resumed her conversation with him. The baffled geologist turned to the hostess, while Marjorie engaged Coristine's attention, and in a petulant way stated his case. "You know the kind of man I am, Mrs. Thomas, I'm a man of haction. I strike wen the hiron's 'ot. By good luck, I went back to Peskiwanchow last night, though it is a beastly 'ole, and got letters hat the post hoffice this mornin'. My hagent at Toronto says, Mrs. Do Please-us is pretty badly hout for want of chink, hand that the girl's ready to