

THE TRADE OF THE TRAPPER

From "Canada."

Canada, the land of development and promise, to-day, is very far removed from what she was but two or three decades ago. Then but a few small settlements, there was no population to speak of except in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and the whole of the great West of to-day was the property of the Indian and half-breed trapper. Western Canada was then considered to be nothing more than a hunting-ground and a fur-bearing domain, and was ruled absolutely by the great fur trading companies—the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Fur Company. Although the day of the immense herds of buffalo is past, and the beaver has retreated before the settler into the remoter fastnesses of the Northland, the West still retains a large proportion of its old character, and is yet one of the finest game countries in the world.

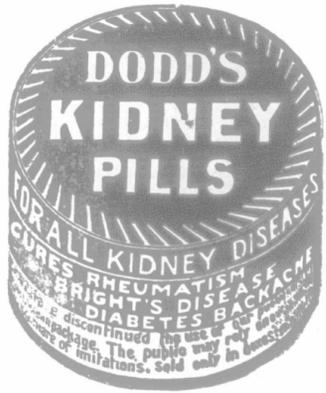
This is not only true of the unsettled and little known country north of Ontario, Manitoba, and the new provinces, but of the old settled East and the progressive West as well. In Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick in the East, where a few hours' journey from the railroad takes one into the hearts of forests which still abound with large and small fur-bearing animals, to Vancouver Island in the West, where the impenetrable timber and unexplored fastnesses are bull of bear, deer, congar, and other beasts, the country is still the home of countless wild animals, and the fur trade is still prosperous.

If Britain with its small area and its 40,000,000 inhabitants still preserves large tracts of heath and forest, it can readily be understood that Canada, with its vast territory and 6,000,000 people, must possess enormous tracts in which the animal life, if not entirely undisturbed, is still free and unspoiled. Only the more readily valuable portions of the Dominion are as yet densely settled; there are long stretches of little settled country in between.

The fur trade has, however, undergone a vast change from the days when it was in the hands of one or two large companies, and when voyageurs and hunters travelled great journeys to bring down the season's take of furs from the forts where it had been collected from the Indians. Now every little country store is a fur-collecting depot in the winter. In almost every village, in every province, one may daily see skins brought in for trade, from the few raccoon, marten, mink, and fox skins obtained by the farmers to the winter pack of pelts brought in by the Indians or the trappers who have gone further afield.

One of the sights that strikes me most in the winter in Canada is that of the magnificent musk ox robes used in the sleighs in the eastern cities. Even hired sleighs are draped with fur, while the turn-outs of the wealthier people are splendid with trailing long-haired robes of great beauty.

It is only a few years since the western prairies were white with the bones of the buffalo which had been so ruthlessly slaughtered for their skins, and the traveller in the Northwest cannot help being struck with the deeply-worn paths of trails which were made by the wanderings of these enormous herds, and which are still not only visible, but lead plainly and unmistakably to every spring and every



river ford. One has only to follow every little creek in the West to mark how every "narrow" was dammed by beaver, and to be struck with wonder at the countless numbers in which they must have inhabited the ponds and streams. Even yet there are myriads of the beaver's humble cousins—the muskrat—in the country. Thousands of these beautiful skins are collected in every village in the Northwest and Manitoba every winter. The prairies, denuded of their elk and buffalo, still support countless badgers, coyotes, red foxes, and the rare and more beautiful black and silver fox. The streams of the country provide a living for the soft-furred mink, and the woods are the home of black and brown and grizzly bear, the wolverine, and the fierce, slim-waisted, broad-footed lynx, while the cold winter turns the bold weasel into the beautiful white-furred ermine. Still the old fur trade is plied in the North. The life of a trapper, though pleasant for a short time, is extremely hard if carried on as a business and for a living. Starting in the fall, he must prepare his winter quarters far from civilization in a part of the country he has proved to be productive of game. Long lines of traps must be set in different directions and these lines must be visited every day to take the catch before it has been eaten by the hungry beasts of the forest. No light work is it to tram on snowshoe some twelve or fifteen miles out and the same home in all weathers, gathering the catch of the traps and carrying it all home to be thawed out and skinned in the evening.

"Father," said Tommy Bardell of the William Henry Harrison grammar school "you want to come next Saturday afternoon and see us play a game with the Oliver Wendell Holmes base ball team. We're going to do 'em up."

"Do you belong to a base ball team?" asked his father. "It is news to me."

"Do I? exclaimed Tommy proudly. "Well, I reckon! I am the shortstop of the Tornadoes."

"The Tornadoes! Who are they?" "That's the name of our school team."

"Humph! And you are going to play a game next Saturday, are you? Well, I'll go and see it."

The game took place according to announcement, and the Tornadoes were beaten by a score of 26 to 0.

"Tommy," said his father, overtaking him while he was on his way home, "what did you tell me was the name of your team?"

"The Tornadoes," answered the boy "but we're going to change it to something else. We ain't even a fog!"

"The ignorance of many persons touching the 'good old Anglo-Saxon' speech we hear so much of in the magazines and newspapers," says a member of the faculty of Princeton, "is most amusing at times. A member of the bar in Philadelphia, a man more remarkable for the vigor of his addresses to juries than for his learning, was not long ago commenting on the proceedings of the other party to a suit under trial."

"I do not know, what gloss," said he, "my learned friend may put upon this matter, but I will not mince my words. I denounce this thing in plain, downright Anglo-Saxon English as a nefarious and preposterous transaction of the most unprecedented kind."—Harper's Weekly.

Sammy, a little boy from the state of New York, was invited with about twenty others to a charity dinner given at the house of a lady in fashionable society. When the dinner was over the lady asked the little ones to sing or recite in turn.

All went well until it came to Sammy's turn, when he made no sign of starting until the lady said, "Come, Sammy let me hear you sing."

After a moment's pause the young guest answered, "I can't sing, lady."

"What?" said the lady. "You cannot sing? Then what can you do?"

"Well," said Sammy, "I ain't used ter singin', but I'll fight any of the other kids in the room!"—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

An Englishman was recently invited by a New Yorker to accompany him on a hunting trip on Long Island.

"Large or small game?" laconically asked the Briton, who has hunted in every quarter of the globe.

"You don't expect to find lions and tigers on Long Island, do you?" queried the New Yorker.

"Hardly," responded the Briton, with a laugh, "but I like a spice of danger in my hunting."

"If that's the case," answered the other with a grin, "I'm your man, all right. The last time I went out I shot my brother-in-law in the leg!"

A resident Magistrate living near Johannesburg, South Africa, owns a Goulay piano and is very proud of it. He writes: "The piano is in perfect order. It is standing our climate well and in tone and mechanism leaves nothing to be desired."

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