



TRAMP, TRAMP, TRAMP, IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

OUTING.

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WABUN ANUNG

BY F. HOUGHTON.

CHAPTER I.



DECEMBER
10th, 18—,
6:30 A. M.
Wind nor-
west, blow-
ing fresh
(— says
devilish
fresh! but that
does not sound
sufficiently sci-
entific, and is
slangy, to say the least).

A few flakes of dry, powdery snow falling. Thermometer 22° below zero. Hole as big as your head in the tent; trying to shiver ourselves into a perspiration, according to unscientific and slangy Blank; can just see four stars through the hole; handy thing a hole? — is lighting (or trying to light) the fire. Wants to know if I can hear his teeth chattering; — always was an ass.

Thermometer, as I was saying, — —. Oh! this won't do at all; too much like the regulation Polar diary. So here goes for a new departure (new departure, by the way, is rather neat; saw it chalked up in a restaurant window; can't say where they had newly departed to—probably to the bankruptcy court or the next street). But all this is beside the question and does not interest us in the least.

Flowing into (Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, about latitude 46° 15', and longitude

—(nothing like putting in a latitude or a longitude, it is so very convincing, so mathematically solid and correct!).

I, for my part, in my wildest railing against human deceit and nature in general, never doubt the most romantic stories that begin with a latitude such and such and longitude so and so; it is too much like throwing stones, which is dangerous when one lives in a nice little glass cottage of one's own.

To continue. About the above-mentioned latitude and longitude a river empties itself through five different mouths into the bay. The name of this river is the Mississauga, which being interpreted into the brutal Saxon tongue signifies "a river with many mouths."

The last mile of the eastern or main branch runs about due north and south. At the northern end of this stretch, on the western side, stands the Hudson Bay Company's post, consisting of the storehouse, a large frame building, and a low-lying, comfortable log cottage where the storekeeper and his family live.

The post is situated on an island formed by this main branch and a smaller one. It is a low-lying, flat piece of land covered with second-growth birch, poplar and jack pine, and many a gamey partridge have I knocked over as it rose with a whirr among these same birch and poplars in the grand October days, when the leaves are pretty nearly all fallen, and what few remain are crumpled and with-

ered to half their natural size and rustle sadly among the dry branches. Then the cover is not too thick and the birds not too tame. The ring of your double barrel is sharp and clear in the bracing autumn air, cool enough to color your cheek and eye and give a spring to your

marks the mud bank where you have startled some snipe at his breakfast. And later on, when the bays and streams have frozen across, the geese and waxies (white geese) come down from the North—then what stalking, wading and wetting you get. What rejoicing there is at the

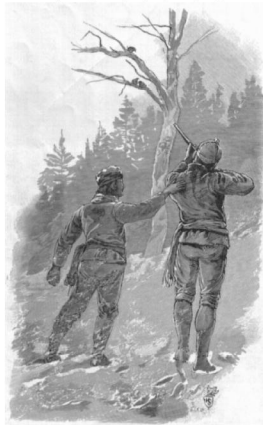
post when you are fortunate and make a bag! How good everything tastes—waxies especially! daintiest of dishes!

Ah! that is life, after all. You are not perched up on a three-legged stool, of the comforts of which—"Allah be praised"—I am no judge; puzzling your brains, chewing your pen handle and destroying your chest and lungs in the wild desire to write something both witty and amusing for people who merely yawn and will not be amused. "O tempora! O mores!"

But this is not a wild-geese chase—I wish to heaven it were!—nor the description of one, though I might write pages on a subject so enthralling; but it cannot be. We are looking for big game now!

From the post you can see three-quarters of a mile about northeast up the river to where it bends around to the west of north.

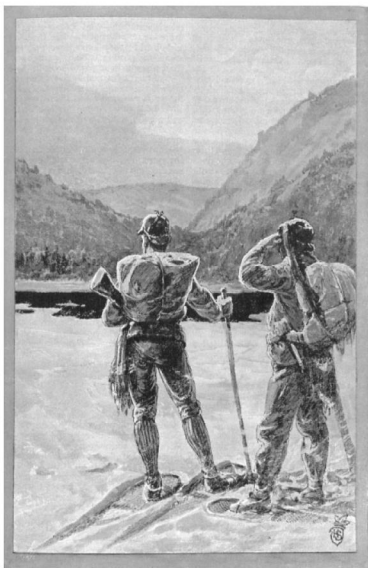
Along the east shore there are scattered Indian dwellings, little log shanties, the most of them about twenty by twenty-five feet, and standing among them, relics and reminders of



"DO NOT SHOOT," SAID WAPUNA. "CARIBOO ARE VERY CLOSE TO-NIGHT."

step. Ah! those are the days, lad, and that is life! Do you know it? Have you hunted duck in the marshes, with the mist hanging in great waves over the rice and bulrushes, seen the day in long crimson shafts come creeping up in the eastern sky? While now and then, as you push your canoe along, a hoarse, rather guttural ah-h-h, a-h-h and a little whirr

former times, the regular Indian bark wigwams. Shaggy dogs and no less shaggy, unkempt Indian ponies loiter about, when they are not at their usual employment—the dogs hauling fish on their little sleighs and the ponies wild hay from the marshes at the river mouth. Their masters, the Indians, seem very well off, and take life easily; they are happy-go-lucky, honest



A LONG STRETCH OF OPEN WATER.

and upright, till they become civilized, when they lie and steal on a par with the rest of the flock.

In one of the shanties lives Boney Kewsh, their chief, a jolly, bow-legged, bent-up old chap, who loves a gossip as well as any tea-drinking old lady, and, when he can get it, a little "Skillawaboo" (whiskey).

At the second bend of the river, and back from it a short distance, is a small clearing with two shanties on it; the smaller one, with a rough snake fence around it, is the stable; the occupants, a span of wiry little oxen, stand munching beaver hay at the door. The larger one, a low log shanty like the former, perhaps a little more pretentious, having besides the door two windows, while from a rusty old stove pipe through the roof a thin bluish wreath of smoke floats upward above the dark spruce background till it mingles with and is lost in the deep blue of the sky.

This is the home of "Wabun Anung" (the Morning Star), a good hunter and thoroughbred Indian. Many a mile have we tramped together through the great silent northern woods. Honest, obstinate, laughter-loving fellow, with his sturdy breadth of back and bull neck! If he is a trifle stout you will find, when you know him better, that he understands to perfection the art of walking despite the superfluous flesh. A shy, reticent man till he is quite sure of you, when he is talkative enough, with a sailor's love of a yarn, though, at times, I fear prone to exaggeration.

But when we look back "Wassa nay-awgo" (to a day far behind), do we not see, or fancy we see, a halo? The flickering firelight hanging over those dead ashes, buried beneath so many autumns' leaves, and by that light does not the face of that jovial friend (with the stubble on his chin) look handsomer by far, despite the stubble, than it does to-day, at lunch, perchance, though his face is as smooth as a lady's, his person clothed in purple and fine linen, and a silver fork in his hand? While in those days so long ago, lit for our special delectation by that flickering, waning poplar fire, it was pork and hard tack in your fingers and a jorum of strong tea to wash it down, dished up with appetite sauce, a digestion that a camel might be proud of, and a short black pipe as dessert—a dessert that lasted well on into the night.

Is it any wonder that the range of the right and left at those two teal has increased from thirty to forty yards?

But there is a fellow feeling among all true sportsmen—God bless them! for there are no other people like them in the wide world; they know, love and understand each other. They suck away at their pipes with a jovial look in the corners of their eyes, and do not care particularly if the range does increase a bit as the years pass away and the leaves fall.

And "Wabun Anung" is one of them, and a good fellow, too, though his bow is a little long and the arrow flies a little too straight.

However, this is all twaddle and beside the question. I see my audience are becoming impatient. It is not reminiscent of "wild-goose chases" in the autumn or maudlin sentimentalisms of ashes and buried friendships (which none of us nowadays believe in) they came to hear. It is a shot at big game they want! And a shot at big game they shall have, if they will be patient and follow me!

I remember it was a raw, unpleasant evening, a wind from the northeast, cold and penetrating, that cut one to the marrow, sweeping down the stretch of river, gathering the snow up in fine powdery little drifts and flinging clouds of it in one's face with stinging force. For it is very cold up there, to the north of Georgian Bay, and we have breezes occasionally, cat's paws, that wreck big steamers and make the gulls scream.

I had made arrangements to stay that night—never mind what night—at Wabun Anung's shanty, as we were to start at sunrise the next morning to hunt caribou.

So after supper at the post I made up my pack, a gray blanket, with some provisions wrapt up in it, Indian fashion. With this on my back, and my rifle—a Winchester repeater .45 calibre—over my shoulder, I walked up to Wabun Anung's.

I found the family all at home. Wabun Anung's wife, a very stout, not particularly lovely old squaw, though what her personal charms might have been when he wooed and won her I cannot say.

There she sat, however, looking stolidly contented and happy, a short black clay pipe in her mouth, busily engaged in making a pair of mocassins for her liege lord, who sat, also smoking, in an old rocking chair—by the way, the only one in the shanty. This, with a contempt sublime in its carelessness for the correctness of

things, he did not offer his guest—your humble servant. He merely, on my entrance, removed his pipe long enough to emit a cloud of smoke and the usual salutation, "Boochow" (good day), leaving me to shift for myself, which I did by selecting a corner, slinging down my pack, taking out my pipe and imitating his lordship, which I flatter myself I did to perfection.

But his squaw was not the only busy one in the room. His daughter, a girl of about fourteen years of age, was peeling potatoes. She was quite as ugly as her mamma, and like her, even at so early an age, slightly inclining toward embonpoint. She took about as much notice of me as her mother did, which amounted to none whatever. This would have been crushing from a woman of any other nationality; but from a squaw—I shrug my shoulders! They were like the rest of their sex—puzzling, to say the least. A fig for beauty's smiles, be they dark or fair. They are quite as sweet to Mr. Smith, who calls to-morrow. Cheering reflection! So what need we care while our limbs are strong, our digestion good—for there are cariboo browsing on the hills to the north! So just keep to leeward, lad; a steady hand, cool nerve and dogged resolution to follow will do the rest. Let beauty smile as she will on Mr. Smith or Mr. Brown, for the matter of that; we will forget her smiles as quickly as she does, and ho! for a good west wind and the snowshoeing not too heavy.

But there was one other person there who found me interesting. I judge so by the way he—for said person was a fat little boy—gambled about and looked at me, with his head cocked first on one side and then on the other, with his eyes jet black like a squirrel's, quite as quick and sparkling. Up he would come to me, sidling along, ready at my slightest movement to scamper off to a safe distance behind the fire. How he laughed and showed his white teeth, and how quickly he placed the protecting fire between us when I called out, giving a jump as though I meant to catch him! "Boochow gitche nish nobbee" (good day, big Indian). I did catch him at last, the fat, little chap! and seated him on my knee, where he watched me, his head cocked and white teeth and eyes sparkling, not a bit afraid of the *ébo-gouosh* (white man).

"Anisuenta costa keen aquevasas?" (what

is your name, little boy?), and little boy answered, in correspondingly little voice, "Ta-a-bid." Oh, that I could give the intonation!

"Neen cown kekandou kem" (I do not understand you), I said. But "Ta-a-bid" was his name, and "Ta-a-bid" was all I could get from him, though I discovered later on that he meant and tried very hard to say David.

Then I persuaded him to stand while I sketched him. It was rather difficult, for he would continually shift his position from one leg to the other, removing his hands from his pockets and putting them behind his back, then back to his pockets again, while every now and then he would say, impatiently, in his soft little voice, "Wee-weep" (hurry up). I finished at last and caught a certain likeness. Wabun Anung, his wife and daughter were tremendously tickled by it and laughed heartily.

CHAPTER II.—"BIG GAME."

Two hours before daylight next morning we were up, and, after arranging our packs, sat down to a breakfast of pork, potatoes, hard tack and black tea, after which we sat by the fire, smoking, till we could see by a faint whitish look in the eastern sky that day would soon break. Then, knocking the ashes out of our pipes, we slung our packs on our backs, our rifles over our shoulders, and, putting on our snowshoes at the shanty door, we started for the hunting grounds along a trail leading due north through the woods.

There is very little talking done now, and will not be till camp is made for the night. Tramp, tramp, tramp is the order of the day, and tramp it is with a vengeance.

On entering the woods we each cut a stick about three feet long; and very useful we find it to knock off the snow which balls on our shoes and the masses which hang on the low balsam branches, which otherwise we would dislodge on passing, smothering ourselves for a moment in a drift and sending a handful or so down our necks, or rather the neck of the man in front.

Hour after hour we walk along a trail which has been blazed out years before, a part of it being used for a winter road to Green Lakes, where there is another Hudson Bay post some one hundred miles farther north.

The country through which we are

passing is thickly covered with spruce, cedar and balsam, with birch, poplar and occasional clumps of maple growing on the ridges. These ridges run about east and west at right angles to the trail: up, up we go, ever crossing them (they lie like

with only a trust in your luck to keep you on your legs. Down you go for a good three hundred feet till you reach a flat covered with ash trees; in the middle of this winds and creeps the Pottogoosing, a sluggish stream about thirty feet wide.



I WALKED UP TO WABUN.

ribs on the hillside), for the whole country is a hill or a gentle slope rising from the Mississauga and reaching its greatest height some four and a half miles north, when it suddenly drops off so steeply that you have to catch at the trees to steady yourself as you plunge, slip and stumble

Wabun Anung has a mink trap here in a hollow old stump, covered by the last snowfall.

Finding the chain, he hauls it out and finds it shut, with a little furry paw in it. With an expression of disgust he throws it away—it is only the paw of a

squirrel. Indian curses on the whole race!—but for it he might have had a mink. So the little bright-eyed chap may shiver his life out in some hollow stump, or be caught and eaten by a pine marten for aught he cares. Let him lick the stump in his blood-dyed, leafy nest, little chattering busybody!

It is a relief to throw down your pack for a few minutes while the trap is being reset and pull in a long breath, which seems to take the creases out of your chest, for twenty-five pounds feels quite that weight after an hour and a half of hill climbing.

The trap is set all too soon and we are off again, Wabun Anung in front, walking with a long, strong, swinging stride from the hip. One admires it in the morning, by noon your admiration is somewhat toned down, and in the evening as you, perchance, are crossing the last lake with a hollow feeling in the region of your stomach, and a very decided sensation of weariness about the legs, if you no longer admire, you cannot but marvel, for the swing in the long stride remains.

Another six miles is passed, and, going down a hill, a track crosses ours; it looks about three or four days old and is almost filled with snow, but they are still plainly to be seen, those little hollows so far apart leading along the hill side. Wabun Anung stops, looks at it a minute, then turning to me with a grin, pronounces that singular, soul-stirring word, "Moose!" with a guttural intonation. Moose tracks they are sure enough, a wandering one, for there are really none in the country, but the moose that left that trail is now no more, for Negickaus (the Little Otter) found it four days before, and its flesh is now roasting in his lodge on the banks of the Mississauga.

However, it is a sign of big game. So it brightens the next few miles.

Another mile and a half and we cross a lake on the further shore of which, in a little sheltered bay at its inlet, we have our lunch. Wabun Anung cuts the wood and lights the fire, while I gather an armful of brush and get a pail of water. There is very little sitting by the camp fire done now, for our backs, wet with perspiration, are freezing, while our faces are roasting; so, swallowing our pork, hard tack and tea, and only staying long enough to light our pipes, we push on again.

Another half mile brings us to Mo-

kooming Lake. Our direction is straight down the middle to a low point in the distance.

A half tumble, half scramble down a steep bank and we are on the ice. Looking down the lake we see a sight that makes us feel like sitting down upon our packs and weeping salt tears. We are standing in a bay, right across the mouth of which, stretching from shore to shore, is a long line of open water, cold as the north wind, and black as ink it looks against that glittering sheet of snow. How the waves dance! seeming to laugh—inhuman merriment—at our weary, rueful faces, while the mountains, like a great ruined wall, rising bluff from the dark water, circle the lake around.

We gaze and gaze again, shift our rifles from one shoulder to the other, try to imagine we are happy and love the dancing, rippling water that poets are so fond of writing about. I wonder if they would continue to do so in their delightfully pretty, enthusiastic way, if to escape the leaping wavelets—I flatter myself that is poetically expressed—they were obliged, as we were that afternoon, to climb those eternal hills to reach that low lying point, carrying heavy packs, which whenever you would stop suddenly, bringing up against a tree, would slide from your shoulders, only prevented from taking part in the avalanche of snow, rapidly forming in front, by the tunk line catching around your throat and half strangling you. Then readjusting your pack you murmur something soft and appropriate to yourself, and with a sweet, sweet smile, while the perspiration trickles down your face, and the snow, from the tree you have collided with, meanders down your neck, you seat yourself on the heels of your snowshoes and start a *hey presto pop* business in which you suddenly become the central figure in an avalanche; down, down, you go, while your smile and happy thoughts increase, when, lo! your mad career is stopped by sliding straddle legs into a small balsam tree, which responds gaily—if I may use the expression—by instantly depositing on your unprotected head about a ton and a half of snow-speaking very roughly. When the balsam has annoyed and irritated you as much as it can, you dig your way out, taking as much snow as possible from your pockets, ears, etc., readjust your pack for the twentieth time, collect your scattered faculties, and if you are of an

easy-tempered, joyous disposition, you say: "What fun!" "Grand sport!" Everybody doesn't say this, but you may; it is quite allowable in cariboo hunting.

By this time your Indian has probably reached the bottom of the hill and is disappearing into the swamp at its foot, necessitating a race to catch him, which increases a hundredfold your chance of a headlong tumble. You reach the bottom at last, only to climb, very likely, a much worse bluff than the one before. Thus we passed the afternoon, arriving at the end of the lake with only sufficient daylight left to make our camp for the night.

While we were eating our supper we suddenly heard that well-known whirr, then another and another, and three partridges flew into the top of a birch tree just above our heads, and sitting there clearly outlined against the evening sky, made an excellent mark.

I picked up my rifle, intending to try my hand and eye.

"Cowin buskeezo!" (do not shoot) Wabun Anung said quickly. *oppeche bay show tibecook*" (cariboo are very close to-night).

You may be sure I laid down my rifle as quickly as I had picked it up, and we, partridge included, finished our meal quietly. Then the whirr sounded again, and one after the other they dived off into the snow.

Wabun Anung piles more wood on the fire, and, stretching ourselves out on the balsam brush, we light our pipes and puff contentedly, gazing into the blazing, crackling camp fire.

What stories you will hear then! How straight his arrow flies and how long his bow becomes! Kind-hearted, jovial old chap, with the camp fire lighting up his keen dark face!

Is it any wonder that we sportsmen love those old times when our limbs are strong; love the sound, which, perchance, only comes to us now in dreams, of the creak, creak of the snowshoes to the long swinging tireless stride, in the crisp morning air. Hut here we wake and find ourselves not on a wholesome bed of brush with the bright stars shining down upon us, but in one with white sheets; we groan and turn upon the snowy pillow, to fall asleep again thinking of the cariboo browsing on the hill tops away to the north. But I am wandering too, and must return to camp, for the night is cold.

Till about 9 o'clock we sit or lie by the camp fire, "swapping" yarns and smoking, then we throw a few more logs on and rolling ourselves in our blankets are soon again in the land of dreams.

Every two or three hours we wake, and getting up throw more wood on the fire. A few nights of this kind of thing and you learn to fall asleep almost the moment you lie down.

The following morning we are up about daylight, and after breakfast—at which, by the way, we are joined by the three partridges in the same birch top—we light our pipes and start off again.

The country here is not mountainous, but rather low and rolling; every little way we cross a slight knoll, generally with top bare of trees, the rock coming to the surface and covered with lichen. The sides of these knolls are wooded with stunted jack pine, with spruce and cedar swamps, the home of the hare, between. Here we startle one, which goes zigzagging away in quick jumps, noiselessly, like a white phantom, its little tail flourished high in air; for fifty yards or so its panic carries it, when quick as thought it crouches in its form, regarding us with round, startled dark eyes and sensitive ears cocked up, till we are lost to view.

Another mile or two and Wabun Anung suddenly stops. I am about a hundred feet behind. Turning toward me, at the same time pointing to the snow, he says: "Adick omah" (cariboo here).

There is not much doubt about that, for the snow is tramped down and in places scraped away. He examines the tracks, poking his stick into them, and tells me in a minute or two that they were here two days before. Six or seven inches of snow have fallen since, so what they tell is to me a sealed book. Rut Wabun Anung can read and understand that book, and I have faith. My heart gives a great leap, for I see by the tracks that they are feeding and will in all probability, unless they have been startled, which is not at all likely, be within a couple of miles of us at the furthest.

"Animanick adick?" (how many cariboo) I ask Wabun Anung, who has laid down his pack and is loading his gun. Glancing at the tracks for an instant, he answers: "Godoswee" (six).

I slip the cover off my rifle and examine it to see that it is in proper working order. By this time Wabun Anung has his gun loaded and his pack on his back.

So we will off again to test the accuracy of his woodland lore.

These tracks are on one of the numerous little hills, and from one to another the cariboo have traveled single file, only stopping to feed on the tops.

For a mile or so we follow the trail, Wabun Anung walking ahead, every now and then feeling the hoof marks through the loose snow with his stick. Then he stops again and, telling me that we are at their last night's feeding ground, slings down his pack and pulling his axe out of his belt leaves it beside it.

I follow his example, also leaving my mitts, which are too conspicuous, being a bright scarlet.

And now the excitement begins. Not a twig must we break, for the cariboo may appear at any moment.

It is a proper day for still hunting, a slight wind—rather more than a breeze—blowing and snow falling, which deadens sound; occasionally we stop to listen and peer about.

What is that sound we hear off to the right? We stop again and hold our breath. We can almost hear our hearts beating in the great stillness. There it is again! A rubbing, grating noise.

Only a tree or branch, rubbing against another. On we go. I tuck my rifle under my arm, thrust my hands into my pockets and try to quiet the excitement which I feel is growing at all this watchful expectancy and straining of every nerve and sense, by watching Wabun Anung's face, which is a study, so dark, and his jet black eyes so quick and keen.

This expectancy is telling on him, too, as it will on any lover of sport and true hunter. It does not unnerve the hand; it steadies it, I think, for it is not the tremulous, blinding, breathless excitement of a novice. It is that longing to kill, that savage part in most men that will come to the front at such times, though he may love and admire the things he slays.

We are crossing an alder swale now, with a knoll before us. Wabun Anung

is some twenty feet or so ahead. Up the side of the hill he goes. Suddenly I see him start! Off go his mitts; he tears off his gun cover, rushes to the hill top, anti, throwing up his gun, takes a rapid aim and fires!

Two seconds later I am beside him, my rifle full cock, and Wabun Anung loading like mad!

The buck he fired at I never see—nor he again; for with two leaps it is under cover of the woods and gone forever!

But seventy yards ahead, on the far side of a clump of jack pine, I see, plunging madly along, a sweeping, eddying swirl of snow flying over and around them, a small herd—all bunched together—of some four or five cariboo.

Right before them, twenty yards or so, is an open space in the direction they are running; they are sure to cross it. I will make assurance doubly sure and wait till they do; if I fire now the bullet will probably strike a tree or branch and glance. All this passes through my mind like a flash, while Wabun Anung loads, saying: "Buskeesoo! buskeesoo!" (shoot, shoot).

Hut they never cross the open, it is a hill side with the woods running along to their right. They turn—a whirl of snow, a plunge, and they too are under cover, and, like the buck, "gone forever!"

I draw a long breath—it is no time for words, my heart is too full.

Slowly I uncock my rifle, and dropping the butt on the toe of my shoe, I glance at Wabun Anung. We grin at each other in a feeble, heart-broken way and say nothing.

We have bungled it all wretchedly and we know it.

Wabun Anung recovers first, and going over to the trail of the buck examines it. But nothing has happened to take from the strength of those grand leaps. No red blood dyes the spotless whiteness of the snow. It is a clean miss, and a long, narrow track in a drift shows the direction of the bullet.

To be continued.

