

was also a useful friend to me, and with these two men, their families, and their followers, I travelled to the head waters of the Saskatchewan, Athabasca and Frazer rivers. I had brought with me a cross-cut saw and other tools necessary to build a comfortable log cabin, and whilst the horses were resting and gaining flesh, we put up substantial winter quarters, located in a place convenient to wood and water, in the centre of a good game country, and close to where there was plenty of trapping. This completed, we gathered together one night outside the cabin and held a great "tea dance," (there was also a little Hudson's Bay rum.) The Indians and half-breeds came from the adjoining valleys, and on that night I became known to all in the Yellow Head Pass. To my own lot I suggested we should visit the country around the head waters of the Saskatchewan, and after caching in the cabin such things as we did not require, we started. As I looked back on the train of pack animals,—the men, women and children that followed us,—for John was leading, I thought to myself a happier lot never started on journey before. Even the dogs, and we had plenty of them, wagged their tails freely as they moved off in rear.

From the Athabasca to the Saskatchewan we found a rough trail. We travelled up Rock Creek, killing mountain sheep and goat every day as we moved on. John, Alex and myself would take the side of the Mountains, just above timber limit, on foot, whilst the remainder of the party, with the horses, kept at the bottom of the valley until they heard us shoot; then Alexis and Jack would bring two or three of the ponies to where the shooting occurred, and, if we had made a kill, the meat would be loaded, and all would return to the trail, where the women usually had a comfortable camp already established. In this way we went on for eight or ten days, until our arrival at Saskatchewan river. Here we remained several weeks, hunting elk, sheep and bears, in one of the most beautiful countries it has ever been my lot to travel in. The meat of the animals we killed was carefully cut up, spread on poles, and properly dried and cured for winter use. There was a salt lick close to our camp, visited daily by num-

bers of sheep, yet the big rams seldom if ever came to lick. One day, about sunrise, I counted no less than seventy-two wending their way in single file, down to the salt. Out of this lot we killed seventeen, which doubtless the reader may think unsportsmanlike, but remember the number we had to feed, the distance we were from any means of purchasing food, and the long winter before us! Our stay on the Saskatchewan did not last as long as I expected. My party had seen the fresh mocasin tracks of other Indians, and were afraid there might be trouble if they were caught hunting in grounds not their own, as every little band of Indians had their own portion of the valleys and mountains to hunt in, and they consider it a great breach of etiquette to hunt in other fields, without first acquainting the Indians who had the prior right. (Making trails, etc., gave them this right.) I agreed to a certain extent with my party, so we retired, leaving this magnificent field of sport, with every horse heavily loaded with dried meat and trophies. We arrived at the Athabasca a week later, deposited our loads in the cabin, and started within a few days on our next trip, which took us onto the summit of the Rockies, near the head waters of the Frazer river. Here we were in a country teeming with caribou, and after each day's slaughter, I can call it nothing else, as we had to kill freely in order that we might obtain sufficient meat for winter use, the Tom Toms of my companions would strike up and weird and melancholy tunes would reach my tepee until late in the night.

It was now getting on in the season, snow had already fallen to some depth, so we hastened back to the Athabasca river and made ready for winter. The thermometer registers daily below zero and the charm and pleasures of tent life have gone, but there are yet fascinations for me. To know this country perfectly and to have an accurate knowledge of the animal life in it, one must have the experience of a winter. It is only at this season one begins to realize what the natives can endure; what cold, what fatigue, and sufferings, what hunger and deprivations. On one occasion I had travelled some forty miles to a mountain where sheep ranged in