

# The Canadianizing of Sam MacPhail

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By ROBERT WATSON

Author of "My Brave and Gallant Gentleman." "The Girl of O. K. Valley." etc.

## SKETCH NO. III.—SAM'S FIRST HAIRCUT IN CANADA.

Mrs. Sands' little front bedroom was not long in taking on a flavour of Sam.

It is quite possible to tell a man's character from a glimpse into his bedroom. It is impossible to be mistaken in Sam's.

On a table at the side of his bed, a Bible sits on top of the "Auchtertory Gazette." Two pairs of number eleven boots and a pair of carpet slippers peep out from under his bed. On the wall, above the bureau, hangs a golden text, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well," handsewn on cloth by Sam's mother. On the opposite wall is an oak-framed picture of the Auchtertory Football Club in full uniform, with Sam in the background in a double-jersey, gloves, and wearing a cap—telling all who know anything of football that Sam used to be the gallant defender of the uprights.

In a brass frame, on the right-hand side of the bureau, is a photograph of Sam's mother and father in their Sunday best,—rugged, stern, but of kindly countenances. A twin frame to this occupies the left-hand side and holds a picture of a sweet-faced, young Scots lass, sitting stiffly and primly in a chair, holding a book for effect.

For want of better information we have called this young lady "Maggie." Sam accepts the name and does not try to enlighten us as to the correct one.

In a row, on an improvised shelf, are a dozen books for boys; R. M. Ballantyne, G. A. Henty, the Lives of Livingstone and Chalmers, a Bible Concordance and a Nuttall's Standard Dictionary. In the fly-leaf of most of them is a label bearing the name of the Auchtertory United Free Church Sabbath School, and the words, "Presented to Samuel MacPhail for Regular Attendance and General Excellence." Not a year is missed from the time Sam was five years old till the year he left Auchtertory.

A huge bottle of ink, a blotting pad and a pile of note-paper and envelopes complete the visible adornments of Sam's bedroom.

On the second Saturday evening after Sam's arrival, we had him down town to see the sights.

We liked having him with us; it was such fun watching his surprise at anything new or strange that struck him.

He would stand and gape, and turn around at every Chinaman who passed him, following each Oriental with his eyes, as if "John" were a Barnum freak.

"Dod! but they're the queer-lookin', slippery-lookin', half-starved cratur's," he would remark.

However, it was not long ere he got used to them, they were so numerous.

Sam very strongly resented having to pay "twopence-ha'penny," as he styled it, for a tramcar ride.

"Man," he would protest, "it's awfu' dear. In Glesca you can get as muckle for a ha'penny. In Auchtertory—you just walk.

"Why are a' these men sittin' in the shop windows like a wheen wax figures?" he asked, stopping up in front of a large hotel.

"Come on," cried Jim, impatiently. "You're just like a country bumpkin. These folks aren't on exhibition. That is an hotel. These people are staying there. They sit in the windows to rest and, at the same time, to enjoy the sights of the passers-by."

"They're no' a bit bashfu'," pawkily remarked Sam.

"Jim," he asked suddenly, "do you think I'm needin' my hair cut?"

"You bet your life you are," answered Jim. "Your hair is creeping in a mouse tail down the back of your neck and over your collar. Come on in here. We'll wait for you."

We led the way into one of the most up-to-date barber-shops in the city; one of those places with appliances and contrivances that remind one of a dentist's parlour or the sub-station of an electric railway. It had great mirrors everywhere that made one wonder whether he were himself or merely his reflection.

On the American Continent the most trivial service seems to be converted into an art to which a thousand fringes are added; fringes that are most pleasant, but altogether unnecessary; until one almost requires to have an anaesthetic and to undergo a surgical operation in order to have his hair combed.

As we went into the shop, a dozen white-uniformed individuals sprang to attention in a line, one at each chair.

Sam started back nervously, but we kept pushing him forward.

With a grin, a Goliath of a nigger jerked Sam's hat out of his hand. Sam's eye followed that hat until he saw it safely hanging on a peg. He looked at us in desperation; then, seeing no hope, he flung himself into the nearest chair.

"Shave sir?" asked a business-like barber. Sam hadn't a hair on his upper lip.

"No! I would like my hair cut," replied Sam.

"Yes, sir! Medium, sir?" he asked, flourishing a cotton cover around and tucking it under Sam's chin.

"As short as you can," said Sam.

"Lawn-mower, sir?"

"Whit?"

"Shall I use the machine on the edges, sir?"

"Please yoursel'. It's you that's doin' the job," came the answer.

There was silence for a little while, then the barber spoke again.

"Do you shave the neck, sir?"

"Do I what?"

"That is—Canadian style, sir—neck shave. Maybe you prefer English style, sir?" he put in politely, guessing Sam was a new-arrival.

"Just gie me a plain, Scotch haircut, and nae nonsense," answered Sam, a bit testily.

Then, as if to increase Sam's troubles, the nigger returned to the scene, loaded up with a bunch of gear. He peered at Sam's feet, then into his eyes.

"Shine, sah? Shine yo' shoes?"

Taking silence for consent, he had almost started in, when Sam seemed to wake up.

"Do ye take me for an invalid," he exclaimed. "I've blacked my ain boots since I was five and I'm no' goin' to have them blacked by a black boot-black noo. Forby—I cleaned them just before I came oot o' the hoose."

"Yes, sah! Yes, sah! No offense, sah!" grinned the coon, departing.

"Would you care to have a shampoo, sir?" asked the barber, renewing the attack.

"What does it cost?" asked Sam.

"Fifty cents extra, sir!"

"Never mind it," said Sam decisively, leaning back limply in the chair.

"A lot of dandruff in your scalp, sir! Maybe you would