

out of the church door, while the veteran took Coristine's palsied arm and placed that of his young mistress upon it, ordering them, with military words of command, to accompany the victims, as bridesmaid and groomsmen. When the dreamer recovered sufficiently to look the officiating clergyman full in the face, he saw that this personage was no other than Frank, the news-agent, whereupon he laughed immediately and awoke.

"Corry, Corry, my dear fellow, are you able to get up, or shall I break the door in?" were the words that greeted his ear on awaking.

"The omadhaun!" he said to himself under the bed-clothes; "it would be a good thing to serve him with the sauce of silence, as he did me last night." But better counsels prevailed in his warm Irish heart, and he arose to unlock the door, when suddenly it flew open, and Wilkinson, with nothing but a pair of trousers added to his night attire, fell backwards into his arms. It was broad daylight as each looked into the other's face for explanations.

"But you're strong, Wilks!" said the lawyer with admiration.

"Corry, when I heard you groan that way, I was sure you were in a fit."

"Oh, it was nothing," replied his friend, who found it hard to keep from laughing, "only a bad nightmare."

"What were you dreaming about to bring it on?"

Now, this was just what Coristine dared not tell, for the truth would bring up all last night's misunderstanding. So he made up a story of Wilkinson's teaching The Crew navigation and the use of the globes, when the captain interfered and threatened to kick master and pupil overboard. Then he, Coristine, interposed, and the captain fell upon him. "And you know, Wilks, he's a heavy man."

"Well, I am heartily glad it is no worse. Get a wash and get your clothes on, and come down to breakfast, like a good boy, for I hear the bell ringing."

Over their coffee and toast, eggs and sausages, the two were as kind and attentive to one another's wants, as if no dispute had ever marred their friendship. The dominie got out his sketch map of a route and opened it between them. "We shall start straight for the bush road into the north, if that suits you," he said, "and travel by easy stages towards Collingwood, where we shall again behold one of our inland seas. But, as it may be sometime before we reach a house of entertainment, it may be as well to fill the odd corners of our knapsacks with provision for the way."

"I say amen to that idea," replied the lawyer, and the travellers arose, paid their bill, including the price of the door-lock, seized their knapsacks by the straps and sallied forth. They laid in a small stock of captain's biscuits, a piece of good cheese, and some gingersnaps for Wilkinson's sweet tooth; they also had their flasks refilled, and Coristine invested in some pipe-lights. Then they sallied forth, not into the north as Wilkinson had said, it being a phrase he was fond of, but, at first, in a westerly, and, on the whole, in a north-westerly direction.

When the last house on the outskirts was left behind them, they helped each other on with their knapsacks, and felt like real pedestrians. The bush enclosed them on either side of the sandy road, so that they had shade whenever they wanted it. Occasionally a wayfarer would pass them with a curt "good morning," or a team would rattle by, its driver bestowing a similar salutation. The surface of the country was flat, but this did not hinder Wilkinson reciting:—

Mount slowly, sun! and may our journey lie  
Awhile within the shadow of this hill,  
This friendly hill, a shelter from thy beams!

"That reminds me," said Coristine, "of a fellow we had in the office once, whose name was Hill. He was a black-faced, solemn-looking genius, and the look of him would sink the spirits of a skylark down to zero. 'What's come over you?' said Woodruff to me one fine afternoon, when I was feeling a bit bilious. 'Oh,' said I, 'I've been within the shadow of this Hill,' and he laughed till he was black in the face."

"Corry, if I were not ashamed of making a pun, or, as we say in academic circles, being guilty of antanacrosis, I would say that you are in-corri-gible."

Coristine laughed, and then remarked seriously, "Here am I, with a strap-press full of printing paper in my knapsack, and paying no attention to science at all. We must begin to take life in earnest now, Wilks, my boy, and keep our eyes skinned for specimens. Sorry I am I didn't call and pay my respects to my botanical friend at the Barrie High School. He could have given us a pointer or two about the flowers that grow round here."

"Flowers are scarce in July," said the schoolmaster; "they seem to take a rest in the hot weather. The spring is their best time. Of course you know that song about the flowers in spring?"

"Never heard it in my life; sing it to us, Farquhar, like a darlin'."

Now, the dominie was not given to singing, but thus adjured, and the road being clear, he sang in a very fair voice:—

We are the flowers,  
The fair young flowers  
That come with the voice of Spring;  
Tra la la, la la la, la la,  
Tra la, tra la a a a.

Coristine revelled in the chorus, which, at the "a a a," went up to the extreme higher compass of the human voice and beyond it. He made his friend repeat the performance, called him a daisy, and tra la la'd to his heart's

content. Then he sat down on a grassy bank by the way-side and laughed loud and long. "Oh, it's a nice pair of fair young flowers we are, coming with the voice of spring; but we're not hayseeds, anyway." When the lawyer turned himself round to rise, Wilkinson asked seriously, "Did you hurt yourself then, Corry?"

"Never a bit, except that I'm weak with the laughing; and for why?"

"Because there is some red on your trousers, and I thought it might be blood—that you had sat down on some sharp thing."

"It'll be strawberry blite, I'll wager, *Blitum capitatum*, and a fine thing it is. Mrs. Marsh, that keeps our boarding house, has a garden where it grows wild in among the peas. She wanted some colouring for the icing of a cake, and hadn't a bit of cochineal or anything of the kind in the house. She was telling me her trouble, for it was a holiday and the shops were shut, and she's always that friendly with me; when, says I, 'There is no trouble about that.' So I went to the garden and got two lovely stalks of *Blitum capitatum*. 'Is it poison?' said she. 'Poison!' said I; 'and it belonging to the *Chenopodiaceae*, the order that owns beets and spinach, and all the rest of them. Trust a botanist, ma'am,' I said. It made the sweetest pink icing you ever saw, and Mrs. Marsh is forever deeply grateful, and rears that *Blitum* with fond and anxious care."

"I would like to see that plant," said Wilkinson. So they retraced their steps to the bank, over which Coristine leaned tenderly, picking something which he put into his mouth. "Come on, Wilks," he cried; "it isn't blite, but something better. It's wild strawberries themselves, and lashings of them. Sure any fool might have known them by the leaves, even if he was a herald, the worst fool of all, and only knew them from a duke's coronet."

For a time there was silence, for the berries were numerous, and, although small, sweet and of delicate flavour.

"Corry, they are luscious; this is Arcadia and Elysium."

"Foine, Wilks, foine," mumbled the lawyer, with his mouth full of berries.

"This folly of mine, sitting down on the blessings of Providence—turning my back upon them, so to speak," he remarked, after the first hunger was over, "reminds me of a man who took the gold medal in natural science. He had got his botany off by rote, so, when he was travelling between Toronto and Hamilton, a friend that was sitting beside him said, 'Johnson, what's in that field out there?' Johnson looked a bit put out, but said boldly, 'It's turnips.' There was an old farmer in the seat behind him, and he spoke up and said, 'Turmuts!' said he, 'them's hoats—ha, ha, ha!'"

As they tramped along, the botanist found some specimens: two lilies, the orange and the Turk's cap; the willow herb, the showy ladies' slipper, and three kinds of milkweed. He opened his knapsack, took out the strap-press, and carefully bestowed his floral treasures between sheets of unglazed printers' paper. Wilkinson took a friendly interest in these proceedings, and insisted on being furnished with the botanical names of all the specimens.

"That willow-herb, now, *Epilobium angustifolium*, is called fire-weed," said the botanist, "and is an awful nuisance on burnt ground. There was a Scotchman out here once, about this time of the year, and he thought it was such a pretty pink flower that he would take some home with him. So, when the downy-winged seeds came, he gathered a lot, and, when he got back to Scotland, planted them. Lord! the whole country about Perth got full of the stuff, till the farmers cursed him for introducing the American Saugh."

"The American what?" demanded Wilkinson.

"Saugh; it's an old Scotch word for willow, and comes from the French *saule*, I suppose."

"I am not sorry for them," said Wilkinson; "they say that pest, the Canada thistle, came from the Old Country."

"Yes, that's true; and so did Pusley, which Warner compares with original sin; and a host of other plants. Why, on part of the Hamilton mountain you won't find a single native plant. It is perfectly covered, from top to bottom, with dusty, unwholesome-looking weeds from Europe and the Southern States. But we paid them back."

"How was that?"

"You know, a good many years ago, sailing vessels began to go from the Toronto harbour across the Atlantic to British ports. There's a little water-plant that grows in Ashbridge's Bay, called the *Anacharis*, and this little weed got on to the bottom of the ocean vessels. Salt water didn't kill it, but it lived till the ships got to the Severn, and there it fell off and took root, and blocked up the canals with a solid mass of subaqueous vegetation that made the English canal men dredge night and day to get rid of it. I tell you we've got some pretty hardy things out here in Canada."

"Do you not think," asked Wilkinson, "that our talk is getting too like that of Charles and his learned father in Gosse's '*Canadian Naturalist*'?"

"All right, my boy, I'll oppress you no longer with a tender father's scientific love, but, with your favourite poet, say:—

To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

"That is because of their associations, a merely relative reason," said the dominie.

"It isn't though, at least not altogether. Listen, now, to what Tennyson says, or to something like what he says:—

Little flower in the crannied wall,  
Peeping out of the crannies,  
I hold you, root and all, in my hand;  
Little flower, if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

There's no association nor relation in that; the flower brings you at once face to face with infinite life. Do you know what these strawberries brought to me?"

"A pleasant feast I should say."

"No, they made me think how much better it would have been if I had had somebody to gather them for; I don't say a woman, because that's tabooed between us, but say a child, a little boy or girl. There's no association or relation there at all; the strawberries called up love, which is better than a pleasant feast."

"According to Wordsworth, the flower in the crannied wall and the strawberry teach the same lesson, for does he not say:—

That life is love and immortality.

Life, I repeat, is energy of love,  
Divine or human, exercised in pain,  
In strife and tribulation, and ordained,  
If so approved and sanctified, to pass  
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy?

At any rate, that is what he puts into his Parson's lips."

"Farquhar, my boy, I think we'd better stop, for I'm weakening fast. It's sentimental the flowers and the fruit are making me. I mind, when I was a little fellow in the old sod, my mother gathering wild flowers from the hedges and putting them all round the ribbon of my straw hat. I can't pay her the debt of that mark of love the same way, but I feel I should pay it to somebody. You never told me about your mother."

"No, because she is dead and gone long ago, and my father married again, and brought a vixen, with two trollops of girls, to take the place of an angel. These three women turned my stomach at all the sex. Look, there's a pretty woman for you!"

They had reached a clearing in the bush, consisting of a corn patch and a potato field, in which a woman, with a man's hat on her head and a pair of top-boots upon her nether extremities, looking a veritable guy, was sprinkling the potato plants with well-diluted Paris green. The shanty pertaining to the clearing was some little distance from the road, and, hoping to get a drink of water there, Coristine prepared to jump the rail fence and make his way towards it. The woman, seeing what he was about, called: "Hi, Jack, Jack!" and immediately a big mongrel bull-dog came tearing towards the travellers, barking as he ran.

"Come back, Corry, for heaven's sake, or he'll bite you!" cried Wilkinson.

"Never a fear," answered the lately sentimental botanist; "barking dogs don't bite as a rule." So he jumped the fence in earnest, and said soothingly, as if he were an old friend: "Hullo, Jack, good dog!" whereupon the perfidious Jack grovelled at his feet and then jumped up for a caress. But the woman came striding along, picking up a grubbing hoe by the way to take the place of the treacherous defender of the house.

"Hi, git out o' that, quick as yer legs'll take yer; git out now! we don't want no seeds, ner fruit trees, ner sewin' machines, ner fambly Bibles. My man's jist down in the next patch, an' if yer don't git, I'll set him on yer."

"Madam," said Coristine, lifting his hat, "permit me to explain —"

"Go 'long, I tell yer; that's the way they all begin, with yer madam an' explainin'; I'll explain this hoe on yer if yer take another step."

"We are not agents, nor tramps, nor tract distributors, nor collectors for missions," cried Coristine, as soon as he had a chance to speak. "My friend, here, is a gentleman engaged in education, and I am a lawyer, and all we want is a glass of water."

"A liyer, eh?" said the Amazon, in a very much reduced tone; "Why didn't yer say so at wonst, an' not have me settin' that good for nuthin' brute on yer? I never see liyers with a pack on their backs afore. Ef yer wants a drink, why don't yer both come on to the house?"

Wilkinson, at this not too cordial invitation, vaulted over the fence beside his companion, and they walked housewards, the woman striding on ahead, and the dog sniffing at Wilkinson's heels in the rear. A rather pretty red-haired girl of about fifteen was washing dishes, evidently in preparation for the mid-day meal. Her the woman addressed as Anna Maria, and ordered her to go and get a pail of fresh water for the gentlemen. But Wilkinson, who felt he must do something to restore his credit, offered to get the water if Anna Maria would show him the well or pump that contained it. The girl gave him a tin pail, and he accompanied her to the back of the house, where the well and a bucket with a rope were. In vain he tried to sink that bucket; it would not sink. At last the girl took it out of his hands, turned the bucket upside down, and, letting it fall with a vicious splash, brought it up full of deliciously cool water, which she transferred to the pail.

"You are very clever to do that the first time," remarked the schoolmaster, wishing to be polite to the girl, who looked quite pleasant and comely, in spite of her bare feet and arms.