A TRIP AMONG THE RAINY LAKES.

BY

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I arrived at International Falls, Minnesota, on the morning of the 18th of October last, but found that the "International", the lake boat, would not run up the lakes until the 20th. So I bided my time visiting Fort Frances, Ontario, also the International Pulp mills at International Falls on Rainy river, said to be the largest paper mills in the world. On the 20th I took boat. Our course lay nearly east. For eight hours we steamed up the lakes a distance of more than 50 miles. Our course lay among islands and projecting points and through narrows and wide open spaces. The day was beautiful and the mirrored shadows of the shore line, rocks, trees, and entangled vines brought forth to view the doubled beauty of the wonderful scenery. Also as we journeyed along in and out through this chain of lakes, the sea birds gathered about us and the captain threw bread and crackers and other eatables on the water for them. And without fear the birds hovered about and darted here and there for the floating morsels. And they were disappointed when the boat whistled for Kettle Falls, our destination.

Our boat had hardly anchored when an Indian woman by the name of Ke-me-tah-beake was canoeing me over to Kettle Falls on the British side; and on the next day I proceeded on to Moose river and Capitogama lake, finding myself that evening in the Indian village of Moose River. I had moose meat for supper and our Indian guide killed a dear about dark. So we had plenty of venison the rest of our stay in the country.

We were in the Indian country and Indian scenes were to view on every hand.

While strolling about the Indian village on the day of our arrival I found two Indians playing the Bowl Game—the Chippewa dice game. The players had a symmetric, nicely finished, hemispheric bowl of some 13 inches in diameter and 6 inches in depth, a bowl made of a large round nodule of a maple root, fashioned solely with the aid of an ax and a knife. This bowl is about an inch in thickness in the bottom but tapers considerably towards its rim. In this game there are 40 counters. These are made of trimmed sticks about 12 inches in length and usually ⅛ of an inch in thickness. Half of these are colored red, half white. The dice used in the game are some variously carved, very small, thin pieces of bone, with sides variously colored.

When I arrived, the bowl containing these dice was being lightly tapped on the ground to flip the dice. Bets were being made and the staked property was to view. And as both spectators and players sang, the game went on. A "Smart" tap of the bowl might change the whole game. While thus playing, the players tapped the bowl alternately until one person won all the counters, both the white and the red. He then had won the game.

The value of the throws as played were:
First throw (tap) 3 white dice and 5 red, 1 count.
Second throw, 4 white dice and 4 red, a draw.
Third throw, 8 red dice and 0 white, 40 counts.
Fourth throw, 2 white dice and 6 red, 4 counts.
Fifth throw, 1 white dice and 7 red, 20 counts.

I watched this game till one of the players who had sold some hay for $180 the day before was staking a handful of nails on the game.

Turning from this game, I heard a vigorous drum tap in one of the houses and on entering the house I found several Indians playing the Moccasin Game. It is a curious affair and resembled our "shell game" in many respects. A blanket was spread on the floor and on it in front of the player were four inverted moccasis. The player had four bullets in his hand, one of which was marked and was the winning bullet. As the winners sang, this actor (player), to disconcert his opponents, shrugged his shoulders, waved his hands and went through various contortions and slight-of-hand performances, as he slipped one bullet after another under a moccasin. When all had been placed, the guessing then began. An opponent went through various preliminaries with a long stick to see if he could detect from the action of the hider of the bullets under which moccasin he had hid the marked bullet. Then with this stick he struck the moccasin under which he thought the marked bullet was hid. Sometimes he won and got the moccasins and the bullets, and his opponents began to guess. Each time the guesser failed to guess right, he lost a tally count. Forty tally counts gave the winner the game.

While watching this moccasin game, my attention was attracted to a deep sounding drum beat beyond a little raise of ground. So I repaired to the spot from whence the sound came. There I saw the medicine fraternity initiating a "subject" into the medicine lodge, called "Medawin" (lodge) by the Indians. The medicine ceremonies were being held in a long drawn-out wigwam of 100 feet or more in length, a wigwam all but having the bark roof on it. I went close to the lodge and saw the people eating puppy soup with a relish. And soon thereafter the dance was begun, or rather resumed, as they had been dancing previous to the dog-feast period. Two old men began to chant in the minor key, while both beat a crude drum. As soon as the chant reached a fairly high pitch, the dancers began to line up in column style, the "navitiate" heading the column. The dance was a forward movement encircling the central space of the lodge, the movement being a tripping, gliding dance. As each one thus danced, he waved some medicine trophy in each hand, usually the skin of a bird or some animal. As they thus waved the medicine things, they gave forth peculiar utterances in grunting style and glided, tripped on.

As I was watching this dance, I noticed that through the center of the lodge longitudinally there were hung blankets and much bright colored calicos, the navitiate's price to join the order. And at the close of the ceremony, I noticed further that the medicine men took these medicine gifts up themselves, as a price of their services.

My attention was next called to where an aged Indian was repeating the myth stories of his race to an eager listening audience. The story he was telling was about his god Manabush and was as follows:

"In the early days of the earth Manabush was god as he is now. He lived then in the East at the coming of the rising sun. He was the maker, the creator of all things. He made the trees, the animals, the birds, the land, the water, the clouds, the air, the sky, and all things we see. He is god. He also made the earth as it is and the sky as it is and prepared places for the living and places of habitation for the dead peoples. The whole universe as he created it is one whole thing. It is as though he had created it as we would make a cheese box and put shelves in it; only the universe, as Manabush created it, he made five places, or shelves, of habitation one above another, the earth occupying the middle-shelf position. The gods live in and on the shelf above this one and the dead people live in the world just below the shelf on which we live—the people of the dead live toward the south in that world. The gods (manidos) also travel about the whole universe at will. They visit all the places of habitation, as they wish.

"After Manabush had created all things he went to live with his grandmother in the brilliantly colored regions in the vicinity of the setting sun and he lives there still. He is the guardian for all the Indians and he holds in reserve for them the things of the earth and lets them have them as he thinks they need them. He is to the Indian in a spiritual way the same as the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs is to them in a material way. He conserves for his peoples the things of earth and allows them to have them as they can show that they need them. When the Indians wish anything they ask Manabush for it in dancing, drumming and praying. When they wish to hunt they dance and drum and pray to him to give them plenty of game to kill. They do the same when they wish a good fishing season, a good crop of berries, and so on. Manabush owns all things and if he is made to know or believe that the one who is praying to him and dancing before him (for Manabush is everywhere) really needs the things prayed for, he allows them. But sometimes he can not be induced to allow the things. The man may ask the things but may not be a worthy person. The man may wish much game in the hunt and may dance and drum and pray and may go hunting and get no game at all. But the man may dance and drum and pray again—they always dance and drum and pray four or five days. The man may do this till he wears out the patience of Manabush and Manabush may get angry and give it to him—allow him success in his undertaking." (This accounts for the reason why an Indian never quits on any proposition. I have known an Indian to ask the government for a certain thing and be told that it could not be allowed and on the very next mail he would demand it again. Furthermore, the Indian will confer charges against employes and inspectors will come and investigate same and find that the Indian has falsified in the full of the cloth and dismiss the case. And before the inspector is hardly out of sight the Indian has reconferred the old charges in a new form and demanded a new investigation. He never quits. The same is true with his dealings with the government.

He abrogated treaties and signed new ones and now he demands settlement by each treaty and is keeping at it till he will get it (?)—get paid twice or more times for the same thing. Many Chippewas believe that Manabush is the Great Spirit ("Chee Manido").)

"After Manabush had created all things, he set about going over the earth. He was unfortunate. He lost his bow and broke his arrows. Consequently, he could not kill any game. He therefore got very hungry. One day as he was traveling, he met Mr. Lion and, as he had a good bow and some arrows, he had him lend them to him. He went hunting. He had traveled about only a short time when he came near a caribou that was browsing in a near-by bushy area. So he slipped up to it and took deadly aim and let fly not one arrow but three. The poor beast fell dead after making just one leap. So Manabush took the caribou and skinned it. He then cut it in pieces and suspended same from the boughs of a fir tree. He then built a big fire beneath the tree and by it cooked the meat. He then took the meat down and sat down to eat. He was hungry. He had eaten only a few bites when he heard the groaning of one tree rubbing against another near-by. This groaning disturbed him. He had rendered out a tray of tallow from the caribou. This he took and determined to stop the groaning by greasing the parts that rubbed over each other. He went to the trees that were in trouble. A high wind was blowing and the groaning was intense and ear-grating. He sat the tray of tallow down and quickly climbed up one of the trees. Reaching the place where they rubbed together, he put his hand between them to pry them apart so he could put the tallow on the rubbing surfaces. At this moment the wind stopped blowing and he found his hand fast. He could not release it. So he had to remain there in the tree branches.

"As he was held fast by the trees holding his hand between them in a crushing grip, wolves were seen approaching in great numbers. He told them to go away, but, instead, they came on, having smelled the fresh meat. They came to where the cooking had been done and ate every bit of the meat, leaving nothing but the bones. They then began to smell about and finally discovered the tray of tallow and started to go to it. Manabush hallooed to them to go away; but, not minding him at all, they came on and licked up all the tallow. Then they galloped off into the woods and were soon out of hearing.

"Soon after the wolves had left, the wind began to blow again, thus releasing Manabush's hand. He then climbed down to find that not a bit of the caribou he had killed was left but the bones and a little meat around the eyes and in the inside of the skull that neither the wolves nor himself in his human form could get. He was hungry. For a considerable time he tried to get some meat from these bones. Then he changed himself into a snake and crawled into the skull. In this form he could get plenty to eat for one meal. He ate there till he was satisfied then started to get out of the skull by backing out of it. He had gotten nearly out when he suddenly was changed back into the human form; but—his head was still in the skull and he could not get it out. Furthermore, his head was so

far in it that he could not see, but he had to go somewhere. So he, blind so far as being able to see anything was concerned, commenced wandering about in the woods trying to get to his friends, if possible. He wandered about in the woods here and there, now falling over logs, now falling into pits, and so on. At last he came to a tree. He felt of it. 'You are Cedar,' he addressed it (all things had a mind then and could talk), "show me which way to go and give me the direction to the water. You grow by the lake.'

"'Keep on going,' answered Cedar.

"So Manabush took two more steps and fell head-foremost into twenty feet of water in a big lake. He at once began to flounder about. He swam here and there for a considerable time somewhat towards shore, as he was a good swimmer. His head, as he swam, brought the caribou head and horns to view. The Indians on the shore saw it and supposed it to be a caribou swimming. So they set out in their canoes to attack it. There was quite a chase and many arrows were dispatched at the head of the supposed beast; but Manabush outswam his pursuers and finally came to shallow water. He then stood upright and waded ashore. In his hurry and his not being able to see, he fell down over several boulders along the shore. He finally fell headlong over a large rock and struck the caribou skull on his head on another boulder that laid ahead of him in the direction he fell. This rock cracked and broke open the caribou skull and Manabush drew forth his head. He was at once recognized and taken to the village and feasted.

"He is our god and lives in the brilliantly colored sunset sky." The next day found me in Indian village of Nett Lake where I took in another grand medicine lodge dance scene, similar to the one mentioned above. Towards evening I took a canoe and went out to Picture Island and examined the chiseled pictures of the long ago. As I was examining the various pictured scenes night closed over the land, and before another day I was on my way to civilization. But I had enjoyed my trip.

In Nett lake about a quarter of a mile off shore to the north the Indian village of Nett Lake, Koochiching and St. Louis counties, Minnesota (the county line runs through the center of the village), is an island of something like half an acre in area. Its western and southern slopes are wooded with poplar, birch, elm, and some shrubs and some viny species. There is also some grass and quite a profusion of flowering plants scattered here and there. Its northeastern part has an exposure of bare rocks, pitching into the lake on that side. Its central part reaches an elevation of some ten feet above the surface of the water of the lake. The island is surrounded by rice fields intermingled with cane brakes and flags, except on the southwest where the water is too deep for rice to grow. In the ages past this island, as well as the surrounding country, was glaciated. At the time of the glaciation, the northern sloping rocks on the northeastern part of the island were polished to an almost perfect smoothness.

The rock of this island is of the Koochiching (Couchiching) formation, being composed of mica schist and gneiss cut by granite intrusions. The

whole is then cut by a large green stone dike running in an approximately north and south direction, from which stringers have been sent out across and through the other rocks. The dike itself is faulted in one place. As seen, it strikes about north and south; the mica schists strike N. 58 degrees E. and dips to the south of this direction at an angle of 70 degrees, except just at the northeast point where the rocks, as we have seen, dip northeast into the lake.

In the revolving years following the glacial epoch the region was inhabited by Indians. These peoples visited this picturesque island. There the medicine man danced and "made medicine", and the Indian wooed his squaw in the squaw dance. From there the deities called the dusky inhabitants to partake with them the eternal bliss of the happy hunting ground. Furthermore, to commemorate the events of that far away time, the medicine man chiseled the then life scenes on the polished rock surface of their island home. These are pictographs of human beings, dance scenes, and outlines of the animal gods worshiped by the men making the pictures. These have been preserved to the investigator, though all history of their purpose has vanished and but only a very faint legendary history of the people who made them can be had from the legends of the aborigines who now occupy the country. The pictographs, thus preserved, are of dance scenes, medicine ceremonies, scenes of the hunt, and dream scenes.

This island has one peculiar feature. The polished rock area is hollow beneath; and, on walking over it, it gives a hollow, drum-like sound. For this reason it is considered sacred by the Indians of the reservation even to this day. They say it is the home of their god and that he "drums" whenever they go on the island to tell them they are on sacred ground. Consequently, to appease this god and keep his good will and to have their lives more happy, they place "medicine", tobacco, and smelling herbs in the crevices and the "hollow" place in the rock as an offering to him.

This island is also called "Ghost Island." Tradition has it that in the second generation back a corpse in a coffin was taken there for interment. There it was left for a little while, while the people went back to the village in accordance with their burial customs. When they returned, the corpse had disappeared. "The god of the island had taken him to his abode."

It is also a fact that in the old times and even now God and the drum have a close relationship among Indians in this northern country. In the old times there was a drum house; and some one was always left to keep charge of the drum. To lose the drum was to incur the enmity of the gods. Their reverence for the drum has had influence, no doubt, in causing them to worship the "drum place" on this island and cause them to honor it with their sacred drawings.

Who made the pictographs of this island? The drawings seem to be similar to those at Pipestone, Minnesota, which are known to be Siouan. Furthermore, the Chippewas of the region say: "Our people did not make the 'rock pictures;' but have this tradition as to what beings made them

(undoubtedly a mythical account of the fleeing of the Sioux from Nett Lake on the approach of the Chippewas):

"When the first Chippewa came to the region," (after the terrible battle of Elbow Falls near Gheen, Minnesota, where the Sioux were disasterously defeated according to other Chippewa traditions), "he crossed over Pelican Lake portage from Farmer John's landing and entered Nett Lake by way of Lost creek. On approaching Picture Island, it was found to be inhabited by innumerable beings that were half fish and half sealion. Upon the approach of the Chippewa, these became panic-stricken, and, diving into the water, they swam with all speed across the lake southwestward; the Chippewa followed them by the muddied water they stirred up in their mad flight. On reaching the southwestern shore of the lake, they fled up a little creek, and, coming to its source and having been caught as in a net, they dove down into the earth and are there yet. You can see the water bubbling up (in a huge spring) today where the earth swallowed them up. We know this region as holly ground. Because of these beings being caught as in a net, we call our lake 'Netor As-sab-aco-na' (Nett lake). When the pursuers returned from chasing the half fish, half sealion beings, they found these rock pictures on the rocks of this island. They are the pictures of these beings our people found here."