

Matagami Lake. Away on the opposite shore the setting sun shone on a little group of white buildings, and high above the largest floated the red flag of the Company. The little clearing beside the Fort was dotted with tents and tepees. There the Indians were encamped with their children and their dogs. They had been there since spring, when they brought in their furs and paid their last year's debt to the Company. There they would remain until the trapping season came again. In the meantime they ate, slept, and ran a "debt" with the Company.

That night we camped on a high bluff, overlooking the lake, where a hundred years ago stood the old Fort Matagami. The present Fort is located on the opposite shore on a site known as "The Battle-field." In the old days when the "North-west Company" had a trading post at Matagami Lake, this was the scene of the bloody conflicts between the Voyageurs and Indians of the rival companies.

The following day we spent at the Fort, taking photographs and buying supplies. Salt pork is twenty cents a pound at Matagami, and is pure fat; flour costs \$12. a barrel, prices of other articles are in proportion.

During the day we witnessed a chase in which seventy-two of the seventy-three half-starved huskie dogs at the Indian Camp participated. The seventy-third dog was running away with a bone. In the evening a brigade arrived with supplies, and that night there was to be a dance in the Company's kitchen.

We were there early. The kitchen was built of logs; tallow candles placed here and there, on shelves and beams, shed a flickering light around the smoke-blackened room. Although it was in August, there was a blazing fire in a stove in one corner; a second corner was occupied by a box containing a litter of huskie pups.

After a while the dancers began to arrive. Indian girls, their heads covered with bright shawls and wearing dresses of gaudy calico; the men with colored handkerchiefs knotted at the throat, beaded moccasins of moose hide, and long brilliant sashes, the fringed ends of which dangled to their knees.

A half breed sat by the stove, producing

strange and awful sounds from a fiddle, while the excited dancers yelled and pounded the floor with their moccasined feet. As soon as one set became exhausted others took their place. Now and then an old squaw, with a baby at her back, would enter quietly and sit down in a corner on the floor. We went back to camp at 3 a. m. and at daybreak we could still hear the yells across the lake.

From Fort Matagami we were going to Flying Post. Old Aleck had been over the route fifteen or twenty years before. We asked the Indians at the Fort about it. "No one ever goes that way", they said,—later we learned why. Then we asked Millar, who has been Factor at Matagami for twenty-six years. Millar shook his head, "It's a hard trip", he said,—and Millar knows.

In order to reach Flying Post, we had to retrace our course to Minnie-sin-a-quah Lake. In going up the river we were obliged to pole up two rapids, which we had run, coming down. At the first rapid Pete and the Doctor got their canoe across the current, it filled rapidly and they had to jump, the water being only waist deep. The bread, salt and tobacco were submerged and were not improved thereby. The second rapid is larger than the first, and flows into a deep black pool. Last spring a Government Fire-Ranger tried to run down, his canoe struck a rock and overturned. Now there is a little wooden cross on the shore and the rapid has a name. They call it, "Dead Man's Chute".

From Minnie-sin-a-quah Lake we paddled to the Northwest, following the course of a small creek, which had its source in a little pond, almost overgrown with marsh grass. This was really the beginning of the road to Flying Post. Hitherto we had travelled a route used by the Company's canoes and the portages had been comparatively smooth and well defined. Now we were following a course traversed but seldom by a solitary Indian. The trails, when there were any, between lakes, were overgrown with bushes and blocked by fallen trees, the mosquitoes tormented us incessantly.

Leaving the creek we crossed two small lakes. Twice we had to resort to the tump-lines, the last time for a mile, over