

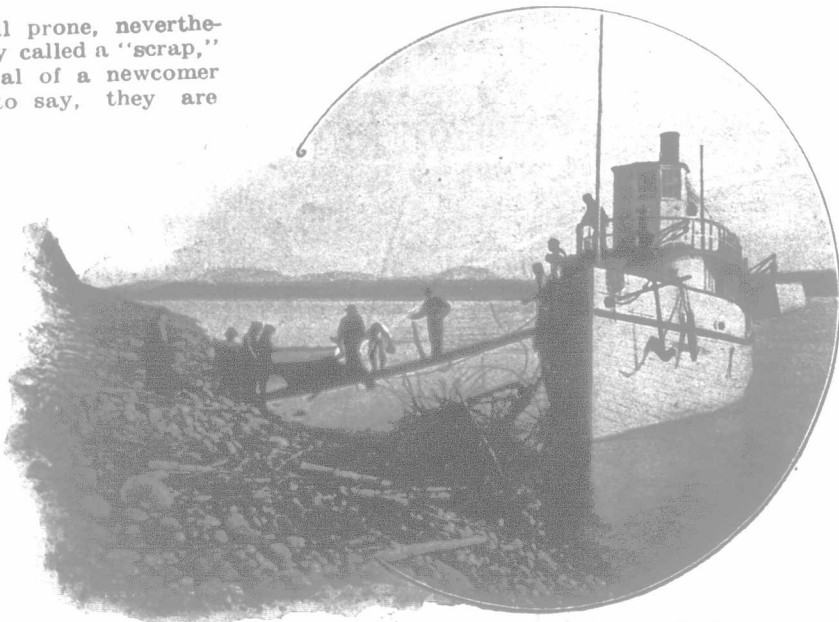
two sides apart. They are all prone, nevertheless, to enjoy what is commonly called a "scrap," and usually celebrate the arrival of a newcomer by a general fight. Strange to say, they are natural-born thieves. They will steal anything from a pair of boots to a side of bacon. We could never leave the boats for five minutes, not even if there was no dog in sight, for as sure as we did something would be missing. At Fort Smith, before we got things secure from their encroachments, they ate a side of bacon, ten pounds of cheese, two large sacks of oatmeal, and even got away with some flour. One day, when we were ready to launch a boat, but away to dinner, they licked the grease from the "ways" and ate up two pounds of putty. We have seen them stand in the water by the hour trying to catch a fish, and quite often they were successful.

From Fort Smith we took passage with another trader as far as Ft. Resolution, on Great Slave Lake. Here we saw the "Dog Rib" and "Yellow Knife" Indians coming in off the lake with their winter catch of fur. When they came within sight of the Fort, the first thing they did was to salute by firing off their rifles, keeping up quite a fusillade until they got quite close to shore. After they land and get up their skin lodges, their next move is to visit the trading post and get what is called their "arrival." It usually consists of a small quantity of such articles as flour, tea, raisins, sugar, etc., with probably tobacco and matches added. They may, however, have nothing to put them in, in which case they take the handkerchief off their head, and in the absence of that one, usually a variegated silk one is bought. Otherwise, a long, narrow, small cotton bag, made for the purpose, is secured. First, he may get a skin of flour, which means only a cupful; that is put in, and a piece of shaginnappa tied around. A skin of tea may follow, and another cord. The skin of raisins and one of sugar are put in together, and another tie. Then may come a skin of currants and a skin of rice. Finally, when the bag is full, it looks like an overgrown sausage.

The next day he returns, and talks about his fur and the price, the scarcity of game, his dogs, and how many miles they can travel in a day. In fact, there is little else you can talk to them about, and even that has to be done through an interpreter. Three or four days are taken up in this way, as if he were reluctant to part with his much-prized peltries. To him this is the one event of the year. Finally, the pack is brought in and thrown on the floor. The trader very deliberately opens and sorts the fur. He may have a few red fox, one cross fox, four or five beaver, one or two musk or a black bear or two, several rats, half a dozen marten, a fisher, and an otter or two; probably a white fox or a blue one, three or four skunks, and a wolverine or two.

After the sorting and counting is done, the trader hands the Indian two pieces of paper. On one is marked the value of the fur, and on the other the amount of his "gratuity." It seems a very absurd mode of trading. I give you so much for your furs, and so much for nothing. The "gratuity" is always traded out first.

Nothing is ever papered up. Such articles as brown paper and cord are unknown, so when the Indian comes to do his chief buying, which is usually some days after he has traded out his "gratuity," he and his squaw, with the interpreter, are the only ones admitted into the store. The door is locked. They walk around and look at everything, pointing out what they want, and indicating the quantity by so many "skins."



Moose Hunting: H. B. C. Steamer Wrigley, Mackenzie River.

Each article as it is chosen is thrown in a pile on the floor. After their "limit" is reached they gather all up in their arms and are let out. When their trading is done, they usually stop around a few days, and by that time most of the luxuries are eaten up. Then they live on fish, with the only variation, that when they don't have it fresh they have it dried.

We took the H. B. Co.'s steamer from here for the rest of the trip north. A one-hundred-mile "run" brought us to the Mackenzie River—an immense stream, one thousand miles long and from two to three miles wide. Unceasing vigi-



Esquimaux and their Kayaks.

lance is the price that has to be paid for its safe navigation. Channels that the steamer followed last year may be closed this year. Sand-bars suddenly appear where formerly the main channel ran. Just before entering the Mackenzie we spent a few hours at the English Church Mission at Hay River. There we saw a most beautiful and well-kept garden—growing everything in the flower and vegetable line.

Shortly after entering the Mackenzie River we passed Fort Providence, where I saw a fine crop of barley growing. Next we came to Fort Simpson, the chief post for the whole north. There we saw several things that surprised us considerably. The first, was to see an electric-light plant



Trading with the Esquimaux, Peel River.

used for lighting up the fort in the long days of winter. The next was to see all kinds of garden truck growing, and doing just as well as any you would see in Edmonton, even though this point is 1,200 miles further north, a fact which we think should dispel the idea that some people have, that even Edmonton is too far north for successful farming. Even as far as the Arctic circle, the missionaries and attaches of the H. B. Co. grow their own potatoes.

The banks of the Mackenzie for its entire length are densely wooded with spruce and willow. Some of the spruce would square eight inches for seventy-five feet. Of course there are valleys, miles in extent, where rank grass grows in abundance. Where the fire has destroyed the timber the royal golden-rod, fireweed and raspberries grow in profusion. But in the whole north, I venture to say, that to any lover of the marvellous in nature, there is no spot so interesting as the "Ramparts." Two great stretches of perpendicular sandstone rock, 180 to 300 feet high, bound the river on either side, thereby forcing the river into the channel of only one-third its usual width; yet there is no quickening of the current, which is explained by the fact that the river here is 360 feet deep. Half way down this rocky gorge the river bends almost at right angles, which gave me the impression as we floated down that we were up against the end of the river; nothing to be seen but an immense wall of rock surrounding a pool of water. From there the snow-capped peaks of the Rockies can be seen very distinctly. After leaving the "Ramparts" we only had to make a run of twenty miles before reaching Fort Good Hope, which is virtually on the Arctic circle. All this time the days were growing steadily longer and longer, until they become as one—for almost the whole journey down the Mackenzie the night was so bright that we could not see the stars.

A 250-mile run inside the Arctic circle brought us to the delta of the Mackenzie. The river at this point is eight miles wide, and it looks as if the solid stream at a given line had agreed to break itself up into innumerable channels and islands. We here left the Mackenzie and went up the Peel River forty miles to Fort McPherson, arriving there at one o'clock one night. Although cloudy, the people at the Fort saw us coming, and had their flag up. Fort McPherson is like all other ports, built on a high bank with a flag-pole in front. Everybody seemed to be wide awake. I found out afterwards that they slept in the daytime, and were up during what we called night. We were not long anchored until we saw what we came to see—the Esquimaux in their "kayak." Three of them, in their little skin boats (kayaks), came to see us, their double paddles flitting from side to side as they apparently skipped over the water. When they came aboard we all, of course, had to shake hands, a ceremony we would sooner have dispensed with, but for courtesy's sake we indulged in it. They were fine, greasy, jolly coons; all dressed in fur, trimmed with wolverine skin. They wore labrets (great stone buttons) in their lips by way of ornament, as shown in illustrations.

The Esquimaux are a perfectly uncivilized tribe, living on meat entirely. We saw them eating the raw tallow you find in the deer, and eating dried meat by putting one end in their mouth and cutting off the bite by a murderous-looking knife held in the other hand. The old men's teeth were all worn down to the gums in consequence of so much meat diet.

At Fort McPherson, though 2,000 miles north of Edmonton, we stood in grass four feet high, and pulled wild rhubarb in blossom on July 14th. We also saw spruce trees eight inches in diameter growing along Peel River, as far north as the Arctic coast, and the night we left the "Midnight Sun" appeared to view.

[NOTE.—The photos used in illustrating the above article were taken by the author, Mr. Mathers, and are copyrighted.—Editor.]

Anecdote of Lord Beaconsfield.

An amusing and characteristic story is told of Lord Beaconsfield in the days when he was wooing Mrs. Lewis, to whom in later years of married life he was so touchingly devoted.

One day Mrs. Lewis, who was then living in retirement at her seat in Glamorganshire, saw a gentleman walking leisurely up the drive. "Jane," she exclaimed to an old servant, "I really believe that horrid man, Disraeli, is coming up the drive. Do, please, run to the door and say I'm not at home." Jane opened the door to the undesired caller, and gravely announced her message. "I know," Disraeli coolly answered, "but take my bag to a bedroom and prepare luncheon. I will wait until Mrs. Lewis is ready to come downstairs," which, of course, Mrs. Lewis felt compelled to do. "O dear, what can I do with such an obstinate, thick-kinned man?" the widow asked, despatching later in the day, when Disraeli showed no signs of leaving the siege. "Marry him, I suppose, madam?" was Jane's philosophic answer; and, as the world knows, the persistent wooer had triumphed in this as in most other things.



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