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THE

CANADIAN BROTHERS.

A Tale of the Western World.

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THE CANADIAN BROTHERS.

I NEED not tell you, my dear little friends, that there are other countries besides happy England, for of this of course you are well aware; but I dare say, many of you do not know how very different are the manners and customs of the people inhabiting them, and how much safer little boys and girls are in England than in many other distant lands; but I mean to tell you a story, to explain to you how it is that little children are safe any where. Perhaps some of you will say, they are safe because their parents take care of them; but, my dear little children, there is one whose care and love for you far exceeds that of your own kind parents, good and careful as they are of you, and he would take care of you, if they were removed, and would surely lead you into safe paths. I am sure you are well enough instructed to reply, "Yes, he is our Heavenly Father."

It was the same unchanging Friend who preserved the little boys of whom I am about to speak. Now, I take it for granted, that like all good sensible people you are fond of your own country, and prefer it to any other; and you may well be proud of your country, for it is the first in the world. Now we know that it is very wrong to cherish revenge, and that no duty is more frequently impressed upon us in Scripture, than that of forgiveness of injuries, but this is not known among those people with whom my story is connected. I have no doubt you admire boys who are brave and generous, and have a great dislike to those who are cowardly. I have observed, that boys who would cry if they were left in the dark, or at all roughly treated, were very fond of telling tales of their brothers and sisters, whenever an opportunity occurred, and never played without quarrelling: when such children read the tale of the brave, kind, Canadian brothers, they will, I hope, endeavour to imitate them, and those who are kind and affectionate themselves, will be pleased to find how very similar the conduct of good children is, who are separated by a vast expanse of sea.

[.] Many years ago, a gentleman emigrated from Kent

to Lower Canada, and having cleared (that is, cut down) all the trees in the tract of country in which he intended to settle, built himself a log house, or what we should call a wooden one, and made it very compact and commodious. Canada is beautifully intersected with lakes and rivers, and adorned with woods of a magnificent description. Mr. Smith, our Kentish emigrant, fixed his residence near the village of Compton, which is situated on the river of Coatacrots, a tributary of the Saint Francis, in the eastern township of Lower Canada.

Before I proceed further, I must tell you, that John and Sebastian Cabot discovered Canada in 1497: it was at that time inhabited by savages, whom we now call Canadian Indians. In consequence of others taking possession of their land, they conceived a violent hatred for them, and instead of joining them and learning their various arts of civilization, they withdrew principally into the woods, from whence they made incursions, and carried off, and cruelly put to death, any unfortunate person who came too near their territory.

It happened that Andrew and Robert Smith, who were twin brothers, when they were about 12 years

old, were tempted to wander much farther in the woods than they had ever done before. A very fine afternoon, and a desire to see a little of the country beyond the settlement, were the principal inducements. There were so many things to engage the little boys' attention, that they proceeded without noticing how late it was becoming. One of their amusements had been catching the beautiful little humming birds which are so plentiful in this country: they were diverted at the cunning of the little creatures, who, after they had been caught, pretended to be dead, but whilst the boys relaxed their hold to examine them, they would dart away like arrows.

It was not until they began to feel tired that they thought of returning home: they seated themselves on the stump of an old tree, planning some amusements for the morrow, with arms fondly clasped round each other's neck, when they were seized by two Indians. It was in vain that they struggled to escape, they were held fast by the two men, one of whom, by his fantastic dress, the boys knew to be a chief. His face was painted black and red, and his head was shaven, with the exception of a single lock which was allowed to

grow long: on this was fastened a plume of feathers of various colours, with a silver or ivory quill. The dress of his follower was not so distinguished: he wore the plume of feathers as well as his chief, but they were not of such gay colours. They cast looks of revenge and savage exultation at the boys, as they led them along to the place where they generally lived.

Andrew and Robert exchanged kind glances at one another; no reproachful look was visible on their faces, they were both alike in misfortune, and they loved and pitied each other. They knew too well the character of their captors to attempt to move them to compassion, but they did what was better, and for this knowledge they were indebted to the piety of their English parents: and they besought Him (with youthful simplicity and faith) who gave David strength to fight with Goliath, and Samson to grapple with the lion, to give them the courage they so much needed. This done, they felt happier; and when the savages halted for the night, they partook heartily of the provisions which the Indians drew from their pouch, where they generally keep a store in case of need.

Darkness was fast approaching, and the spirits of

the boys began to be depressed, as they saw every chance of escape cut off, by the precautions of the cunning Indians. That they did not sink altogether under such distressing circumstances, was owing to the pains which their fond mother had taken to impress upon their minds the fact, that there is no portion of this earth upon which God's eye is not fixed; and to those who believe in him, he is a very present help in time of trouble. These thoughts cheered them, and enabled them to lie down with composure.

Each Indian took a boy whom he closely pressed to his breast. The glare of the fire which they had kindled, cast a lurid and terrific light on all around, and especially upon the faces of the savages. As they slept, they gradually relaxed in their hold of the boys, and they were liberated from the grasp of the Indians, which very much resembled the hug of a bear.

The chief uttered a low sigh, and stretched out his arm to feel for his little captive, and finding him safe by his side, resigned himself to his heavy slumbers, and snored in a style worthy of an Indian chief.

It was well for the little twins that it was not the hunting season, for previous to that they accustom

themselves to frequent fasts, in order to promote dreams, in which they expect to be informed where the game lies. The consequence of this is, that their sleep is lighter, and they are more easily awakened; whereas profound and heavy sleep is never accompanied by dreams. This alteration in their slumbers is caused by their abstinence from food.

The poor boys knew that unless they could escape there was but one chance for their lives, and that was so very uncertain, that they dismissed it almost as soon as it arose in their minds. Andrew and Robert had heard it from the early settlers. The tale was this:—That one among the dark skinned race had befriended a pale face child, as they called him, in a moment of imminent danger, in the following manner:

“A timid child, allured by the splendid insects and birds, as well as by the luxuriance of the maple trees, which emit a delicious perfume, had wandered too far from home, like the twin brothers, and was carried away to an Indian hut, or wigwam, and placed before the assembled inmates, who, with fiendish malevolence, rejoiced in the various expressions of terror and despair

which passed over the countenance of the unhappy boy. The tomahawk was uplifted, and the various tortures which Indian ingenuity alone could invent, were preparing for him: he looked imploringly around for help, but in vain, until his eye rested upon the face of a very aged man. The size, the attitude of the boy,—and even the old chief fancied (but that was most likely a fancy, mercifully sent for the child's deliverance) his face resembled a child of his own, who, very many years before, had been carried off by the Indian's almost only disease—small pox.

“ This chief's face was like a star of hope to the distressed child ; he looked constantly and steadily at it, until he saw the features relax, and the old man stand upright in the midst. This was a signal for all to suspend their employments ; and the question arose to every lip, ‘ What does our chief and father command his children to do ? ’

“ ‘ To send back the pale faced child to his fire-house,’ replied the old man.

“ A slight murmur of dissatisfaction was heard proceeding from the lips of a few aged persons, which consisted of their usual expressive grunt—‘ ugh.’

“ ‘ Carry captive, put to death, and rejoice in the dying groans of your victim, but not until many snows has increased his growth, and hardened his frame.’

“ The boy was immediately carried back to the place from whence he had been stolen, and he quickly found his way back to his own happy home.”

This had happened many years before, and it was very unlikely that the old man still lived, and if he did, he might not belong to the tribe which were carrying them away.

During the time that I have been telling this tale, Andrew and Robert were busily employed. Having ascertained that the Indians were asleep, they looked cautiously around for means and ways of escape: they almost despaired of being able to seize the rifles which the chief had placed at the entrance of the only aperture through which they must pass.

“ But,” said Andrew, “ if we succeed in getting away, they will take us again, long before we have reached home, for they are so very cunning.”

“ We must not,” said Robert, “ hesitate about what we shall do; let us hide the guns and tomahawks, and then put out the fire, and we may by this

means escape in the darkness before the savages will awake."

They then cautiously crept to the warlike instruments, and succeeded in secreting them amongst the bushwood. They next bethought them how they should put out the fire without occasioning a noise.

A thought came across Robert's mind, that he might extinguish it by suddenly throwing over it a large thick mat which belonged to the savages. He whispered his plans to Andrew, and having taken hold of the mat they hastily threw it over the fire, and treading upon it quickly, the flames were extinguished and all was in total darkness.

The two brothers silently crept through the only opening to the place where the savages lay. They did not venture to speak, lest the sound of their voices should betray them; and the cracking of the branches under their feet seemed to them as the report of guns, so great was their alarm. All things seemed to favour them, and they soon found themselves at a considerable distance from the spot where they had left the savages.

To mark the place of their adventure, and to proceed homeward, was the next thing to be done; but the dis-

tance was great, and it was afternoon, on the following day, ere they reached the settlement. Who can describe the joy of their parents in receiving them from the very jaws of the grave: nor were the comforts of home ever more appreciated, than they were by Andrew and Robert, after their temporary captivity.

Times are altered since this incident occurred: the settlers' children may now enjoy in safety the bountiful gifts of nature, with which a beneficent Creator has pre-eminently distinguished this part of the world.

I am sure, my dear children, you will agree with me in thinking, that the brotherly affection of these twins is worthy to be imitated by both rich and poor boys. You may never have an opportunity of imitating their bravery, but you will have many opportunities of trying to be like them in their kindness to each other. Although, I trust, it will please a merciful Providence to shield you from such danger, you will, in your daily intercourse with your brothers and sisters, be able to prove yourself an affectionate friend, by soothing and sharing all their sorrows, and securing to yourself, by these means, an ample reward in their increased affection for you.

Robert and Andrew did not accuse each other of being the cause of the misfortune into which both had fallen; but, in the brief interval afforded them, comforted and consoled each other. And having proved that the pure faith which had descended to them from a far distant land, could inspire confidence in the most trying situation, they were able, also, to shew that they inherited, in no small degree, the bravery of their ancestors.

I fancy I hear some of my little readers saying—we should like to hear a little more of these people, and to know what sort of amusements Robert and Andrew had, and what the old man meant, (who saved the poor little boy's life,) when he spoke about snows.

Now, all these things I want to tell you; so I will begin by describing to you the various clever contrivances which the Indians have to serve instead of writing and printing, which are used among us: neither can they read, as I am sure you can, and yet there were many things as needful for them to remember as there is for you. So they make belts of beads or shells, which have all a different meaning, according to their colours and arrangements. These belts are taken great care of, and serve as the records of the nation; and they re-

fer to them (in case of necessity) as readily as we should do to any printed book.

I have told you in this story, that they painted their faces, and ornamented their single lock of hair. You would not like to copy them in this respect, I am sure, except it was in fun; but there is one particular in which all good children would be willing to imitate even a wild savage Indian, and that is in the remarkable respect they pay to all old people. It was to this excellent quality that the poor little boy owed his life: they obey a father implicitly, but a grandfather's decision is received with feelings of the greatest reverence, and there is no appeal from it. The old chief was a grandfather, therefore, when he commanded them to release the child, they obeyed with fidelity.

They do not reckon their time as we do ours—by days, and weeks, and years—but by winters or snows. They count by months, or rather by moons: the new moon is hailed with every appearance of joy; they have a worm moon, which they call so on account of its being the time in which the worms leave the bark of the trees, and woods, where they have sheltered themselves during the winter. They have also the moon of flowers,

the moon of corn, the cold moon, and the snow moon; but, the funniest thing of all is, when the moon does not appear above the horizon, they say the moon is dead.

They are very fond of dancing, in common with many other nations. They are also very curious in their choice of names: it appears that they acquire them by circumstances in after life.

My dear little children, you will be amused at the idea of men having such names as, "Two Guns," "Long-Horns," and "Steep Rock;" yet thus were some of those called, who visited London many years ago.

Bears are the worst enemies which the pale faced children have to contend with. Bears are very clumsy and strong; but they are also cowardly, for they never attack a man, except in cases of desperate hunger, but choose women and children, whom they appear to know are much weaker, and less able to defend themselves. This is very mean-spirited in master Bruin, who is a great thief, and notwithstanding all his care, he sometimes gets caught, and pays dearly for his dishonesty.

I will give you an account how clever the bear is

when he fights: he raises himself upon his hind legs, and fights in the manner of a cat, taking care to protect his head, which he knows is the only part where he can be hurt by blows; for the thick layers of fat protect his body from every thing but fire-arms. These layers are what bear's grease is produced from, for the growth of the hair.

In one respect, the American bear shows himself a refined animal; that is, in his appetite, in which he very nearly resembles the farmer: he can eat women and children, but greatly prefers pork.

It happened one night, in a settlement near St. Francis, that a bear was seized with a violent desire either to form a new acquaintance with a hog, or else to perpetuate an old one: be this as it may, he made the best of his way into the hog-sty. The farmer, being aroused by an unusual noise in that part of his farm, hastily left his bed, followed by his wife, and they were just in time to see the bear getting over the fence with a fine hog in his fore-paws, which he embraced most lovingly. The farmer killed the bear and saved his hog.

You all know, I dare say, that pork and green peas

are very nice together. Now, in the Canadian fields there is usually a great deal of maize grown, and when it is in a very soft state, it is boiled and eaten like peas, which it very much resembles. When it is in this state, the bear visits the fields very regularly, and having a good appetite, the depredations are soon visible. If Bruin is not a bright animal, he makes up for this disadvantage by his regular habits, for having once found a fence, suitable for his purpose of climbing, he never wastes time to look for another.

This is a lucky thing for the farmer, who is able, by this means, to lay a secure plan to rid himself of an enemy whose tastes are, unfortunately, so congenial to his own. The farmer, to save his corn, puts a loaded gun in such a position that the bear's motion in mounting the fence discharges it, the contents of which are lodged in the poor beast's body, so that his individual depredations cease.

The amusements of the Canadians are very numerous; but those of Robert and Andrew varied with every month which produced different beautiful insects, flowers, and birds. There is no country more rich in moths and butterflies than Canada.

I have told you of the cunning of the little humming bird, to feign death in order to escape. I will now tell of one which was so very particular in his appetite, that he quarrelled with Andrew because he gave the wrong food.

This little bird had become so very tame, that it would fly in and out of Mrs. Smith's sitting-room, and would perch on different things there. Mrs. Smith used to mix a little sugar and cream, to the consistence of syrup, and pour it into the tube of the trumpet honey-suckle; this it would eagerly suck up, and if not satisfied, would return in a few minutes for more. One day, Andrew, in the absence of his mother, filled the tube with honey, which so seriously offended the bird, that it was a long time before he visited them again.

There are now convenient sledges, lined with the skins of the different animals, which supply to the Canadians the use of the omnibus. In the summer, there is plenty for men, women, and children to do.

The maple tree, which I have spoken of before, is what the Canadians make their sugar from, by boring holes in the trunk of the tree, and putting vessels under

it, to catch the juice; they then boil it, and with a very little more trouble, it becomes very excellent sugar. This, you may imagine, employs a great number of persons, and Andrew and Robert Smith were among the busiest.

The seasons do not come on so gradually there as they do with us: the winter leaves them suddenly, and in a few days after the fields have been covered with snow, the grass and flowers make their appearance. Just before the winter commences, the inhabitants are obliged to kill all the animals which they require for the ensuing months, these immediately freeze hard, and will keep good for any length of time, by which means they save their food during these months.

The Canadians have another mode of preserving their meat, when they do not wish to have it frozen, that is by means of sugar, instead of salt; but these are not exactly the sort of sweetmeats my little friends would like. There is, however, no want of any good preserves: they quarter and string the apples, and hang them up in festoons from the kitchen ceilings, where they remain in complete preservation until they are required for use.

I have before told you that the winters in Canada are very severe. The ice is very thick, and when it becomes consolidated, the Canadians call it "The Pont," or bridge, and thus travel as securely and rapidly over it, as you would travel over London or Blackfriars Bridge in a cab. By this means the market people are enabled to dispose of their produce, and the severity of the cold affords at the same time both pleasure and profit. The winter is the season of social enjoyments, and a constant interchange of visits takes place between friends at a very great distance, by means of sledges, which, being lined with fur, afford every protection against the inclemency of the weather.

The universal custom of travelling at this season of the year in Canada, gives the country a very animated appearance. When the ice is not sufficiently even for the sledges to pass easily, they endeavour to remedy the defect by removing the inequalities, and if this plan do not succeed, they make a winding road (that is, they turn the road into another direction).

Quebec, my dear children, is the chief town, or capital, of Lower Canada. It presents nothing sufficiently remarkable to attract attention, the streets

being narrow, uneven, and very few of them paved. The houses are built of stone, but the roofs in former times were generally composed of boards. This plan being found very objectionable and dangerous in case of fire, they now substitute painted sheet iron or tin.

Canada is remarkable for its lakes, waterfalls, and woods: the latter are singular as beautiful; the trees grow to an immense height before the foliage appears, which forms, with its various hues and colours, a most magnificent canopy over the head.

Is it not surprising to you, my dear little friends, that when people are surrounded with every thing that can make life agreeable, they will persist in making themselves miserable. Such people might as well be blind, if they will not enjoy the beautiful scenes which an all-beneficent Creator has prepared for their enjoyment and appreciation; or be deaf, if they close their ears to the voices of joy and gladness which would lead them to similar delights.

I have heard of a very good boy, who was so happy and contented that he always wished the present season to continue, as being the most pleasant; yet he glided imperceptibly from one season to another with-

out any diminution of comfort. "Mother," said this little boy, one day in winter, "I should like it always to be winter, it is so very delightful. I have been sliding and making snow-balls, and jumping and skipping about; and in the evening we shall sit round a cheerful fire, while you tell us such pretty fairy tales." The change of seasons only brought change of pleasures to him: the long rambles, the nutting in the woods, the little excursions on the water, and many other innocent enjoyments, endeared the several seasons to this amiable child. The real secret of his happiness was, (although he did not know it,) that he was naturally of a cheerful contented disposition. Some people are always anticipating, but never enjoying; this is very foolish—for we are only sure of the present time, and can never command the future.

Now, my dear little friends, I think I have told enough of Canadian manners, and customs, as well as of the country, to convince you that people may be happy any where, if they will but try to be good; but without this, no place, no gratification or indulgence, can afford them real pleasure: they envy what others have, and when they obtain them, do not find that en-

joyment in them which they expected. The reason is, they are not happy in themselves.

If any of you, my dear children, should be troubled with this complaint, be quite sure that fresh amusements, or new toys, will not add to your comfort; but endeavouring to be content with such things as you have, and to make others happy, will always succeed in making yourselves doubly so.