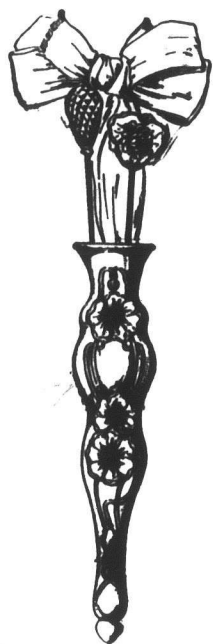


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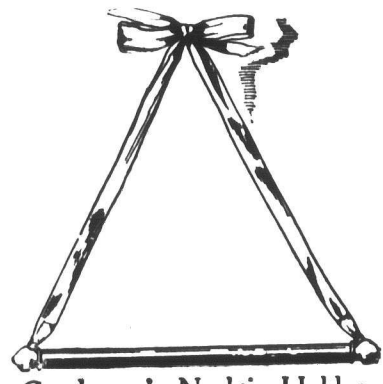
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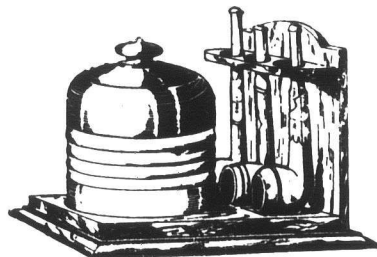
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ZINTO: An Episode of the Great Slave Lake.

Written Specially for the Western Home Monthly.

Zinto, a Couteaux Jaunes Indian, sat cross-legged before the burning logs in his lodge, smoking his pipe and gazing thoughtfully into the fire. Overhead, hung on poles lashed crosswise from door to back, were long black strips of deer meat, brown "depouilles" or back-fats, tongues, half-dried red-looking sides with the rib-bones taken out, long marrowfats, and over all, two heads, placed there to keep the brains from freezing, till such time as they might be used in the tanning of the deerhides to leather.

Zinto was contented, and he looked it. Bales of dried meat were piled around the back of his lodge, his dogs were in good trim to undertake the coming musk-ox hunt, he had warm clothes to wear, and enough tobacco to last him with care till the Christmas foregathering at the far-

a day less in the month of the big wind! I am ready to-morrow."

Gloona (the White Mouse) threw off her deerskin copote, and squatting down before the fire, reached for a half-laced snowshoe, and commenced weaving the "babiche" with deft fingers.

"Ateachili does not go," she said, without looking up from her work; "he has the sickness in his back, and cannot travel fast."

"Huh!" responded Zinto. "His back was well until he killed the six otter by the Big Lake; he is lazy now he has enough fur to trade for a little tobacco and tea. You join his mother's lodge while we are away."

Some two weeks later the camp was astir and busy. The shrill cries of the women from lodge to lodge, mingled with the wail of children and the yelping of



"HE TOILED ON WITH DOGGED PERSISTENCY."

away Hudson Bay fort. Perhaps the only thing that troubled him was the fact that he had no children, for the Couteaux Jaunes Indians believe that a bad devil possesses a childless lodge.

The flap-door was swung back, and a good-looking, sturdy girl entered, and flung down a net-work bag, made of fine "babiche" (or rawhide), and gaily trimmed with tassels of bright wool, proceeded to dust the snow off her moccasins, leather leggings and short skirt. From the bag she took three whitefish, and placed them on the cross-poles overhead, where the smoke was curling upwards in blue wreaths.

"It is far to go to the nets," she remarked, "and the deer are passing seldom," Silveethi says the musk-ox hunt starts when the moon is a week old."

"Watch!" granted Zinto. "To hunt a day sooner in the deer month is to hunt

dogs, the jingle of many sleigh-bells formed an under-current of sound, as the dogs shook themselves in their newly-donned harness, or fought with a rival team, to the confusion of traces and tie-strings. Farewells were exchanged in profusion—for an Indian of these tribes never goes away for even a few days without taking an elaborate good-bye of all his relations—and the party of eight dogsleights and twelve men wound their way across the lake hard by the camp, till they looked against the sky-line like a long black serpent on the white snow. Then the lodges were all struck, and the old men, the boys and the women, moved down to a fishing place ten miles away; to await the hunters' return.

Days, then weeks, passed away, and they began to look anxiously to the north for the returning hunters. Fish were scarce on the usual feeding grounds, and the nets and trout lines had to be set far

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