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"BELA"

CHAPTER I.

From within the teepee of Charley Whitefish issued the sounds of a family brawl. It was of frequent occurrence in this teepee. Men at the doors of other lodges, engaged in cleaning their guns, or in other light occupations suitable to the manly dignity, shrugged with strong scorn for the man who could not keep his women in order. With the shrugs went warning glances toward their own laborious spouses.

Each man's scorn might well have been mitigated with thankfulness that he was not cursed with a daughter like Charley's Bela. Bela was a firebrand in the village, a scandal to the whole tribe. Some said she was possessed of a devil; according to others she was a girl born with the heart of a man. This phenomenon was unique in their experience, and being a simple folk they resented it. Bela refused to accept the common lot of women. It was not enough for her that such and such a thing had always been so in the tribe.

She would not do a woman's tasks (unless she happened to feel like it); she would not hold her tongue in the presence of men. Indeed, she had been known to talk back to the head man himself, and she had had the last word in the bargain.

Not content with her own misbehavior, Bela lost no opportunity of giving at the other women, the hard-working girls, the silent, patient squaws, for substituting to their fathers, brothers and husbands. This naturally enraged all the men.

Charley Whitefish was violently obdurate on the subject, but he was a poor-spirited creature who dared not take a stick to Bela. It must be said that Bela did not get much sympathy from the women. Most of them hated her with an astonishing bitterness.

As Neenah, Neenah's wife, explained it to Eelip Moosa, a visitor in camp: "That girl Bela, she is weh-ti-go, crazy, I think. She got a bad eye. Her eye dry you up when she look. You can't say nothing at all. Her tongue is like a dog-whip. I hate her. I scare for my children when she come around. I think maybe she steal my baby. Because they say weh-ti-gos got drink a baby's blood to melt the ice in their brains. I wish she go away. We have no peace here till she go."

"Dow the river they say Bela a very pretty girl," remarked Eelip. "Yah! What good is pretty if you crazy in the head?" retorted Neenah. "She twenty years old and got no husband. Now she never get no husband, because everybody on the lake know she crazy. Two, three years ago many young men come after her. They like her because she light-colored, and got red in her cheeks. Me, I think she ugly like the grass that grows under a log. Many young men come, I tell you, but Bela spit on them and call fools. She think she better than anybody."

"Last fall Charley go up to the head of the lake and say all around what a fine girl he got. There was a young man from the Spirit River country, he say he take her. He come so far he not hear she crazy. Give Charley a horse to bind the bargain. So they come back together. It was a strong young man, and the son of a chief. He wear gold-embroidered vest, and dookkin moccasins, worked with red and blue silk. He is call Beavertail. "He glad when he see Bela's pair forehead and red cheeks. Men are like that. Nobody here tell him she crazy because all want him take her away. So he speak very nice to her. She show him her teeth back, and speak ugly. She got no shame at all for a woman. She say: 'You think you're a man, eh? I can run faster than you. I can paddle a canoe faster than you. I can shoot straighter than you.' Did you ever hear anything like that?"

"By and by Beavertail is mad, and he say he race her with canoes. Everybody go to the lake to see. They want Beavertail to beat her good. The men make bets. They start up by Big Stone Point and paddle to the river. It was like queen's birthday at the settlement. They come down side by side till almost there. Then Bela push ahead. Wa! she beat him easy. She got no sense."

"After, when he come along, she push him canoe with her paddle and turn him in the water. She laugh and paddle away. The men got go pull Beavertail out. That night he steal his horse back from Charley and ride home."

"Everybody tell the story round the lake. She not get a husband now I think. We never get rid of her, may be. She is proud, too. She wash herself and comb her hair all the time. Foolishness. Treat us like dirt. She is crazy. We hate her."

Such was the conventional estimate of Bela. In the whole camp this morning, at the sounds of strife issuing from her father's teepee, the only head that was turned with a look of compassion for her was that of old Musq'oosis the hunchback.

His teepee was beside the river, a little removed from the others. He sat at the door, sunning himself, smoking, meditating, looking for all the world like a little old wrinkled muskrat squatting on his haunches.

If it had not been for Musq'oosis, Bela's lot in the tribe would long ago have become unbearable. Musq'oosis was her friend, and he was a person of consequence. The position of his teepee suggested his social status. He was so old all his relations were dead. He remained with the Fish-Eaters because he loved the lake, and could not be happy away from it. For their part they were glad to have him stay; he brought credit to the tribe.

As one marked by God and gifted with superior wisdom, the people were inclined to venerate Musq'oosis even to the point of according him supernatural attributes. Musq'oosis laughed at their superstitions, and refused to profit by them. This they were unable to understand; was it not bad for business?

But while they resented his laughter, they did not cease to be secretly in awe of him, and were ready enough to seek his advice. When they came to him Musq'oosis offered them sound sense without any supernatural admixture.

In earlier days Musq'oosis had sojourner for a while in Prince George, the town of the white man, and there he had picked up much of the white man's strange lore. This he had imparted to Bela—that was why she was crazy, they said.

He had taught Bela to hepak English. Bela's first-hand observations of the great white race had been limited to half a score of individuals—priests, policemen and traders.

The row in Charley's teepees had started early that morning. Charley, bringing in a couple of skunks from his traps, had ordered Bela to skin them, and stretch the pelts. She had refused point blank, giving as her reasons in the first place that she wanted to go fishing; in the second place, that she didn't like the smell.

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Both reasons seemed preposterous to Charley. It was for men to fish while women worked on shore. As for a smell, whoever heard of anybody objecting to such a thing? Wasn't the village full of smells?

Nevertheless, Bela had gone fishing. Bela was a duck for water. Since no one would give her a boat, she had traveled twenty miles on her own account to find a suitable cottonwood tree, and had then cut it down unaided, hollowed, shaped, and scraped it, and finally brought it home as good a boat as any in the camp.

Since that time, early and late, the lake had been her favorite haunt. Caribou Lake enjoys an unenviable reputation for weather; Bela thought nothing of crossing the ten miles in any stress.

When she returned from fishing, the skunks were still there, and the quarrel had recommenced. The result was no different. Charley finally issued out of the teepee beaten, and the little carcasses flew out of the door after Charley, propelled by a vigorous foot. Charley, swaggering ahead as a man does who has just been worsted, sought his mates for sympathy.

He took his way to the river bank in the middle of the camp, where a number of the young men were making or repairing boats for the summer fishing just now beginning. They had heard all that had passed in the teepee, and while affecting to pay no attention to Charley, were primed for him—showing that men in a crowd are much the same white or red.

Charley was a skinny, anxious-looking little man, withered and blackened as last year's leaves, ugly as a spider. His self-conscious braggadocio invited derision.

"Huh!" cried one. "Here comes woman-Charley. Driven out by the man of the teepee!"

A great laugh greeted this sally. The soul of the little man writhed inside him.

"Did she lay a stick to your back, Charley?"

"She gave him no breakfast till he bring wood."

"Hey, Charley, get a peccotta to cover your legs. My woman maybe give you her old one."

sought to brave it out. They had no mercy on him. They outvied each other in outrageous chaffing.

Suddenly he turned on them shrilly. "Coyotes! Grave-robbers! May you be cursed with a woman-devil like I am. Then we'll see!"

This was what they desired. They stopped work and rolled on the ground in their laughter. They were stimulated to the highest flights of wit.

Charley walked away up the river-bank and hid himself in the bush. There he sat brooding and brooding on his wrongs until all the world turned red before his eyes. For years that fiend of a girl had made him a laughing-stock. She was none of his blood. He would stand it no longer.

The upshot of all this brooding was that he cut himself a staff of willow two fingers thick, and carrying it as inconspicuously as possible, crept back to the village. At the door of his teepee he picked up the two little carcasses and entered. He had avoided the river-bank, but they saw him, and saw the stick, and drew near to witness the fun.

Within the circle of the teepee Charley's wife, Losels, was mixing dough in a pan. Opposite her, eBla, the cause of all the trouble, knelt on the ground carefully filling the points of her fish-hooks. Fish-hooks were hard to come by.

Charley stopped within the entrance, glaring at her. Bela, looking up, instantly divined from his bloodshot eyes and from the hand he kept behind him, what was in store. Coolly putting her tackle behind her, she rose.

She was taller than her supposed father, full-bosomed and round-limbed as a sculptor's ideal. In a community of waistless, neckless women she was slender as a young tree, and held her head like a swan.

She kept her mouth close shut, a hardy boy, and her eyes gleamed with a fire of resolution which no other pair of eyes in the camp could match. It was for the conscious superiority of her glance that she was hated. One from the outside would have remarked quickly how different she was from the others, but these were a thoughtless, mongrel people.

Charley flung the little beasts at her feet. "Skin them," he said, thickly. "Now."

She said nothing—words were a waste of time, but watched warily for his first move.

He repeated his command. Bela saw the end of the stick and smiled. Charley sprang at her with a snarl of rage, brandishing the stick. She nimbly evaded the blow. From the ground the wife and mother watched motionless with wide eyes.

Bela, laughing, ran in and seized the stick as he attempted to raise it again. They struggled for possession of it, staggering all over the teepee, falling against the poles, trampling in and out of the embers. Losels shielded the pan of dough with her body. Bela finally wrenched the stick from Charley and in her turn raised it.

Charley's courage went out like a blown lamp. He turned to run. Whack! came the stick between his shoulders. With a mournful howl he ducked under the flap. Bela after him. Whack! Whack! A little cloud arose from his coat at each stroke, and a double wale of dust was left upon it.

A whoop of derision greeted them as they emerged into the air. Charley scuttled like a rabbit across the enclosure, and lost himself in the bush. Bela stood glaring around at the guffawing men.

"You pigs!" she cried. Suddenly she made for the nearest, brandishing her staff. They scattered, laughing.

Bela returned to the teepee, head held high. Her mother, patient, stolid squaw, still sat as she had left her, hands motionless in the dough. Bela stood for a moment, breathing hard, her face working oddly.

Suddenly she flung herself on the ground in a tempest of weeping. Her startled mother stared at her uncomprehendingly. For an Indian woman to cry is rare enough; to cry in a moment of triumph, unheard of. Bela was strange to her own mother.

"Pigs! Pigs! Pigs!" she cried, between sobs. "I hate them! I don't know what pigs are till I see them in the style at the mission. Then I think of these people! Pigs they are! I hate them! They are not my people!"

Losels, with a jerk like an automaton, recommenced kneading the dough. Bela raised a streaming, accusing face to her mother.

"What for you take a man like that?" she cried, passionately. "A weasel, a mouse, a flea of a man! A dog is more of a man than he! He 'my mother gave me to him,' murmured the squaw apologetically.

"You took him!" cried Bela. "You go with him! Was he the best man you could get? I jump in the lake before I shame my children with a coyote for a father!"

Losels looked strangely at her daughter. "Charley not your father," she said abruptly.

Bela pulled up short in the middle of her passionate outburst, stared at her mother with fallen jaw.

"You twenty year old," went on Losels. "Nineteen year I marry Charley

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I have another husband before that. "Why you never tell me?" murmured Bela, amazed.

"So long ago!" Losels replied, with a shrug. "What's the use?"

Bela's tears were ineffectually called in. "Tell me, what kind of man my father?" she eagerly demanded.

"He was a white man." "A white man?" repeated Bela, staring while it sunk in. A deep rose mantled the girl's cheeks.

"What he called?" she asked. "Walter Forest." On the Indian woman's tongue it was "Hoo-ah-ah." "Real white?" demanded Bela.

"His skin white as a dog's tooth," answered Losels, "his hair bright like the sun." A gleam in the dull eyes as she said this, suggested that the stolid squaw was human, too.

"Was he good to you?" "He was good to me. Not like Indian husband. He like me dress up fine. All the time laugh and make jokes. He call me 'Tagger-Leelee.' "Did he go away?"

Losels shook her head. "Go through the ice with his team." "Under the water—my father," murmured Bela.

She turned on her mother accusingly. "You have good white husband, and you take Charley after!" "My mother make me," Losels said, with sad stolidity.

Bela wondered on these matters, filled with a deep excitement. Her mother kneaded the dough. "I half a white woman," the girl murmured at last, more to herself than the other. "That is why I strange here."

Again her mother looked at her intently, presaging another disclosure. "Me, my father a white man, too," she said in her abrupt way. "It is forgotten now."

Bela stared at her mother, breathing quickly. "Then—I 'most white!" she whispered, with amazed and brightening eyes. "Now I understand my heart!" she suddenly cried aloud. "Always I love the white people, but I not know. Always I ask Musq'oosis tell me what they do. I love them because they live nice. They not pigs like these people. They are my people! All is clear to me!" She rose.

"What you do?" asked Losels, anxiously. "I will go to my people!" cried Bela, looking away as if she envisaged the whole white race.

The Indian mother raised her eyes in a swift glance of passionate supplication—but her lips were tight. Bela did not see the look.

"I go talk to Musq'oosis," she said. "He tell me all to do."

CHAPTER II. The village of the Fish-Eaters was built in a narrow meadow between a pine grove and the little river. It was a small village of a dozen teepees set up in rough semicircle open to the stream.

This stream (Hah-Wah-See) they call it (came down from Jack-Knife Mountains to the north, and after passing the village, rounded a point of the pines, traversed a wide sand-bar and was received into Caribou Lake.

The opposite bank was heavily fringed with willows. Thus the village was snugly hidden between the pines and the willows, and one might have sailed up and down the lake a dozen times without suspecting its existence. In this the Indians followed their ancient instinct. For generations there had been no enemies to hide from.

It was at the end of May; the meadow was like a rug of rich emerald velvet, and the willows were freshly decked in their pale leafage. The whole scene was mantled with the exquisite radiance of the northern summer sun. Children and dogs loafed and rolled in aimless ecstasy, and the old people sat at the teepee openings blinking contentedly.

The conical teepees themselves, each with its bundle of sticks at the top and its thread of smoke made no inharmonious note in the scene of nature. Only upon close look was the loveliness a little marred by evidences of the Fish-Eaters' careless housekeeping.

Musq'oosis' lodge stood by itself outside the semicircle and a little down stream. The owner was still sitting

at the door, an odd little bundle in a blanket, as Bela approached.

"I think you come soon," he said. These two always conversed in English.

"You know everyting," stated Bela, simply. He shrugged. "I just sit quiet, and my thoughts speak to me."

She dropped on her knees before him, and rested sitting on her heels, hands in lap. Without any preamble she said simply: "My father a white man."

Musq'oosis betrayed no surprise. "I know that," he replied. "My mother's father, he white man, too," she went on.

He nodded. "Why you never tell me?" she asked, frowning slightly.

He spread out his palms. "What's the use? You want to go. Got no place to go. Too much young to go. I think you feel bad if I tell."

She shook her head. "I know what's the matter with me now. I understand all. I was mad for cause I think I got poor miserable father lak Charley."

(To be continued.) HERBERT C. HOOVER. Tabloid Biography of the U. S. Food Law Administrator.

Herbert Clark Hoover: Born West Branch, Ia., August 10, 1874. Quaker parents. After death of parents in 1883 sent to Oregon in charge of relatives, residing at Newberg and Salem, Ore., until 1891. Became self-supporting at 13 years of age. Went to Stanford University, California, 1891, graduating 1895 as mining engineer. Employed professionally in New Mexico, Colorado, California and Oregon until 1897, part time with United States Geological survey. In 1897 went to Australia in administrative metallurgical work and mining.

Returned to California in 1899. After few months left for China as an engineering adviser to the Chinese Government. Returned to California, 1900, after outbreak of Boxer rebellion. After a few months left California again for China as manager of industrial works, comprising coal mines and works, fleet of 20 ships, canals, railways and harbor works, employing some 25,000 people. Returned to California in 1901.

Thereafter opened offices in San Francisco, New York and London, visiting all points annually. Employed in administration of large industrial works, embracing railways, metallurgical work, mining, iron and steel, shipping, land and electrical enterprises in California, Colorado, Alaska, Mexico, India, Russia and China, until the war broke out in 1914. Was a trustee of Stanford University, California, and spent much time there, 1901-1914, in affairs of that institution and on conduct of business in that state. Went to London just before war broke out. When the war broke out became engaged in the organization of return of stranded Americans. In October, 1914, organized commission for relief in Belgium, and remained in Europe during the war, with the exception of a return to the United States in the fall of 1915 and the winter of 1917.

The commission for relief of Belgium from October, 1914, until April, 1917, handled the import of upwards of 100,000,000 bushels of other cereals, beans, peas and other cereals, together with many thousands of tons of meat products; operating its own fleet of from 50 to 70 ships, its own mills, and in addition thereto acquired and redistributed cereals and several other staples in the occupied territory involving between 30,000,000 and 40,000,000 bushels of other cereals, and large quantities of meats, etc. The commission for relief in Belgium organized and distributed a ration to 10,000,000 people, directly employing upward of 125,000 people in its operations. The personnel was in a great majority volunteer, and the total overhead expenses of the commission up to April, 1917, were three-eighths of one per cent. The aggregate amount of money expended on imported foodstuffs and through the organization. In the purchase of native food supplies was approximately \$500,000,000.

Slipper Day in Holland. There is a curious festival called slipper day celebrated in Holland. Slipper day in the Netherlands is the one day in the year in which the Dutchwoman claims superiority over her husband. On that day she rules him to her heart's content, and he generally obeys good humoredly enough. It is, unless she is one of those ladies not unknown in Holland or in any other country who aspire to complete rule over their unhappy partners throughout the year.

In its cheeses, now practically unobtainable, Switzerland has a first-class asset for bargaining.—Springfield Republican.

Do not think that you can approach a man's heart by treading on his toes.—Youth's Companion.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

Mothers who keep a box of Baby's Own Tablets in the house may feel that the lives of their little ones are reasonably safe during the hot weather. Stomach troubles, cholera infantum and diarrhoea carry off thousands of little ones every summer. In most cases because the mother does not have a safe medicine at hand to give promptly. Baby's Own Tablets cure these troubles, or if given occasionally to the well child, will prevent their coming on. The Tablets are guaranteed by a government analyst to be absolutely harmless even to the newborn babe. They are especially good in summer because they regulate the bowels and keep the stomach sweet and pure. They are sold by medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

AMRITSAR. Religious Centre of the Sikh Race, is Interesting.

The city of Amritsar, in British India, is the religious center of the Sikh Rith, and as such it gains a high degree of interest and distinction. The Sikhs are known all over the British empire, as the best of the native Indian fighting men. They have done loyal service on every battlefield where England has called on her native troops, and they are immensely proud of their record and their fighting ability. They are perhaps the most militant creed and people in the world.

The city of Amritsar was built by the Sikhs, to serve as headquarters of their church. The name itself signifies "The Pool of Immortality," in reference to the great tank in the center of the town. In this tank is an island and on the island stands the Golden Temple of Amritsar, which is to the Sikh what Solomon's temple was to the ancient Jews, and what the Tomb of the Prophet is to the Mohammedan to-day. The Golden Temple is so-called on account of its burnished copper dome, that gleams with a dull flame in the fierce Indian sun. Beneath it, the holy men or gurus, of the Sikhs, expound the sacred books. These gurus are old men, and the fighting Sikh pays them all devotion, but his real veneration is for the sword.

The origin of the Sikhs is a good indication of the kind of men they are. The creed had its birth in comparatively recent times, when the Punjab was chafing under the heavy heel of the Mongol conquerors. A certain man of pugnacious temper grew weary of the oppression, and decided to raise a small band to fight for freedom. He drew his sword and stood shouting in the market place, calling for volunteers. The people thought he was mad, and feared him, but at last another fighting man, tired of servitude, volunteered.

The first man concealed himself in a secret place, and returned to the market place, after smearing himself with the fresh blood of a sheep. Again he called for volunteers, but the people thought he had killed the first one, and fled. But at last he got another volunteer. Again he concealed him, again he smeared himself with blood, again he called for recruits. By this system, he only got those who thought they were going to certain death, and did not fear it. When he had collected a dozen men by this system, he put himself at their head and they sallied forth to rout the Moslem oppressors.

Thus the Sikhs had their origin in battle, and it battle they have maintained themselves ever since. They turnish to-day some of the most loyal troops in the British empire.

Coin Profiles. Where a face is used on a piece of money it is always in profile; because the cameo is more readily struck with the die in that manner, and if a full or three-quarter face were represented the nose of the gentleman or lady would get damaged in circulation and produce a ridiculous effect.

IF A woman cause you suffering, I want you to write, and let me tell you of my simple method of home treatment, send you ten days' free trial, post-paid, and put you in touch with women in Canada who will gladly tell what my method has done for them.

If you are troubled with weak, tired feelings, headache, backache, bearing-down, constipation, catarrhal conditions, pain in the side, regularly or irregularly, bloating, sense of falling or giddiness, nervousness, desire to cry, palpitation, hot flashes, dark rings under the eyes, or a loss of interest in life, write to me to-day. Address: Mrs. M. Summers, Box 3, Windsor, Ont.

FOUR-IN-HAND TIES. An Easy Way to Iron Them After They Have Been Washed. It is not an impossible task to wash a four-in-hand tie. The difficulty comes in ironing it in such a way that its original shape will be restored, writes Emile Parent in the Popular Science Monthly.

To do this it is necessary to proceed carefully. Start by placing the wide end of the tie upon the board with the seam up, then thrust in the finger and take hold of the lining. Crisp the silk cover in the other hand and pull it back from over the lining for about half of its length. Then with a hot iron run over the lining to straighten it out.

Cut a piece of stiff cardboard to fit into the wide end of the tie and long enough to reach to the narrow band. Slip this in between the lining and the seam side of the outer layer. Then turn the material back in proper shape, dampen in a clean cloth, lay it over the tie and iron in the usual way.

The cardboard form will prevent the pressure of the iron from causing a glossy mark to appear on the silk front opposite the seam. When through put the form aside for another time.

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