

HOW A YOUNG PUPPY AVOIDED STARVATION.—The Clearwater river, which enters the Athabasca at Fort McMurray, Alta., is from its mouth as far as Portage la Loche, a comparatively well-travelled canoe route. Several canoes at least will pass up and down its waters each month of navigation. This portion of the river was formerly an important link in the line of travel between the Churchill and Mackenzie river districts and is still largely travelled. Above Portage la Loche, however, the river is rarely used, the Swan lake Indians being practically the only travellers. These people inhabit the region about Swan lake at the headwaters of the river up in the granite area, and come down once a year to trade at Methye lake.

While on this upper portion of the Clearwater last summer, the writer came across an interesting example of how necessity can change the food habits of the domestic dog. On one of the portages at some little distance from the trail, a whining sound was heard, and on closer investigation a young puppy was discovered apparently not over three months old. In all probability he could not be found when the Indians moved their camp, as dogs in that country are too valuable to be voluntarily abandoned. Pathos was lent to the scene when he was discovered lying on a new Indian grave, which had been excavated laboriously by a wooden pick and shovel. These, as well as a motley array of ancient pails and cans, had been left on the grave, while nearby was a small bottle filled with water hung from a branch to ward off evil spirits. We afterwards learned that the Indians had left for their homes at Swan lake nearly two months before, and in all probability had been absent from the portage at least six weeks. The degree of slumping of the earth on the grave lent corroboration to this estimate. Apparently the puppy had lived on his own resources for that time. Considerable coaxing was required to gain his confidence so that he could be approached, but having done so, we were surprised to find that he was in much better condition than might have been expected. To one accustomed to seeing the gaunt, starving spectres of that country, which hang about the camps, stealing every possible scrap of food, the appearance of this little fellow, in an unhabited country, only a few weeks old, and whom one would not expect to know how to forage for himself, was quite remarkable. Upon closer investigation, it was found that he had changed his normal diet entirely, and, copying his cousin bruin, had become a berry eater. The country over which the portage passes is a burnt jackpine plain where blueberries and low bush cranberries grow in great profusion.

These fruits the young dog was eating constantly, and he continued to do so, even after we had given him, as we thought, a square meal of rice and meat scraps. Apparently he had become much addicted to his new diet. As he had made such a game struggle for existence, and as the autumn frosts would soon render his food supply precarious, we took him along until we reached the first Indian encampment on our return journey. Although well fed, whenever we landed, he would jump ashore and commence hunting for berries. One wonders why more dogs in that country do not take advantage of this kind of food, but such occurrences seem uncommon.

It may be added that kindness is as effective with the Indian's dog as with the most pampered poodle. The average dog of the north country, kicked, clubbed, and whipped from puppyhood, can scarcely be blamed for occasionally biting even the hand that attempts to pat or feed it. Although with us a very short time, this little dog was very affectionate and, as we paddled away, eluded the hands of the Indians to whom he had been given, jumped into the river and swam after us, and had to be returned forcibly to their keeping.

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Since mentioning the admirable work of Hamilton Laing in the Nature column of the *Toronto Globe*, (Can. Field Nat., xxxiii., p. 99). I have had my attention called to another similar writer in the *Daily Province*, Vancouver, B.C., J. W. Winsor who under the nom-de-plume of "Wild-wood" contributes a series of articles entitled Open-air Jottings. These are a little more purely literary than those mentioned before but breathe a wholesome out-of-doors spirit that is refreshing. They may not contain much information that is new to science but they present commonplace every day activities of wild and semi-wild things in an interesting light and must have a decided influence in educating the eyes of the indifferent to the wonders about them. It is to be regretted that the author does not boldly sign his own name. There is so much nature fakery that it is only due the public to let them know who they are listening to so they may judge authoritatively.

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A SPIDER NEW TO CANADA.—At Lake Missanog, Frontenac Co., Ontario, on September 13th, 1919, I collected specimens of *Drapetisca socialis*, a little spider which runs about on the trunks of trees. Mr. J. H. Emerton, who kindly determined the specimens of this species, informs me that these are the first Canadian specimens he has seen.

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