

miles of snow to Edmonton, rather than remain and starve on the cold Mackenzie. We cooked the caribou, they ate it—all of it—and concluded to stay. But the next day we were as hungry as ever, though the bishop and the mission man made acknowledgement to their God for sparing our lives.

"The days dragged by. The hunters went out and came back empty-handed. Again the factor came to me, and said, 'Charley, go out and find something or we shall all perish,' and I went out. The snow lay so deep no living thing moved in the hushed forest, and not a track marked the white pall that blanketed the silent, sleeping world. The river froze to the bottom, maybe the fish were fast in the ice, or gone to sea. Anyhow, there was nothing to eat but overshoes and old moccasins.

"I had often heard the man of the mission say we all looked alike to the white man's God; that we had only to ask, and we would get what we asked for. Now, when all else had failed—my god and my gun—I remembered what the mission man of the English church had said of the white man's God, and I made up my mind to try him. I was glad of the memory of that white man and his good God, who loved the red man and knew no difference. I abused myself for having neglected him so long, when I had only to ask and have plenty. It was all so easy with the white man's God.

"And so, having concluded that this was the short way out of the bush, I turned my back on Wes-a-ka-chack, god of all good Crees, and returned to my cold, empty lodge. It was the middle of the afternoon when I arrived. I set a cup and a plate on my little table and prayed to the white man's God, relating and repeating what the mission man had said. Believing ever and doubting never, I implored the God of the white man to give me to eat.

"As often as I opened my eyes, I saw only the empty plate; yet I did not despair. To be sure, I had understood from the mission man that the prayers of believers would be answered at once, but I might be wrong. Maybe by and by; so I prayed on over the empty

dishes, with only the shudder of the lodge as it swayed with the breath of the giant, Winter, to break the killing silence that was like the hush of the grave.

"It had been almost two o'clock when I sat down. It was dusk when I got up, smashed the plate and kicked the table out of the tent. 'To Mitche with the mission man and his cruel God!' I cried, beating the table into splinters over the door-stone.

"By and by, when I grew calm, I fell upon my face on the frozen floor of my tent, and asked Wes-a-ka-chack, god of the Crees, to help me. I begged a thousand pardons, and promised never again to listen to the mission man, or to pray to his God. Long I lay there in the ashes of my camp-fire, until the day died and night came and curtained the world, praying, praying as I had never prayed before to Wes-a-ka-chack, god of the Crees. All through that long, long night I sat bowed above the flickering fire, waiting for the dawn, never doubting the god of my fathers. Once I slept and dreamed it was summer-time. I heard the song of the river, the flutter of wings, the crash of horns in the thick forest, and the clatter of feet on the beaten trail.

"I took a bit of red calico and tied it to my ramrod, and then I asked Wes-a-ka-chack to go with me, and help me to find, knowing he would fail me not. Out over the trackless waste I wandered, until the round red sun rose, and mocked me through the tops of the trees. On, on I trudged, my good gun ready, watching always for the food I felt I must find. 'O Wes-a-ka-chack,' I cried, sinking to my knees, 'send me to eat, or I shall surely die,' and when I rose to go, lo, there before me stood a reindeer staring into my face. A moment later he lay dead, and I lay drinking life, that flowed from his torn breast. My hands I washed in his hot blood and I gave thanks to Wes-a-ka-chack, for what had come. The god of my people was glad for my return, and I gave thanks then, and never again did I set face to that fair God who failed me when I so deserved success, and never since that day have I known hunger. Great is Wes-a-ka-chuck, god of the Crees."