

ROD AND GUN IN CANADA

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(Continued from the March issue.)

Hudson's Bay Post, Lake Abitibi, cannot be called a settlement. It consists of the house and store houses of the company, several log houses in a more or less state of dilapidation, and a Roman Catholic church. The Indians, who all go north hunting in the winter, return in the spring with their catch of furs; then the place is a large village of tents. They stay here all summer, living on what they have made in the winter, and when it is time to return north, usually the latter part of August, go into debt for their supply of provisions for the coming winter, to be paid for in furs when they return. This goes on from year to year, and apparently through the whole course of their existence. Some of them save a little, and are better off than their neighbors; but as a rule they are thriftless and improvident, and seem to have no object in life beyond the bare necessities of the hour. They are handicapped in the struggle for existence by the force of circumstances, which might be summed up in the simplicity of their nature, lack of education, want of ambition and the white man's greed. Perhaps they are filling the place which nature intended; and as the great civilizer, the railroad reaches out, game and animals, taken for their fur, their means of support, are driven northward, and with them the remnant of a race dying or losing its identity by absorption into the mass of society, higher or lower as it encroaches upon their hunting grounds.

The Indians here at present seem poor in everything except dogs—dogs of every color and mongrel breed that dogs can attain, always hungry, and the most rascally thieves in existence. It took one man his whole time to prevent them from stealing our provisions, and when we were at dinner we had dogs in front, dogs behind and dogs all round, so that it required constant vigilance on our part to get our legitimate share. They stole a can of pork and beans, and, I think, one of the can openers. I believe if a loaded shotgun were left around they would steal the cartridges out of it. There is no tax on dogs at Abitibi. The more dogs you have the better off you are. Their owners seem to regard them as part of the family, and with them enjoy their mode of life; but whether they are happy, pleased or discontented, their countenances give no sign. It may be easy to see "the mind's construction in the face" of an ordinary white man, but not in that of the North American aborigine, at least the Abitibi sample.

The women are very shy. If they see you coming they will seek the seclusion of their tents quickly. After you pass, if you turn around you will likely catch a glimpse of two or three heads for a moment that have been taking a sly look at you. Some of the tents are quite tidy, and the younger women nicely dressed, and even good looking; but these were exceptions. We managed to get a few pairs of moccasins and some