

as it has since become, I quite well remember the curious sensations with which this my first journey of the kind was commenced. It was mid-winter, the snow lay several inches thick upon the ground; the latest reports from up the river spoke of much ice about and below Fort Hope, so that I was by no means sorry to avail myself of the offer of Mr. Lewis, of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had accompanied the 'Plumper' to Langley as pilot, to be my companion. Mr. Yale had selected a good canoe and nine stout paddlers, four half-breeds and five Indians, and when I landed from the ship a few minutes before eleven they were waiting on the beach, dressed in their best blankets, with large streamers of bright red, blue and yellow ribbons, in which they delight so much, flying from their caps. Mr. Yale had previously harangued them, and presented them with these streamers by way of impressing them with the importance of the service in which they were engaged. Seating ourselves in the canoe as comfortably as we could, away we started, the frail bark flying over the smooth water, and the crew singing at the top of their wild, shrill voices, their particolored decorations streaming in the bitter winter wind.

The North American Indians, and, indeed, the Canadians as well, paddle much more steadily when they sing. They keep splendid time, and, by way of accompaniment, bring the handles of their paddles sharply against the gunwale of the canoe. In singing their custom is—and the greatest stickler for etiquette among us will find himself outdone by the Indian's respect for whatever habit or fashion may have dictated—for the steersman to sing, the crew taking up the chorus. Although I have frequently tried to induce one of the others to start a song, with the view of testing the strength of their social habit in this respect, I have never succeeded unless supported in my request by the steersman. This post of honor is usually conferred upon the senior of the party, unless the owner of the canoe happens to form one of the crew when he takes the seat by virtue of his interest in it. Next in position and importance to the steersman are the pair of paddles who sit immediately behind the passengers; then come the two forward hands, who have a great deal to do with the management of the canoe in keeping it clear of blocks of floating ice, or the snags which often appear suddenly under its bows, and preventing the current from spinning it