The Road to Content Corners

BY C. COURTENAY SAVAGE.

It was still early in the morning of Dominion Day when Boyce Hewett turned his automobile from the main highway to the country road that led to Content Corners. The sun was hot and Boyce had taken off his coat and opened the soft collar of his shirt. He looked much younger than his thoughts, which were entirely of how cheaply he could buy and at what a large figure he might be able to sell.

It was all very familiar country to Hewett. He was born on a farm a mile away from Content Corners, lived there until after his mother's death, when he went to the city where his rise in the business world was almost spectacular.

He was figuring, as he drove along, that while the Board of Directors had made him no outright offer, he believed that they were thinking of asking him to represent them in Content Corners. Yesterday afternoon he had learned that the Directors had positively decided to build a branch of the railroad through to Content Corners; that was why he was hurrying to buy up as many land options as possible before the farmers and small-town folk became aware of the fortune that awaited them. Land in Content Corners was going to be valuable, especially when it was known that the sole purpose of the men who were to build the branch railroad, was to take advantage of the water power from the hills and build several manufacturing plants.

He had planned his campaign hastily but accurately, making mental note of the places on which he wanted options. The prime site of all was the four or five acres of land where the two small rivers met. He wished the land did not belong to Betty. Of course, Mrs. Sawtell, Betty's mother, had often said that the land was not worth its taxes but just the same, he could not convince himself that it was entirely fair to take advantage of Mrs. Sawtell and her daughter.

If he married Betty—well, that would be different. But was he going to marry her? She was very beautiful but a very simple little lady, after all. He was going to be so very rich, so very successful, that he wondered if he ought not to have a smart, up-to-date city bride? He shrugged his shoulders, shifted his thoughts and began to wonder if the Cummings' field would be suitable for exploitation. The field was on a straight line with the proposed railway and there were two swift streams that joined the river at that point. When he made the turn beyond the Cummings' farmhouse, he drew his car to the side of the road and jumped out.

The field was a large one. He climbed the rather dilapidated stone wall, looked about and started on a tour of exploration.

In the far corner of the field a group of boys were playing baseball. It may have been his business interests that led him in their direction or perhaps it was a sudden assertion of his own youth. He was only twenty-six, hardly out of the boy class himself. Certainly, one would never have imagined him to be a man of scheming business methods. He was of fair height, with a broad forehead and clear, clean eyes.

As he walked toward the boys there was a shout and his attention was directed to a ball, swiftly rolling along the ground near him. He picked up the ball and hurled it back. Once he had been a good player but now the ball fell short. To excuse his poor throw, he walked closer to the players. They were country boys of from fifteen to twenty and they were playing "sides."

"Hello, Boyce!" one of the older boys greeted him. "Want a game?"

He shrugged his shoulders, undecided. The game went on. It was mostly a case of throw and hit, not the fancy game of the high-priced ball park but rather the excitement of the back lot. Gradually the tingle of it crept into Hewett's blood. He barrowed a fielder's mitt and went to a base to enter the game. It was fun.

For an hour Boyce Hewett played ball. When he fanned the air and struck out, they laughed and so did he. When he hit with such force that his "side" scored three runs, they looked at him with pride and his heart swelled. When there was a dispute as to whether a ball had fallen fair or foul, he was called upon as deciding judge. It was quite plainly a foul, and this in spite of the fact that his decision was against his team.

"Yeah, see!" one of the boys called, "It *was* a foul! Don't you know that you can't get nothing by playing a skin game? Play fair! Cheating shows!"

The game went on. Hewett forgot business. His soft white shirt was crumpled and dirty. The crease was gone from his immaculate gray trousers. He did not even hesitate to slide in hopes of making a base. He was in the game and the game was his.

Presently a watch was consulted.

"Gee! I promised to be home at twelve sharp," said one of the older boys. "There's going to be big doings in town this afternoon and I'm going to be there."

"Yeah! Say, it's hot! I'm all wet."

"Let's go swimming—let's!"

A quarter of a mile away was a famous old swimming hole where the water was deep and clear, the thick hedge of trees and bushes shut out the rest of the world and the stream was wide enough for a short race.

"Sure! Come on—won't take but a few minutes—come on." The younger lads sped off, shrieking with joy. The older boys undecided, looked at Boyce, feeling instinctive deference to a guest.

The perspiration was rolling from his face and the back of his neck burned where the hot sun had reached the tender skin. He looked at the pool and grinned.

"Sure! Come on!" he said, and five minutes later they all splashed into the cool water.

There is no sensation on earth quite akin to throwing off the garments of civilization and drifting unhampered through water. It is freedom, cleanliness! Hewett lay on his back, floating, his eyes to the heavens. Presently, he raced half a dozen fellows the length of the swimming-hole and won. When he clambered up the bank toward his clothes, he was singing an unknown melody of content that originated in his heart.

When they were dressed, he offered a ride home to any who lived down toward the village. They climbed in happily and begged him to "let her out."

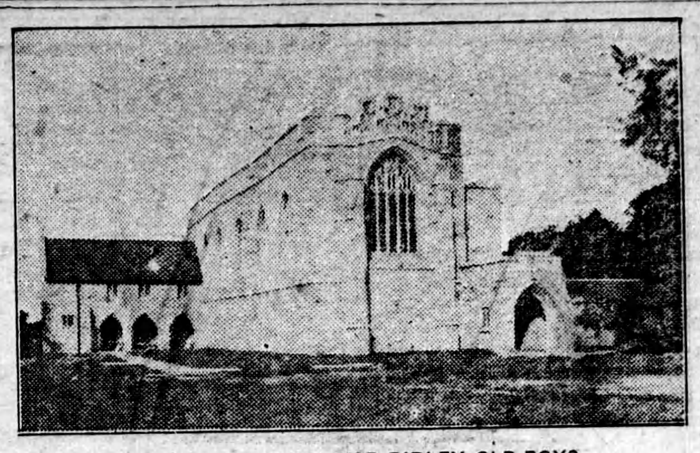
As he drove over the bridge from which was visible the point of land caused by the meeting of the two small streams, he glanced quickly in its direction. He meant to look over that land very carefully, to be sure it was as good a site as he had imagined. There was no time now, however, for he had telephoned early that morning to Betty and told her of his intended trip. She had made him promise to be their guest. He knew that all morning Mrs. Sawtell had been busy in the kitchen, just as his own mother would have been. Twelve was the universal noon meal hour for Content Corners and he wanted to be on time. He was hungry for what would come out of the kitchen—and other things.

Betty was in the rather spacious garden of the well-kept cottage, a pretty picture in her soft white dress. She greeted him cordially, with a wistful shyness that made him suddenly guilty that he should have stayed away so long and his letters been so few. Mrs. Sawtell offered him the frank affection that Betty had been too shy to give him. She had always liked Boyce. She had no misgivings in her heart that some day he and Betty would marry.

After dinner they all went to the village green, where there was to be singing and speeches. The speaker of the day was the local political leader, a rather forceful talker. Boyce listened half-heartedly. Within him, a battle was raging. This was such a big chance to make money; but was it square? A shout from the ball game seemed to echo to him—*Play fair!*

"Working for their fellow men," the speaker's phrase stuck in Boyce's mind. Well, after all, he would be doing a lot of good to the people of the town. However, he could not free himself of the forceful thought that while he was going to benefit them all, he would, at the same time, be taking advantage of them. He wished he had never come to Content Corners! The call for a discriminating decision was not easy to meet.

A cross fire of emotions went on in his mind. One moment he berated himself for a sentimental idiot, the next the call of his blood, honest, country blood, came to him and, echoing down the years, were the tenets of statesmanship that had made this great national holiday a possibility.



MEMORIAL CHAPEL FOR RIDLEY OLD BOYS

Ridley College Memorial Chapel, the gift of Ridley Old Boys, dedicated on Sunday, June 17, at St. Catharines. The handsome structure forms a striking addition to the college buildings and represents an outlay of $125,000 entirely contributed by former Ridley College students.

He glanced at Betty, sitting beside him. Would she smile so sweetly if she knew the truth?

"They did their share in the making of this nation." Boyce heard the speaker again. "Now it is *our* time. It may not seem that we can do a great deal, here in this little village but if we live our lives so that we reflect the true spirit of Canada, then we shall be doing our share. We can't all be famous but we can all be clean, upright men and women, working for the good of the community and so for the good of the whole country. We can maintain that most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man."

An honest man! Boyce started mentally, as the words hit him. Mentally, he hit back. He was honest! What he proposed to do was quite within the law. Within the law, yes—but playing fair? He thought of the baseball game of the morning and how the boys yelled for fair playing. The whole world seemed to be thinking of it—hurling it at him.

When the exercise were over, he walked silently home with Betty.

"How would you like to be rich?" he asked suddenly.

"I don't know," she considered. "There are lots of things nicer than a lot of money. It doesn't buy a really happy time nor health, nor—" she hesitated. "I guess it's more apt to get one into trouble," she added.

"Well, anyway," he said, "I've come about business. The railroad has decided to build a spur into Content Corners. It's coming right up the valley and they're going to make a hustling little town of this place."

"Really?"

"Sure as you live. And that piece of property where the two rivers meet, that—" he stopped.

A great revulsion of feeling swept through him. He saw!

"Betty," he said softly, "Betty, I've a confession to make. When I came here this morning, I was going to do a very rotten thing."

She looked up quickly, startled. "*You——?*"

"Yes. I'm sorry. I must tell you. Before any of you people knew of the new road to Content Corners, I was going to get long options on all the best land and then sell it to the railroad. I—I planned to make a lot of easy money. By more or less cheating my friends."

"You couldn't do that—you would not have done that if you had the chance!"

"I wonder! Well—I'm not going to do it. I'm going to do something else instead. I see straight now. I'm going to tell the folks how much their land will bring and not to sell it to the first land shark who reads the announcement of the new road."

"Let's tell Mother," Betty said suddenly. She could not put her feelings into words—Mother would understand everything.

"Yes, but first, dear, there is something I must tell *you*," and he drew her close to him.

"Betty, the Board of Directors will probably want me to represent the railroad interests here at the Corners. I'm going to try to be the type of man the speaker was talking about to-day—a good, honest, hard working citizen. I want them—and you—and—Mother to be proud of me. I know we've never really been engaged but, Betty, you know——"

"I know," she breathed softly, "I know!" and she might have said more if he had not kissed her.

Before Content Corners went to bed that night, the news of the coming of the railroad had spread. Men and women brushed away the tears at thought of boys who had gone away to work and who would be coming back. The young people swelled with the pride of opportunity. In their dreams they saw progress, comfort, luxury, coming to them on rails of steel. And everywhere the name of Boyce Hewett was mentioned with pride. It had been a great Dominion Day.

Late that night, Boyce Hewett, driving back to the city, looked out across the dusk and smiled. He felt mentally, morally, as he had felt physically in the water of the swimming-hole that afternoon — clean. Honor—that was the height he had gained, the honor for which Canadians died. Then, too, there was Betty—and Betty was Love! Honor and Love! what more could any man want? It had been a great Confederation Day.

Useful Peanut.

An Alabama experimenter with peanuts so far has found that 145 different food products and otherwise useful articles can be derived from them.

HAVING A JOB

"My task, it is hateful," you plaintively sob; you ought to be grateful that you have a job. You ought to be thankful; when payday arrives you'll have a tin bank full of X's and fives. "The wood I am sawing is too tough to burn; the wage I am drawing is half what I earn; the ax and the wedges my shoulders have lamed; no wonder man hedges when labor is named. I'd like to cease splitting and sawing the logs; I'd cut out my knitting and play with the dogs." I hear you complaining, you're weary of toil, of striving and straining and digging the soil. But when you deliver the honest old sweat, you ride in your flivver, and you're out of debt. Your wife has a mantel, a lid that is new, on payday your aunt'll be wearing one, too. Your kids are all flossy in worsted and silk, your brindled cow, Bossy, is furnishing milk. Your home is a haven where you may repose; why croak like a raven and catalogue woes? Just lose the employment that worries your heart, and all the enjoyment of life will depart. You ought to be grinning since you have a job; heave smiles that are winning and cut out the sob.

The AUTOMOBILE

"BE PREPARED," A GOOD SLOGAN FOR AUTOISTS.

The motorists who are going on tour this summer should consider the Boy Scouts' motto: "Be Prepared." It is a good idea to check up on items that may be needed. Have a special corner in the garage or closet in the house where various things can be collected. While the automobile of to-day is a pretty reliable vehicle, it should be remembered that a tour often takes one to out-of-the-way places where service stations are scarce and where the driver is more dependent on his own resources than usual, in case anything goes wrong with his machine.

The tourist who goes by auto fully prepared for the emergencies which may arise is not likely to have his vacation marred by unhappy experiences. A little engine trouble will cause no consternation in his mind. Bad weather will not delay his progress. In fact, there is nothing that can take the joy out of life as he proceeds calmly on his way.

SPEED ELIMINATES JOY.

The speed hound knows nothing about the pleasure of touring, and the fellow who is always worrying lest he may not arrive at a certain point at exactly a certain time might better have stayed at home, if it is pleasure he is seeking. Such a person spends so much time watching the clock on the dash that the beauties of nature laid out for him to see are entirely lost in the shuffle. To him the memory of the trip will be largely about so many meals and so many beds.

The man who is starting out for a motor trip with a new car, which has been tried out enough to be sure it is in condition, need only know he has with him the things most likely to be needed for an emergency. But if the car has been in service for several months or more, he ought to give it a thorough inspection before starting.

One of the things he has to attend to is the refilling of the gear cases. Both the transmission and differential cases should be drained of oil and washed out carefully with kerosene. At the same time the gears should be examined closely to see if they are in good shape. One may find a tooth or two clipped though not broken enough to make the condition known by sound. The material may have been too hard in the first place, so the break may not have been the fault of the driver. At any rate it should be replaced, for it is likely to give trouble at any time. When cleaned, the cases should be refilled with an ample amount of new lubricant, but not too much. If oversupplied it will work out and scatter over the car and probably get on the brake drums, causing them to slip.

The crank case of the engine should be drained and cleaned out with kerosene and fresh oil should be put in. If the oiling system is working properly, it is best to let it alone except to see that it is well filled with the proper quality of lubricant while on the road.

FILL THE GREASE CUP.

Of course, the grease cups should be filled and all points which are lubricated by oil from a squirt can should be taken care of. All the wheel bearing should be examined to determine their condition and to see that they are properly lubricated. If very dirty, they should be cleaned and fresh grease applied.

It is well to carry an extra gallon of engine oil in the car, also a small can of grease. Sometimes an accident occurs which causes a loss of the main supply of oil, making it impossible to drive even a mile without an extra supply. Likewise, if the gasoline tank is not provided with an emergency tank or chamber, an extra gallon of gas should be carried. Convenient emergency tanks for this purpose may be secured at any necessary store.

Both sets of brakes should be carefully examined to see that the lining is not worn too thin and that the different pins and clevises of the brake linkage are not worn so as to be weak and likely to give way in touring under extraordinary pressure. Often in touring one comes upon unexpected grades, some of them miles long, and the tourist should be prepared for prolonged and extraordinary service on the part of his brakes.

Where prolonged service is required it should be possible to use the two sets of brakes alternately. In this connection it is well to keep in mind that on long grades considerable breaking may be done by cutting off the ignition and allowing the car to turn over the engine in high or intermediate gear. Keeping the car down to a rather low speed in this manner will also be found to save burning up the brake lining.

It is of utmost importance to keep the brake drums free from oil. When the car is driven out into the country the crown of the road tilts the car over, so that if there is too much oil in the differential case it will work through the axle housing to the brake drum on the right side.

BEWARE OF CARBON.

If the engine shows a tendency to knock when going up hill it would be well to have the carbon removed before going on tour. It is disagreeable to have to take a hill on second speed that ought to be taken on high.

The car should be gone over systematically to be sure that all nuts are tight and properly supplied with cotter pins or lock workers. All parts should be carefully scrutinized to see that there are no cracked or badly worn parts that are likely to give out under the strain of touring.

The compression of this engine should be tested and if found to be weak in any cylinder the valves should be ground in. Spark plugs should be made perfectly clean, magneto interruptor points should be cleaned and adjusted to gauge, high tension distributor cleaned out and battery tested. The commutators of the generator and starting motor should be examined and tuned up if badly scored.

In addition to the usual tools the tourist should take at least one set of electric bulbs for the car, a couple of extra spark plugs, one or two extra tires carried on the rims, a couple of extra inner tubes and patches of cement for tire troubles. Also include a fire extinguisher, tow rope, spool of annealed wire, a pair of side cutting pliers and a roll of tape. If the storage battery is depended upon entirely for ignition a set of dry cells should be carried so that in case of entire failure of the storage battery ignition and lights may be had for a short time even though the engine has to be cranked by hand.

His Services Needed.

Wiffie (listlessly) — "Time mends everything."

Hubby—"I wish you'd hunt him up and get him to go to work on these socks!"

Stamp.

Behold the postage stamp, my son;
Consider its real worth;
Though modest it can make its way
To any place on earth.

Just bear the postage stamp in mind;
'Twill help you turn the trick;
You, too, can win to any goal,
If you will only stick.

—Edgar Daniel Kramer.

Enormous Siberia.

In Siberia is comprised one-ninth of all the land surface of the globe. The United States, Great Britain and all Europe, except Russia, could be put into Siberia, with a big corner to spare.

Rooks Live to be 700.

Classical writers tell us of ravens which lived for 240 years. But even these birds may be said to have died young when compared with the 700-year-old rooks which Pliny mentions in his writings.

Buoyant Stuff.

"He talks and talks, but never works—how does he keep afloat?"

"Hot air."

IN RABBITBORO