

trolley cars, endless drays, vans, motor trucks and hurrying people. Here were vaudeville theatres, moving picture palaces, great hotels and a never ending collection of things never known to him.

So he had banked his sizeable roll obtained from the sale of his furs, selected the most expensive hotel, and, donning the best clothes money could buy, settled down to enjoy pleasures of a world that was as fascinating to him as tales of fairy-land to a child.

The great Lounge room of the newly erected grey granite hotel, "Chateau Macdonald" was his chiefest delight. Hours upon hours he sat in a big leather chair watching the passing crowd that thronged the lobby, Lounge and dining room, and listening to the droning voices of the Japanese page boys as they moved at intermittent intervals calling the name of some desired guest.

This pageant of, to him, strange life defiling an ever richly dressed parade, thrilled and held him in constant amaze. Even now as he sat here on this, the tenth evening of his stay, the life of the big hotel was as interesting as upon the first night he had witnessed it. The people were more numerous at the minute. It was six o'clock and, by ones and twos and little groups, men and women were coming from the lobby through the Lounge past him toward the dining room beyond for the evening meal.

But Haskins made no move to follow. The crowd was too great. Once, upon the first evening of his stay, he had essayed the dining room during the early minutes of the meal, and, the place being crowded, he had found himself seated in company with two gorgeously dressed women and a little wisp of a man, resplendent in evening dress.

Had he been alone, the realization of his mistakes of selection from all the puzzling array of "eatin' tools"—as he described to himself the many varied knives, forks and spoons spread before him—would not have particularly phased him. But, made conscious by his table companions' glances, their thinly veiled mirth, that he knew was born of watching him, he had been twice awkward.

After that incident had come caution,

which now held him waiting for the near emptying of the dining room.

With the large handedness, typical of wilderness dwellers when in a city, he had showered plentiful tips upon the cold, impassive and haughty appearing head waiter, and upon the one who served his table. He had done this intuitively, for the customs of hotels were strange to him. Certainly, the result had been most satisfactory. The head waiter had become smilingly cordial, pressing attentive. As for the regular waiter; he at first got upon the big northman's nerves, standing as he did so close, apparently watching every mouthful. That the man was but obeying a rule of the dining room, and wished only, if possible, to anticipate the guest's every need and so, the more quickly, supply it, Haskins did not grasp. "Little jumpin' jacketed critters," he dubbed them all.

Thus, after the second day, the dining room also held no terrors for him as long

as he sat alone at table. Even the problem of the menu card, with its strange wording which left him in doubt as to all but a few food particulars, he solved by calmly waving it away each time the waiter held it before him, remarking: "Just bring it all, doc."

And each time, marvelling afresh, the waiter—he was French, new to Edmonton and unused to archetypes which frontier cities so often turn up, even in the most select of places—would obey the order to the letter, bringing the vast assortment of foodstuffs that are part of the table d'hôte service of any great American hotel. But Joe Haskins' stomach, supplying six feet of brawny frame, was equal to everything brought forth by even this ordering of entire bill-of-fare.

If sometimes he left the olives to the last and ate them between dessert and demi-tasse, the meal was none the less a gustatorily satisfying one to him.

Save for himself the Lounge was now

deserted. Presently he glanced at his watch. It was seven o'clock. In another half an hour would be time enough to go in, he decided. He lit a cigar and, turning his chair about fell to staring out through the tall window. Across the paved promenade without, that ran to the edge of the river's high, steep sloping bank, his eyes passed on to the further view of winding yellow river, yet high with the flood waters of late northern Spring, and to the new green of the poplars and freshening spruce lining the jagged and broken walls of the gorge of the Saskatchewan. Something in the rugged grandeur of this distant vista of shaggy clay banks and trees and farther rolling plain, stretching green and warm under the still high sun, woke within him the old longing for the open places. Once again the spell of the northland, of which he had been so long a part, was upon him. A vague unrest stirred. And somehow all the city things that had entranced and enthralled him during the last ten days seemed suddenly very tawdry; a queer lonesomeness, almost an ache, gripped his heart. The cigar between his teeth went cold from inattention, but he did not notice. His eyes were fixed far away on the distant horizon, misty and blue and shimmering under the lengthening rays of the evening sun.

Only yesterday he had decided to temporarily desert the northland. He had three thousand dollars in the bank, and these last two days had been turning over in his mind various schemes of investing it, finally deciding to buy a pair of horses and go teaming, for certainly there seemed plenty of work in this new, bustling city, which had proved so fascinating.

Yet now, with his eyes upon the far horizon, the idea was suddenly distasteful. Still, this recent made decision might have triumphed had not a scrap of conversation caught his attention, causing him to listen interestedly.

Two men had just come from the dining room and dropped into chairs at his right.

"Yes," one of them was saying, "I had an offer to-day of six dollars and twenty-five cents a pound, if I'd guarantee to deliver by October five thousand pounds of



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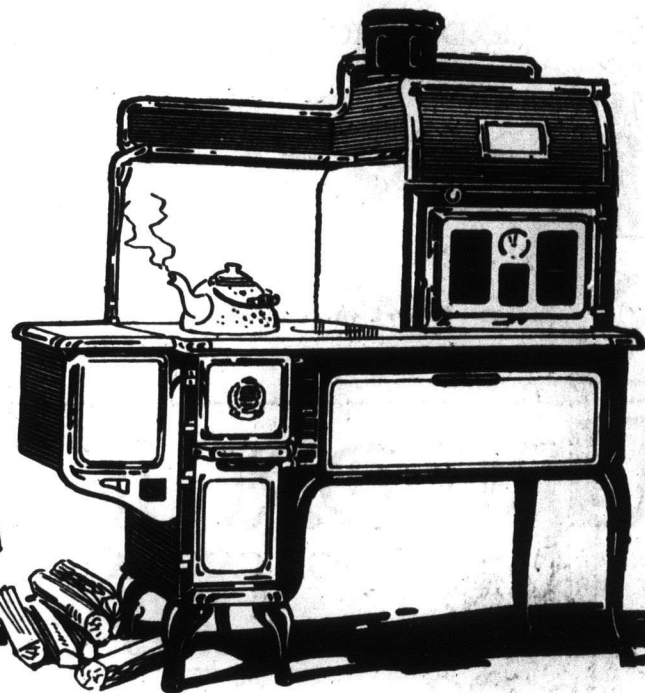
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