

**GAFF LINKUM, A
TALE OF
TALBOTVILLE**

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Gaff Linkum, a tale of Talbotville by Archie P. McKishnie

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ARCHIE P. MCKISHNIE

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TALE OF
TALBOTVILLE**

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GAFF LINKUM

A Tale of Talbotville

BY

Archibald

ARCHIE P. McKISHNIE



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TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1907

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Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand nine hundred and seven, by ANGELO P. MCKISLICK, at the Department of Agriculture.

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GAFF LINKUM.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEARCH PARTY.

JACEY CREATION, Esquire, Postmaster of the village of Talbotville, laid aside the pile of letters he was assorting, and turned to answer deaf Simon Diggs' question for the fifth time.

Putting his face as close to the pigeon-hole as its framework would allow, he shouted:

"They're organizing a search-party for those boys. They're lost."

"Hey!" cried Mr. Diggs. "What's that you say? Who's lost?"

He kept his ear strained at attention, but an answer was not forthcoming. Jacey Creation, Esquire and Postmaster, was a busy man, a man of importance, and one much respected on account of the vast amount of knowledge he was thought to possess—thought to possess, because it had never been proven. But he had a dignified mien, a superiority of manner that carried weight with his townspeople. He never lost an argument; not in all his long career as Postmaster and dispenser of groceries had he been downed. He had a way more powerful than facts of besting

his man. It was a smile of commingled derision and superiority, with a dash of contempt in the corners. All argument was suspended when he smiled.

Had he not been under a slight obligation to Mr. Diggs, proprietor of the Commercial Hotel, it is doubtful if he would have descended from his dignity even so far as he had in order to enlighten the old man. As it was, he had done enough already to awaken a stir of wonderment among the villagers who happened to be present. He threw down a blue envelope and waved Mr. Diggs majestically aside.

"Nothing for you," he said to a small man with untrimmed beard and clothes smelling of tar and fish.

"I was expecting an epistle." The voice was high-pitched and wheezy.

"Nothing," said Mr. Creation shortly, waving him an invitation to fall back.

"I think it probable there is a paper."

"No paper."

"Perhaps it would be well to investigate a little further."

"Perhaps you had better come inside and show me how to do my business, Mr. Shipley."

The listeners laughed, and Mr. Shipley moved foolishly away. A long, bony man, sitting on a barrel and cutting tobacco off a twist of Canada Green, motioned Mr. Shipley over to his side.

"Corker, isn't he?" he remarked, looking admiringly toward the pigeon-hole. "He's got a sharp tongue, Jack."

Jack nodded, and reached out his hand for the twist.

"He's a very much overrated person," he responded,

"not well balanced, not well balanced, Benjamin—ahem!—all vulgarity—no refinement to speak of."

"You might have giv' him a setback when he opened up on you. You claim as you kin beat him in sarcasm, Jack?"

"Probably—probably I might have done so, Benjamin, but there are sometimes obstacles that debar us from working our dearest pleasures." Shipley cast a furtive glance toward the wicket. "The reason I did not retaliate is that I owe a bill in this store, and Mr. Creation will not be retaliated unto by a debtor."

"Well, he'll make you pay good interest on what you owe him, er my name's not Ben Sward."

"Probably, probably," rejoined Mr. Shipley, meekly, as he filled his pipe.

"Now, I deal with Dustband 'cross the way," said Sward. "He don't look right through you inter your pocket whenever you come in and happen to owe a little bill. He shakes hands with you and asks how's business."

"Dustband don't like me for some reason, Benjamin."

Sward chuckled.

"It's because you know so much, Jack; that's the reason. You're too much of a scholar fer him."

"I admit that, I admit that," responded Shipley, with conceited frankness; "but if I am well learned, am I proud? I ask you, Benjamin, can any man or woman in Talbotville say that John D. Shipley, fisherman on Lake Erie, is proud?"

"They kin not, Jack."

"Dustband says that I look like a piece of tarred