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## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE.**

The Publishers have extreme pleasure in placing this novel, by a new and promising native author, before the reading public of Canada. They will be greatly disappointed if it does not at once take its place among the best products of Canadian writers. While the work has peculiar interest for Torontonians and dwellers in the districts so graphically described, its admirable character drawings of many "sorts and conditions" of our people—its extremely clever dialect, representing Irish, Scotch, English, Canadian, French, Southern and Negro speech, and the working out of its story, which is done in such a way as would credit an experienced romancer—should insure the book a welcome in very many homes. The literary flavour is all that can be desired; the author evidencing a quite remarkable acquaintance with English Literature, especially with Wordsworth, the Poet of the Lake Country.

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## TWO KNAPSACKS:

### A Novel of Canadian Summer Life.

BY J. CAWDOR BELL.

#### CHAPTER I.

The Friends—The Knapsacks—The Queen's Wharf—The Northern Railway—Belle Ewart—The *Susan Thomas*, Captain and Crew—Musical Performance—The Sly Dog—Misunderstanding—Kempenfeldt Bay.

Eugene Coristine and Farquhar Wilkinson were youngish bachelors and fellow members of the Victoria and Albert Literary Society. Thither, on Wednesday evenings, when respectable church-members were wending their way to weekly service, they hastened regularly, to meet with a band of like-minded young men, and spend a literary hour or two. In various degrees of fluency they debated the questions of the day; they read essays with a wide range of style and topic; they gave readings from popular authors, and contributed airy creations in prose and in verse to the Society's manuscript magazine. Wilkinson, the older and more sedate of the two, who wore a tightly-buttoned blue frock coat and an eyeglass, was a schoolmaster, pretty well up in the Toronto Public Schools. Coristine was a lawyer in full practice, but his name did not appear on the card of the firm which profited by his services. He was taller than his friend, more jauntily dressed, and was of a more mercurial temperament than the schoolmaster, for whom, however, he entertained a profound respect. Different as they were, they were linked together by an ardent love of literature, especially poetry, by scientific pursuits, Coristine as a botanist, and Wilkin[Pg 6]son as a dabbler in geology, and by a firm determination to resist, or rather to shun, the allurements of female society. Many lady teachers wielded the pointer in rooms not far removed from those in which Mr.

Wilkinson held sway, but he did not condescend to be on terms even of bowing acquaintance with any one of them. There were several young lady typewriters of respectable city connections in the offices of Messrs. Tyler, Woodruff and White, but the young Irish lawyer passed them by without a glance. These bachelors were of the opinion that women were bringing the dignity of law and education to the dogs.

It was a Wednesday evening in the beginning of July, and the heat was still great in the city. Few people ventured out to the evening services, and fewer still found their way to the Victoria and Albert hall; in fact, there was not a quorum, and, as the constitution stated that, in such a case, the meeting should be adjourned, it was adjourned accordingly. Coristine lit a cigar in the porch, and Wilkinson, who did not smoke, but said he liked the odour of good tobacco, took his arm for a walk along the well-lit streets. They agreed that it was time to be out of town. Coristine said: "Let us go together; I'll see one of the old duffers and get a fortnight's leave." Wilkinson had his holidays, so he eagerly answered: "Done! but where shall we go? Oh, not to any female fashion resort." At this Coristine put on the best misanthropic air he could call up, with a cigar between his lips, and then, as if struck by a happy thought, dug his elbow into his companion's side and ejaculated: "Some quiet country place where there's good fishing." Wilkinson demurred, for he was no fisherman. The sound of a military band stopped the conversation. It came into sight, the bandsmen with torches in their headgear, and, after it, surrounded and accompanied by all the small boys and shop-girls in the town, came the Royals, in heavy marching order. The friends stood in a shop doorway until the crowd passed by, and then, just as soon as a voice could be distinctly heard, the schoolmaster clapped his companion on the shoulder and cried, "Eureka!" Coristine thought the music had been too much for his usually staid and deliberate friend. "Well, old Archimedes, and what is it you've found? Not any new geometrical problems, I hope." "Listen to [Pg 7]me," said the dominie, in a tone of accustomed authority, and the lawyer listened.

"You've heard Napoleon or somebody else say that every soldier of France carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack?"

"Never heard the gentleman in my life, and don't believe it, either."

"Well, well, never mind about that; but I got my idea out of a knapsack."

"Now, what's the use of your saying that, when its myself knows that you haven't got such a thing to bless yourself with?"

"I got it out of a soldier's—a volunteer's knapsack, man."

"O, you thief of the world! And where have you got it hid away?"

"In my head."

"O rubbish and nonsense—a knapsack in your head!"

"No, but the idea."

"And where's the knapsack?"

"On the grenadier's back."

"Then the grenadier has the knapsack, and you the idea: I thought you said the idea was in the knapsack."

"So it was; but I took it out, don't you see? My idea is the idea of a knapsack on a man's back—on two men's backs—on your back and on mine."

"With a marshal's baton inside?"

"No; with an extra flannel shirt inside—and some socks, and a flask, and some little book to read by the way; that's what I want."

"It'll be mortal heavy and hot this boiling weather."

"Not a bit. You can make one out of cardboard and patent cloth, just as light as a feather, and costing you next to nothing."

"And where will you be going with your knapsack? Will it be parading through the streets with the volunteers you would be after?"

"Go? We will go on a pedestrian tour through the finest scenery available." This was said correctly and with great dignity. It had the effect of sobering the incredulous Cristine, who said: "I tell ye, Farquhar, my boy, that's a fine idea of yours, barring the heat; but [Pg 8]I suppose we can rest where we like and go when we like, and, if the knapsacks get to be a nuisance, express 'em through,

C.O.D. Well, I'll sleep over it, and let you know to-morrow when I can get away." So the pair separated, to retire for the night and dream a knapsack nightmare.

Coristine's leave did not come till the following Tuesday, so that Friday, Saturday and Monday—or parts of them, at least—could be devoted to the work of preparation. Good, strong, but not too heavy, tweed walking suits were ordered, and a couple of elegant flannel shirts that would not show the dirt were laid in; a pair of stout, easy boots was picked out, and a comfortable felt hat, with brim enough to keep off the sun. Then the lawyer bought his cardboard and his patent cloth and straps, and spent Saturday evening with his friend and a sharp penknife, bringing the knapsacks into shape. The scientists made a mistake in producing black and shiny articles, well calculated to attract the heat. White canvas would have been far better. But Wilkinson had taken his model from the military, hence it had to be black. The folded ends of the patent cloth, which looked like leather, were next to the wearer's back, so that what was visible to the general public was a very respectable looking flat surface, fastened round the shoulders with becoming straps, equally dark in hue. "Sure, Farquhar, it's pack-men the ignorant hayseeds will be taking us for," said Coristine, when the prospective pedestrians had strapped on their shiny baggage holders. "I do not agree with you there," replied the schoolmaster; "Oxford and Cambridgemen, and the best *litterateurs* of England, do Wales and Cornwall, the Lakes and the Trossachs, to say nothing of Europe, dressed just as we are." "All right, old man, but I'm thinking I'll add a bandanna handkerchief and a blackthorn. They'll come in handy to carry the fossils over your shoulder. There now, I've forgot the printers' paper and the strap flower press for my specimens. True, there's Monday for that; but I'm afraid I'll have to shave the boards of the flower press down, or it'll be a sorry burden for a poor, tired botanist. Good night to you, my bouchal boy, and it's a pack you might throw into a corner of your sack." "Cards!" replied Wilkinson; "no sir, but [Pg 9]my pocket chess box will be at your service." "Chess be hanged," said the lawyer; "but, see here, are they checkers when you turn them upside down? If they are, it's I'm your man."

On Tuesday morning, about eight o'clock, there appeared at the Brock Street Station of the Northern Railway, two well-dressed men

with shiny knapsacks on their shoulders. They had no blackthorns, for Wilkinson had said it would be much more romantic to cut their own sticks in the bush, to which Coristine had replied that, if the bush was as full of mosquitos as one he had known, he would cut his stick fast enough. They were the astonishment, rather than the admiration, of all beholders, who regarded them as agents, and characterized the way in which they carried their samples as the latest thing from the States. For a commencement, this was humiliating, so that the jaunty lawyer twisted his moustache fiercely, and felt inclined to quarrel with the self-possessed, clean-shaven space between Wilkinson's elaborate side-whiskers. But the pedagogue, in his suavest manner, remarked that Cicero, in his *De Natura Deorum*, makes Cotta call the common herd both fools and lunatics, whose opinion is of no moment whatever. "Why, then," he asked, "should we trouble our minds with what it pleases them to think? It is for us to educate public opinion – to enlighten the darkness of the masses. Besides, if you look about, you will see that those who are doing the giggling are girls, sir, positively girls."

"Your hand on that, Farquhar, my boy; if it keeps the hussies off, I'll wear a knapsack every day of my life."

Coristine did not know where he was going, being subject to the superior wisdom and topographical knowledge of his companion, who appeared in the row that besieged the window of the ticket office. "Two for Belle Ewart," he demanded, when his turn came.

"Trains don't run to Belle Ewart now; you had better take Lefroy, the nearest point."

"All right; two for Lefroy."

The ticket agent looked at the attire of the speaker, and was about to produce the cardboard slips, then hesitated as he glanced at the straps and the top of the black erection on Wilkinson's shoulders, and enquired, "Second [Pg 10]class, eh?" The dominie was angry, his face crimsoned, his hand shook with indignation. Being a moral man, he would not use bad language, but he roared in his most stentorian academic tone, a tone which appalled the young agent with rapid visions of unfortunate school days, "Second Tom-cats! Does the company put you there to insult gentlemen?" It was the agent's turn to redden, and then to apologize, as he mildly laid the

tickets down, without the usual slap, and fumbled over their money. The feminine giggling redoubled, and Coristine, who had regained his equilibrium, met his friend with a hearty laugh, and the loud greeting, "O Lord, Wilks, didn't I tell you the fools would be taking us for bagmen?" But Wilkinson's irritation was deep, and he marched to the incoming train, ejaculating, "Fool, idiot, puppy; I shall report him for incivility, according to the printed invitation of the company. Second! ach! I was never so insulted in my life."

There was room enough inside the car to give the travellers a double seat, half for themselves and the other for their knapsacks. These impedimenta being removed the occupants of the carriage became aware that they were in the company of two good-looking men, of refined features, and in plain but gentlemanly attire. The lady passengers glanced at them, from time to time, with approbation not unmingled with amusement, but no responsive glance came from the bachelors. Wilkinson had opened his knapsack, and had taken out his pocket Wordsworth, the true poet, he said, for an excursion. Coristine had a volume of Browning in his kit, but left it there, and went into the smoking-car for an after breakfast whiff. The car had been swept out that morning by the joint efforts of a brakesman and the newsagent, so that it was less hideously repulsive than at a later stage in the day, when tobacco juice, orange peel, and scraps of newspapers made it unfit for a decent pig. The lawyer took out his plug, more easily carried than cut tobacco, and whittled it down with his knife to fill his handsome Turk's head meerschaum. When all was ready, he discovered, to his infinite disgust, that he had no matches nor pipe-lights of any description. The news agent, Frank, a well-known character on the road, supplied him with a box of Eddy's [Pg 11]manufacture, for which he declined to receive payment. However, he pressed his wares upon the grateful Coristine, recommending warmly the Samantha books and Frank Stockton's stories. "Are there any women in them?" asked the smoker. "Full of them," replied Frank; "Why, Samantha is a woman." "Take them away, and bring me something different." The news agent returned with a volume made up of cartoons and other illustrations from *Puck*, and soon the Irishman was shaking his sides over the adventures of Brudder Sunrise Waterbury and similar fictitious characters. So absorbed was he in this trivial literature that

he failed to notice the entrance of an old man, respectably dressed who took a seat on the opposite side of the aisle, and was preparing to smoke his three inches of clay. He was aroused by the salutation and request:—

"Good marnin', Sor, an' moight Oi be affther thrubblin' yeez for a loight to my poipe?"

"Certainly, with pleasure; glad to be of any use to a fellow countryman," replied Coristine, looking up, and perceiving that his new acquaintance, though old and stooped, had a soldierly air. "You have been in service?" he continued.

"Troth I have, puff, puff, now she's goin' aisy. Oi was in the Furren Laygion in South Ameriky, an' my cornel was the foinest man you iver see. It was Frinch he was by his anshesters, an' his name it was Jewplessy. Wan toime we was foightin' wid the Spanyerds an' the poor deluded haythen Injuns, when a shpint bullet rickyshayed an' jumped into my mouth, knockin' out the toot' ye'll percaive is missin' here. Will, now, the cornel he was lookin' at me, an', fwhen Oi shput out the bullet and the broken toot' on the ground, he roides up to me, and says, says he, 'It's a brave bhoy, yeez are, Moikle Terry, an' here's a' suverin to get a new toot' put in whin the war is over, says he. Oh, that suverin wint to kape company wid a lot more that Oi'd be proud to see the face av in my owld age. But, sorra a toot' did the dintist put in for me, for fwhere wud the nate hole for the poipe have been thin, till me that, now?"

Mr. Coristine failed to answer this conundrum, but continued the conversation with the old soldier. He [Pg 12]learnt that Michael had accompanied his colonel to Canada, and, after serving him faithfully for many years, had wept over his grave. One of the old man's sons was a sergeant in the Royal Artillery, and his daughter was married to a Scotch farmer named Carruthers, up in the County of Grey.

"She was a good gyurl, as nate an' swate as a picter, whin she lift the cornel's lady's sarvice, an' wint an' tuk up wid Carruthers, a foine man an' a sponisible, not a bit loike the common Scotch. Carruthers and her, they axed me wud Oi go an' pay thim a visit, an' say to the comfort av her young lady on the way."

"What young lady?" asked Coristine, and immediately repented the question.

"Miss Jewplessy, to be sure, the cornel's darter, and an illigant wan she is, av she has to make her livin' by the wroitin'."

At this juncture, the lawyer, with lively satisfaction, hailed the arrival of Frank, who came straight towards him.

"Are you Mr. Coristine, the lawyer?" he half whispered. "Yes; that's my name," his victim replied, thinking that Wilkinson had sent him a message.

"Well, there's a lady in the rear car wanted to know, and I said I'd find out."

"Fwhat's that you'll be sayin' av a lady in the rare car, my lad?" questioned the old soldier, who had overheard part of the conversation.

"It's the tall girl in the travelling duster and the blue ribbons that wants to know if Mr. Coristine is here."

"Fwhat? my own dare young mishtriss, Miss Ceshile Jewplessy; shure it's her that do have the blue ribbins, an' the dushter. Do yeez know that swate young crathur, Sor?"

"I do not," replied Coristine abruptly, and added, *sotto voce*, "thank goodness!" Then he relit his pipe, and buried his head in the Puck book, from the contemplation of which the Irish veteran was too polite to seek to withdraw his attention. In a few minutes, the door opened and closed with a slam, and Wilkinson, pale and trembling, stood before him.

"Eugene, my dear friend," he stammered, "I'll never forgive myself for leading you and me into a trap, a con[Pg 13]founded, diabolical, deep-laid trap, sir, a gin, a snare, a woman's wile. Let us get off anywhere, at Aurora, Newmarket, Holland Landing, Scanlans, anywhere to escape these harpies."

"What's the matter, old man?" enquired Coristine, with a poor attempt at calmness.

"Matter!" replied Wilkinson, "it's this matter, that they have found us out, and the girl with the cream coloured ribbons and crimson

wrapper has asked that villainous news-agent if my name is not Wilkinson, and if I don't teach in the Sacheverell Street School. The rascal says her name is Miss Marjorie Carmichael, the daughter of old Dr. Carmichael, that was member for Vaughan, and that her friend, the long girl with the blue ribbons, knows you. O, my dear friend, this is awful. Better be back in Toronto than shut up in a railway car with two unblushing women."

"Stay here," said Coristine, making way for his friend, "they'll never dare come into this car after us." Yet his eye followed the retreating form of the South American warrior with apprehension. What if he should bring his 'dare young mistress' and her friend into the atmosphere of stale tobacco after their lawful game? Wilkinson sat down despairingly and coughed. "I feel very like the least little nip," he said faintly, "but it's in my knapsack, and I will not enter that car of foul conspiracy again for all the knapsacks and flasks in the world."

Now, Coristine had smoked two big pipes, and felt that it was dry work, but loyalty to his friend made him braver than any personal necessity would have done. "It's sick you're looking, Farquhar, my dear," he said, "and it's no friend of your's I'd be, and leave you without comfort in such a time of trouble. Here's for the knapsack, and woe betide the man or woman that stops me." So up he rose, and strode out of the car, glowering fiercely at the second-class passengers and all the rest, till he reached the vacated seats, from which he silently, and in deep inward wrath, gathered up the creations of cardboard and patent cloth, and retreated, grinding his teeth as he heard the veteran call out behind him, "Would yeez moind comin' this way a bit, Mishter?" He paid no attention to that officious old man, but hurried back to [Pg 14]the smoking-car, where he extracted Wilkinson's flask from its flannel surroundings, removed the metal cup, poured out a stiff horn, and diluted it at the filter. "Take this, old man," he said sternly, pressing it to the lips of the sufferer, "it'll set you up like a new pin." So the schoolmaster drank and was comforted, and Coristine took a nip also, and they felt better, and laughed and joked, and said simultaneously, "It's really too absurd about these girls, ha, ha!"

Apprehension made the time seem long to the travellers, who gazed out of the windows upon a fine agricultural country, with rolling fields of grain, well-kept orchards and substantial houses and barns. They admired the church on the hill at Holland Landing, and the schoolmaster told his friend of a big anchor that had got stuck fast there on its way to the Georgian Bay in 1812. "I bet you the sailors wouldn't have left it behind if it had been an anchor of Hollands," said Coristine, whereupon Wilkinson remarked that his puns were intolerable. At Bradford the track crossed the Holland River, hardly flowing between its flat, marshy banks towards Lake Simcoe. "This," said the schoolmaster, "is early Tennysonian scenery, a Canadian edition of the fens of Lincolnshire," but he regretted uttering the words when the lawyer agreed with him that it was an of-fens-ive looking scene. But Lake Simcoe began to show up in the distance to the right, and soon the gentlemanly conductor took their tickets. "Leefroy," shouted the brakesman. They gathered up their knapsacks, dropped off the smoker, and sped inside the station, out of the windows of which they peered cautiously to see that no attempt at a pursuit was made by the ladies and their military protector. The train sped on its way northward, and feeling that, for a time, they were safe, the pedestrians faced each other with a deep-drawn sigh of relief. The station-master told them to walk back along the track till they met the old side-line that used to go to Belle Ewart. So they helped each other to strap on their knapsacks, and virtually began their pedestrian tour. The station-master would have liked to detain them for explanations, but they were unwilling to expose themselves to further misunderstanding. Walking on a railway track is never very pleasant [Pg 15]exercise, but this old Belle Ewart track was an abomination of sand and broken rails and irregular sleepers. Coristine tried to step in time over the rotting cedar and hemlock ties, but, at the seventh step, stumbled and slid down the gravel bank of the road-bed. "Where did the seven sleepers do their sleeping, Wilks?" he enquired. "At Ephesus," was the curt reply. "Well, if they didn't efface us both, they nearly did for one of us." "Coristine, if you are going to talk in that childish way, we had better take opposite ends of the track; there are limits, sir."

"That's just what's troubling me; there are far too many limits. If this is what you call pedestrianizing, I say, give me a good sidewalk

or the loan of an uneven pair of legs. It's dislocation of the hip or inflammatory rheumatism of the knee-joint I'll be getting with this hop and carry one navigation." Wilkinson plodded on in dignified silence, till the sawmills of the deserted village came in sight, and, beyond it, the blue green waters of Lake Simcoe. "Now," he said, "we shall take to the water." "What?" enquired Coristine, "on our knapsacks?" to which his companion answered, "No, on the excellent steamer *Emily May*."

There was no excellent steamer *Emily May*; there had not been for a long time; it was a memory of the past. The railway had ruined navigation. What was to be done? It would never do to retrace their steps over the railroad ties, and the roads about Belle Ewart led nowhere, while to track it along the hot lake shore was not to be thought of. Wilkinson's plans had broken down; so Coristine left him at the village hostelry, and sallied forth on exploration bent. In the course of his wanderings he came to a lumber wharf, alongside which lay an ancient schooner.

"Schooner ahoy!" he shouted, when a shock-headed man of uncertain middle age poked his head up through a hatchway, and answered: "Ahoy yourself, and see how you like it." This was discouraging, but not to a limb of the law. Coristine half removed his wide awake, and said: "I have the pleasure of addressing the captain of the ship *Susan Thomas*," the name he had seen painted in gold letters on the stern.

[Pg 16]"Not adzackly," replied the shock headed mariner, much mollified; "he's my mate, and he'll be along as soon as he's made up his bundle. I'm waitin' for him to sail this yere schooner."

"Where is the *Susan Thomas* bound for?"

"For Kempenfeldt Bay, leastways Barrie."

"Could you take a couple of passengers, willing to pay properly for their passage?"

"Dassent; it's agin the law; not but what I'd like to have yer, fer its lonesome, times. Here comes the old man hisself; try him."

A stout grizzled man of between fifty and sixty came walking along the wharf, with his bundle over his shoulder, and Coristine

tried him. The Captain was a man of few words, so, when the situation was explained, he remarked: "Law don't allow freight boats to take money off passengers, but law don't say how many hands I have to have, nor what I'm to pay 'em or not to pay 'em. If you and your friend want to ship for the trip to Barrie, you'd better hurry up, for we're going to start right away."

Coristine was filled with the wildest enthusiasm. He dashed back to the hotel, the bar of which was covered with maps and old guide-books, partly the property of Wilkinson, partly of mine host, who was lazily helping him to lay out a route. "Hurry, hurry!" cried the excited lawyer, as he swept the maps into his friend's open knapsack. Then he yelled "hurroo!" and sang:—

For the ship, it is ready, and the wind is fair,  
And I am bound for the sea, Mary Ann.

Like a whirlwind he swept Wilkinson and the two knapsacks out of the hotel door, along the sawdust paths and on to the wharf just in time to see the first sail set. "What in the name of common sense is the meaning of this conduct?" asked the amazed schoolmaster as soon as he got his breath.

"Meaning! why, we're indentured, you and I, as apprentice mariners on board the good ship *Susan Thomas*, bound for Kempenfeldt Bay.

Brave Kempenfeldt is gone,  
His victories are o'er;  
And he and his eight hundred  
Shall plough the waves no more.

[Pg 17]But we'll plough them, Wilks, my boy. We'll splice the spanker boom, and port the helm to starboard, and ship the taffrail on to the lee scuppers of the after hatch, and dance hornpipes on the mizzen peak. Hulloo, captain, here's my mate, up to all sorts of sea larks; he can box the compass and do logarithm sums, and work