

and glowing fire-bed, and a sapling bent over the hottest part to hold a pendent kettle on its tip. The dogs will have needed disciplining long before this, and if the driver be like many of his kind, and works himself into a fury, he will not hesitate to seize one and send his teeth together through its hide after he has beaten it until he is tired. The point of order having thus been raised and carried, the shaggy, often handsome, animals will be minded to forget their private grudges and quarrels, and, seated on their haunches, with their intelligent faces toward the fire, will watch the cooking intently. The pocket knives or sheath knives of the men will be apt to be the only table implement in use at the meal. Canada had reached the possession of seigniorial mansions of great character before any other knife was brought to table, though the ladies used costly blades set in precious and beautiful handles. To-day the axe ranks the knife in the wilderness, but he who has a knife can make and furnish his own table—and his house also, for that matter.

Supper over, and a glass of grog having been put down, with water from the hole in the ice whence the liquid for the inevitable tea was gotten, the night's rest is begun. The method for this varies. As good men as ever walked have asked nothing more cozy than a snug warm trough in the snow and a blanket or a robe; but perhaps this traveller will call for a shake-down of balsam boughs, with all the furs out of the sled for his covering. If nicer yet, he may order a low hollow chamber of three sides of banked snow, and a superstructure of crotched sticks and cross-poles, with canvas thrown over it. Every man to his quality, of course, and that of the servant calls for simply a blanket. With that he sleeps as soundly as if he were Santa Claus and only stirred once a year. Then will fall upon what seems the whole world the mighty hush of the wilderness, broken only occasionally by the hoot of an owl, the cry of a wolf, the deep thug of the straining ice on the lake, or the snoring of the men and dogs. But if the earth seems asleep, not so the sky. The magic shuttle of the aurora borealis is oftentimes at work up over that North country, sending its shifting lights weaving across the firmament with a tremulous brilliancy and energy we in this country get but

pale hints of when we see the phenomenon at all. Flashing and palpitating incessantly, the rose-tinted waves and luminous white bars leap across the sky or dart up and down it in manner so fantastic and so forceful, even despite their shadowy thinness, that travellers have fancied themselves deaf to some seraphic sound that they believed such commotion must produce.

An incident of this typical journey I am describing would, at more than one season, be a meeting with some band of Indians going to a post with furs for barter. Though the bulk of these hunters fetch their quarry in the spring and early summer, some may come at any time. The procession may be only that of a family or of the two or more families that live together or as neighbors. The man, if there is but one group, is certain to be stalking ahead, carrying nothing but his gun. Then come the women, laden like pack-horses. They may have a sled packed with the furs and drawn by a dog or two, and an extra dog may bear a balanced load on his back, but the squaw is certain to have a spine-warping burden of meat and a battered kettle and a pappoose, and whatever personal property of any and every sort she and her liege lord own. Children who can walk have to do so, but it sometimes happens that a baby a year and a half or two years old is on her back, while a new-born infant, swaddled in blanket stuff, and bagged and tied like a Bologna sausage, surmounts the load on the sled. A more tatterdemalion outfit than a band of these pauperized savages form it would be difficult to imagine. On the plains they will have horses dragging travois, dogs with travois, women and children loaded with impedimenta, a colt or two running loose, the lordly men riding free, straggling curs a plenty, babies in arms, babies swaddled, and toddlers afoot, and the whole battalion presenting at its exposed points exhibits of torn blankets, raw meat, distorted pots and pans, tent, poles, and rusty traps, in all eloquently suggestive of an eviction in the slums of a great city.

I speak thus of these people not willingly, but out of the necessity of truth-telling. The Indian east of the Rocky Mountains is to me the subject of an admiration which is the stronger the more nearly I find him as he was in his prime.