

tamarac fire, on which stewed a bowl of huckleberries, while a huge trout fizzled—a trout straight from the river, by which Waba's camp was made.

Never in his life had Christopher eaten such a breakfast. In addition to the trout and stewed berries, Waba dexterously prepared buckwheat pancakes, over which he poured maple syrup of his own manufacture. Christopher learnt later that his new companion was a well-known local guide—one of those solitary Indians to be found hanging about the outskirts of almost every forest settlement. The meal over, Waba, lighting his pipe, pointed to Christopher's city clothing. "Kysana?" he asked, with a smile, and Christopher not knowing in the least what Kysana meant, nodded and said "Yes." Waba then produced an unwieldy bundle, from which he hauled a deerskin shirt similar to the one he himself was wearing, only smaller, a pair of muckbucks, a small, three cornered, gaily colored blanket and a fur belt. Feeling himself in a seventh heaven the young millionaire donned these things with trembling fingers, then let off a mighty war whoop. "And now for the long trail," he told Waba. "When can we start?"

"Now," answered Waba, and in less than ten minutes they had pushed off for the great unknown.

III

An Indian's sense of humor is, to say the least, somewhat grim. Waba must have known that there was something very questionable about the present state of affairs, and that it could not go on very far, but it was no affair of his, and enquiries were not in his line. He had already received \$80, and he knew there was plenty more where that came from. He would remain in the bush with this bright faced boy, whose com-

pany delighted him, so long as the boy wished to remain.

So far as Christopher was concerned, the days that followed were a dream of delight. Up each morning with the dawn to haul in the hair fish nets Waba set across the creek, dawdling on their way to stalk partridges in the cedar swamps, or to pull a bait behind the canoe. They saw moose, deer and caribou; now and then they heard the yap of a wolf—wolves do not howl in the spring—or the scream of lynx. They made camp when hungry and tired, shot long strings of surging rapids, and did and saw such things as Christopher had thought existed only in story books.

But one night Waba was thoughtful and silent. "Christopher want to go long way?" he enquired at length, and the boy nodded.

"Christopher like to visit Wabawaba's tribe?" enquired the red man.

"O, yes! Yes!" cried the juvenile millionaire, with visions of a glimpse into real Indian life.

"We go—to-morrow?" suggested Waba, with the deliberation of uncertain English.

To-morrow they went. There was no dawdling on the way now. Never before had they travelled like it. Propelled by Waba's strong arms the canoe fairly ricocheted over the lakes, and every rapid was taken in their stride, and thrill after thrill of wonderful canoeing. But now they retired late and rose early, and Waba was always silent.

IV

One morning a change came upon Waba. He paddled slowly now, and seemed always to be listening. They had left the forest behind, and here were rounded hills sparsely timbered, rising from the river banks. Presently Waba stooped low in the canoe and muttered

"Whist!" Without lifting his paddle from the water he swung the canoe under the bank, and while they both crouched, he whispered: "Herd of cow caribou away up bluff. Christopher like to shoot one?"

Christopher's pulses fairly thrilled at the thought of it. "Yes!" he whispered hoarsely, and for the first time in their voyage Waba drew the sporting rifle from the packs.

"It charged," he stated. "Christopher know how to shoot?"

"You bet your boots!"

Taking the heavy weapon the boy crept up the bank and peered ahead. On the hillside beyond he saw a herd of blackish grey animals, quietly grazing, and at the sight of them he began to tremble. Cautiously, silently, he stole forward, and while yet some distance off one of the animals raised its head and looked in his direction. Then up went its great ears, and instantly, it seemed, the whole herd was looking at him, not with their eyes but with their ears! Still they showed no alarm, one of them, indeed, recommenced to browse; and quivering with excitement Christopher crept on, till presently he thought himself to be within range. Then slow, cautiously, he brought the sights to bear and pressed the trigger.

The kick of the rifle almost broke his shoulder, but to his intense surprise and wonder the animal he had aimed at seemed to stand on its head, then it collapsed in a limp heap—dead! The rest of the herd galloped over the slope, and as they went Christopher thought he saw a human figure going with them, the figure of a woman!

Christopher leapt up with a shout of triumph, and ran towards his dead caribou. But as he gained it the expression on his face changed from one of joy to one of surprise and finally to bewilderment. This was no deer at all, but the

creature which lay dead at his feet was an Indian burro!

It took Christopher about ten seconds to sum things up. Waba had played a joke on him! Waba had sent him after a herd of tame old burros, telling him they were deer, and he, like an ass, had fallen into the trap. Well, he would take the joke in good part and pay for the burro. In future he would be prepared for Waba's jokes.

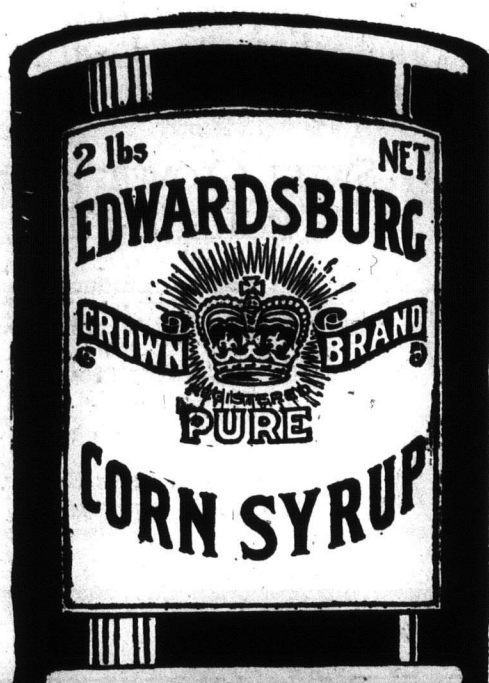
Christopher swung down the hillside back towards the canoe, but to his utter surprise he found no canoe awaiting him. Was this the wrong place—no, there were his footprints, and there—goodness, what was that? It was his own small leather grip containing his money, and his private belongings, left on the bank just where he had landed! Where was Waba? Christopher called. No answer. Suddenly the boy felt a chill of loneliness. Around him was the great silent waste. He was subtly aware that Waba had deserted him for ever!

Then it occurred to Christopher to search for other signs, for Waba had already taught him to be observant, and he found in the sand the print of Indian moccasins which were too large for his and not large enough for Waba's. The Indian that wore them had approached the canoe hurriedly, entered it, and apparently gone off with Waba!

Utterly mystified, Christopher suddenly recalled the human figure he had seen—or thought he had seen—disappearing with the burros, and that person, whoever it was, had circled round the hill and gained the canoe ere he himself gained it. Christopher gave himself up to conjecture, for he could not understand why his friend Waba should desert him thus.

V

But Christopher was not long to be



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