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DAD'S STORY

In those days there was no doctor within call to help the mother and her little one. In our neighborhood Mrs. Fowler served the purpose and it was she who ministered to the mother, having been brought by Johnnie Taylor who lived across the road. The Fowlers had taken up a homestead about two miles from Father's and this big, fat, hardy midwife went from one family to another as midwife, as nurse, as friend and companion and sometimes, I fear, just as a neighborhood gossip. For she knew all the goings on in that locality.

One thing I forgot to mention that is possibly of interest is that the country there is laid out in townships, not entirely coinciding with the townships of the Government survey, but often doing just that. But these townships were little municipalities, they elected their officers, held regular meetings, were divided into school districts, and performed all the functions of a body corporate, just as a city, a town, a county, or a state. Each of these townships had a name and the name of the township where I was born was Paradise. I hardly know who, when or why it was named that. Perhaps it was named in hopes that it might become a paradise. But it never did to my recollection.

They tell me that my first clothes were a red flannel piece of cloth enclosed in a deer skin. Somehow, I don't seem to remember much that happened along there for a year or two. There are, however, some recollections that still cling to the life in that log house. I was only four when Father built and moved into the "New House" right in front of the log cabin, a new house with real lumber and nails, though they were the "cut" variety and not the "wire" nails of today. In some old building you may see a sample of these cut nails, not at all like the nails that you usually buy at the hardware store now.

I remember Father bringing a big object in on his back one night. The light was not very good, although by that time we had kerosene lamps, in place of the button and string or the later tallow candle. My folks never having sheep (Father did not like them) and for the most part killing hogs for their tame meat, they never had many tallow candles, but the neighbors had them, and I can well remember the old candle moulds, those long tin tubes held together with other pieces of tin, the tubes opening into a sort of inverted base. It would be difficult for me to give a word picture of these handy utensils, anyway to one who never saw one.

Father flung his burden on the floor beside the door and under a window that was close to and just west of the front door. That object had the movement of a dead animal and Uncle Homer dead me to go up to it and take hold of it. I was pretty shy but finally I got hold of a big paw and Homer let out a soul scorching screech that would have scared Old Nick himself. Of course I dropped that paw in a hurry. But I found out soon as I recovered from being startled by that yell that it was a yearling bear. Father never took any hand in teasing me but Uncle Homer and Uncle George and my older sisters were always teasing me and trying to scare the liver out of me in one way or another.

Having had supper father reached into his inner coat pocket and brought out a parcel about the size that one big or two small towels would make now. Having smelled it he handed it to Mother who took it to the cupboard with the remark that it could wait until morning. The parcel was tallow stripped from the entrails of a deer he had shot after tracking down and shooting the bear.

In some places one sees log buildings that have stood for a considerable number of years but those buildings are built up off the ground. The action of the ground on the logs causes the latter to decay fast and log houses ten or twelve years old get badly out of shape unless repaired. Our log house was built in 1867. It was nine years old when I was born. It must have been thirteen or fourteen years old when we moved to the new house.

By that time there was a stove, yes, a second stove had come into the new old log house. And a sewing machine, priced at \$65.00, iron hinges had replaced the old wooden ones, glass had been installed in the windows, and a number of changes had been made. Father had killed venison and sold it to the lumber camps which had begun to dot that country, to pay

CODE OF THE NORTH

. . . By HAROLD TITUS . . .

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CHAPTER XIII—Continued

"May-be. Not now. He is not hot. Maybe I go sometime. He needs me now. He is my friend."

"Friend?" A tightness came into Kate's tone as a wonder which was almost alarm asserted itself when the word caused her once again to think of the possible relationship of these two.

"He your brother? I see you once. You are Of Jim's girl. I know. This,"—with a gesture—"Yo'ng Jim, he is my friend."

She was silent a moment, struggling against things, wanting to speak, not knowing just how.

"Me, I got no brother. I got nobody. Yo'ng Jim was good to me. He make Franz let me come here. He tol' Franz to leave me be. Franz . . . I Franz's girl long time. I say to Yo'ng Jim I be his girl. Wash, cook. He tell me no. He tell me to go to school. He is my friend," she repeated simply, as though it explained everything, and in the words was an infection, a quality which made Kate Flynn know that Franz had lied.

A low moan came from Steve just then, which checked the many questions Kate wanted to ask. After a moment his brows furrowed and he uttered a weak, inarticulate word. Then, as if the effort of that had wearied him beyond measure, he let breath slip from his lungs and turned his head to one side.

Silently Mary moved away and replenished the fire. She heated the coffee again and brought a cup and spoon and forced more of it into Drake's mouth.

Throughout this interval Steve was strangely aware of voices near him. They came to his consciousness, however, as from a great distance, rushing nearer, retreating as rapidly, all but fading out, then coming close again.

Steve fought against an overpowering weakness, a terrible lethargy. He was in pain somewhere. Yet there was something he had to say . . . something he must say . . . something on which more than his own life depended. . . .

He could not remember what this was. He repeatedly exhausted his sparse strength in trying to recall the message he must give, the order he must issue. He would lie in an odd state of rest until vigor came back and he could feel strong enough to grow angry at the things which stood in the way of his recollection. He tried to sit up and some one held him down and that stirred hot rage in his heart, but it did him no good because these others were so strong and his body had become so feeble, like a child's, or an old, old man's.

But for a time, he was at peace. Yes, more than at peace. He had a feeling of wonderful happiness. He was happier than he had ever been in his life. Some one he had always wanted to see was at hand; some voice he had hungered and thirsted to hear was in his ears. . . . Then things, even happiness, faded out, and after another incalculable interval he was aware of fretting again.

"Franz!" some one said in a thick, unnatural voice, and he realized that he himself had spoken the name. "Franz, I'll . . . I'll let you go if you'll give her back!"

"Yes," a voice answered. Not Franz's voice; that other voice. "Yes, I'm back. It's all right. I'm here. What is it?"

He found himself staring into that face, a face now bathed in the soft warm light of a snapping fire.

"Oh," he said and closed his eyes

and smiled. So she was all right, then. "All . . . right," he whispered.

Then something was pressed to his lips.

"It is hot," a voice said. That must be Mary's voice. Where did she come from? . . . A hand raised his head gently and he felt strong coffee scorch his lips. He sipped obediently and dropped back. This was strange. . . . He was alone with two girls, and had a job before him. . . . A man with things he must do who can't remember what they are can't be alone with women. . . .

He stirred, trying to sit up, and Kate's voice begged him to lie quiet. "All right," he murmured. If she wanted that, then that was what she would have. . . . Lord, but she was lovely to look upon! . . .

So it came to be dawn before he looked about him with clear consciousness. At his feet sat Mary, her eyes fast on him.

"Hullo," he said.

Mary gestured for caution, finger at her lips, and tilted her head toward the sleeper.

"Your sister," she said, leaning close. "She tired."

"Sister? What's that—?"

Kate roused, her movement cutting off his words.

"Oh!" she gasped as she saw the clarity in his countenance. "Oh, how do you feel? Are you stronger, now?"

"Strong? Not very." He smiled slightly. "But what's all the fuss? What went on? How'd we all—"

"Oh, God!" he moaned as memory of what had happened and what might yet happen flooded back. "What day's this?"

"It doesn't matter," Kate said soothingly, coming close to him. "So long as you're feeling better, it doesn't matter—"

"Matter? Of course, it matters. I think! What has happened. . . . I got in Tuesday and all day yesterday—"

"That's it! I remember, now. . . . All right, if you say so I won't sit up. But listen, I'm giddy as the devil. Things are going round outside but I'm thinking straight. Today at four o'clock that money's got to be in MacDonald's hands or Polaris is sunk. I remember, now. . . . Franz nicked me with a knife. I stay out all this time? Whew! Say, we've got to snap into it."

"But you mustn't think of things like that," Kate protested as one would talk to a petulant child. "It makes no difference what happens to Polaris until you're all right."

"Me!" he scoffed feebly. "I'm all right except for being helpless. I must've lost a lot of blood. I'm weak as . . . as something. But I guess I got weak trying to arrange things for you Flynns. I can't fall down on the job with the finish in sight. Where are the boys?"

"I haven't seen a soul except Mary, here, since you overtook Franz and me yesterday morning," said Kate.

Steve groaned. "I sent word. Something slipped. . . . I wonder . . ." He shut his eyes tightly and, opening them, stared at the Indian girl a long interval.

"Mary, you ever been through the country between here and MacDonald's?"

"Oh, yes,—Idly.

"How long would it take you to get there?"

"Long ways. Maybe all day."

"It'd take you more than all day to go by canoe, that's certain. Listen, Mary, once you wanted to do something for me and were honest about

it. Well, now's your chance. There's something I've got to have done today that's more important than anything I've ever tried to do in my life. . . . Except one thing, of course,—with a grave smile at Kate. "Understand that? Good."

"I've got something to send to MacDonald. Will you take a package to him across country and get there before four o'clock today?"

The girl squinted at the sun and shrugged slightly.

"May-be. I go fast all time."

He tried to move and turned his face helplessly to Kate.

"I'm stiff as a board. In my hip pocket is a note-book and pencil. No; no. . . . Other one. . . . Yes, that's it. Now, write out a receipt for the Laird to sign. That option's binding. All we've got to do is fulfill its terms. Get the dates straight in your head and make the receipt an acknowledgment of the initial payment on the option recorded in this county as of such-and-such a date. Good, now!"—as the girl began to write.

After a moment she read it to him; he suggested a change and then gave the document his approval.

"That'll hold him," he said excitedly, color beginning to stain his cheeks. "Now, where's the brief case?"

He shifted his gaze to the waiting Indian girl.

"Mary, that bag's got more money in it than you'll ever see. More dollars in it than you can count. I'm going to trust you with it. If you should meet anybody on the way—which isn't no chance in ten thousand—and who might not be my friend, you keep it in your hands."

"You get to MacDonald's before four o'clock this afternoon. You give the bag to him and tell him to write his name on this paper. Then you take the paper to headquarters and give it to . . . Mrs. LaFane. She'll be there, surely. You wait for me there and you'll have your reward or the stars'll fall!"

"Sure, Yo'ng Jim. . . . Good-by," she said, and tucking the receipt into her blouse, took the brief case and turned to her canoe.

Steve was in a sweat by that time. Every pore seemed to be open, letting his meager store of strength gush from his weary body.

"No good!" he whispered after a moment. "I'm all in. . . . But she'll get there. I'll bet on that girl. . . ."

"Don't talk, please," urged Kate, drawing the blankets about his shoulders.

She sat close beside him then for a long interval, it seemed. He wanted to talk further but could not. The flow and ebb of his strength was marked by definite sensations. He felt it reach a low point and commence to build again.

"Has she landed?" he whispered.

"Just now. . . . She's drawing out her canoe. . . ." Another moment of silence. "She's looking back, now. . . . Good luck, Mary!" He felt that she was waving her hand.

"She's going into the timber, now. . . . She's gone."

Kate rose and went to the fire. "Here's a broth made of smoked meat and meal," she said. "Take it now, and then more coffee. Mary said it was the thing to do. She knows. I felt so helpless. . . ."

Obediently he sipped from the cups she held for him, his head held against her side, and after that he slept for a time. It was a deep sleep. He was conscious of the girl's presence all the time and when he finally roused she was standing under the fly looking down at him. He smiled weakly.

"More to eat?"

"If it's from your hand," he answered.

He was definitely better by then, but still events and people were tangled in his mind.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

doors and their corners cut great gashes in his face, one just over the left eye and one in the left cheek, just above where a dimple comes in a girl's cheek.

The other incident happened after the building of the new house had begun. Dave Days was hired to "lay out" the frame and to do some of the work. He was a big, raw-boned, and sober-faced pioneer (those pioneers seldom were a hilarious lot) who seldom spoke to anyone unless it was necessary. He left his tools laying about as carpenters do. His hammer was handy to drive nails with and his planes were just the thing to smooth off the rough spots in the rough lumber, 2x4's, etc., that were being built into the house. Of course a little chap of only four could not be expected to do otherwise than to play at the thing Father was doing. The pine timber was nice to drive the nails into and the planes cut a whole lot better than the old hoe of a splitting ax he was allowed to play with nor the hatchet he had for his own.

That night at the supper table he complained to my folks that some one had dulled his tools so that he would have to go get them ground up before he could do anything with them the next day. At once all eyes were focused on me. I never knew why. But Mother insisted that I go over to Dave and that he pull my hair so that I'd not molest his tools again. I'll never forget it. I hated to go but Mother insisted. I finally went over in his roach. I do not know if he pulled my hair or not, or what he did to me if anything, but I never liked him, nor his family. He had a son a little older than I who went to our school later, and his daughter, Lucy, became the belle of the place, but they never looked good to me. You can call it what you wish. Certainly I do not remember his hurting me. Nor do I believe he did. But I've never forgotten having to go over to him as he sat there where he had shoved back from the table and awaiting—I know not what, but I never forgot.

It was along about Christmas when we moved into the new house. I do not know whether snow had fallen much or not. But that spring when they shovelled the snow from the path to the sugar bush, the sides of the path were away higher than my head. I seem to remember helping to move

the meager furniture into the new house but when I think of how high those snow banks looked, compared with my height and with the height of the stumps along the path, I hardly suppose that I did much moving of that furniture any more than I did in the tapping of the sugar bush, or the gathering of the sap that spring.

In an old reader I studied when I got to going to school there was a story of "How Maple Syrup Is Made" and this story told how the young boy always imagined he did a lot in the sugar bush but in reality he was in the way much more than he was helping. I suppose that holds good with my activities both when moving into the new house and in tapping that sugar bush that spring.

Along about this time there are so many things that made a deep impression on me that I never was able to get them very well arranged, chronologically or otherwise. The snow sifting through the shingles and the awaking to find the ermine inch deep on the bed covers, the starting to school, two miles through solid woods with never a stick cut along the road between the new house and the school house, a log affair with a woodshed built on in front to serve both as a wood shed and a storm door for the entry, the beautiful school room that I asked to wait until I was twenty one so that I could marry her, the lie that one of the neighborhood boys told the father of Mrs. Mabel Walker Wildebrand about something they said I had done, which I hadn't, the hiding from the others who were going my way home and letting them pass, and a thousand and one things that are vividly stamped on my memory, but that have no particular sequence or chronological order. If I get them twisted as to time, I crave your pardon but the incidents will be truthfully portrayed as they repose in the recess of a memory that has held them for more than half a century. (To Be Continued Next Week)

Miss Faye Scheible and Monty Ward made a decided hit with the residents of this place with their demonstration of the Zenith Marvel washer and White King soap. Mr. Ward braided three towels tightly together and placed them in the tub. In a very short time the towels were disentangled and evenly distributed in the tub.

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