

A YARN.

Well, I say! I want to know! What kind of country are we in, anyway?

To enter into the general question why a Yankee always wants to know,—of course it was a Yankee asked this question—is not the present purpose. This particular Yankee certainly had a right to know, and a good purpose in knowing. The particular part of country we were in was not very prepossessing certainly, as far as present appearances went. Our position was not an enviable one either. We were snow-bound—on a train, several miles from a station. There were seven of us. First, a knight of the road, one of that class of men you meet everywhere. A farmer who was on his way home from town made the second member of the party. The third was an architect, evidently with high ideals. The fourth a lumberman, a well-to-do business man, intelligent, and one who had seen a good deal of life. The fifth member was a lecturer. He had hours ago given up all thought of delivering his lecture on that special occasion. The Yankee made the sixth. He was of the down east type, a business man evidently. The seventh, as you will no doubt have guessed, was myself. Of him I shall say no more.

We were *not* seated in orthodox style in the smoking room of a Pullman. There were various reasons for this; chief and most important of which was that being on a local train there was none. On that account we were seated around the heater in an ordinary "first-class" Grand Trunk day coach. Inside we were comfortable enough. It was warm and light, but as I said, outside the conditions were far from cheerful. The wind was blowing wildly. The low humming vibration of the wires along the track made a dismal accompaniment for the spectre-like motions of the drifting snow. Above us towered the black outlines of a high hill, almost a mountain, rising so precipitously that the snow had no place to cling. Below was a dark forest of pine, which, blown upon by the wind added its melancholy song to that of the wires. Before or behind we could not see. There were no works but those of nature in sight. As far as appearances went there was no human habitation near.