

CANADIAN FORESTS.

Through an Indian Hunting Ground.

An interesting account of experiences in the Canadian forests is given by a writer for the Empire Review under the title, "Canadian Voyageurs." In the course of it he writes as follows:

To those who know the smell of the balsam and the aroma of the twisted cedar, who have seen the infinite cliffs, the hollow canyons and the dashing cascades of the Canadian northland, the yearning for the woods is not one which passes understanding. The fever is still in the blood though the breed has changed. The coureurs de bois were the lost legion of the French regime, but they were empire builders, after their kind, who stayed not for forest or torrent, but passed north, west and south, to spread the Gallic lilies over half a continent. To-day the Canadian voyageur is the scout of another empire. Still resolutely he pierces the sub-Arctic wilderness, and paddles his birch bark into unknown waters. The rulers of the old regime set themselves against this woodland fever. To-day the government turns it to account by organizing exploring parties between Hudson Bay and the great lakes.

Expeditions of this kind are naturally through an Indian hunting ground; but in that broad district stretching from Labrador to the Lake of Woods, where once the populous Montagnais, Algonquins and Pottawatomies roamed, the tribes are few and far between. A century of commercial hunting and trapping has made the peltries scarce, and now the straggling natives are selling their birthright for a mess of pottage. The aborigines are surely passing with the game. Hunger and exposure bring consumption, and it is now rare to find an Indian whose lungs are sound.

AN INTERESTING TRIP.

It was about 5 o'clock on a June morning that our small fleet of canoes pushed off in the rain from the south shore of Lake Helen, and a paddle of three miles brought us to the Narrows; nine miles further up we came to Camp Alexander, which lies at the foot of two miles of rapids, the first chute on that magnificent waterway, which is also the finest trout stream in the world. Here, in a blinding rain storm, we pitched our tents, and, besides the discomfort of being wet, we were besieged that night by mosquitos. All next day, and the next we waded over the portage through mud, weighed down by loads ranging from one hundred to two hundred pounds, according as we were whites or Indians, tenderfeet or seasoned packmen. The man who has never had a packstrap across his forehead or staggered a mile or so under a hundred weight of pemmican will know but faintly the joy of a two-mile portage or the perspiration which attendeth it.

On the fourth day we had our canoes once more in the water, and an early start brought us to Salt Rock portage before noon. Islet portage was reached in due course, and for the night we camped at the south end of Pine portage. At the foot of these rapids were landed several five and six-pound speckled trout, which made a pleasant variation in our menu. The day following we forwarded our supplies across Pine portage, a distance of two miles. Passing around the foot of the White Chute we came to Little Flat Rock early in the afternoon, and, leaving the Nepigon river, crossed Little Black Sturgeon lake to the west, camping for the night on Flat Rock portage—the home of the original black fly.

At daybreak we made our way across the trail and had our first glimpse of Lake Nepigon, the largest body of water between Lake Superior and Hudson's Bay, measuring about forty miles long by as many broad. High, rocky shores rise abruptly from the dark, deep water, and forest fires have scorched its bleak headlines. Here the Hudson's Bay schooner Bella was waiting for us, and as soon as our supplies were on board she slipped out of the barren harbor.

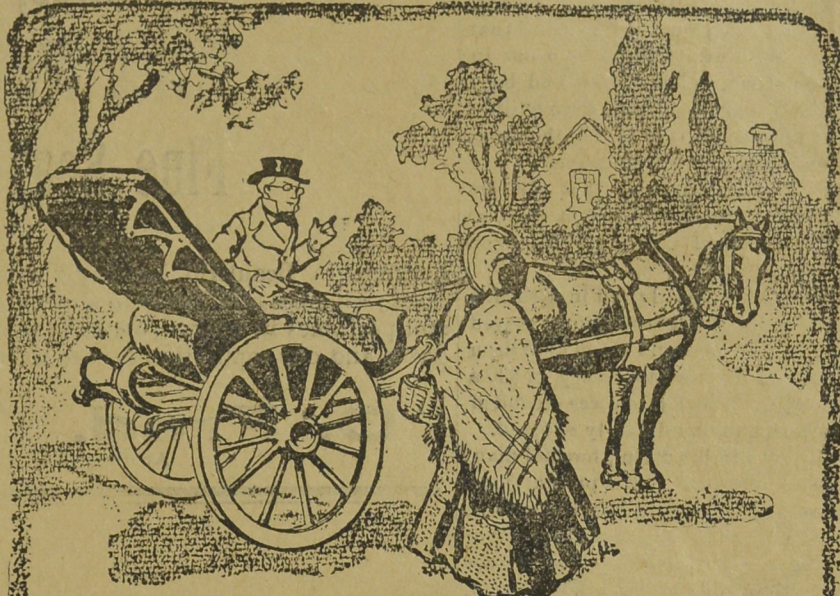
THE INDIAN AT HOME.

I must not give the impression of the Indians as a race idle, childish and incapable. In his own business he is as agile as a deer. He will carry his canoe through undergrowth that al-

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most balks you empty-handed. On one occasion we were making our way overland to a small lake. There was no trail to speak of, and the distance was five miles. We rested only once, and, although I was only burdened with a rifle, I had great trouble in keeping pace with the copperhead, who bore on his shoulders my fifty-pound canoe. Seeing that the savage triumphs over his environments through the sharpness of his wits, one half expects the ingenuity by which he secures his prey. His traps and deadfalls are marvels of crude engineering, but he does not rely on such implements exclusively. One day a partridge started up in front of us as we were crashing through the bush, and by some chance we were without a firearm. The bird looked down upon us foolishly, after the manner of partridges little suspecting the sequel. In about a minute an Indian had cut down a sapling, pulled forth a tenril from under the moss, and, executing a flank movement, he soon had the silly bird dangling at the end of his pole.

A WONDERFUL CHARACTER.

Our cook, Perrot, was a French Canadian, who knew the backwoods from the Ottawa to the Hudson's Bay, but before we reached home we had dragged him over a country he had never seen before. Perrot was also our interpreter. He knew all about Indians. Some said that his own mother was an Ojibway squaw, but this Perrot denied with a good Scotch oath, and as he wore a long, fair moustache and parted his hair in the middle, I believed him. As a linguist his repertory was great, including English, French, Ojibway, Cree, Chinook and the profane. The last named he had perfected in a long course of river driving on the Gatineau, where a sharp tongue is as useful as an ax, and a stark oath as fetching as a canthook. Our guides knew no English, but they told their yarns to Perrot with the most outrageous pow-wow. And afterwards he repeated them to us.

WITH THE VOYAGEURS.

To be with Perrot in the canoe was to be at ease. No matter how fierce was the rapid or how high the wave, his paddle seemed to throw oil upon it, and he brought you safely through the flood. A rushing river or a foaming cataract had no hidden terrors for him. He knew by the shade of the water and the curl of the wave how deep was the reef, and he would juggle his canoe through the rocky jaws of death. One slip, one false movement, and the tiny craft would be shattered on the rocks or swamped by the back eddy. A Canadian voyageur seldom has two chances, and on account of its element of constant danger the running of rapids is a most exciting sport. Imagine yourself bounding down a watery stairway, perhaps half a mile in length, swept around a bend by the milky cataract, the banks flying by like the panorama past the window of a train. Your pulses are galloping, but your eye is fastened on your bow man, whose every movement you must second. His paddle is now on the port, now on the starboard side; anon it is thrust out in front to guard against false channels. Over the last chute you bound like a toboggan in the ice, and slide at length into smooth water. The other canoes race down, taking exactly the same course, but running less risk now that you have picked out the safe waterway.

A landing is made at the foot of the rapids, since here is always the best fishing ground. The axes ring out for a while, and then in the little clearing the tents are pitched.

Meantime the cook has made a fire on the beach, and over it on a pole the kettle is hung. Tea, bread, pork and beans—with stewed prunes as the plat du jour—make a banquet in the woods, with hunger for a sauce piquante. One will eat anything, and lots of it, when the aromatic balsam gets in his lungs and the taffrail log shows thirty or forty miles a day. Then a good long smoke round the campfire to keep the flies at bay; a game of cards, more of Perrot's stories, or your own; and if you have run across a flock of wild duck during the day there will be a bowl of bouillon before you turn in for the night.

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7.45 a.m.—Mixed, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for Woodstock, Presque Isle, Edmundston, etc., via Gibson Branch. Leaves St. Marys 8.15 a.m.

9.15 a.m.—Mixed, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, for Woodstock, Presque Isle, Edmundston, etc., via Gibson Branch. Leave St. Marys 9.41 a.m.

9.45 a.m.—Express, week days, for Fredericton Junction, connecting with Express for St. John and points east. Palace sleeper Fredericton Junction to Halifax, N.S.

6.00 p.m.—Accommodation for Fredericton Junction, connecting with Short Line Express for Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and with the Pacific Express from Montreal for the west, Northwest and Pacific Coast, also connects for Bangor, Portland, Boston, etc., St. Stephen, Houlton and Woodstock. Palace sleeper from Fredericton Junction to Montreal. Pullman sleeper Fredericton Junction to Boston.

9.00 p.m.—Express, week days, for St. John and points east.

ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON

9.05 a.m.—From St. John and points east.

11.35 a.m.—Week days, from Boston, Montreal, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Woodstock and Houlton, etc.

6.20 p.m.—Monday, Wednesday and Friday from Woodstock and points north via Gibson Branch. Arrives at St. Marys 7.35 p.m.

8.00 p.m.—Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, from Woodstock and points north via Gibson Branch. Arrives St. Marys 7.35 p.m.

8.10 p.m.—Week days from St. John and east

10.40 p.m.—Week days from Boston, Portland, Bangor, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock and north.

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TRAINS WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN

No. 2 Express for Halifax and Campbellton..... 7.50
No. 134 Express for Quebec and Montreal..... 18.00
No. 26 Express for Point du Chene, Halifax and Pictou..... 12.15
No. 8 Express for Sussex..... 17.10
No. 4 Mixed for Point du Chene..... 13.10
No. 10 Express for Halifax and Sydney..... 23.25

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN

No. 9 Express from Halifax and Sydney 6.20
No. 7 Express from Sussex..... 9.00
No. 133 Express from Montreal and Quebec..... 13.50
No. 25 Express from Halifax and Pictou 17.40
No. 1 Express from Halifax..... 18.40
No. 81 Express from Moncton, (Saturday only)..... 24.35
No. 3 Mixed from Point du Chene..... 16.50

All trains are run by Atlantic Standard Time. Twenty-four o'clock is midnight.

Moncton, Oct. 10, 1902.