



WINNIPEG IN 1887.

to eat my lunch as I knew I must have walked some twelve miles from my camp and that night would overtake me before reaching it.

Snow commenced to fall. I had good cause for little delay in starting back. I had tramped some five miles when the wind commenced to blow in fitful gusts and the snow falling thickly the wind whirling it round about in gusts as if undecided as to the direction which it meant to blow, the branches of the trees breaking from its force and falling in my path.

It was now getting dark and I was obliged to look steadily to make sure that I had not lost my track, but as I proceeded I found it getting obliterated from the terrible storm raging, and I had a lake to cross, some two miles wide.

As the snow and drift would have completely covered over my snow shoe trail my chances of not getting lost on the lake were rather against me as my success in accomplishing same was to keep in a straight line across, and I would come off into our timber road.

I had confidence I could risk doing so and as confidence is strength, with unabated speed and a killing pace I took the lake which was a most perilous undertaking in such a terrible storm, and to make matters more difficult, it was intensely dark, not a star to be seen from the density of the snow drifting and falling very heavily. A good bush man is like a good swimmer, he must keep his senses and be cool and confident when he gets into such straits.

I was now getting over the lake but often blinded and almost smothered from the wind and snow I had to stop several times to get wind.

I was now about half way across the lake when the dismal howl of wolves came

on my ear, and from their number, giving tongue, I knew they were in pursuit of some game—moose or cariboo, as we had no deer so far north in the St. Maurice district. I felt relieved to know from old experience that they would stick to their game if I kept out of their sight.

Their howling seemed getting more distant and indicated that they were going further away but I could understand the deer were coming round the lake.

I had now suddenly brought up on the other side of the lake and as luck would have it I came within a couple of hundred yards of the timber road, I had now no fears of being lost, only some difficulty in keeping the right road to my shanty, still some three miles distant, as there were numerous branch roads leading in several directions which we had cut in getting out the timber.

I threw off my snow shoes, and now in the forest and more sheltered from the storm, which seemed to be raging worse than ever. I sat down to rest and regain my wind as I had crossed the lake at a killing pace of fully six miles an hour.

It being now intensely dark I had to stop often to examine the road so as to be able to keep the right one.

I was now within a mile of my camp and knew I was in the right road from a very large pine tree my men had cut down and hewed, and had placed it on skids, when I again heard the wolves. This time they seemed to be coming straight on to me, and knowing my safety was to keep out of their sight, my having lost my powder horn my gun was not loaded. I again doubled my pace to reach the camp if possible before they came in sight.

It is wonderful the instinct of the deer when pursued either by wolves or hounds;

how they dodge and turn to throw them off the scent.

I was now getting very near my camp and could hear the branches breaking when some half a dozen cariboo or reindeer came thundering across the road followed by a pack of wolves about two hundred yards behind them. In the darkness I could not count the number but from their howling there must have been ten or a dozen and was not I am satisfied more than a few yards from them.

I could hear all my men outside the shanty as they had all rushed out to see the sight, having heard the wolves approaching and were all feeling very anxious for me being out in such a storm and so late, it being 9 o'clock and I had been tramping since 7 a. m.

I felt very tired, but my bagging two such magnificent moose and my narrow escape from giving the wolves a supper, fully repaid me and all gave me more firmness to try and bag a reindeer or two, of which, numbers had their haunts at a lake some twenty miles from the camp, where I had been fishing through the ice for lunge, weighing from six pounds up to twenty.

I started next morning with four men and brought in the moose which you can bet we all enjoyed. Such splendid venison, fully two thousands pounds of choice meat.

CHARLES HUGHES.
Montreal 1892. Lumber Merchant.

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