

"Well, Hi, it's your play next," said Hinkley. "I don't mind him smelling chips, but fires is dangerous, of course, and as Councillors of this here town it's our duty to warn him about it."

"You leave that to me," answered Mr. Braddy. "I'm goin' to put it to him, right to his face."

Late that night the bell-boy at the Lakeview Hotel took up a message to Mr. Ormond in Room 16—Councillor Braddy was waiting below, and wished to see him. Mr. Ormond, whom people thought unapproachable, sent back a request for the Councillor to come to his room, and there, a few minutes later, politely received him.

"I'm here as a guardian of the people," began Hiram, plunging bravely in, "to ask ye some questions."

The stranger said nothing, but waited. The Councillor went on.

"Y'see, we—that is, the little trick you have with the chips, y' know—"

"Oh, the chips! And what next?"

"I'd like to warn ye about them chips," said Mr. Braddy, somewhat annoyed by the man's coolness. "Folks is beginnin' to talk about ye, and wonderin' if you're a German spy."

"You don't say so! Have I made so bad an impression as that?"

"Well, Mister, you've been goin' round for days smellin' chips like a house afire, and we want to know what it means."

The stranger sat for a moment looking abstractedly at nothing. Then he rose, and paced the room after the way of men who are deeply moved. Presently he turned to his visitor again.

"Mr. Braddy, I am grateful to you for calling my attention to this. I'm not a German spy. You will put me right with the good people of the town, won't you?"

Mr. Braddy replied that it was his duty as a town officer to protect the public interests, and outsiders could not be given the run of the town in times like these, and allowed to set fires, and such like, without paying license or taking the risk of arrest. At the same time, if he was there on business, he would use his influence to shield him from suspicion.

The stranger's reserve, which till now had covered him like a mask, gave way.

"For thirty years, Mr. Braddy," he said, "I have been wearing myself out in a city office. The doctor told me I must get away, and so I came to Woodport. I am enjoying it greatly. Some city men, when they get out to the country, try to renew their youth by fishing, or playing, or working in the fields; my way of doing it is to smell chips and the raw bark of Nature's trees."

"How in time d'ye work it?" asked Hiram, perplexedly.

"By the law of association, Mr. Braddy. To this day the fragrance of a pine knot, or of a piece of raw spruce next the bark, makes me think of my boyhood, when I lived among the trees. The smell of the wood acts on me like an elixir."

"We've noticed ye doin' it, but we didn't know it was actin' that way on ye," said his listener, almost sympathetically.

"One day last week," the city man went on, "I was down in your old shipyard, and found a piece of spruce with the raw edge on it, and it smelled just as if I had pulled it out of the scrap-heap at Uncle Henry's sawmill, on the Miramichi, forty years ago. That was where Ned Burton and I used to play. Ned was my chum. He is dead now."

"But I can't tell you of a hundred other associations that the smells of the wood bring up. Even a chip comforts me, and the scent of birch bark burning is better than costly perfume. I didn't realize, however, that in thus gratifying my hobby I was acting like a spy."

Mr. Braddy pondered the matter. Just what to make of this reminiscent chip-smeller he did not know. Plainly, he was there for his own enjoyment, and not for business; but at least there was room for a wholesome warning.

"I ain't ever heard before of ridin' back to home and mother on a passel of chips," he said presently, "but I s'pose this is as good a place as any to set out from. I'd go easy, though, if I was you. It looks bad in public, and them fires is likely to be risky."

"I see that. Do you know of any suitable place where I wouldn't be so conspicuous?"

"Perhaps now I could fit ye out myself," replied the Councillor, with becoming hesitation. "I've got a lot of wood on my grounds, and about as many chips lying around the woodpile as ye could git

through smellin' in the next two or three months. It's off the road, too, so folks wouldn't disturb ye."

"That would suit me very nicely," declared Mr. Ormond.

"Of course," added Mr. Braddy, "I could hardly give ye the run of my place without a consideration. It's bound to be some bother to us."

"So it will. But I'll pay you for the privilege. Name a figure."

It was not an easy bargain to make, on Braddy's part, but at length he ventured to suggest sixty dollars, ran it up to eighty for season's rights, and finally, being asked for exclusive privileges as well, fixed upon a hundred. Ormond accepted the terms, and made a memorandum of them in a letter pad, remarking that he always put his agreements in writing. Then he tore out the sheet, and passed it to Hiram to

sign. It was an unfamiliar handwriting, but one part of it stood out in large plain letters:

"One Hundred Dollars, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged."

Braddy said he would sign it. Ormond, who seemed over-particular about formalities, called up the hotel clerk to witness it, and completed the transaction by counting out ten convincing bills and paying them to his landlord-to-be. Then he thanked him for his kindness, and said good-night.

On Tuesday morning, Mr. Braddy waited for Ormond at Birch Lodge, supposing that he would begin there at once under the terms of contract. But he did not come, and when Hiram called at the hotel later in the day, he found that his expected guest had left town on the early train. Nothing more was heard about the chip-

bug, Woodport went back to its accustomed ways, and Councillor Braddy, thinking it best not to report Monday night's interview to his fellow townsmen, kept his own counsels, and his hundred dollars.

Toward the end of the next week, however, another surprising development took place. Mr. Braddy one morning heard axes at work in a grove of birch trees that stood at the edge of his lot, and hurried over to find a gang of five men cutting his best trees, several of which were already down and trimmed into log-lengths. The thing was almost incredible and entirely intolerable.

The choppers stopped long enough to say that they were working under orders from John Ormond, to whom, they understood, a conveyance of lumbering rights had been made. Braddy denied that

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