

A Haunch of Venison

Duck Lake

Tales of the Canadian Backwoods

by Rev. Egerton Ryerson Young, 1840-1909

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Table of Contents

Chapter I ...	A Gift of Venison.
Chapter II ...	Jonas the Indian.
Chapter III ...	Old Dave Dodge.
Chapter IV ...	The Backwoods Trial..



Chapter I

A Gift of Venison.

The latest arrival in the Duck Lake district of Northern Ontario was the newly appointed game-warden, Mr John Holden Fitzgerald, and here by his vigorous application to business, eagerness in calling in the power of the law, and his haste in procuring evidence, he nearly made the innocent suffer with the guilty.

The noble game, the moose deer, were in danger of extinction in the beautiful lake and forest regions of the province of Ontario, such was the persistency and success of the hunters in these parts. To prevent such a calamity, the Provincial Government passed stringent laws that for a number of years no moose deer were to be shot under any consideration, and any person found killing one would be subject to a fine ranging from \$20 for the first offence to \$50 or imprisonment for others. The game and guns of the poacher were to be confiscated. To enforce their law the Government appointed a number of game-wardens, and sent them to different points where killing had been reported.

The beautiful country around Duck Lake was one of these regions which had fallen into ill-repute, and to it Game-Warden Fitzgerald was sent. He entered upon his duties with the zeal of a new appointee, but his pleasure in his appointment was increased by the presence of his cousin, Mr Horace Fitzgerald, with his wife and little children, who had taken a cottage on Duck Lake, and were extending their stay into the autumn.

When the Game-Warden reached Duck Lake, he made his way over to his cousin's home, but was disappointed in finding him away. He, however, accepted the cordial invitation of Mrs Fitzgerald to step in and rest, as Mr Horace might return home at any moment.

„You are extending your stay considerably. Don't you find it lonely?" asked the Game-warden.

„Oh, a little, sometimes," replied Mrs Fitzgerald; „but the autumn scenery is so beautiful. I believe it is the best part of the year in this charming lake region. Horace is perfectly delighted with it."

„Where has Horace gone to?"

„I don't know exactly. He has a few friends whom he is fond of visiting. One is an Indian, Jonas Bear, who is the best canoeist and fisherman around here. There are two or three settlers he likes to visit, to hear their tales of early struggles when they first came into this country. There is also an interesting school-teacher not far away; but his latest discovery or acquisition is a young preacher who came in here a few months ago."

„That is indeed a new turn for Horace. It sounds like conversion to hear of him fraternising with a preacher," laughed the Warden.

„Well, he is a decidedly interesting fellow," replied Mrs Fitzgerald. „He is not like the ordinary ministers, full of preach and little else. Mr Hewitt, for that is

his name, believes in doing something for his people. He is very independent, however, and some of his women parishioners think he is a little too independent and not a little conceited, especially over his own cooking and laundrying"; and Mrs Fitzgerald laughed a merry laugh.

"A jolly *Vicar of Bray* in the woods," suggested the Warden, with an attempt to be merry also.

"Oh no! Not that. He's too shy, too single-minded, too earnest for that. When he came, he could not find a suitable home, as the few settlers who have houses of any size have their extra rooms filled with tourists or hunters, and Mr Hewitt would not live in the common room of the smaller householders. Failing in his attempt to get himself a home, Mr Hewitt searched around and found a discarded log cabin at the other end of the lake. For this he negotiated, and secured it for the consideration of \$15 a year. He patched up the logs, filled in the chinks, and sent to his distant home for a few things to make it habitable. Some hemp matting acts as a carpet, and an ancient stove serves for heating and cooking purposes. He says he can make the best johnny-cake around here"; and Mrs Fitzgerald went off into another merry laugh.

"And this the women deny?" put in the Warden.

"Of course they do," said Mrs Fitzgerald. "They say, 'Such conceit!' But Mrs Miller pities his laundrying attempts the most. She says, 'Why, it's yellow as my Leghorn rooster's legs!'" And as she pictured the contemptuous look of the sturdy backwoodsman's wife, the happy little woman went into peals of laughter.

"Is it the preacher's johnny-cake that takes Horace over there?" asked the Warden.

"Oh, don't you get sarcastic about our preacher. We won't stand that around here. He may be independent and all that, but he is good and nice and kind. He is happily innocent of the ways of the world you know only too well, but he has read a good deal; he is fond of music, and is jolly good company. Horace likes to visit him, and he is always welcome here."

Mr Horace Fitzgerald had gone that day to the "Parsonage," as they had humorously styled Mr Hewitt's cabin-home; but when he reached the place he found it empty. The night before a farmer by the name of Farley had come on horseback and told Mr Hewitt that his hired man had been taken suddenly ill, and they thought that he was dying. The missionary quickly ran out, saddled his horse, and told his informant to lead the way over the rocky road as fast as he dare.

When they arrived, Mr Hewitt saw that the poor fellow was suffering from a severe attack of inflammation. To merely speak soothing words to the man, while he was in such agony, seemed to the practical minister sheer mockery and folly. It was time for action, and he had bags of salt heated and then applied to the suffering man. He also used hot water in abundance, and then he gave the man a gentle massage. This heroic treatment was repeated throughout the night. By morning the young man was much relieved, and hopes were entertained for his recovery. Mr Hewitt then read and prayed with the sufferer, and carefully nursed him all that day.

When Horace Fitzgerald found no one in the "Parsonage," he went in, sat down and rested awhile. He looked into some of Mr Hewitt's books, played a little on his guitar, and then picked up an old rifle which the young preacher had brought with him. This rifle had once belonged to Mr Hewitt's father, and

thinking that he might have some use for it, he brought it with a box of cartridges to his backwoods home. But up to the present time he had not used it.

Horace Fitzgerald was quite a hunter, and so was much interested in the weapon. While handling it he determined to try it, and after picking a few cartridges out of the box he started off into the woods. He had not walked more than a quarter of a mile from the house, when, to his delight, he saw a large moose spring up from his resting-place, about two hundred yards away. He raised the rifle and fired. The startled brute gave one leap into the air, and dropped dead.

Horace hurried back to Mr Hewitt's cabin, replaced the gun, and secured his carving knife and axe. Returning to the deer, he cleaned it and skinned it. He cut off a good haunch and carried it back to the „Parsonage" with the knife and axe. He deposited the meat on the table, stuck the knife in a beam, and left the axe outside the door. Looking around, he found a large piece of canvas. Out of this he made a kind of a bag, and placed in it as much venison as he wanted to carry home. The rest he hung up in the trees, making what the Indians call a „cache."

When Horace Fitzgerald reached his home, highly delighted with his success, his wife told him that his cousin the Warden had arrived, that he had waited for him all the morning, and that he had now gone on to the »Duck Lake Hotel«. Then, suddenly recollecting the Warden's business, and the boasts he had made to her that he would put a stop to all moose-poaching in that part, she said, with some solicitude—

„But what will the Warden say about this moose you have shot? He doesn't approve of such things."

„Oh, he," replied the triumphant hunter, jocularly. „Give him a steak to eat. I'll guarantee he'll say that it is prime."

Although he had said this bravely, he was struck with a conviction that he had done wrong, and felt that even relationship with the Warden would not shield him from the law's demands when his act became known.

„But what will you tell the Warden?" persisted his wife.

„Tell him all, and also that his moose must not come and tempt people when they are out hunting for their humble fellows," said Mr Fitzgerald, rather more shortly than courtesy allows.

With provoking imitation of a monitor at school, Mrs Fitzgerald said, with a merry twinkle—

„Now you'll catch it. See if you don't."

* * * * *

It was late the next day when Mr Hewitt, after his pastoral visit, started on his long ride home. The day was very raw. A drizzly rain was falling. So when he reached his home he was tired, hungry, and cold.

The sight of the splendid haunch of meat on the table made his heart dance.

„Somebody has been very kind," said he.

The horse was quickly stabled and fed, and then the missionary returned to examine his treasure. He soon had a fire roaring in his stove, and a savoury steak sizzling in the flames.

After he had heartily enjoyed his simple meal, he threw himself on his lounge, and was soon lost in a much-needed refreshing slumber. But the young

preacher had been asleep only a short time when he was awakened with a start, and found a stranger in his room.

It was the new Game-Warden.

„Ah, ha, young man,” said the Warden, „I have caught you this time. Almost in the act, red-handed anyway. Before you sleep, after your successful chase, you should have covered your tracks better.”

Mr Hewitt sprang up and rubbed his eyes in a most bewildered way. Things seemed so strange to him, he thought he must be dreaming. What could the Game-Warden mean? „Caught red-handed— cover up tracks?”

After a moment of staggering silence, the young missionary said—

„Sir, I’ve no tracks to cover up.”

„What impudence!” said the Warden, growing stern. He had hoped that the young man would have confessed, and that he would not have given him any more trouble than was absolutely necessary.

„Can’t I see with my eyes what a fine piece of venison you have on the table? Within half a mile of this place a moose was killed; part of it is now hanging in the trees, and there are blood tracks all the way to your house. I’ll guarantee that your rifle is hardly cold, and your axe and knife are yet bloody.”

Mr Hewitt was, if possible, more stupefied than ever at these words. When the Warden referred to his gun, he replied—

„I have never fired my rifle since I came here.”

The Game-Warden walked over to the place where the rifle stood. He took it up in his hands, opened the barrel and held it up to the sunlight.

„Come here, and look at this,” he said.

The young man walked stupidly over. The universe seemed falling around him. He walked as one in a dream.

He looked. Sure enough, there were unmistakable signs of fresh powder and other marks of recent firing.

„I cannot account for this,” said he, meekly.

„Bring me your hunting-knife and axe,” demanded the Warden.

Mr Hewitt went outside and found his axe. Though he was a decidedly muscular young man, yet the sight of that axe made him as weak as a kitten.

„There, sir,” said the Warden, as he stood in the doorway, „there is the blood of the moose you have killed and cut up. Now, out with your hunting-knife, and be quick about it.”

„I have no hunting-knife,” was the reply.

„Well, get the knife you used to cut up the moose, whether it is a hunting-knife or not,” said the Warden. He had his eyes about him far more than had the poor missionary, and in his moving around he found the knife where it had been left the day before, sticking in the beam, near the door.

„Oh, here it is. Ha! ha! All smeared with blood! Now, young man, I’ll make you sweat for this. Lying as well as poaching. Pretty work for a young preacher looking for Orders in a ministry; I confiscate your gun and knife. I shall take this piece of meat with me; and when I summon you before a justice it will be well for you to appear and confess your guilt.”

With this he took the meat, rifle, and knife, and left the young preacher’s home.

A more distracted young man could hardly have been found than Mr Hewitt at that moment. Bright, almost unusually buoyant, even when many serious things seemed to impede his way, he appeared to rejoice in things that tested

physical endurance; but here was an altogether new condition of affairs, a testing of the spirit. What a tangle the whole world seemed to be in!

Perhaps, if Mr Hewitt had not been so worn out after his self-sacrificing endeavours for the sick man he would have been less distracted. But what a complication of evidence! Proved guilty to his face! What could he do?

Chapter II

Jonas the Indian.

„Mr Hewitt want any fish to-day?”

„Hello, Jonas, old boy, come in,” said the young missionary, recognising the voice of his Indian friend, and glad to be relieved from his distracting thoughts.

Jonas had quick ears, and he detected a false note in the usually merry voice, and he said—

„Is Mister Hewitt sick to-day?”

„No, not sick, Jonas, but ruined. All my work here is to be utterly ruined. I must have been dreaming, or something or other. I came home about an hour ago from tending to Farley’s hired man, and found a piece of meat on the table, then lay down to get a nap, when in popped the new Game-Warden, and said that I had shot a moose. My rifle and axe, neither of which I had touched for days, showed signs of recent use. I am to be fined, or confined in jail, for poaching.”

Jonas’ face grew solemn, and for a moment he was deep in thought; then he asked—

„Killed moose! Where?”

The Warden said it was killed within half a mile of this house, and that there are blood-marks all the way.

„We go see,” said Jonas, as he immediately turned, went out, and began examining the ground.

With unerring skill he found the marks that had attracted the attention of the Game-Warden. These the young men followed up, and at length came to the remains of the moose.

„Good fine moose that,” said Jonas, with evident pleasure. „But who kill him?”

„Ah, that’s the question,” responded the missionary.

Jonas surveyed the ground carefully, and in a few minutes brightened, as he glanced at some marks in the ground, near the spot where the deer fell, and then looked at Mr Hewitt’s feet.

„Long feet, the man who kill deer; you square, him long.”

„How do you know, Jonas?”

„Here, see. He try lift deer. Ground soft with blood. Feet go deep; make big mark.”

That was a point for Jonas; and when it was explained to Mr Hewitt he was for a moment amazed, for it brought to mind the generous feet possessed by his friend, and he said, almost without thinking—

„I wonder if those are Fitzgerald’s tracks!”

Jonas had thought the same, but had not wished to express himself first. He, however, had added another discovery by the time Mr Hewitt had recovered from his surprise, and had made his last remark.

„Mister Fitzgerald, perhaps, for sure. Here, look. Heavy marks; man with heavy load; on trail to Mr Fitzgerald his house. Me go see; he have moose.”

At this decision he was off, and the young missionary went with him.

Jonas kept his eyes on the path, and pointed out many little indications which his companion would never have noticed, which more and more convinced him that he was on the right trail. These convictions only added to the missionary's dismay. Horace Fitzgerald was his friend; and he did not wish to bring him into trouble; and yet why should he have used his gun, and axe, and knife; he had plenty of his own? Was the piece of meat a ruse to divert the blame from himself, and place it upon the innocent preacher?

„I am glad to see you, young man.”

Mr Hewitt and Jonas started up from examining the ground, and were faced by the Game-Warden.

„By this happy meeting you have saved me a long journey to your house. Here is your summons, the Justice of the Peace will be at 'Duck Lake Hotel' to-morrow. I want you to be promptly on hand at ten o'clock. This matter of moose-poaching must be immediately attended to, and you had better make your story pretty plain, or I'll have you up for perjury as well as poaching.”

After thus addressing, and distressing, the preacher, and giving a contemptuous look at his Indian companion, he turned and stalked away on the path that led to the lake. Mr Hewitt and Jonas hurried on, to see if they could find any trace of Horace Fitzgerald. Mr Hewitt was sure his friend could help him, even if he knew nothing of the killing of the moose, for he himself was entirely ignorant of all court proceedings.

To his dismay, however, when he reached Mr Fitzgerald's home, he found that his friend was away, and was not expected to be back until to-morrow. He did not know what to do. He did not wish to falsely accuse Mr Fitzgerald, or even to leave the least shadow of suspicion, and yet he most urgently needed the presence of his friend.

„Will you not leave a message for him?” asked the maid.

„Yes; tell Mr Fitzgerald that I am in some difficulty, and I have to meet a Justice of the Peace at the »Duck Lake Hotel« to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. I should like to have him there with me. Please do not fail to tell him.”

„If he is home in time I shall.”

„Mister Fitzgerald away far?” asked Jonas.

„He went to Sandy Bay, Jonas,” was the reply.

Mr Hewitt and Jonas bade the maid good day, and turned rather sadly for home. After they had walked a mile or so through the woods, and were upon a brow of a hill, Jonas suddenly stopped and said—

„Why that?”

Mr Hewitt was instantly aroused, and looking in the direction indicated by Jonas he saw a little flock of sheep in a clearing, near the woods on the other side. They were all huddled together in a bunch, and were racing around in a funny whirlpool sort of a fashion.

„Why that?” asked Jonas again.

„What do you think is the matter with the sheep?” said Mr Hewitt.

„Don't know; see soon. Bear, p'r'aps,” said the Indian.

„Those are John Miller's sheep, and we must save them,” said Mr Hewitt; and he ran down the hill to the clearing. As he came to the edge of the forest the sheep saw him, and at the sight of a man they seemed to find their wits. Then they all turned and ran as hard as they could across the field towards their barn.

From behind some underbush, where he seemed to be half-hiding and half-mesmerising the silly sheep, up sprang a big black bear. He ran for the nearest point of the woods, and as far as Mr Hewitt was concerned was gone. The young preacher was delighted at his rescue, and would have gone to his parishioners with the news of the bear, but when he turned he could not see any sign of Jonas. Where he was he knew not, and so Mr Hewitt hastily retraced his steps to the top of the hill. But Jonas was not there. Mr Hewitt then thought that Jonas had wandered on towards the Parsonage, near which lay his canoe, so he hurried along the path. As he stood upon a knoll near his little home, a most extraordinary scene presented itself to him. There was Jonas rushing through the forest, and the bear after him. Jonas did not act like a frightened man running for his life, for he dodged here and there, and seemed to know exactly what he was doing. Mr Hewitt was about to run to the rescue, when he saw Jonas double on the bear and then back up against the tree. Bruin's blood seemed to be thoroughly roused, and he rose on his haunches to attack his antagonist. Mr Hewitt's heart almost stood still. He thought it was all over with poor Jonas. He himself was helpless. He had no weapon, and even his gun was not now in his home. He could only pick up a club and hurry to the rescue. He saw the bear close with Jonas. Suddenly the bear's paws went spasmodically up, and Jonas shouted—

„Like that!” and wrenched a bloody hunting-knife out of the bear's ribs, as that denizen of the woods fell to the ground. Another convulsive shudder and the bear was dead. Jonas' knife had found its heart.

„Whatever are you doing?” said Mr Hewitt, as he ran breathlessly up to Jonas.

„Gettin' bear-roast for venison you lost,” said Jonas. In spite of his fright Mr Hewitt had to smile at this sally, and wonder at Jonas' skill and coolness.

„But why did you run so?” persisted the preacher.

„Make him carry his own roast here,” said Jonas, with provoking imperturbability.

„How did you get him to do that? He ran into the woods when I shouted. Where did you catch him, or rather, where did he take after you?”

Jonas' knife was into the bear, and while he was cleaning, skinning, and quartering the bear, by snatches Mr Hewitt received the following information. Jonas saw the bear before Mr Hewitt did, and he knew that he would run to a dense spruce grove to hide. He also knew that if he hurried he could intercept bruin's flight, and perhaps secure some good bear-meat to replace the venison roast which Game-Warden Fitzgerald had confiscated. Jonas thought that it would be far easier for the bear to carry his body to the neighbourhood of the Parsonage than for the two young men to do so, and hence he determined that he would make bruin be his own express waggon. When the bear was caught trying to kill sheep, he slunk off like a dog caught egg-stealing. Jonas overtook him in his flight, and by interfering with him and annoying him, he aroused the fighting nature of the animal. Then he started for the Parsonage, and the bear, like a small dog chasing a retreating traveller, followed Jonas. When Jonas was

satisfied that the bear had done his duty, he ran around a tree, to make the beast more angry. Then, placing his back against it, he waited for it to come and hug him. When the bear's breath was in his face he gave him the hunting-knife in the heart.

Having finished his story, his work of cleaning and cutting up the bear was also nearly done. He then handed Mr Hewitt a splendid roast, and said—

„Long run make hunger.“

Mr Hewitt took the hint and the meat that Jonas offered him, and hurrying over to the Parsonage, prepared a good supper of the bear-steaks which bruin had carried through the woods.

Jonas finished his work on the bear and brought it in instalments to the Parsonage, where he left it for the time being.

While eating the supper Jonas said to his companion—

„What like that meat the Warden took?“

„Like that?“ pointing to the piece of meat from which the steaks had been cut.

„Yes,“ replied Mr Hewitt, „like it for all the world. Only this meat is lighter, having more fat in it.“

„Ugh,“ said Jonas.

After the meal the men again talked over the case and the best way to meet the Justice. After discussing the different phases of the matter, they both came to the conclusion that their best hope lay in having Mr Horace Fitzgerald with them. At this Jonas jumped up and said—

„Me go get him myself, p'r'aps, for sure.“

„But I want you there to tell about the tracks,“ replied the preacher.

„Jonas will be there, see?“ was his reply as he took down his paddle. As he was leaving he picked up the piece of meat which was lying on the table, saying as he did so—

„Jonas may be hungry before seeing Mr Fitzgerald.“

Then he quietly and quickly went out.

Jonas did not go directly to Sandy Bay for Mr Fitzgerald. He first paid a visit to the »Duck Lake Hotel«, as he considered that he had some dealings with the man who had looked so contemptuously at an Indian in the woods. Jonas had no difficulty in finding the room which the Game-Warden occupied, and then, under the cloak of night, when that representative of the law was enjoying a sound Muskoka sleep—the Muskoka air has good sleeping properties—Jonas made his way into that room, and leaving the bear-meat, appropriated the haunch of venison, which the Warden had taken from Mr Hewitt. As silently as he had come, Jonas made his way back to the lake, and then paddled as hard as he could for Sandy Bay.

After Jonas left the Parsonage a heavy wave of intense loneliness swept over Mr Hewitt. He flung himself on his knees before his little lounge, and buried his face in his hands. A strange sense of oppressive darkness came upon him. It startled him and made him look up. Just over the lounge and the place where he was kneeling was the window of his log cabin, which faced the west. The autumn sun had not set; but the cloud-banks, robed in the hue of deepest midnight, piled themselves up around the sun and obscured all the light. After this wall of darkness had overshadowed the world for a few minutes, it seemed as if some gigantic power had taken hold of the inky cloud, and torn it across, as a draper tears a web of cotton. The glories of the setting sun burst through.

The ragged ends of the inky clouds turned, in the sunlight, to violet, crimson, and gold. The scene fascinated Hewitt; his knees seemed to be riveted to the floor; but a hallowing sense of peace and companionship came to him. His heart was flooded with a new light. New hope came to his soul, and throwing back his head, as his face glowed with divine emotion, he cried, with the triumph of the Psalmist—

„The Lord God is a Sun and Shield:
The Lord will give grace and glory:
No good thing will He withhold
From them that walk uprightly.”

The clouds passed away, the sun sank behind the verdant hills, and the autumn twilight came upon the land.

Mr Hewitt sprang from his knees. His despair had gone with the clouds, and his rich baritone voice rang out a favourite hymn: „There’s glory in my soul.”

As he went around to do some household duty he remembered a promise he had made to go over to visit poor Mrs Brown, and to sit with her boy Charles, who was slowly sinking under the fell destroyer, consumption. He was the fourth of the family to fall a victim to this disease. The eldest daughter had died, an elder son, and the husband; and now Charles, a boy who had given promise of more than usual strength and health, was, at seventeen years of age, fast fading away under the same white plague.

Mr Hewitt brought out his horse, sprang on its back, and quickly rode to the widow’s home, at which place he was always a welcome guest.

„Very glad to see you, Mister Hewitt,” said the poor mother, as her face brightened up to greet the smile and sympathetic look of her pastor.

„How’s Charles?”

„He is very weak; but he is always glad when you come. He says you always bring a cheerful breeze with you. He always feels so much better when you come.”

The pastor did not wait to weigh, or even to accept, the compliment. He had been to that house so often, that he hesitated not to push into the room where the sick boy sat propped up in a home-made invalid chair.

With happy words he spoke to the boy, and with kind inquiries after the other members of the household, Mr Hewitt soon put them all at ease. During the evening some of the neighbours, who knew that their pastor was to be at Mrs Brown’s, came in both to have a talk with him, and also to sympathise with the widow. Mr Hewitt was greatly pleased at this, and was soon very happy in their company. Their lives, plans, thoughts, were of great interest to him. All his private cares and burdens were forgotten in his desire to help them. As he had their utmost confidence, they did not hesitate to open their hearts to him.

With words of encouragement to one, of advice to another, and of gentle warning to a third, he replied to the statements given to him. All felt the love, sympathy, and helpfulness of his words; and though sometimes they felt rebuked of rashness, and even of sinfulness, they knew that he was right in his words, and that he had only spoken for their good.

There was an accordion in the house. This Mr Hewitt secured, and played several airs, and then led the company in singing some of the songs and hymns and psalms they had learned and loved. After a happy evening was thus spent,

enjoyed by all, especially by the invalid, the loving pastor called them to prayer and addressed the Throne of Grace on behalf of each one present. After prayer the people cordially shook hands with each other, and spoke a few words of affection and cheer to the needy one. Several of the visitors surreptitiously slipped some substantials and dainties for the family into Mrs Brown's kitchen, making their gifts in such a way that the poor woman could only look, but dare not speak, her thanks. The tears of thanksgiving that hung in her eyes were pearls of richest payment to the givers, and such as the Lord treasures in His remembrance.

The company then separated for their homes. Mr Hewitt stayed with Charles, and sat the vigil with him. The young men had much to say to each other; eternity seemed so near.

Chapter III

Old Dave Dodge.

At the earliest blush of dawn Mrs Brown relieved her pastor. He soon found his horse and was on his way home. He galloped along the little road, and as he turned into the bush the sun arose above the horizon and lit up one of the most beautiful scenes that man ever beheld. In his enthusiasm, Mr Hewitt exclaimed—

„It's a pathway for a king!"

It was an autumn scene of rarest beauty. The wind had shaken the beeches, maples, and other trees that composed that bit of Muskoka woods, and their gorgeously coloured leaves covered the ground. In the night, a nipping frost and a passing cloud had joined their forces, and ere the morning sun cast his brilliant beams through the limbs of the trees they had dropped a light shower of snow upon the leafy carpet. The fall had been so light and the leaves so laid that it seemed as if thousands of little golden and crimson cups, of as many varied and antique shapes, were upturned, and in the morning sunbeams were filled with limpid pearl.

The rider reined his horse to a walk at this scene of entrancing beauty. With heart filled full of wonder, he exclaimed—

„Orion and Pleiades can hardly show amore beautiful scene than earth has prepared for me to-day. The curtains of tinted clouds that at sunset God hung in His western sky were beautiful, but His carpet this morning is fairer far. Truly He spreadeth out the heavens at His pleasure, and the earth clothes herself in rich apparel at His word. Might and art have concerted together to please and praise their Master. The fall of the leaf is in His knowledge, and the Frost King is but His servant. They make clouds for His garments, and wrap them up with the winds; they spread the snow as a carpet, and remove it at His command. They speak of His glory, His skill and His power; they call forth our wonder, our admiration, and our praise. But the love of Christ surpasses these. In Him, love as pure as the snow was nursed in a crimson bowl of suffering. His fingers moved the frost and guided the wind, but His arm and life brought salvation. May my life praise Him."

Dolly was restless under her master, even if he were singing a psalm of praise, and when the word was given she soon sprang into a gallop, bounding over the uneven bush road like a deer, and soon reached her home.

After seeing his horse carefully stabled and happily eating her breakfast, Mr Hewitt went into his Parsonage and kindled a fire. He broiled a steak, and after eating it he threw himself upon the lounge for a rest. After a short nap he awoke. He went to the lake, and kneeling at the bank, had a refreshing wash. Then, returning to his house, where he finished his morning toilet, he bowed in thankfulness for his many blessings to God, rejoicing that He who had spread the heavens and set the sun in his place was his God, his Father and his Friend. Full of faith in His everlasting Friend, he set about to prepare himself to meet the Game-Warden and the Justice of the Peace at »Duck Lake Hotel«.

The house that bore the name of »Duck Lake Hotel« was a medium-sized frame building, fitted up for a few summer boarders, with a bar-room at one end and a post-office at the other.

Dave Dodge, the proprietor and manager of this hotel, was a sour-hearted, scheming man of about fifty. Almost from the day of the arrival of Mr Hewitt, he and the proprietor had altercations; both declaring that their motives were purely for the benefit of the community. The preacher had denounced the disgusting beer-parties and low dances that Dodge had got up in his bar-room. Dodge had, in his early days, seen the delight that many men in the city had taken in sparring-matches, and he was not going to have less attractions for his hotel. So, for the benefit of his summer guests, he got two of his lounging attaches, of whom he had quite a number, well „primed" with whisky, and set them to fighting. This brutal work Mr Hewitt had denounced in scathing terms. To the credit of the boarders be it said, they took the next means of conveyance, and left Dodge's place. This action of the guests and the denunciation of the preacher made Dodge very angry.

The latest conflict that Mr Hewitt had had with Dodge was over the night-school. Mr Hewitt and the school-teacher desired to open a night-school for the benefit of the young people in the neighbourhood, who had not had early opportunities to attend such places, and now had to work all day for their living. Dodge had managed to get himself elected as a school trustee. There were two other trustees; one was a parishioner of Mr Hewitt's, and an open-minded decent man; the other was a good-natured sort of a settler, with no mind of his own, and no conscience.

Dodge had talked of the school and its expenses, until the people thought that he was going to work great reform on the score of economy. In carrying his point on these lines, he had reduced the school opportunities of the boys and girls to barely six months of the year.

Mr Hewitt thought that this was outrageous, especially in view of the liberal grants that were given by the Government to encourage education.

When Mr Hewitt and the school-teacher had talked the matter over, they came to the conclusion that if the trustees would open the school, they would give lessons two nights a week.

The people thought that this was a generous offer; and Dodge also agreed with them; for he reasoned that they were getting double the work out of the teacher, all for the same money. So the young men started the school. The teacher made his work so interesting that the school was popular from its inception. Dodge soon noticed that the school diminished the evening

attendance at his bar-room; and the amount spent in „drinks” and „treats” was correspondingly reduced. This must be rectified.

So he at once started an agitation about the expense the young men were putting the community to in the way of lamps and oil. The teacher put the statement of expense before the parents of some of the young people who had been attending the school instead of the bar, and had, therefore, been showing marked improvement in their general home-conduct. They at once started a subscription, and this expense was quickly met.

When this objection was overcome, Dodge agitated about the reckless wear and tear of the school property; the desks were only made for children, not for „grown-ups.” The whole of them would soon be „busted,” and they would be put to the expense of getting new ones. Public sentiment was against Dodge, and he was angry—in secret. So he took another tack. The school trustees had the handling of the school. He knew that he could not manage Mr Hewitt’s friend; but he, with the other trustee, would be the majority. So he determined to „work” him; which he succeeded in doing when he put his figure high enough.

To try and win back popular favour, and to make amends for closing the school against the wishes of the majority of the people, Dodge came out with this „generous” offer.

„It is a good thing, and no mistake, to help the grown-ups to a bit more schoolin’. But the schoolhouse is no place for ‘em; the seats were never meant for ‘em. Let ‘em come to my bar-room. It is a good large place, well lighted, and I’ll lend you some tables, chairs, and all—all free.”

The people saw through the ruse. Mr Hewitt publicly denounced Dodge and his scheme to entrap the young, and to tempt them with the fumes of destruction. His real motive was to get them into his hotel; and then he would induce them to „treat” at his bar. The young preacher said he would not advise his young men and maidens to go there, any more than he would ask them to swim around Niagara’s whirlpool.

„Well,” said Dodge, „you come to my bar, or your good-for-nothing night meetings’ll stop.”

„The meetings shall be held, sir, and our young people will not be tempted by the dangerous fumes of your dirty bar,” was Mr Hewitt’s reply.

The young preacher, the school-teacher, and many others were much disappointed in the third trustee. They coaxed, pleaded and argued; but all in vain. He didn’t see any harm in their falling in with old Dodge’s scheme, and it would be a mighty saving to the community. He was not to be moved.

„Well,” said Mr Hewitt, „the upshot of the thing is, we’ll have to hold the night-school outside of the schoolhouse. But where can we go?”

That was a grave question, where the homes of the people were so small, and where even these were widely scattered.

While wrestling with this problem, Mr Hewitt visited a lumberman across the portage, about three miles from the hotel. This man had increased the number of the workmen in his saw-mill, and having to find a suitable place in which to house them, had built a commodious boarding-house with a good-sized dining-room.

Mr Hewitt made bold to ask for this, and to his delight received not only a hearty consent, but also sympathetic co-operation. The fact was at once made known, and the school reopened with brighter prospects of success.

The removal of the school to a distance had caused a few of the men who lived around the hotel to drop off; but their places were taken by many who were nearer the saw-mill. Some people who had been tenants on Dodge's land threw up their property, and found better accommodation, with school opportunities for their children, across the portage.

Taking the thing altogether, while Dodge had won his point in closing the school, he was by far the loser in the end; and as he placed most of the success of his opponents to the tact and energy of Mr Hewitt, he was exceedingly angry with that young man, and also very desirous of humbling or getting rid of him.

This was how matters stood between them when Mr Hewitt set out on that eventful morning to meet the Justice at his place.

After the Game-Warden had left Mr Hewitt and Jonas in the woods, he went to the »Duck Lake Hotel«. Here he was met by Dodge, who said—

„The Justice will be here to-morrow.”

„So he wrote me,” replied the Warden.

„Have you any business with him?” cautiously inquired Dodge.

„Yes, I have caught a poacher. I am going to clean up this part of the country of poaching. See if I don't.”

„Who have you caught?” asked Dodge, within tense interest.

„That young preacher across the bay.”

At this Dave gave a low whistle of surprise, and also of relief, for fear had risen at the mention of bringing a poacher to justice. Then a Satanic grin came over his face, and he assumed a most knowing air.

„Do you know anything about this fellow?” asked the Warden.

„Know him? Yes, I know him like a book. It's just what I expected—you'd find him up to some devilment.”

„What do you know about him?” asked the Warden, ready for any information that would assist him in prosecuting his case.

„He's the veriest hypocritical preacher that ever struck these parts. He had some dirty schemes on hand, I knew, when he wouldn't board with a settler, though there was a many what would a taken him in. He lives in his log-house alone. Laws only knows what he's a-doin' there. Just as like done most of the poachin' around here. He's been seen going home late at night, whistlin' when he thought no one was around—like as not had a deer in front of him, over his horse. Then he's keeping company with that sly sneakin' Indian, that pretends to catch fish for a living, but, between you and me, he and the preacher schemes and does a lot of devilment.”

The Warden was prejudiced against the young preacher because of his stubborn denials of „facts,” as he called them; and as he knew nothing detrimental to Dodge, he was quite ready to accept these lies and innuendoes, almost without questioning. He, however, asked—

„Will you swear to your statements? Can you prove them?”

„Prove 'em! Well I should say! Lanky, call Huddy out of the bar, and come here.”

The man addressed was a tall, thin man, who was at that moment leaning against the bar-room door. He did as he was bidden. As the two men came up Dodge told them that the young missionary had been summoned for poaching, and also what he had said about the young man; and then added that the Warden wanted some one to back up his statements.

The men were ready to corroborate anything that Dodge said, and followed his words as well as they could.

The Warden gravely thanked Dodge for his information, and asked him to be on hand on the morrow, and to have these „gentlemen” there, as their statements might be of some assistance to him.

When he was gone, Dodge led the men into the bar. He poured out a stiff glass of brandy for himself and drank it. Then, with a leer, he asked the men what they would have. Each took a glass of whisky; and as they were drinking Dodge hissed—

„We’ve got that preachin’ cur by the throat now. What a gull that new Warden is! If we can only load the moose all on the preacher, eh! Get him out; then the Warden will go out for a rest; and we can get to work again.”

„He may be a gull, Davey,” said Lanky, „but he’s evidently a weasel after poachers. I wonder he hasn’t got on to the two you bagged last week. I’ll bet they’re in your cellar now, and’ll spoil before you get ‘em out. But however has he got hold of the preacher? I never knowed him to fire a gun. He’s no sport: though he’s a cocky little fighter, and he’s a brave preacher on the school question, ain’t he, Davey?”

This sally made Dodge very angry, and he would have hit Lanky, had not Huddy stopped him, saying—

„Don’t be a fool, Dave! Now you’ve got the lad on the hip; get your yarns down pat; and let us hear ‘em. The Justice may ask us stiff questions, and get us muddled if you don’t.”

This answer cooled Dodge’s anger a little, and the men set to work to gather fictitious proof for the statements made, and see if they could not add other damaging accusations.

The Warden noted the points that Dodge and his men had given him, and carefully wove them into his indictment, which he prepared with elaborate care to deliver to the Justice at the trial.

As Mr Hewitt hurried along the bush road to his trial, he was so assured of his innocence, of meeting Jonas and Horace Fitzgerald, and of having the matter easily cleared up, that he was quite light-hearted. He had made no efforts to bring friends to uphold him, or to testify to his good character; the necessity of such a thing never entered into his mind. The morning was beautiful; the sunshine glistened and played with the dewdrops; and the forest seemed full of gladness.

As the young preacher was walking along, drinking in the beauty and song of Nature, he was attracted by a little scene that presented itself to him. He was walking on the brow of a little hill that abruptly descended to his right. At one time, perhaps, a stream had run along the bottom of the valley; but now it was dry and partly filled with leaves. The root of a large tree had elbowed its way out of the side of the hill. This made a delightful place for a rabbit’s home. A pretty bunny had burrowed her nest under the root; and just as Mr Hewitt came along she had her little brood out for a frolic in the leaves, while she, with pleased and matronly contentment, watched their gambols.

The wind was blowing from them to Mr Hewitt, so they did not catch his scent as he paused a moment to see them. He had not watched them long before he became aware that there was another watcher. A sly old fox had his eyes upon the mother, and was cautiously creeping up until he could get within springing distance. He was intent upon his prey, and being lower than the

young preacher, he was unaware of his presence. The actions of the fox were so sly and quick, that it seemed but a moment from the time that Mr Hewitt first observed him, till he was ready to spring upon the rabbit.

With his promptness to help, Mr Hewitt shouted, snatched up a stick, and jumped to rescue the mother. The fox, startled and taken completely by surprise, abandoned his purpose and turned and fled. Mr Hewitt threw his stick, and although he struck the fox he did not stop him, and he was soon lost in the forest. When the preacher looked around, the rabbits had also disappeared.

Mr Hewitt felt pleased that he had been permitted to save a mother to her little ones. He might have taken warning that he, the pastor of a flock, was also watched by a veritable fox; but in his faith and light-heartedness such a lesson did not impress itself upon him. On he went, whistling, and thinking more of the beauties of Nature, and the majesty and power of Nature's God, than of his trial and his defence.

As he turned the road, and the hotel came into view, the young preacher, for the first time, thought that his old enemy, Dodge, the proprietor, might influence the Justice against him. Still, he hoped that the administrator of the laws of the country would be above such influence.

The Warden was awaiting his coming in the bar-room of the hotel, where Dodge had placed a table and some benches for the trial. The Justice, accompanied by a sworn constable, had also arrived, and was anxious to get through the business as quickly as possible, so that he might fulfil another appointment.

Chapter IV

The Backwoods Trial.

The Warden greeted Mr Hewitt in a friendly manner, told him that he was glad to see he was so promptly on hand, and then presented him to the Justice. Mr Hewitt told them that he had one request to make, and when asked what it was, said that he did not wish to be tried in Dodge's bar-room, amidst its disagreeable fumes. The Justice smiled, but the Warden agreed that it was not a very desirable place in which to meet.

The Justice asked Dodge for another room. Dodge swore a little, and said that the time the Justice was there before, he held his court in the bar-room.

„But,” said the Justice, „we've got a preacher to try, and we must consider the cloth.”

Dodge cursed the preacher up and down, and said he could go into the bar as well as any other sinner. He hadn't another room in the house large enough, unless it was the kitchen.

„We'll go into the kitchen, then, if it will please you, sir,” said Mr Hewitt, calmly addressing the Justice.

„All right, Dave, put the table and chairs into the kitchen, and hurry up. Come on, Fitzgerald, and let us get to business at once.”

Mr Hewitt looked anxiously around. There was neither Horace Fitzgerald nor Jonas; no, not even one man whom he could call a friend, and from whom he

could expect a word of advice or sympathy. For a moment his strength seemed to leave him. He was hardly prepared for this; but the sweet memory of last night's scene floated in upon him, and as the words of the Psalmist again rang in his ears, he upbraided himself for unbelief. New strength came to him, and with interest he followed the proceedings of this backwoods court under a county Justice of the Peace.

After Dodge had reluctantly prepared the kitchen for the court, the Justice, followed by the Warden, Mr Hewitt, the constable, and the hangers-on of the bar-room, entered the house, and the business of the day was opened.

The Warden then took up his case against Mr Hewitt for moose-poaching, and said—

„Your Honour, I have a rather sad duty to perform to-day; namely, to accuse of poaching moose a young man who is a licentiate of one of our prominent Churches, and who, I believe, up to the time of his coming here, has had an honourable career. But, sir, I have such facts and evidence that it will be merely a matter of routine duty upon your part to receive it. Part of the evidence I shall give myself from my own observation; and I have also a few witnesses here, who will testify to the general conduct and life of this young man since his arrival in these parts.” He then called upon Dodge and his men as witnesses. Their statements were merely repetitions of what Dodge had already said to the Warden; made, however, more effective by more direct statements and apparent proof.

Mr Hewitt, whose faith in humanity had been shocked at Dodge's previous actions, but not shattered, was almost dumb with surprise, amused, and yet saddened, that about his simple life and acts of kindness and self-sacrifice such abominable lies could be told.

In summing up his evidence, the Warden said—

„Thus, sir, we find this young man, coming out here ostensibly to preach the Gospel, but falling into the temptation of his surroundings, making his home, so-called a 'parsonage', a thief's den, consorting with a thievish Indian, in whose company I saw him myself, and under the cover of ministering to the eternal welfare of the neighbouring people, robbing the country of its game.

„As I have stated before—and the evidence lies before you: the venison, the gun, and the knife—I caught this young man red-handed in the act, almost over the moose. He had barely disposed of his part of a deer, no doubt taken away by his Indian accomplice, and, thinking himself secure, after having lunched off that piece which you see, was taking a nap, when I fortunately passed that way, saw the offal of the deer, followed the blood-marks on the trail, and in this way most convincingly found the thief.

„While, sir, I beg you will have due regard for the youth of the poacher, it being his first offence, and also his position as a minister of the Gospel, I hope, sir, that you will remember the majesty of the law, which, in these parts, demands summary enforcement, to maintain its dignity and to retain proper regard therefor at the hands of the people.”

Turning to the Warden, the Justice very gravely said—

„The fact that this young man has been trained for the ministry only adds to the heinousness of his crime. He, above others, should have known better than to have done such a thing, even from a higher motive than that of breaking his country's laws.”

This is what the Warden really thought, and it pleased him very much to hear the Justice say it.

Then a grim smile played and rippled over the big, weather-beaten face of that backwoods Justice, and he emitted a succession of „Ehms,” which decidedly aroused the spectators and told them that something unusual was coming. Then the smile flitted away, and he asked the Warden, with the coolest deliberation—

„Is that the piece of meat which you took out of Mr Hewitt's home?”

„Yes,” the Warden promptly replied.

The spectators were now alert to catch every word and even every look of the Justice. The Justice never acted in the present way without a purpose. His reference to the meat made many eyes study it curiously, and set many brains at work to fathom the Justice's meaning. As some saw that it was bear-meat, and not venison, as the Warden had so emphatically stated, a loud guffaw broke from several quarters. This piece of information was quickly passed from mouth to mouth, with increasing uproar. This greatly pleased the Justice, then he continued talking to the Warden. Half apologetically, he said—

„We backwoods people are simple, but we think we can tell what we have to eat. Your bloody axe and knife are tell-tales, but that meat, that meat! Come, Warden, tell us again how you got it?”

This made the spectators uproarious over the Warden's meat, which he had so pompously displayed as evidence of moose-killing against the preacher. Even Dodge and his perjured parasite witnesses began to weaken, when they felt the sympathy of the spectators turning against the Warden, and also saw what the Justice was alluding to.

The Warden was annoyed at the innuendoes and mock humility of the Justice, and decidedly flushed at the laughter of the spectators, which he could not understand. A Government city official to be so badgered by a county Justice, and jeered at by country clowns!

„We are waiting,” said the Justice, who read the Warden's thoughts with well-disguised amusement, „to hear you tell us exactly how you came by that meat.”

„I got it,” began the Warden, „in Mr Hewitt's home, so-called a parsonage, and it is part of a large moose—”

A great laugh from the spectators greeted this last remark. The Justice also smiled, but said sternly—

„Silence!”

Then, turning to the Warden, as if wishing him to proceed with his evidence, he said suggestively—

„This is venison, eh?”

„Yes,” replied the Warden, with a good deal of hauteur.

„Well, Mr Fitzgerald, I fear that you are not a well-qualified epicure, for I think that that piece of meat is cut out of a bear, and—”

The kitchen was nearly a pandemonium. The Warden was in a rage.

„I traced the blood-marks to that house,” he declared.

„A bear has blood as well as a moose,” said the Justice, in no wise disturbed at the noise or at the Warden's sudden rage.

„Well, I'll take you to the ground,” said the Warden, „and I'll show you the rest of the deer cached in the trees.”

„Do,” said the Justice; adding, „I declare this court adjourned, to meet on our return.”

The sympathy of the simple-hearted, rough bystanders ran quickly to Mr Hewitt. He had been a hero in their eyes because of his fight on the school question, and they respected him because of his brave and fearless preaching; but they had preferred to stand in with the man who served out their whisky. Now, however, they jumped to the conclusion that the young preacher was the victim of some plot hatched in revenge by Dodge, who had somehow duped the green Warden; and so, when the Justice dismissed the court, to manifest their sympathy with Mr Hewitt, they picked him up on their shoulders and carried him out of the house. It was a moment of triumph for the young preacher, and the rough fellows let loose all their pent-up admiration, and defying the power of Dodge they told him what they thought of his brave deeds.

At this turn of affairs, capped by the demonstrations of the men over Mr Hewitt, Dodge was very much chagrined. In the very worst of humour he drove out all who had lingered in the kitchen or on the doorstep, and he slammed the door upon them.

When noon arrived, and a large number of men presented themselves with the Justice and the Warden for dinner, Dodge's professional hospitality restored his good-humour, which was increased when some of the men told him that the Warden had shown the Justice the cache in the trees, and that they had traced unmistakable signs of the moose's blood to the Parsonage. The Justice had seen all this, but they could find no trace of venison in the Parsonage. There was bear-meat there in „abundance", but not an ounce of venison. These latter facts were, however, not told to Dodge.

The news of the trial of the preacher had spread quickly around the country, and a number of Mr Hewitt's parishioners came up to look after their pastor. Mr Miller took him and the constable, whom Mr Hewitt specially invited, to dinner.

When the court re-assembled in the afternoon the Warden was very stern. He would make no mistakes this time, and he would have his revenge on the whole of them. The Warden could not understand the change in the Justice, especially in the matter of haste and expedition of business. In the morning he said he had another engagement he wished to fulfil, and he was in a hurry to get away. Now, however, he was very slow, deliberate, and rather too friendly, thought the Warden, with the spectators. The Justice knew that his other engagement could wait, but it was not often his privilege to have a green conceited Warden in the toils, and he was not going to spoil his fun by rushing matters through too quickly.

Seeing some of Mr Hewitt's parishioners, the Justice called upon several of them to tell what they knew of Mr Hewitt's movements, especially during the last few days. One of those called upon was Mr Farley, who had gone for Mr Hewitt to come and help his sick hired man. As he told of that ride through the dark, over the rough roads, many a heart was thrilled, and there was some faint effort at a cheer. Mr Miller followed, and told of Mr Hewitt's faithful attentions to Widow Brown and the dying Charley. This story touched many of the rough hearts, and there were many wet eyes among the spectators and many a smothered, „God bless him!"

After one or two others had spoken, the Warden again took up the prosecution. It was mostly a repetition of his former address, with all reference to the haunch of venison carefully left out. Just as he was finishing, there was a sudden commotion around the kitchen door, and in burst Horace Fitzgerald, almost out of breath, followed by Jonas.

„What’s all this nonsense about the preacher’s shooting moose?” demanded Horace, breathlessly.

„Don’t interrupt the court, Horace,” said the Warden, taking his cousin by the hand and trying to quiet him. „I caught the young preacher poaching moose.”

„You never did,” said Horace, emphatically.

„But I did,” insisted the Warden, „and I have proved it to the Justice.”

„Well, I’ll unprove it again for you. What have you proved to the Justice?”

„That I saw the remains of the moose near Hewitt’s place, and traced the blood-marks to his house. Isn’t that evidence enough, especially when I found the axe and knife which he used and the man himself almost on the spot?”

„No, sir, that is not evidence enough,” said Horace.

„But I caught him on the spot,” insisted the Warden.

„He had just returned from his pastoral work, then,” declared the thoroughly aroused Mr Horace Fitzgerald.

„Well,” said the Justice, „a moose has been killed, and Mr Hewitt’s tools seem to have been used. The question now is, Who killed the moose?”

„I did it, sir,” said Horace, straightening himself up. „I did it. I went to pay Mr Hewitt a visit, but he was away. Jonas here can tell you where, if you want to know, or ask Mr Hewitt himself. I went into his place to rest, and saw his gun. I wanted to try the weapon, and that moose was the first thing that I saw to shoot. I gave Mr Hewitt a haunch of venison for the use of the gun.”

Then, noticing the piece of bear-meat, he said to the Justice: „What have you got this bear-meat here for?”

„Oh!” said he, amidst the laughter of the crowd and before the crimson cheeks of the Warden, „this is a piece of meat that the Warden has exhibited for your haunch of venison. It must have strangely disappeared, for when I visited Mr Hewitt’s place I saw plenty of bear-meat, but no venison. However, on your confession, Mr Fitzgerald,” said the Justice, with heroic deliberation, „that you have shot a moose out of season, I shall have to fine you.”

„Fine away,” said Horace; „only don’t go and accuse an innocent man, a lover of mankind, and a noble soul all round.”

„But the hotel-keeper, here, swears to seeing him with a thievish Indian, and taking moose to his house at night.”

The Justice knew that these were lies, but he wished to draw Horace out a little.

„Dodge has spoken falsely, then,” said Horace. „His name should never be mentioned in the same breath with that of that splendid young Indian. Just think, that man has paddled and portaged all night to get me, and, without waiting either to eat or rest, has hurried me here, to rescue Mr Hewitt from your false accusations. Has any one of you done a nobler thing? And as to the lies about Mr Hewitt’s bringing moose home at night; I’ll guarantee that old Dodge is the guilty party. Where was he, to see Mr Hewitt at night? or any of his beer-soaked followers? Mr Hewitt was homeward bound from some deed of love and mercy, and if anybody had moose, I’ll guarantee it was old Davey Dodge.”

„You’re right, Mister Horace,” said Jonas, whose delight was shaking even his Indian imperturbability, and most of the spectators sympathised with him. Jonas was near the door that led to the cellar, which was partly open; and he added—

„Venison down there, p’rhaps, for sure; me smell him hard.”

„Get out!” shouted Dodge.

„I’ll no get out for you, Dave Dodge, ven’son there,” said Jonas, in a way that made Dodge keep back the hand which he had lifted to strike him.

Horace understood the meaning of Jonas words, and said—

„I accuse this man also of poaching, and demand that his cellar be searched.”

There was some parley over this; but Horace won his point. He demanded that the constable should take charge of Dodge, while Jonas and the Warden be sent to search the cellar.

These two men quickly returned, and stated that the bodies of two large moose, lately shot, were there.

„That means a forty-dollar fine at least, with costs,” said the Justice.

„Watch that man, constable,” said Horace, „for he’s got to go with you, for he hasn’t the money, the old scoundrel! How much is my fine, Justice? I want to get out of this mess, and go and see my wife.”

„I’ll straighten that out, Horace,” said the Warden. „I am glad you have saved us from punishing an innocent man. I am very sorry that I have falsely accused you, Mr Hewitt. I shall return your knife and rifle. I’ll send them over to you by Jonas. And as for him, I hope that I can secure his assistance. I want just such a man as he.”

„Well,” said Mr Horace Fitzgerald, laughingly to his cousin, „it is a pleasure to see your conceit humbled for once; but I shall pay my own fine, thank you. Perhaps, Justice, my accusation of Dodge, which has so quickly brought conviction, will give me part of his fine. Just figure out the sum, and send me my bill or my cheque, and it will be promptly acknowledged.”

Then, turning again to the Warden, he said slyly, as a reproof to his hasty accusation—

„Next time you catch me shooting a moose give me time to get my breakfast, ere you drag me before a Justice.”

The Warden was very red in the face. He did not even turn to his cousin, but was looking at Mr Hewitt for a reply to his apology.

With his usual unselfishness, the young preacher said—

„I am glad that you have something for Jonas to do. You will find him as true as steel and as honest as the sunlight.”

„You better than that, Mister Hewitt, for sure,” replied Jonas.

The constable, Justice, and Dodge were having some lively words between them, in which the last-named „gentleman” was cursing the interference and „scent” of the Indian, and also calling maledictions down upon the laws of the land.

Horace gave Jonas a pat on the back, and said—

„Stick to the Warden. You’re well fixed now, old boy.”

Then, slipping his hand under Mr Hewitt’s arm, he said—

„Come, let us get out of this.”

And they went home to supper.

