



## The Sagamore



Y BROTHER, the reporter said, "What a dreadful state of affairs we are called upon to witness. Have you ever heard anything to equal the recent revelations at Ottawa? Isn't it enough to make one almost despair of human nature? Dear me! Dear me!"

The reporter wiped his forehead with his handkerchief and sighed profoundly.

"What's the matter now?" demanded the saga-

more.

"What! Haven't you heard? Has no one read the papers to you?"

"My grandson," replied the sagamore, "reads 'um every night."

"And has he not read to you the awful revelations being made at Ottawa? Have you not learned that we have in our national capital a sink of corruption that is bottomless, that stinks in the nostrils of the whole world, and that never was equalled this side of Sodom?"

"No," said the sagamore. "He didn't read any stuff like that. Ain't been any strange smells round here, either."

"But he must have read the evidence in the Tarte investigation and before the public accounts committee," said the reporter.

"Ah-hah," said Mr. Paul.

"Very well, isn't that enough to make patriotic men hide their heads in shame and sorrow for their country?" the reporter demanded in solemn tones. "Trickery, fraud, bribery, corruption,—a state of affairs unparalleled in modern history. Why, sir, we must apply the most drastic measures, or the spirit of knavery will overwhelm the nation. We must destroy the government, turn the rascals out, make a clean sweep of the civil service, and put honest men in every office. Otherwise the fate of Sodom may fitly overtake us. It is a time for every honest man to rise up and strike for honest methods in the affairs of the nation. We are the prey of thieves and robbers. The disgrace and shame must be wiped out!"

"You're right up on your hind legs to-day," quoth Mr. Paul, as the reporter concluded with a dramatic flourish.

"It is time!" cried the reporter, with another flourish. "It is time that honest men should rise up and denounce the thievery and jobbery that permeate every department of the government of this country. What hope for the preservation of national morality if the centre of the government be steeped in iniquity!"

"Far's I kin make out," observed Mr. Paul, "some men in Ottawa been found out in gittin' money in other people's names, and some other people been found out makin' presents to men to try if they kin git fat contracts that way. Ain't that so?"

"It is," said the reporter. "But the half has not been told. The government is rotten. The spirit of thievery permeates the whole system. We must make a clean sweep. Honest men must speak out."

"Ever since I been little boy," said Mr. Paul, "I noticed when one thief was caught every other thief spoke out—hollered with all his might for a clean sweep."

"What do you mean, sir?" sharply demanded the reporter, giving the old man a terrible look of virtuous indignation and wrath.

The sagamore met the look with perfect equanimity.

"I mean," he calmly rejoined, "that when a man hollers 'stop thief—he means some other thief."

"Am I a thief?" hotly demanded the reporter—"or what do you mean to insinuate?"

"I mean," said Mr. Paul, "that all this blather 'bout awful things been found out at Ottawa don't mean that all the crookedness in this world is up there. You asked me if I hear them papers read. I did. I hear 'um read 'bout that Tail Race job in Montreal—'bout that street railroad boodle in Toronto—'bout cabmen's insurance swindle over in France—'bout Mr. Mercier's little tricks—'bout boodle

more power than any party in this country. But money changers went there agin, and you kin find 'um in the temple to-day."

"If I understand your view correctly, then," said the reporter, "you hold that wherever two or three—or more—are gathered together, no matter in whose name, the devil of greed and selfishness will be there in the midst with his eye peeled for plunder."

"That's so," nodded the sagamore.

"Then you think if we made a clean sweep at Ottawa there would be some rogues in the new lot."

"Ah-hah."

"But they're all thieves up there now," said the reporter.

"So all the other thieves say," gravely rejoined the sagamore.

"You're an old cynic and a humbug!" cried the reporter, "and I wouldn't trust my life with you. I'll go."

He rose to suit the action to the word.

"Hold on!" cried the sagamore. "What's that in your pocket?"

The end of a string, with beads on it, hung out of the reporter's pocket. He looked down at it.



schemes all over this world. But I don't need to read them papers. I had new axe stole from me las' week. When I found it in Tom Sauk's camp he swore he never seen it afore; and said this place was full of thieves and bad men. But it ain't. Every man up in Ottawa ain't a thief because Mr. Murphy run away from New York and because some clerks got more money than they had a right to."

"But we must turn the rascals out!" argued the reporter. "If we can only make a clean sweep and start new there will be no more such revelations."

"You gonto git new style of men made for the job?" queried the sagamore.

"There are plenty of honest men to be found," said the reporter shortly. "But it's no use to talk to you. You're a friend of the present government, and partisanship makes you blind."

The last words were spoken sadly, as from a grieved heart.

"Young man," said the sagamore, "you're talkin' 'bout an experiment been tried pooty often in this world. I hear that boy read from one man's sermon 'bout money changers bein' drove 'way from the temple by One who had good 'eal

"Ah," he said, thrusting it out of sight, "some beads I got for my little girl."

"Got 'um where?" demanded the sagamore.

"At one of the other camps," said the reporter.

Mr. Paul seized his visitor by the shoulder and went down into that pocket. He brought up (sad to say) a handsome beaded purse that but a few minutes before had hung on the wall behind where the reporter sat, and within reach of his hand. Mr. Paul went into the pocket again and brought up a toy basket and sundry other things. He held them up.

"Where in the world," gasped the reporter, "did those things come from? How did they get into my pocket? Is this sleight of hand, or am I bewitched?"

"You're found out," tersely rejoined the sagamore, systematically going through his visitor's other pockets and piling up more stuff beside the bead work. "I ain't so blind as you thought—eh? Now you git through that door pooty quick—I'm gonto make clean sweep."

He did so—with his boot and an axe handle.

"I'll go," cried the reporter, hurrying down the path—

"I'll go. This is no place for honest men."

And so saying he took to his heels and turned the nearest bend in the road quicker than Mr. Murphy's memory ever got out of sight when Osler got on its trail.

"Beware when comes the pilot fish, for sharks are then around," quoth Mr. Paul to himself, and went in and barricaded his wigwam.