

"Yes," replied Douglas, "I told them to call here this morning for their money, they will be in the waiting-room now, I expect."

The Head finally handed him nine cheques, and a lot of forms to fill in. He took the cheques to the outer room, where the men were waiting.

Mitchell, Wood, Hardy, and McGinnis were all talking together of what they were going to do during the winter with the little wad they had earned. Straw Hat, Hawkeye, and Angel stood at the window gravely watching the traffic in the street below, while Louis Leblanc sat at one end of the room alone, his broad-brimmed hat drawn down over his eyes.

They all turned to Douglas as he entered, one hand full of cheques. With the other he fumbled in an inner pocket for something, it was a very soiled scrap of paper, folded small. He unfolded it slowly.

It was instantly recognized by everyone.

Louis flushed red. He imagined what was coming—he expected to pay the I.O.U. at once—and his mind was full of the things he could buy for his sick wife and child out at Lac St. Anne. To him it seemed

hours before Douglas spoke, very slowly,

"You recognize this note, Louis?"

"Yes, M'sier, for sure I do." His face grew redder than ever.

"Then watch, all of you."

He deliberately went to the stove, lifted the top, and lightly dropped the scrap of paper into the flames, saying quietly and firmly, as he watched Louis's astonished face.

"That is the end of the whole thing. The I.O.U. does not exist. Now here is your money, go straight with it to your wife at Lac St. Anne, unless you buy food here with some of it. And I hope both she and the baby will soon be strong and well again."

Too bewildered to ask for explanations, he ejaculated hoarsely,

"Merci, M'sieur, merci, ma frien'," and held out his hand to Douglas, who shook it warmly.

With that handshake the moroseness of weeks passed away. The old cheery, happy-go-lucky smile came back to his face, and he exclaimed gaily as he shook hands all round.

"Bon jour, ma frien's, bon jour. Bagosh, you'll see me hit that trail. Queek march! Again merci, Monsieur, ma frien'."

