

The Cousin From Canada

(Concluded from page 10.)

was that if you had taken your uncle's advice ten years ago, and gone to Canada, you might have become a more practical man than you are now. Can you, for instance, do anything useful?"

"Yes. Like Miss Braddock, I can drive a motor-car."

"Then is it your intention to become a chauffeur when you have transferred the Dunfor estates to Miss Braddock?"

"I confess I haven't—"

"Haven't given much thought when you are on the verge of— Oh, dear, you do seem to be a hopeless person."

"What would you advise me?"

"I'm not your secretary, Lord Dunfor; I am secretary to Miss Braddock. She has first claim to all my advice."

"I had come to fancy you a friend."

"You say that very nicely, Lord Dunfor. Well, then, as a friend, I will ask you one question. Do you possess a private income?"

"Less than five hundred a year."

"Pounds?"

"Pounds, of course."

"Why, that's two thousand five hundred dollars! With an annual amount like that, you could, if you possess any capacity make a fortune in Canada."

"I doubt the business capacity."

"I don't see why you should doubt that; your uncles showed great business capacity. Why should you be bereft of all good sense? It's merely the enervating life you've been living over here, and the false notions you have imbibed regarding money. Does it never occur to you that a well-equipped man should experience the same exultation in making money of his own rather than inheriting it, or marrying for it, that a thoroughbred horse feels in winning a race."

"Now that you put it that way, Miss Winterbourn— By the way, are you going back to Canada?"

"After I have seen more of England."

"Why, I'd like the privilege of showing some portions of England to you, Miss Winterbourn, and then, when you go back, have a shy at Canada."

"When I go back? Why, what has that to do with your visit?"

"Well, I should like it if there was someone in the great Dominion whom I knew, and whose good wishes—"

"But you have my good wishes now. You are not at all the sort of person I thought you were."

"Does Miss Braddock share your prejudices against me?"

"Oh, Miss Braddock! Don't flatter yourself you can win her over as you have a simpleton like myself. Still, I'll say a good word for you to her; but if you take my advice as well as my good wishes, you will forget Miss Braddock and turn your attention to Canada instead. Perhaps you didn't know that Miss Braddock was a teacher of elocution, and she is quite formidable when she begins declaiming. You'll never know what a cumberer of the earth you are until you hear Miss Braddock expatiate on the uselessness of man, especially the degenerate scions of old families."

"You again bring up regrets for the hansom cab, and fears about the motor-car."

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"Ah, solicitor! That's the word. Well, why didn't you send him to solicit for you, as John Alden did for Captain Miles Standish. It's a solicitor's business to solicit, isn't it?"

"Really, Miss Winterbourn, I don't know what you're talking about. I have not the honour of the acquaintance of the Captain you refer to, nor do I know Mr.—Mr. What's-his-name Alden."

"But don't you know that your solicitor and Miss Braddock's solicitor have put their legal heads together in conference, quite agreeing, in that absurd English way of theirs, that the impoverished nobleman is to marry the wild, untamed heiress from the West?"

"Good Heavens!" cried the startled Earl of Dunfor. "You mean to say that these two solicitors have dared—"

"Well, our solicitor dared, and you ought to have seen the way my dear friend, Miss Jane Braddock, carried on! Why, you'd think, to hear her talk, that no rich American woman had ever married a poor but proud English lord since the world began; but I can tell you that Miss Braddock has risen to the occasion. When you fling yourself upon your knees—I know Miss Braddock will let me stop if I can get your permission—you'll then learn for the first time the capability of the English language. Meanwhile I myself will sing your praises to the angry woman."

"Well, that's very good of you, Miss Winterbourn, and you may begin the song by stating that I have not the slightest intention of marrying Miss Braddock, even if she owned the mines of Golconda as well as the estates of Dunfor."

"Do you mean to pretend that you did not come here to-day to propose to her?"

"Now, I say," hedged his lordship, "you know you're just chaffing me, and also you are quite well aware that I came to pay a friendly and not a declamatory call upon Aunt Jane, who is by way of being a relative of mine, seemingly as objectionable as my uncle, the late Earl. No, Miss Winterbourn, I'm going over to Canada. You wouldn't mind if I went on the same steamer that carried you?"

"Mind? I should be delighted, of course; but I am going by way of Quebec and Montreal."

The girl had risen to her feet. "That would suit me down to the ground," said his lordship. "I went over to New York once in August. Beastly place and beastly hot! I'd like to go by Montreal this time."

He held out his hand to her. She took it, smiling at him, and somehow he didn't seem to know when to let go.

The door burst open as if impelled by some explosive, and there entered a tall, gaunt, mannish woman, with a grim, hard, domineering face framed in iron-grey hair. She turned in cold fury to the obsequious footman.

"Did not I command you to tell the Earl of Dunfor I was not at home if he called, and you knew I went away solely because I wished this announcement to be the truth and not a lie?"

"Yes, madam; I told his lordship so."

"It is all my fault, Aunt Jane," cried Hilda. "You know I wished to see Lord Dunfor, so I gave orders he was to be shown in here, for it was also the truth that I was at home."

"Oh, I knew how it would be, Hilda!" cried the angry woman. "I told you that you yourself would spoil the plan. Here this profligate spends an hour in your company, and I find you standing there holding each other's hands!"

The young lady withdrew her hand. "I knew what this scapegrace would do. With all the detective force in London at his disposal, how long would it take him to find out that you were the heiress, and not I? Haven't you read those Sherlock Holmes books? Nothing can be concealed from a London rake in this shameful city. Oh, Hilda, Hilda, we were getting on so nicely," cried Miss Braddock, "and now you have spoiled it all!"

His lordship made a stammering attempt to speak.

"Do you know, Aunt Jane," he murmured, clinging to the hand, "I don't think she has."

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