

TO THE LUMBER REGIONS, IV.

(HABERER.)

We spent Saturday evening, after our return from the woods, in story telling, and retired early, for the day's jaunt had been fatiguing. We were not among the "early birds" next morning. When I climbed out my city companions were still wrapped in slumber. I breakfasted and left the shanty, to look around for some "little bits," as we artists phrase it. I was more than successful. After strolling about the shanties I went down on the lake shore and noticed a number of men quite a distance out, fishing. Walking over, I found that they were in luck, as the array of speckled beauties they had captured amply testified. Their bait was simply a bit of raw meat.

remain in camp. This fireplace is called the camboose. There is no chimney, only a large square opening in the roof, over the fireplace, which not only gives egress to the smoke, but affords perfect ventilation. A strong wooden post, or "crane," serves to support the various pots, kettles and boilers over the fire. At the end of the shanty, opposite the entrance, and also along the two sides, are an upper and a lower tier of "bunks," where the men sleep side by side. At meal time the men sit on benches round the fire, and each helps himself, neither tables nor waiters being required. A point that struck me forcibly as well as favourably was the cleanliness of the men. There is an abundance of soap,

much was I delighted with it that, with Mr. McLaurin's permission, I carried back to town with me a 10-pounder to grace my own table. If during my lifetime the problem of aerial navigation is solved, I should like nothing better than a lightning excursion on Saturday afternoon to the shanties, to procure a 10 or 15 pound loaf of that bread with which to regale myself and friends at a 5 o'clock tea. I am sure we should all enjoy it. And, *apropos*, I must not forget the "Scotch buns," so pleasing to our palates. If it were not for fear of my cook I should positively declare that I envied those rough fellows their daily bill of fare.



FISHING.

During the period of our stay in the woods the weather was unfavourable for hunting, and the Nimrods of our party failed to get in their work. Neither bear, caribou, deer nor fox was seen. Even the half dozen or so of squirrels that we saw were too nimble to be brought down.

We found the shantymen as merry a lot of fellows as one could wish to meet. Both French and English were spoken among them, for different branches of the Canadian nationality were represented. There were old as well as young men. I was particularly struck with one veteran of sixty years or so, whose long hair and full beard were almost white. This man has been familiar with the woods since boyhood, and to-day, though he owns some twelve or fifteen thousand dollars worth of property in a thriving portion of the province, yet every winter finds him at the shanties. He loves the life, and only the weight of years will ever cause him to abandon his old-time winter haunts. We were treated with the greatest consideration by the men, every one of whom manifested a desire to contribute in some way to our comfort and pleasure.

In shanty life, next to the shanty foreman, the most important figure is the cook. If he be a surly fellow, he can make it decidedly unpleasant for the crew. The cook of our acquaintance proved himself to be a prince of good fellows. Attached to each crew there is also a carpenter, whose duty it is to mend sleds and other broken gear.

We had ample time to study the life of the men at the shanties. They work from daylight till dark, with an interval for dinner. When a long distance from the shanty their dinner is taken to them. If possible, the shanties are always built near a lake or river, as was the case with ours. There were some forty-five men in this shanty. It was built of flattened logs, with the chinks carefully caulked with moss to exclude both wind and storm. The floor was made of flattened logs. The roof was supported in the middle by four stout posts, forming a square, and about twenty feet apart. Within this square, and therefore in the very middle of the shanty, was the heart or centre of shanty life—the huge, blazing fire, which, like that on the sacred mountain of the old fire-worshippers, never dies—at least so long as the men

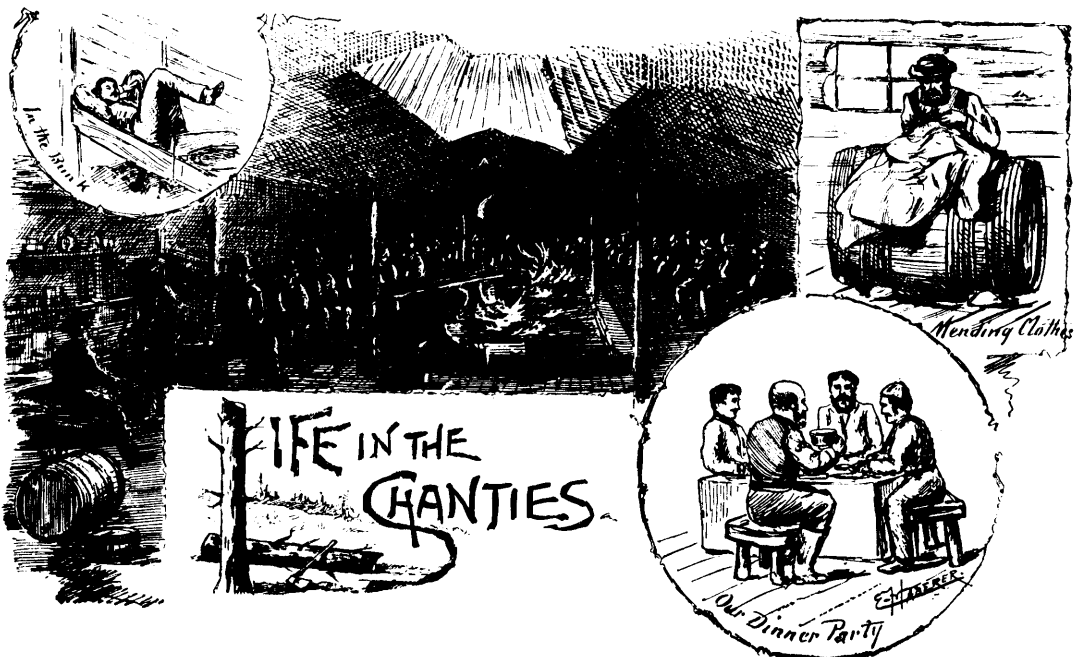


A VETERAN.



The fire is the only light needed in the shanty. And when you talk of comfort, put me down for a seat before that shanty fire, with its eight or a dozen pieces of wood, each four feet long, sending the flames leaping upward toward the skylight, through which, if the flame were not too brilliant, might be seen the stars, keeping their nightly vigil over all. The men smoke, and talk, and sing; some hang up their socks or mitts, or other articles of clothing to be dried; some sharpen their axes; the teamsters see that their horses and oxen are properly attended. Presently one slips away to bunk and then another, till finally the fire is deserted, and the only sound that breaks the stillness is the crackling of the burning sticks or an occasional sound from among the cosy blankets.

When Sunday comes the routine is disturbed for a day. There is no ringing of alarm clocks, no morning call for the start. The teamsters have to be early astir to care for their animals, but the rest of the men rise at their leisure. For this day their time is their own, and it is consumed in a variety of ways. Some of the men go fishing in the lake near by, some go farther, to the frozen river, for the same purpose. Some go hunting. Others remain at camp and mend their clothes, spin yarns, or otherwise amuse themselves.



LIFE IN THE SHANTIES

Our Dinner Party