

THEY LIVE OBSCURE LIVES

Facts Regarding Hudson Bay Company's Agents.

Indians Their Only Associates for Many Months—Company Prefers Married Men.

From Monday and Tuesday's Daily.

You who complain of the loneliness of a suburban home, who chafe at the solitude of rural life, or die of ennui if left to your own society for an afternoon, what would you do if your lot were cast in the midst of a dense wilderness, where newspapers are unknown, and even the sight of a white man an event of years? Unbearable, you would say. Yet under conditions like these are white people born, spend their childhood, grow to manhood and womanhood, transact the business of life and die, and some of them never get even a sight of the wonders of what is to us a commonplace world. Nor are they unhappy, for uncloyed by the super-refined means by which we are accustomed to satisfy our cravings for amusement, they learn to live more within themselves and enjoy as fully their simple lives.

Because ladies must have furs, and commercial companies must have gold, the representatives of trading companies must live in the far reaches of the northern wilderness, and exchange what pleases the eye or appetite of the savage for what pleases the fancy of fashionable ladies, and collect from each a liberal margin of profit.

The Hudson Bay Company, who have a practical monopoly of the fur trade of Canada, look far into the future. Not only do they want capable representatives for today, but wish to insure a perpetuation of servants who have been educated to the business. Consequently when they sent a trader to take charge of a remote post, they prefer that he take a wife with him. In a few years, having severed all connections with the outside world, except for his semi-annual report to and instructions from his company at Winnipeg, he loses the thread of current events and forgets the great outside world of which he has ceased to be a part. His children, who have nothing to forget, adapt themselves more easily to conditions, and stories of city streets and railroads are as vague and fairy like to them as Mother Goose or Alice in Wonderland are to the child of our modern civilization.

It was at the trading post of Hudson's Hope on the Peace river that we met young Gardner. He was a young man of 25 years. His features and good English proclaimed him to be a white man, but his dress and habits were those of the Indian. He also spoke two or three Indian languages with the fluency of the tribesmen. His log house was fitted up comfortably. There were two rooms. One was the kitchen where George, his constant Indian companion, cooked his meals; the other was his parlor, sitting room and bed room. In the corner was a rude couch on which was a profusion of fur robes. Fur rugs decorated the floor of the room, and hanging on the wall with an assortment of fire arms, were the monster claws of a grizzly bear. He showed them with a good deal of pride and told how an Indian was marked for life before the ferocious beast was killed.

He told us the short story of his life while we sat on the robes of his couch. He was born at Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca, and his father was an old servant of the company. At this post he passed his boyhood and received an education at the mission. He hunted and fished with the Indian lads of his own age and assisted about the trading post. As soon as his age warranted he was transferred to Lesser Slave Lake post as clerk and here he lived his first romance and met with his first disappointment. He fell in love with a pretty half breed girl. It was all right as long as he confined his love making to moonlight walks; there was nothing said even when his growing pre-occupation showed itself in his negligence of business, but when he announced that he wanted to marry the girl the blow fell. Perhaps on the recommendation of his father, the company absolutely refused to sanction the match. When he persisted, they transferred him 350 miles back into the wilderness to the lonely spot where we found him. He had neither forgiven nor forgotten. He emphatically stated he would not stay there another season. Unless they gave him another charge he would quit the company.

"But this is the only life I know," he said regretfully. "You people have the advantage of me in civilization. Here I can make a living, but what can I do on the outside?" His knowledge of the outside world was confined to his mission learning, gleaned from what printed matter found its way into the interior, and a brief visit he had made to the frontier town of Edmonton at one time in his life. "But I am pretty good friends with the Indians here, and they tell me stories of gold back here in the mountains," he added confidentially. "As soon as the spring checking-up is over, this post will close for the summer and I am going over with them. I would like to get a thousand or so together before 1900, because I intend to go to the Paris exposition. You are going there, of course."

Even if he realized his hopes and attended the great exposition as he planned, it would be safe to wager that he is again in the seclusion of the forest and in the employment of the company in whose service he was born. That is the experience of others.

It was under similar circumstances that the Cammell boys reached manhood. Their father is chief factor for the company in the Mackenzie river country and has his headquarters at Fort Simpson. His two boys were given a thorough schooling, and finally sent outside to one of the eastern Canadian universities. They graduated with honors, and after having seen and mingled with the society of the civilized world, with any of the professions open to them, they voluntarily returned to their home on the Arctic slope. They are destined no doubt to fill high positions in the company's service.

Similar in some respects, but different in others is the case of Peter Gunn, who with his wife and four children, keep the trading post at St. John on the Peace river. Mr. Gunn was not born in the service, but is a native of Scotland, which place he left some years ago with his wife and infant daughter, Bessie, to take charge of this lonely spot. Here he has since lived, and here were his other children born.

Like the faithful servant which he is, he was completely engrossed with the affairs of his company, cultivating the good will of the Indians, that they should not take their catch of fur to any of the free traders established thereabout, outfitting the best of the hunters and trappers for the winter's fur gathering, keeping up the supply of trading merchandise and properly caring for the furs brought in by the hunters. In this endeavoring to show a large profit balance for his post at the spring audit, his time and interest were monopolized, and the loneliness of his surroundings passed unnoticed.

Nor is the case of his wife much different, for busied with the maternal and housekeeping worries which occupy the mind of all housewives during waking hours, it is doubtful if the good mother missed any of the environments of society. There are women even in our largest cities who are as completely though unconsciously isolated. To them there is no life outside of the walls of their own home, and what does it matter if in the ears of the one is the rumbling and clanging of a city's traffic, telling of the complexity of men's efforts, while in the ears of the other is the rustling of leaves and rippling of waters, telling of a peace which is to be found nowhere on earth. For here, just as in all other places the bread will burn in the oven, and Johnny will stub his toe and run crying to his mother to be comforted.

To little Bessie, who was now a winsome lass of 6, it would seem that the place would be oppressive, for her mind was not taken up with the troubles and business of life, and her young, impulsive spirit demanded expansion and action. But it was not so. Old Rover was her playmate. She pulled old Rover's tail, and in old Rover's ear she poured her childish confidences, hopes and fears, and who shall say she was not understood? Unhindered by the multiplicity of themes which divide the infantile mind, she made remarkable progress in the only life she knew. She spoke perfect English with just a delightful suggestion of the inherited Scotch accent, but not more perfectly than she spoke the language of the Cree Indians. Contiguous to the Cree is the Beaver tribe whose language has proven a stumbling block to almost every white man who tried to master it. Yet she speaks it with a fluency that makes her invaluable to her father as an interpreter, and endears her to every member of the savage tribe.

If you speak of birthday parties or children's matinees, she would not understand, but she knows the difference between a beaver and a marten skin and can tell you just what is the value of a silver fox. She knows little of the geography of the world, but she knows every bush, hill and valley about the little fort, and can tell you where every outgoing trail leads. All she remembers of her life has been at this point, except one time the winter before, her father took her down river in the Hudson Bay Company canoe to the spring accounting at Dunvegan.

We wanted a pair of moccasins. Bessie knew just where we could get them and offered to guide us. She led the way over a trail she knew so well to an Indian's low, dark cabin. She entered unceremoniously, and was greeted cordially, and because we came with her, we were made welcome. She stated our errand, and the moccasins were produced. She looked at them critically and handed them back with a few words in Indian. Another pair was brought out and her sharp eyes detected that one of the binding thongs was inconveniently short. A longer one was fitted in, and after a satisfied examination she handed them to us, saying, "This pair is all right."

Under her guidance we started back, but found that this business woman of 6 was but a child after all, for as we were fairly started on the trail, she turned back and said simply: "I'm tired, won't you carry me?"—Sidney Church.

Rural England a Land of Song.

The love of song is strong as ever among the agricultural folk of England, and at the harvest home super there is always plenty of melody of a sort, says a London newspaper. The old ballads and songs of the peasantry as found in broadsides and manuscripts are full of character. In the great majority of cases the authorship of these poems is unknown. One of the old favorites for recitation at country festivals used to be a dialogue between a husbandman and a sewing man, and Mr. Bell in his collection of poems and ballads says he heard this one occasion recited at Selborne by two countrymen, who gave it with considerable humor and dramatic effect. They delivered it in a kind of chant or recitation.

WINTER LIFE ON THE CREEKS

Interesting Detail of Happenings Recorded.

By the Nugget Correspondent for Gold Run and Dominion—Busy People.

Work is increasing steadily on Gold Run and present indications are that the camp will be a live one next summer. The creek above 43 is simply being prospected, although 47, 50 and one or two others report good pay. Forty-seven will be worked this summer, as the pay is located in the creek bed.

Forty-three has two complete plants, with self dumping buckets working smoothly and the dumps growing rapidly. The pay is reported good and the streak is wide.

Mr. Andy Robinson has put in the winter preparing 42 for summer work. The claim is a good one and will be worked on a large scale.

Laymen are at work on 36, 37, 37a, 38, 39, 40 and 41. These claims all yielded up an abundance of yellow metal last winter and now that a second pay-streak has been located the cleanup will be better than last year. The ground is being burned, thawed and worked in every known manner and the laymen all appear well pleased with their ground.

Thirty-five and thirty-six hillside left limit and 34 right limit are taking out pay. The two former are reported to be in rich dirt. Three steam plants are used to embowel the earth and hoist its treasure to the surface.

Messrs. Williams and McLeod brothers are working 35a and have some very good dirt on the dumps and more coming up as fast as strong arms can hoist it.

Rogers and Berg, pioneers of 34 have a thawer at work loosening up what pay is left on the celebrated Soggs, Ellis and Cahill claim. This claim was one of the best producers on the creek last winter.

Nos. 32 and 33 are being operated by laymen who have two first-class steam hoists and thawers at work as well as several hand power operatives. The dumps are fair sized and from their location should be productive of considerable of the much sought metal.

Andy Larson recently purchased the interest of John Stone in 31 and now has an automatic dump and steam plant working merrily away on the pay streak that once was so elusive, but now easily traced from claim to claim by even a chechako.

No. 30 is being prepared for summer work while 30a is let out on lays. Both claims are good ones if past working is a proof of the future.

No. 27, 28 and 29 are being worked by Chute and Willis as are 16, 17 and 18 and 12b. The claims have the finest plants that money can buy and their dumps tower above all others. By actual time, 29 hoisted 55 buckets an hour each bucket containing two wheelbarrows full of pay gravel. The other plants, four in number, are doing as well and run night and day, so that a great cleanup is anticipated.

Nos. 25 and 26 are being made ready for summer work, while John Korbi of 24 has a plant actively raising pay dirt.

No. 23 has out good dumps and the motive power has lately been reinforced by the addition of a new boiler. Mr. Peterson is also working 14 with good results.

No. 22 will be given over to summer work while 20 is hammering away and piling up the pay gravel in a manner exceedingly pleasing to Mr. Bredie, the owner.

Frank Swanson has recently augmented his machinery by a large boiler which will shortly be in operation. The dumps already out will compare favorably with any on the creek, and the pay is said to be of the best. No. 13 is let out on lays and the boys are doing very satisfactory work. Mrs. Breckenridge is working 12c and personally superintending the work. The ground is rich and promises to yield its owner an abundance of that which at tracts even to the utmost parts of the earth. Ennis, Murdoch & Co., have a very nice hoist with self-dumping bucket and steam thawer on 12 and are getting out a big dump.

Joe Beck has just arrived from the outside and is superintending the setting up of his machinery on 11. The claim will be continuously worked from now on.

Nos. 8 and 9 are being prospected as are the hillside claims adjoining on

the right limit the pay seeming close to the line.

No. 7 is on the pay and the boys have just set up a boiler, hoist and automatic dump and are ready to go at it in dead earnest.

Five and six are being prospected, as are the claims at the mouth of the creek on Dominion.

Roadhouses are numerous on the creeks and dances are quite frequent. The Eagle roadhouse had a dance last Tuesday and a lively time was had. A number of girls from Dawson were in attendance.

Miss Lila Sylvester, formerly with the Boston Lyric Co., a violinist of considerable repute, has opened a roadhouse on 14. A stock of fancy groceries and cigars as well as first-class liquors will be offered to the public.

Mrs. C. Sloggy has built an addition to the Home bakery and lunch room on 28 and will cater to the public with a first-class hotel and stock of liquors. An opening dance will be given the 14 of February, St. Valentine's day.

Dominion.

Dominion creek is presenting a livelier appearance than at any time since the close of summer work. Joe Barrett has set up a large plant on 32 below upper. He will personally superintend the work which will start next week and continue throughout the summer. The Misses Barrett and their mother will make their home on Dominion.

Louie Pond has moved to Caribou and has a few men sinking on 31 below upper. The claim will be opened about March 1st.

James McNeil and family have moved to 3 below upper and will superintend the working of the claim.

Caspar and Mrs. Ellingen will shortly arrive on 2 below upper where a large plant has lately been shipped. The claim will present an extremely active appearance during the summer.

Charlie Anderson of 1 below upper is getting out some fair dumps; the work will be greatly increased during the spring and summer.

Sam Nichols, well known by the sobriquet of "Porcupine Sam," went to his claim, 1 above upper, immediately upon his arrival in Dawson. He started work at once but the holes have filled with water as fast as they were sunk.

Messrs. Chris Reid and Dunc McLellan were flooded out on 1 above upper and have abandoned the drifts. Chris says trotting the bogs of the Emerald Isle is not in it with jumping up a ladder to escape the incoming water in a drift.

Messrs. M. J. McNeil and Ralph Stamp were flooded out on 2 above but have succeeded in bailing out and are once more hoisting.

Gus Chisholm has started the plant on 3 above upper, and is hoisting dirt in a very pleasing manner. The dumps give promise of being big ones by cleanup.

Messrs. Boatman and partner have been struggling to overcome the overflow of Happy Jack's old drifts on 4a above upper and are hoisting dirt again after considerable delay.

Messrs. Heeny, Chisholm, Ross and English Billy, laymen on 7 above are getting out good dumps and report good pay although they too have been troubled with water.

Taylor & Co. have recently placed a thawer on 10 above and are taking out some good pay.

Anderson & Co., have been working 12 above all winter with a thawer and have out the largest dumps on upper Dominion.

Messrs. Timm and son are doing some good work on 17 above with a thawer. They have several good dumps out and report good average pay.

Messrs. Petram, Love, Rodgers and McNamee are doing good work on 18 above. They are burning the ground, but nevertheless their dumps will compare favorably in size with those of many operating thawers.

C. A. Johnston & Co., have sold 21 above upper, the dumps not being included, so Mr. and Mrs. Johnston will remain on the creek. This claim is one of the best above upper discovery, the gold being of a shotty nature and running very even with a wide pay streak. Messrs. Weaver, Burke and Oleson have the same pay and have recently set up a thawer. One would expect poor or very little pay so near the head of the creek, but these claims are on a flat below steeper ground and have apparently caught the greater part of the pay from here to the extreme source of Dominion.

It is reported that Mr. E. W. Mills has bonded the mining property 15 below upper and will shortly arrive in Dawson with heavy machinery to work out the ground.

Ed Serrell and party are taking out some large dumps on 14 below upper,

burning the ground and hoisting some good dirt.

Wissing brothers are doing a little work on 16 below upper and will do extensive summer work.

Messrs. Nichols, Foley and McRae have out good dumps on 18 below upper. They are burning the ground and hoisting with a horse. Dan Nicholson was the lucky man who at a musical raffle recently won Miss Butler's box, a fine Regina, playing all kinds of dancing music as well as popular airs. The boys are now taking lessons in dancing from Prof. Tygelson.

James Kelly, of 22, has resumed work after two weeks' delay pumping out water from flooded drifts. Mr. Kelly reports better pay than ever. His dumps are the largest on the creek.

Sullivan and McGonigle have out good dumps on 21 above. They have worked on the pay since the freeze up and are well pleased with the results.

Smith, McNeil and Wilkenson are working a thawer on 24 and the dump are growing like mushrooms. They will work the claim extensively the coming summer.

Dog Runs Amuck.

About 2 o'clock this afternoon the Aurora saloon was the scene of considerable consternation all on account of a medium sized brown dog which, when the door chanced to be open for an instant, entered the room and proceeded to make things very lively. The poor brute which was crazy with rabies ran hither and thither over the floor of the big rooms and bit a number of other dogs which chanced to be there at the time. Men climbed on chairs, black-jack tables, stoves and on each other's shoulders; Andy McKenzie grabbed the deadly fizz syphon, took hasty aim and shot—himself in the eye. It is hard to say what amount of damage would have been done but for the presence of mind and heavily ironed boot of a miner who watched his chance and as the dog was rushing by him, delivered a kick on the canine's bend which temporarily knocked the frothing, blood-flecked animal out. Another blow on the head from a heavy stick of wood caused that dog to have had his day and the remains were carried out and deposited on the ice of the river. There were half a dozen or more dogs in the saloon at the time and nearly all of them were snapped by the disease crazed brute before it was killed.

Why Did They Miss?

Hunters' tales rarely make mention of poor shots and failures, and a story which depicts the remarkable all success of some famous shots in California a few years ago is therefore all the more interesting. The narrator, Mr. Frank Marriott, terms the incident the one marvelous tale in his book, "Mountains and Molehills." In former times it would have passed for a miracle.

Three of us were out at midday in search of venison in the Santa Rosa valley. The sky was cloudless and the sun blazing hot. Making for a shady thicket, we unexpectedly started a doe in the long grass. She was out of range before we could raise a gun, but there still remained a fawn. The pretty innocent thing stood perfectly still, gazing at us. Our larder was bare, and we could not afford to be merciful.

The fawn stood motionless as I advanced a few paces and took, as I fancied, deadly aim. I missed, and still it did not move. The others fired and missed also.

From the same distance, about 75 yards, we fired each four bullets without success. Still the fawn moved but a pace or two, and our rifle ammunition was exhausted.

I then crept up to the fawn and within 20 paces fired twice at it with my pistol. Then, unharmed, it quietly walked away in search of its mother.

We looked at each other in surprise. Fourteen shots within 70 paces of a motionless deer! "Well, I'll be hanged!" was one man's comment. "Crack shots!"

We could not explain it, unless the rarefaction of the air had made the deer seem nearer than it was.—Ex.

Wrong Diagnosis.

A song with the title "There's a Sigh In the Heart" was sent by a young man to his sweetheart, but the paper fell into the hands of the girl's father a very unscientific physician, who exclaimed "What wretched, unscientific stuff is this? Who ever heard of such a case?"

He wrote on the outside: "Mistaken diagnosis; no sigh in the heart possible. Sighs relate almost entirely to the lungs and diaphragm!"—Ex.

Curlers Will Curl.

There will be no game on the curling rink tonight but tomorrow night the first round in the grand challenge competition will be begun, the sks being Gross vs. Scott and Wilson vs. Hingson. Wednesday night the battle will be between Lithgow vs. Stewart and Willis vs. Rourke; Thursday night, Walsh vs. Norquay.

The drawing for place in the second round of the competitive play will be held Wednesday night after the game.