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TWO KNAPSACKS:

A NOVEL OF CANADIAN SUMMER LIFE.

BY J. CAWDOR BELL.

CHAPTER X.—(Continued).

THERE was no visible cart track to the lakes. If Rawdon's whiskey mill, as Ben called it, was really somewhere among them, there must of necessity have been a road tapping their shores at some point, for an extensive business employing so many men could hardly exist without a means of easy transportation. To the neighbourhood of the Lakes Settlement, however, this road was a mystery. The party halted at a log house by the side of the road proper, and Mr. Perrowne, who claimed Richards as a parishioner, asked his wife if he and his friends could have the use of her boat. Mrs. Richards gave the required permission very graciously, and the excursionists struck into the bush path which led to Lake No. 1, or Richards' Lake. The bush had once been underbrushed, perhaps a long time back by the Indians who generally made for water; but the underbrush was now replaced by a dense growth of Canadian yew, commonly called Ground Hemlock, the crimson berry of which is one of the prettiest objects in the vegetable world. It, and other shrubs and small saplings, encroached on the narrow path, and, in places, almost obliterated it. The land rose into a ridge a short distance from the water, so that it was invisible until the crest was reached. Then, a dark circular lake, seemingly altogether shut in by the elsewhere dense forest, made its appearance. There were remains of a log shelter near the shore on the left, and, between it and the somewhat muddy beach, Toner lit a fire of drift wood to drive away the flies which followed the party out of the bush. The punt was soon discovered moored to a stake, a punt with three seats flush with the gunwales, one each fore and aft, and one in the centre.

"O, I say," cried Mr. Perrowne, "look at that lovely little island out there! See, you can hardly see it because of the black shadows. What a place to fish! and here we are without a single rod."

"Ain't no need to trouble about rods," remarked Ben; "I kin cut you half-a-dozen in two shakes of a dead lamb's tail."

"And I've got three hooked lines," added the lawyer, producing part of his Beaver River purchase from his breast pocket. The dominie did not wish to trust himself in a doubtful craft with Coristine again, and he distrusted the Captain, save on the *Susan Thomas*. His former success in fishing, and his present pleasant relations with Perrowne, prompted him to join that gentleman in practising the gentle art. But what about bait? The question having been put to Toner, who returned with three springy saplings, and worms having been suggested, that veteran fisherman told Mr. Perrowne that he might as well look for a gold mine as for worms in new land. When, however, some envelopes were produced from various pockets, he proceeded to fill them with grasshoppers and locusts. He also excavated a little pond near the shore, and gathered a collection of caddice worms from the shallow border of the lake, after which he found an old bait tin in the log shelter, that he filled with water, into which he transferred the pond's inhabitants for transportation. "Ef them baiuts don't suit, they's a heap o' little frawgs in the grass of that there island," he finally remarked, before unmooring the scow. Then the dominie and Mr. Perrowne got on board with their rods, lines, and bait, and were poled and paddled by Ben over to their isle of beauty. Their lines were in the water, and a bass was on each hook, before the scow returned to the shore.

Now the Captain took command of the craft, occupying the entire stern thwart; while Ben, with his gun resting on the floor and pointing its muzzles out over the bow, held that end of the vessel. The commander would not allow the passengers who sat amidships to do any work, but said they might talk or sing if they had a mind to. Then the lawyer sang:—

The floatin' scow oh ole Virginny
I've toiled for many a day,
Workin' among de oyster beds,
To me it was but play.

When he ended, Mr. Errol gave the company "Flow gently, Sweet Afton, among thy green braes," and Coristine wondered much if "My Mary" that occurs in the song had any reference to a Marjorie, one who, as he said inwardly,

Shall never be thine,
But mine, but mine, so I fondly swear,
For ever and ever mine!

After Mr. Errol's effort, which won applause from the Captain, the lawyer waved his handkerchief as a farewell sign to the busy fishermen, for, just at that moment, the apparently land-locked shore opened, and a narrow channel between cliffs came into view. The second lake, into which they soon glided, was more beautiful than the first. A few jays and woodpeckers were flying about, and Toner was anxious to have a shot at a golden woodpecker, which he called a Highholder, and which sat unconcernedly on a limb within splendid range. Mr. Errol dissuaded him, saying he had heard that the report of a gun was carried through all the channels to the very end by the echoes, and reverberated there like the noise of thunder; after last night, they had better be as quiet as possible. To take

his mind off the disappointment, Coristine asked Ben if he could sing and paddle too. He guessed he could, as paddling wasn't taking his breath away any. So Ben was pressed to sing, and at once assumed a lugubrious air, that reminded the lawyer of The Crew. The song was about a dying youth, who is asked what he will give in legacy to his mother, his sister, and various other relatives. He is liberal to all, till his lady-love's name is mentioned, and, for some unknown reason, excites his indignation. The tune was not the same as The Crew's copyright.

"What will you give your sweetheart, my comfort and my joy?
What will you give your sweetheart, my darling boy?"
"Oh! a gallows to hang on!
Mother, make my bed soft;
I've a pain in my chest;
I want to lay down."

The last line was sung in a very solemn and affecting monotone. Coristine had to pretend to be deeply moved, to turn round facing the Captain, and chew first his moustache and then half of his pocket handkerchief. "Eh, Ben," said the graver minister, "I'm afraid that was no' a very Christian spirit to die in."

"No, your raiverence," replied the singer, "but ef I hadn't a knowed it was old man Newcome as took Serlizer away, I'd be cant-hooked and pike-poled ef I wouldn't ha' sung jest them words, that's ef I had a pain in my chaist and wanted to lay down." When they reached the third lake, through a channel similar to the last, the Captain said sternly: "I'm in command of this vessel, and expect orders to be obeyed. No more singin' nor laughin' out nor loud talkin'. Doctor says it's as much as life's worth to go beyond it. You've heerd orders; now mind 'em." Everything was silent, save the soft dip of the paddles in the water; the quiet was painfully oppressive. Ugly thoughts of bad men mingled with a sense of the natural beauty of the scene. Toner in the bow silently pointed to a square artificial-looking white object at the entrance to the next channel, which was the limit of the voyage. At last the punt came up to it, and its occupants found the channel barred by a heavy grating, that passed down into the water. Above it was a notice in the usual form, indicating the prosecution of trespassers, and signed by order of the proprietor, Miss Du Plessis, with the name of John Carruthers, J.P. "The villain!" ejaculated Mr. Errol. "John has neither been here nor sent here. It's a forgery, an impudent forgery."

"Let us take it down and carry it back with us," said the lawyer.

"Na, na, my lad; we maun just wait till we come in force."

"Time to 'bout ship," growled the Captain.

"Hush!" whispered the minister, "I hear a voice, a woman's voice."

"Come on!" said the lawyer, jumping ashore; "will you come, Ben?"

"Don't ask me that, Doctor, I dissent," replied Toner, shivering with superstitious fear.

"Let me go with him," said the minister to the Captain; "we'll not be a minute away."

"Look sharp, then!" growled Mr. Thomas. "Are you loaded?"

The two explorers looked to their revolvers, and then climbed the bank, which was no easy task, as it was a mass of felled timber and dead brush; but the notes of a woman's voice led them on, and, at last, they found themselves on the shore of the fourth lake. They saw nothing, so they crouched down listening for the voice.

"Steve, Stevy dear, wake up and let us go away. Oh, why are you sleeping when every moment is precious? He will come, Stevy, I know he will, and kill you, dear!" The voice was very near. Simultaneously the intruders looked up the bank, and, at the foot of a standing hemlock, saw a woman, with gray hair hanging loose over her shoulders, who knelt by a recumbent figure. "Steve, dear brother," she continued, "do wake up! You used to be so good and sensible." Coristine crept nearer behind some bushes till he was within a very short distance of the pair. With a white, sad face, trembling in every limb, he came back as silently to the minister, and whispered: "It's poor Nash, and she calls him brother; Mr. Errol, he's murdered, he's dead." The warm-hearted Errol, who had come out to look after the detective's safety, at once became a hero.

"Bide you there, Coristine," he said, "bide there till I call you." Then he arose and went to the spot, but the woman, though he was in full view, took no notice of him. He stooped and touched her. For a moment she shrank, then looked up and saw it was not the person she dreaded. "Matilda Nagle," whispered the minister, "we must get poor Stevie away from here." Then he saw that her intellect was gone; no wonder that she was the mother of an idiot boy. "Oh, I am so glad you have come, Mr. Inglis," she cried, softly; "won't you try and wake Stevy, perhaps he will mind you better than me." The minister brushed the tears from his eyes, and strove to keep the sobs out of his voice. "I have a friend here and will call him," he said, "and we will carry Stevie away to the boat, and all go home together." So he called Coristine, and they picked the dead man up, the dead man from whose smooth, girl-like face the disguise had been torn away, and bore him painfully but tenderly over the rough fallen timber safely to the other side, the woman following. Ben shivered, as he saw the strange procession come down the hill, but, like the Captain, he uttered neither word nor cry. The bearers propped the dead man up against the middle thwart with the face towards the bow, and then set

the woman down beside the Captain, who said: "Come along, my dear, and we'll see you both safely home." The old man's honest face won the poor sister's confidence, as she took her seat beside him and left her Stevy to the care of the minister and Coristine. With all their might and main paddled the Captain and Ben. Joyfully, all the company saw stretch after stretch of the lake behind them, until, at last, they passed the fishermen and landed on the shore. The minister and the lawyer laid their coats upon the boards of the log shelter, and placed their burden upon them. "Let him sleep a bit," said Mr. Errol to the mad woman; "let him sleep, and you help my friend to get a few flowers to take home with him." So Coristine took his candle-box from the floor of the punt, and, with his strange companion, gathered the skullcaps and loose-strifes and sundews that grew by the shore. She knew the flowers and where to find them, and filled the lawyer's improvised vasculum almost to overflowing with many a new specimen. He only took them to humour her, for what cared he for all the flowers that bloom when death, and such a death, was but a few yards away.

Ben Toner brought the fishers back with two good strings of fish; but, when they heard the story, they threw them into the lake. Ben was a handy man. He cut down two stout poles, and with leather wood bark constructed a litter, light but strong. On this the sleeping detective was laid, and while Mr. Errol and the Captain stumbled through the ground hemlock on either side of the now cheerful mad woman, the other four carried their ghastly load, with scalding tears streaming from every eye. "S'haylp me," said Ben to the lawyer, "ef I don't hunt the man as killed him till he dies or me." After a painful journey they reached the Richards' house, and Richards was at home. Mr. Perrowne told him all about it, and the brave fellow answered:—

"Bring it in here, passon; we've a place to put it in where it'll be safe till they send for it. I ain't scared, not I. You know my four boys in your club; they've all got guns and can use 'em, and I've got mine to boot." So, they left the body there, and persuaded the sister to come with them on their six mile walk home. It was seven o'clock before they had accomplished half the journey, and had been met by the representatives of an anxious household, the Squire and his father-in-law, the latter with rifle in hand, prepared for action. The first joy at beholding them safe and sound was damped by the news they brought. As soon as Carruthers could recover himself he spoke to the weird woman and invited her to come and rest at Bridesdale. Then he hastened on ahead to warn his wife and sister, and make arrangements for the reception of the strange visitor. When the party arrived at the house they found a large company, young and old, assembled to meet them, for, in addition to the doctor and his daughter, there was Mrs. Du Plessis with her daughter on one side, and, in all its soldierly dignity, the tall form of Colonel Morton on the other. The lawyer also noticed the ebon countenance of Mr. Maguffin peering over the palings in the direction of the stables. Matilda Nagle was hurried away to the back of the house by Mrs. Carruthers and her sister-in-law, there to find her idiot boy, to partake of necessary food provided by the compassionate Tryphena, and, for a time, altogether to forget the sad tragedy of the day. Tryphosa prepared tea for the truants in the breakfast room, and, after the formalities of introduction and reacquaintance had been gone through, Miss Carmichael poured out tea for the five, while Tryphosa did the same for Ben in the kitchen. The Captain told how Mr. Errol and the lawyer braved the terrors of the barred-in lakes, which appalled the stout heart of big Ben Toner. The two heroes hastened to put all the credit on one another's shoulders, in which, so far as one person's estimation was concerned, the minister triumphed, for, through the tears that shimmered in her eyes, Coristine could see that the presiding goddess was proud of him, and, with all his simple-heartedness, he knew that such pride has its origin in possession.

CHAPTER XI.

Old Man Newcome's Escape, Arrest and Conveyance Home—The Colonel's Plan of Campaign—He Takes Command—Maguffin's Capture by Messrs. Hill and Hislop—The Richards' Aid Enlisted—Squire as Colonel, and Mr. Terry, Sergeant-Major—The Skirmish—Harding Murdered—Wilkinson and Errol Improving the Time—The Young Incendiary—Mr. Hill Crushes Maguffin.

EVERYBODY grieved for the off-taking of the detective. In the front of the house, the Squire and the minister, who knew his history, were most affected; in the back, Ben Toner was the corypheus of grief. An old man on a couch in an adjoining room heard the news, and, little thinking that his deposition and confession were safe in the Squire's possession along with many other documents, rejoiced thereat, and conceived a heroic project. At first, he thought of enlisting the idiot boy, but had to give up the idea; for the boy was happy with those whom he knew, and obstinately refused to go near the old reprobate. Sylvanus no longer watched him; he was basking in the smiles of Tryphena, and, at the same time, amusing Monty. There was a passage from the room he was in to the back of the main hallway, which led into the open air, independently of the summer kitchen. His coat was gone and his hat, both his boots were removed, and his wounded leg was bandaged, but he was a tough old criminal, and a bare back rider from a boy. He slipped off the couch, and helped himself along by the wall, thankful that his boots were off and he could move quietly. Still, simple