

THE PIPESMOKE CARRY

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By BERT
LESTON
TAYLOR



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The
PIPESMOKE
CARRY



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The
PIPESMOKE
CARRY

By BERT
LESTON
TAYLOR

DECORATIONS
By C·B·FALLS



CHICAGO
THE REILLY AND
BRITTON COMPANY
1912

AT
BIG GAME
HIVES

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TO TIFFANY BLAKE

*You too have come the forest way
That wound among the ancient trees
And crossed the open places gay
With asters bending to the breeze;*

*And light the burden that you bore
Along the frank and smiling road
That led you to the lonely shore
Where Rapture's very self abode.*

*You too have known the many moods
Of streams that babbled as they ran
Of far, unravished solitudes
Beneath the primal spell of Pan;*

*Have halted, reverent, on a hill
And felt what speech cannot express—
The "incommunicable thrill"
Of unexpected loveliness.*

*You too, when owls were on the wing,
Have wakened in the windless wood
And hearkened to the murmuring
Of waters under leafy hood;*

*Have heard a wakeful sparrow call,
And seen the bees of heaven swarm,
And watched the waning firelight fall
Upon a sleeping comrade's form.*

B. L. T.



TELL me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

*It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.*

—THE MERCHANT OF VENICE





Divine in hookahs, glorious in a pipe.

THERE is a certain brand of tobacco that is burned in great quantities by the men of the wood. The name of it need not be written here, since it is known to those who know the forest; nor need its qualities as a weed be brought into question. As to this doctors have disagreed, one physician maintaining it to be the best tobacco manufactured, another holding as stoutly that it is not a tobacco at all, but a compound of great villainy. My opinion, were it invited, would strike somewhere 'twixt these two.

Odors quicken the memory, bring up swiftly scenes and happenings of the past. The scent of wallflower may set before the inward eye an old-fashioned garden and a white cottage with faded-green blinds, placed among elms and maples. Mignonette may evoke the ghost of "an old, old love, long dead." The smoke of a Havana cigar may recall a plaza with its gay throng in a city of the Antilles. Thus, the pungent odor of that certain tobacco (the name of which Lord Byron, had he striven for alliteration, might





WHEN Summer is dead and the stream is mute, and the snows lie deep across the trail, or when the False Spring pleasantly deludes us into thinking that Winter is over and gone—one has only to fill a briar bowl, and wreathing rings disclose the Pipesmoke Carry, which flings up-hill from the lake-edge and down-hill to the marge of new waters. Thistledown is not less ponderable than canoe and pack, nor are town streets smoother or more free of foot-snares than this phantom trail.

There is not in all the wilderness a fairer carry than the Pipesmoke one, for it is a composite of many well-remembered roads. It winds through breathless groves where “the pine tree drops its dead” and sun-drenched opens where the choric popples sway and sing, through cedar swamp and alder thicket (strangely passable), and wild meadowland whereon the dwarf rose grows. Now it breaks through the brush to glimpse the brawling river, and now it halts upon a hill-top for a long look into the Valley of Silence. And all along the way are flashes of fur and

feathers, catches of bird song, a scent of twinflower, an endless tinkle of brook water.

The while the pipesmoke wreaths these pleasant pictures, one may tell himself that he is in no haste for riches and leisure and freedom to range the forest whenever the gods may call; the forest spell is not something that passes with youth. Age modifies most opinions, one's pleasure in this or that may wane, there are poets and music-makers of our youth and there are poets and music-makers of our later years; but the forest, like a certain magic melody or phrase, is for all time—never less wonderful than at the moment when it made its first appeal.

The visions which the Lady Nicotine vouchsafes to me contain the lyric note, never the epic. In the plexus of my pipesmoke trails there are no towering mountains, no awesome passes; the few hills are low and fir-clad. One cannot be intimate with a mountain, for mountains are less companionable than the stars; with a hill it is different. Even the poets have not been drawn to close communion with the peaks; Byron alone seems to have exhibited energy in mountaineering. To some natures the mountains speak as nothing else, not even the sea, can speak; but the poets for the most part have found their inspiration in the murmuring wood, the running brook, the wayside flower, the homely countryside.

T*HE South sang like a nightingale
To thaw her glittering dream.*

—THE YOUNG PRINCESS





DEEP as the sleep of the Princess Aurora, untroubled as her gentle slumbers, that waited but the wakening kiss of Spring and Love, is the sleep of the northern woods. We may not break it when Spring is months away, but we may fill again a briar bowl, and pipesmoke wreaths will body forth dim forest aisles, and songful coverts, and pleasant water courses.

There is one pipesmoke trail which memory most frequently retraces; perhaps because the journey was unpremeditated, because so little was expected and so much returned. I was watching two woodlanders loading their packs for a fortnight's cruise through the green places; ninety pounds to the pack, and no wrinkle in the brown canvas—a workmanlike job. An invitation to accompany them as far as their first camp was accepted. I tossed blankets and a few other necessaries into a sack, and we were off. That was a dozen years ago, and I have forgotten the names and the faces of my companions, but not the old lumber road that pitched straight

up from the shore of the Big Water to the crest of the ridge; the singing stream on the other side, along the bank of which wound the now narrow trail; and the clearing to which we came at sundown, keen for supper and a pipe.

In this open place stood a long-abandoned house of logs, our lodging for the night, and at the foot of the clearing the little river spread into a pool, every detail of which memory still keeps unblurred: the curve of the banks, the fallen tree beneath which lay the larger trout, the swaying plant where the stream narrowed again and the current quickened, the arching alders, and the background of firs veiled by the gathering mists of a midsummer night.

“We feel,” Emerson wrote, “that every one of those remarkable effects in landscape which occasionally catch and delight the eye, as for example a long vista in woods, trees on the shore of the lake coming quite down to the water, a long reach in a river, a double or triple row of uplands or mountains seen one over the other, and whatever of the like has affected our fancy, must be the rhetoric of some thought not yet detached for the conscious intellect.”

THE gauger walked with willing foot,
And aye the gauger played the flute;
And what should Master Gauger play
But Over the Hills and Far Away?

Whene'er I buckle on my pack
And foot it gaily in the track,
O pleasant gauger, long since dead,
I hear you fluting on ahead.

— A SONG OF THE ROAD





NOT long ago I happened on the suggestion that "a little anthology or two are indispensable companions for one's summer jaunts," and it was formerly my practice, when loading a pack, to slip the "Golden Treasury" between the blanket folds; but I found — and you may agree — that one cannot be confidential with his favorite poet in such a large and varied company; a thin volume of the bard beloved may prove more profitable. And if I add that congruity should be preserved it is because of a scene that rises before me as I write — a wild shore on the sands of which sprawls an over-stout friend in a vividly-pink shirt bursting at the neck-band, and borrowed trousers several sizes too small for him. He is reading "Pélléas and Mélisande."

Books concerning the forest are better read in winter, or in a tardy spring, when the longing for the pack and the trail is sharpest. Many men of many minds have told us of the pleasure in the pathless solitudes. This one discloses a sentimental interest in wood and hill and cloud; that one

joys in matching against nature his own unconquerable soul, in taming the jungle with an axe; a third is a brother of the angle; a fourth a poet. I am but a Lantern Bearer, moved by that spirit of adventure which discovers itself in a preference for fresh woods over old, for untrodden ways over blazed trails, for distant unwhipt waters over rivers near and known.

Stevenson, in an essay of extraordinary charm, has symbolized this spirit of adventure in a group of lads crouching in the cold sand of the links "under the huge windy hall of the night and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware. To the eye of the observer they are wet and cold and drearily surrounded, but ask themselves and they are in the heaven of a recondite pleasure, the ground of which is an ill-smelling lantern." To one who has not the secret of the lanterns, he says, the scene upon the links is meaningless. So the wilderness wayfarer will find naught but toil and discomfort on the trail unless "deep down in his fool's heart he knows he has a bull's-eye at his belt and exults and sings over the knowledge." Therefore am I a Lantern Bearer, stirred by the knowledge of a bull's-eye at my belt and of the tune the Gauger fluted on the Road to Anywhere.

BUT now the North wind ceases,
The warm South-West awakes,
The heavens are out in fleeces,
And earth's green banner shakes.

—TARDY SPRING





HOW one travels on the Pipesmoke trail! A pinch of tobacco will take me twenty miles. "Here," say I to another Lantern Bearer, as we pore over the chart of some wild township, "here we shall be by nightfall; and here"—five squares away—"by late afternoon of the following day." Five squares—pooh! a knight's move on the chess-board; we may do even better. To be sure, there is no trail, but we travel like the moose, stepping lightly over windfalls and making no account of cedar jungle, tamarack bog, or rushing river. My maps represent, many of them, land that I shall never set foot in, but they are pin-pricked with pipesmoke camps and overrun with pipesmoke trails. And the squares holding for me the greatest fascination are those that disclose only white paper—townships unsurveyed, uncharted as the perilous seas on which the magic casements open.

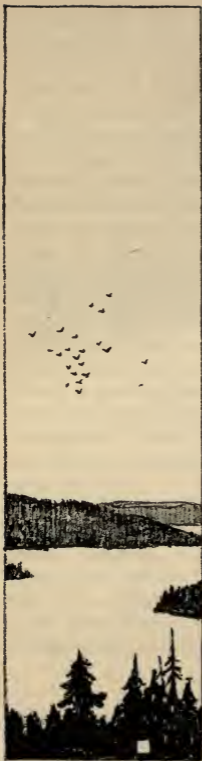
At one side of a blank square a lake leaves off most tantalizingly; at another side a stream emerges from nothingness; the sources of the River Alph are not more mysterious.

I recall with what a thrill of anticipation I grasped the hand of a timber cruiser who had "looked pine" in a certain unmapped township that had especially fired my imagination. He was a rough man, he swore as terribly as the English army in Flanders, and the lantern dangling from his arm, as he leaned against a frontier bar, was not symbolical of a recondite pleasure, but a light to none too steady feet. But this man had been in Sixty-two-six—or whatever the mystic number was—and in my eyes he became, therefore, a person of uncommon interest. His recollection of the topography of Sixty-two-six was disappointingly hazy. There was perhaps a plateau here and very likely a swamp there, this stream did not amount to much and that lake was a "lonesome hole"—what did it matter? Nothing, of course—to a man who is marking pine for destruction.

Every Lantern Bearer good and true must be a lover of maps and share the passion for atlas voyaging. And I am sure that if a good chart of the Narrow Vale were to be had we should, when the summons came, fare forward on the last long carry with a lighter step and a braver heart.

O*H tell her, swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.*

—THE PRINCESS





I HAVE never experienced a desire to follow the meridian over the rim of the southern horizon; the wonders of the tropics make no appeal to a temperament wholly northern. In imagination I may have journeyed on the Orinoco, and watched the Southern Cross rise, and sauntered in the plazas of Latin-American cities; but I have never asked first-hand acquaintance of these things. Polaris, not Acrux, is my star; a white-throated sparrow singing in a hazel bush is more to me than all the brilliant birds of Brazil, a patch of twinflower dearer than the flora of the Amazon. So I follow the meridian north, and as the world of men moves with me, each year will likely find me loading pack or canoe in a fresh outpost of civilization.

The picture that rises now is a long, footless platform marking the terminus of the railway, a straggle of wooden houses on a treeless hill, the inevitable sawmill and the inevitable saloon, women hanging out clothes, hulking men-folk lounging in the sun, and a host of yellow-haired children. Yester-

day the town was not; to-day, the saloon-keeper, glowing with civic pride, calls our attention to the march of rough-shod progress. Where the ancient wood came down to the water, now stands a mighty sawmill; where Pan once piped, Bacchus now tends bar. The saloon-keeper inquires whether we noticed his residence on our way to the store; it was the one with the red roof. How could we have missed so notable a habitation!

Midway of the afternoon we are ready to depart. The canoes are dropped into the stream and the cargoes nicely adjusted; we push out among the lily-pads, and steal away as silently as the storied sons of Araby, and the old thrill comes with the first dip of the paddle. Our camp for the night is distant seven miles, but we need not hurry; there is no wind, the smoke of the sawmill rises straight as the stacks that belch it, the waters are still, the sky is free of cloud. We follow the river a mile or so, and one by one the splotches of frontier civilization drop behind. Then—the open lake, the north rim of the world, and the shining Road to Anywhere.

THEN follow you, wherever hie
The traveling mountains of the sky,
Or let the streams in civil mode
Direct your choice upon a road.

For one and all, or high or low,
Will lead you where you wish to go;
And one and all go night and day
Over the hills and far away!

—A SONG OF THE ROAD





EXCEPT for an occasional exclamation, as the panorama of solitude unrolls, there is little talk during the first hour of a cruise. One is absorbed in "savoring the moment," as Arnold Bennett would say. The five senses are busy transmitting new-old impressions, and the mind is occupied in recording them. You scan the sky for a circling hawk or eagle, the while your ears take in the loon's alarum; his keen vision has marked you a mile and more away. You breathe long columns of the tonic air, and dip the paddle deep for the delight of feeling the water ripple against your wrist. Your guide, too, is silent. He is wondering what sort of "tourist" you may be; every one who comes to these woods merely for pleasure is a "tourist." He is speculating whether you will ask more of him than he purposes to give; whether you expect him to be a woodland Savarin; and whether you will weary him with the stock questions. And you permit him to speculate.

Presently my pilot, in mid-lake, trails his paddle and inquires: "By the way, sir,

where might we be going?" — a not unnatural question. I answer that I had thought of going due north, but that it doesn't matter; all roads lead to camp.

*For one and all, or high or low,
Will lead you where you wish to go.*

Certain things are to be considered — the size of the lakes, the condition of their shores (forest fires have left broad lanes of desolation), and the chance of head-winds on the home trail. Circumstances alter courses, and have since earliest days of navigation; so circumstances are taken account of, and we decide for the north-east.

"He travels the fastest who travels alone" does not apply to literal voyaging through unfamiliar territory. If one's time is limited, a guide is indispensable, for with the best of maps one will wander from the course, and the camping grounds are few and scant. And with the best of maps, again, one will look long for the fissures in the green walls that round these loon-haunted lakes of the north-land. One swings his canoe aloft and passes in, and the green gate closes after. And whoso would follow may inquire his way of the kingfisher, at the Sign of the Sapless Bough.

FOR *oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

— DAFFODILS





WE have ploughed a straight furrow through Carp Lake. Its ramparts are so cruelly burned that the usual inclination to paddle close to the shore is absent, although once we turn in to photograph a huddle of burnt birches standing by the waterside. When we come to the north-east carry we find it green with young woods and tall grasses, but it is disfigured by the abandoned shacks of a mining company, the stark ugliness of which nature is doing her best to modify. Thus we are in the best of mind-states to appreciate an abrupt revelation of beauty, and such a revelation is encountered as we foot the trail to Emerald Lake.

White birches and asters, in a marvelous profusion! The poet who could not but be gay in the jocund company of a host of golden daffodils, could not but be tranquilly joyful in the sweet and serious company of this host of silver birches. So thickly set are the slender boles, I know the camera can make nothing of them, that the record will suggest a bamboo forest; nor can it give a better

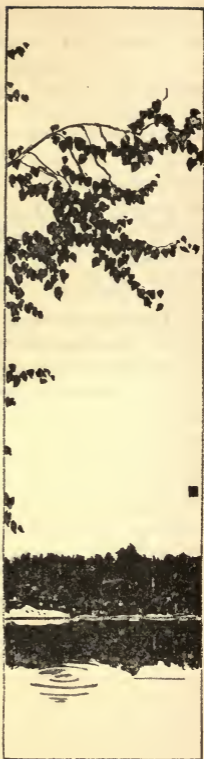
account of the asters, shoulder high and matching the birches in exuberance. A shimmering radiance floods the grove, in which splendor the sun has less share than common, for its direct rays fall only on the tops of the trees; and the warm air is fragrant with the breath of the flowers. Knowing the camera's limitations, I should have got out my notebook and had a try with words; but making notes is something I am always going to do and never doing, trusting instead to memory, which seldom preserves details.

A rememberable carry, notwithstanding. The snows lie thick upon it now, and the leafless masts of the birches cast bluish shadows across a whiteness which shames their own. Their lovely companions, the asters, are withered and gone. But Spring will pass that way again, and following in her steps, some other traveller will come upon the radiant grove, where, standing rapt amid the flowers, he may thank the Creator for the gift of vision and for the inward eye that has the power to call up a vanished glory.

*O*H fair enough are sky and plain,
But I know fairer far;
Those are as beautiful again
That in the water are;

The pools and rivers wash so clean
The trees and clouds and air,
The like on earth was never seen,
And oh that I were there.

—A SHROPSHIRE LAD





INNOCENT of introspection, with none of the Shropshire Lad's desire to "dive and drown," Narcissus gazed into the silver pool that reflected his incomparable countenance. He was an extremely comely youth, but the mirror flattered him a bit, as it flatters everything in nature. You have coasted, on a windless afternoon, along the high shore of lake or river, and marked how clean the water washed the trees and clouds and air. Fair enough are silver birches, mossy ledges, and bushes bearing scarlet berries; but "those are as beautiful again that in the water are."

Sundown on Cypress Lake. A lean notebook mentions merely that the date was August 18, 1911, and that the weather was still; but one does not forget so marvellous a stillness. The last zephyr has expired, and nature seems not even to breathe. It is not the calm that precedes the storm, for then nature seems uneasy, and the lifeless air is charged with omens. Now a luminous peace envelops the woodland. The arches of the forest aisles are motionless as those of

a cathedral; not a line wavers. The glass of the lake doubles every object, from the nearest water grasses to the timbered wall of the farther shore. An islet opposite our camp, with its sprinkle of firs and popples, becomes as beautiful again. A school of minnows are jumping, a spray of silver. A gull, high enough to catch the sun, sails by on lazy wing; its double sails below. A loon calls up the lake, and this and the snapping of our camp-fire are the only sounds.

No less mysterious than these stillnesses are the first moments when nature awakens from her sleep. The popple leaves, first to respond, begin to quiver, soon to dance; the water laps against the shore; the clouds bestir themselves, and like a fleet that has weighed anchor they set sail for other scenes.

*Whereby was known that we had viewed
The union of our earth and skies
Renewed: nor less alive renewed
Than when old bards, in nature wise,
Conceived pure beauty given to eyes,
And with undyingness imbued.*

*C*OME hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

—AS YOU LIKE IT





WIND-BOUND! A potent phrase, on the sound of which gather in the mind's eye an odd company of forest adventurers. There are "tourists" with their guides and canoemen, lumberjacks on their way to this slaughtering place or that, Indians, prospectors, camp cooks, and tugmen, an English army officer who has exchanged the sword for a roll of maps and is inspecting his majesty's woodland, Canadian rangers—alert, good-tempered fellows, with a shrewd eye for contraband—east-bound and west-bound, they are gathered on a neck of land separating Birch Lake from Basswood, waiting the west wind's pleasure.

And chiefly I recall our camp-fire after nightfall on the lee of the hill, to which draws his majesty's First Ranger in that part of the Dominion, a tall and graceful young man, to whose pleasant face a smile comes quickly. 'Twixt him and our guide there is much talk of maps and trails, to which I can listen by the hour. This carry (or portage, as they call it) is but a lift-out, that one is a back-breaker; if one go by Pine Portage he shall

see fine waters and woodland; if he go by Mud Lake he shall find nothing of account. And of all the lakes in this great labyrinth there is none like to— But that is a secret to be guarded, for as yet the “tourists” have not found their way thither, and next summer, or the summer after, it shall be our destination.

Summer and winter these rangers are on the move, in canoe or on snowshoes; and save that their vocation is to maintain the law instead of to break it, their lives are as romantic as those of the bygone archers of Sherwood Forest; or so it seems to us whose lives are spent in towns, and who adventure into the wilderness only in the friendly season. We hear of hardships endured; his majesty's First Ranger is reminded of the “longest hike” of his experience, a double-quick from a certain lake to Fort Francis. This draws a chuckle from our guide. “And I,” vouchsafes the latter, “was just one day ahead of you.”

The ranger laughs good-naturedly. The feud, whatever it may have been, was in the day's work, and is now forgotten. The tobacco is passed, and the embers of the camp-fire stirred, and the unwearied west wind whips them into flame.

N*O weather is ill
If the wind be still.*

—ENGLISH PROVERB





TO be able to sit with one's back against a tree and wait, a week if must be, for a drop in the wind, does not argue possession of a special kind of temperament, for I have two friends that are unlike as can be, whose capacity for sitting still is unlimited. All that either asks is a dry corner of the tent and a supply of tobacco, and the North-East may slant a deluge or the South-West crack its cheeks. My patience falls short of theirs. I can wait if only rain delays; but a wind that blows day in and day out puts me on edge, and I marvel that searchers for the Southern Pole could face a ceaseless gale and keep their wits.

Prisoners of "this fierce angel of the air," on the lee shore of Basswood Lake, we turn in, the third night, to the shrill music of his pipes, but in the darkest hour I wake to find the music gone; hushed even the topmost choir of the pines.

*Argent Westward glows the hunt,
East the blush about to climb.*

A break for liberty is resolved on. The tent

is struck, breakfast is a small matter, and before our fellow-prisoners on the shore have roused themselves we are speeding westward as fast as bending blades of ash can send us. But in one stride the morning overtakes us; the javelins of the sun shower all around, striking fire from the gray rocks and drawing red from the burnt fir-tops on the nearer shore; the mist-phantoms, turned purple by the pelting sun-rays, scurry across the face of the waters. The day is up.

From what quarter may we expect the wind? We have not long to speculate. The West is announced by a band of silver far up the lake, marking its first contact with the plane. The silver spreads, ripples grow to waves, and before another mile is covered the whitecaps are running. We keep on, spite of aching wrists and shoulders, until the water begins to come over the bow, when we give up the tussle, and wonder whether we can make the nearest island without swamping. This interesting question goes unanswered, for a large launch has come up behind us. Distress signals are promptly responded to, the cargo is transferred, and from our "egg-shell pinnace" we step aboard what seems, by comparison, an ocean liner.

THIS was a day that knew not age.

—THE SOUTH-WESTER





A SKY without a trace of vapor, a sunlit beach, a blue plane of water, roughened to purple where the puffy off-shore wind whips it; a cluster of fishermen's houses, and back of these the forest. In this memory picture are the things that the Spaniard Sorolla delights to portray; strong sunlight, and wind, and a surface joy of living. The sunlight is everywhere; it floods even the forest, exorcising the spell of it, dissipating the enchantment. And it wraps, in a blanket of genial warmth, two lotus-eaters lazing by the waterside, waiting for the wind to drop, that they may put forth in their cockleshell.

We are as far from the world of men and affairs, my companion and I, as if the roll of the planet had pitched us off into space. If we prefer a planet's shell it is because the beach beneath us has caught and stored the rays of the sun, because a few miles of atmosphere has colored them, because the woodland has yielded its odors to their keeping. We are not conscious of a stronger bond with this particular footstool of the Almighty. It

is blazing sunlight. Thought, introspection, shadow and mystery, are absent.

But the voyage at "gathered eve," the five-mile paddle along the shore to our camp on the magic Brule—this returns us to the world of men, of the makers of song, the dreamers of shining dreams. Color is everywhere; our paddles drip it. Araby the Blest never harbored odors more grateful than those the land breeze brings to us. As the fires of the sunset pale, a song sparrow sings, slowly and plaintively, two measures of an exquisite melody, and then is silent, though we wait for more of his music. The forest is dark; the enchantment has returned. Shadow and mystery, and the thoughts that elude expression—these are with us now. . . . And these are the things one misses in the paintings of the Spaniard.

THE great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon.
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd
in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea,
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

—THE PASSING OF ARTHUR





IDLE speculation goes very well with pipe-smoking, which Schopenhauer pronounced a substitute for thought. Supplied with this substitute, I have speculated, idly enough, upon what sort of world this might be without the printed, painted and carven products of man's imagination. How would a landscape present itself devoid of every fanciful, poetical association? Perhaps as the metaphysical "thing in itself," or as near to it as we could come. "Landscape," said Amiel, "is a state of mind."

German metaphysics suggests a tarn, and this poetical word recalls a moonlit "state of mind," in which I and another found ourselves one midsummer night that followed a sundown of almost supernatural beauty. Our camp was pitched, and is now pitched in the pipesmoke, at the mouth of the Brule, and when supper is done and the beds laid we venture, the moon riding high, to explore the river—silent in the last deep reach of its journey, but songful in the spreading shallows. A dozen strokes of the paddle bring us to the rapids, lovely in the silvery

light, and we digress through a narrow grassy channel into a circular lagoon. Thrice we round this, then lay the canoe against the rushes and sit motionless.

The tarn, or more strictly lagoon, is walled by the forest, and it pleases us to fancy it of a great depth. The rim of it is all in shadow, with a pale inner ring of sagittaria; the moon's light, thickened by a mist, falls upon the middle of the pool. It was from such a magic mere that the "arm clothed in white samite" rose, bearing the brand Excalibur. And on a bridge of moonbeams we cross the centuries and stand with Arthur and Merlin by "a fair water." And—

"Lo, said Merlin, yonder is the sword that I spake of. What damsel is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady of the Lake, said Merlin; and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any on earth and richly beseen, and this damsel will come to thee anon, and then speak ye fair to her, and she will give thee that sword."

In our childhood we play with blocks, and in our later years we build bridges of moonbeams. What sort of world would it be without them?

MY eyes make pictures when they are shut.

—DAY DREAM





OVER the desk hangs a blueprint, the white rectangles representing building lots; several of these spaces are marked "Sold." One has only to express approval of this lot as against that one, and the magic word "Sold" is written across it. No money changes hands — none that I know of. I remark that the upper lots seem more desirable for residential purpose than the lower, and the Judge (as they call him) becomes alert. He draws the curtain of his desk, locks it carefully, and rises. "I have a little surveying to do up there, anyway," he says. "Glad of the walk," say I; and we set forth, the Judge carrying a small axe and tape, and a stout staff which he holds before him, tapping like a blind man.

Our way follows the sweep of the beach for a quarter mile; then we thread a fringe of firs and strike up the hill. The Judge pauses. "These are the lots you prefer," he says. "Ah, yes. And what do you call the street?" I inquire, looking southward. "St. Paul Avenue," he replies.

I fill a pipe while the Judge drives a few more survey stakes. There is much on St. Paul Avenue to admire. The thoroughfare is gay with fireweed, for one thing, and there are asters, and the red and purple berries of summer flowers, and now and then flashes of feathers and trills of sparrow song. Undisturbed by our presence a porcupine is leisurely stripping the leaves from a fireweed. Below to the east lies the Big Water, unruffled as a forest pool. Two crescents of sand define the shore, and between the crescents sprawls the village; on the right the frame dwellings of the Norse fishermen, on the left the log cabins and tepees of the Chippewas. "I shall have to move my office up here, as everything down there"—the Judge waves his arm—"will be wanted for docks and warehouses."

We wind down the hill. "There's a boat up to-night," I say. "Would you mind giving this letter to the purser?" He accepts the commission almost eagerly, and jots down in a crowded memorandum book a record of the transaction. The Judge always meets the boat. North-bound and south-bound, it puts in four times a week; and rain or clear, fog or starlight, the Judge is first on the wharf, staff and lantern in hand. "Somebody on the boat might want to see me about a lot," he explains.

*O*H, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt,
Sweet Alice with eyes so brown?

—BEN BOLT





PIPESMOKE through pipesmoke. The long narrow hotel bar-room is fogged with it. Against the bar lean a picturesque crew of lumberjacks, timber cruisers and Indians, waiting for the night boat. A tall woodlander, with lighted lantern dangling on arm, is standing treat for the crowd, and the bar is awash with beer, tall beakers of which the landlord serves with a careless hand. In the corner stands a music box of the slot variety; the revolving disc tinkles forth the pensive ballad of "Ben Bolt"; and when the tune ends, Dave the Keeper of the Light drops in another coin, and the ballad begins again. It is the tune he likes best in all the world; so he tells a French-Canadian whom he has persuaded to listen. "You bet, you bet, you bet," says Frenchy, sympathetically. Both are bemused with beer.

I have been talking trails and rivers with one of the cruisers, and when I step out of the fog of pipesmoke for a breath of fresh air, I find another sort of fog abroad. It has rolled in from the lake in great volume

and swallowed everything; the lighthouse light is obliterated. The door opens and one of the woodlanders comes out, followed by a tinkle of "Ben Bolt," which is beginning another round. "There ain't no music in them boxes," says the woodlander scornfully. And he mentions an unknown violinist who passed that way during the winter, and to whose playing he listened while lying sick upstairs in the hotel. "That was music," says he; and I wonder whether it was.

Suddenly through the fog comes a questioning blast from a steamer's whistle. "She's out pretty well," I remark. "Ran by," says the woodlander. "And Dave ain't got his bell going! Wonder how much longer the Cap'n is going to stand for that sort of thing." He opens the door and hails the recreant Keeper of the Light. "Hey, Dave! Start your bell! Boat's outside in the fog—pretty nigh the reef, too!" Dave lurches forth and vanishes in the fog, and presently the sound of oars tells that he is pulling for the light.

It is an anxious hour for the folks aboard the steamer, and for the master of the boat, who fears the rocky, lichen-frosted shore. But he is a taciturn man, and he makes only one comment: "Why don't Dave hang his fog bell on the saloon? Then I'll know where to steer."

*DAY of the cloud in fleets! O day
Of wedded white and blue, that sail
Immingled, with a footing ray
In shadow sandals down our vale.*

—THE SOUTH-WESTER





THE pipesmoke, to my fancy, now takes the form of clouds, above a picture of unbroken solitude. September is only a few days old, but she wears the vesture of October. The fire-swept slopes of Pine Mountain are clad in scarlet and gold, and there are splashes of these gay colors in the pattern of the circling green. Overhead, our poet's wedded white and blue, the cloud in fleets—the low-lying stratus streaming like pennons from the blackened staffs of dead and distant trees.

Here, leaving the rude wagon road, leads off another pipesmoke carry; pipesmoke truly, for path or blaze there is none—one steers by the sun and the “lay of the land.” Four miles of ridges and ravines lie between me and the high burnt hill, by the farther slope of which Atagi of the Rembrandt visage has told me I shall find the magic Brule. The blessed toil of those four generous miles! Thickets of hazel and maple belt the hills, and tangles of alder edge the small streams that drain the ravines; and to the last of these I come with no little satisfaction. A brook washes the base of the

high burnt hill, and along the nearer bank courses a well-worn moose trail. This presently leaps the stream and pitches up the hill, and I toil after. It is a stiff climb for moose or man, but the reward, like all rewards worth while, is at the summit.

One really vibrates but once to the shouts of the Valkyries or the lovely music of "Am stillen Herd"; successive hearings do not bring that first "incommunicable thrill." So, from this hilltop, I shall never see again precisely what I see this day of wedded white and blue, never feel again the lump in throat and starting tear which the sudden revelation of exquisite beauty produces.

Below me lies the Valley of the Brule, a perfect picture of solitude, transcending every beauty imaged for it. Here the river widens into a lake, and one arm, reaching in parallel with the stream, forms a long narrow peninsula, in the swamp of which a few dead trees stand weirdly. Five miles to the west and half as many to the east the valley is open as a map; and where the river is in view lies the roselight of the afterglow.

As I lean my pack against the giant boulder that hangs upon the brow of the hill, and look long into the Valley of Silence, there comes the regret the lone wayfarer knows — the regret that another is not there to share the glory of the place and murmur an "Amen!" to his fervent "God be praised!"

O*NLY at gathered eve knew we
The marvels of the day.*

—THE SOUTH-WESTER





SUNDOWN and striding shadows. An evening of rare beauty descends on the valley; moonlight, and the mist rising from the river; a forest as enchanted as Undine's encircles me. The ban of silence that the day imposed is lifted from the Brule, which babbles of unravished solitudes and mysteries. Always this river has bewitched me. Even now, seen through pipesmoke, its charm is as potent as on that blessed morning when first I looked on it, a brown flood flecked with the foam of countless falls and rapids.

Supper and the pipe contemplative, and the pleasant recapitulation of the obstacles surmounted in the day's work. This is the chief joy of a woodland voyage; and the harder the day, the deeper the peace that broods over the camp-fire. One would not, indeed, unless the need were urgent, retrace some arduous trails; but before the cedar's blaze their thorns are forgiven and forgot, and one chooses to remember only the cloud in fleets, the autumn finery of the hills, the flash of wings, the wayside pool and flower.

Into the weaving of this gay tapestry some sober threads of thought may come. A man may reflect that his life is made up of many carries; that he sets out with a brave array of companions, who fall away with the years; and that middle age finds him footing the trail with a single comrade, sharing with her the good and the ill, the rough and the smooth, the sunlight and the shadow, the heat of the day and the cool of the evening. Then, if heaven be so unkind, he must make the last and longest carry alone. Happy the man who has so ordered his life that he can go this solitary way serene and unafraid.

Now darkens even the western skyline. The mists rise and the stars show in the river. I am glad that I know the names of many of these stars. The tent-opening frames the Chair of Cassiopeia, and I fall to thinking of

*That starred Ethiop queen, that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended.*

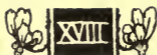
An owl hoots across the lake, a muskrat splashes in the river, the brook brawls under the hill.

All's well in the valley.

T*HE wind has teeth, the wind has claws,
All the wind's wolves through woods are loose,
The wild wind's falconry aloft.*

—HARD WEATHER





THERE are pictures that bite deep in the memory, and rise long afterward with scarcely a line expunged. Such a picture the pipesmoke rings: a wet wisp of a tent swung in a huddle of young popples against a background of dead jack-pines, fire-killed and waiting for the wind. Whenever it blows a full gale, as the sailors say, I see that weird array of blackened masts—waiting for the wind.

All the night and all the day it has rained. The woods are saturated, every leaf is charged. Globules of water hang from the points of the pine needles, and the young balsams and spruces are white with standing rain. Rotted trees turn to muck underfoot, while overhead the forest waits but a touch to discharge a deluge. The camp-fire burns despite the downpour, for the fuel is jack-pine and the flame is roofed.

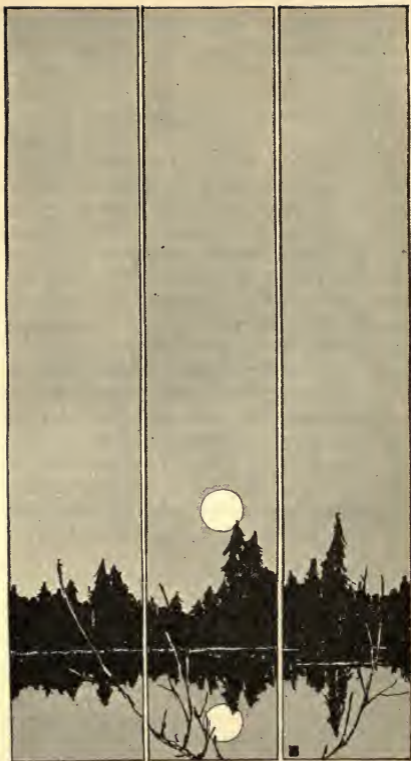
A sudden light gleams in the west and broadens till the blue appears. The east begins to gild, and across a field of azure the low, thinned clouds drive like smoke; the South-Wester shows its teeth and claws.

Arcturus burns like a topaz through the popples, whose slim boles bend before the blasts, the entire grove as one tree. Have we not known people who bow their heads to the gale of adversity, nor raise them till the storm is past?

Crash! One of the dead trees falls; another, and another. I can hear each discharge of the tempest as it comes down the narrow valley. It sweeps around the river bend, preluded by the boom of falling trees, and the next instant it is about my ears, bending the popples, scattering the firebrands, and dying away down the river. But even the giant wings of the South-Wester are dusted with the powders of Poppyland, and my last memory of that wild night is the yellow disc of the rising moon, glimpsed through the storm-parted portals of my canvas lodging. Safe among the bending popples, I fall asleep to the rude music of dead trees falling on the hill, and the deepening voice of the rushing river.

*YOU must love the light so well
That no darkness will seem fell.
Love it so you could accost
Fellowly a living ghost.
Whish! the phantom wisps away,
Owns him smoke to cocks of day.*

—THE WOODS OF WESTERMAIN





THEY tell of mariners who fought with death on whom fell afterward "the Fear," and some such awe of the forest deep may have come to those who, within its shadows, have been at grips with death and all but lost the issue; for there are accidents by trail and river which must be reckoned on when we put forth into the green and blessed silence, and that is one of several reasons for woodsmen traveling in pairs. Nature is as savage as she is beautiful; we must keep the upper hand.

The woodland has always used me kindly, and such fear as I confess to is as foolish as a child's dread of the dark. Too much imagination is at bottom of it—an explanation offered by an experienced mountaineer, who told me that he never scaled a peak without experiencing acute pangs of terror. Imagination it may be—or a too-lively fancy, which when the wind is in the fir-tops peoples with fantastic shapes the "shadowed leagues of slumbering sound," and as odd a company draw up to the edge of the firelight as ever thrust themselves upon the temerarious

youth, in the Grimm märchen, who set out to learn what fear was. Queer folk out of the pages of Hoffmann are among the visitors, and there runs through my head that old tale of Fouqué's, and the river, only a pebble's-toss away, begins to rise. It covers the boulders, it creeps up the bank, it hisses through the brush, until the entire valley heaves with frothy waves, milk-white in the moonshine. I hear the despairing cries of Bertalda and the Knight, and see the grinning face of the malicious Kühleborn.

Then I rise, with a little shiver, to stir the fire; and with its leaping flames the flood subsides and the wraiths depart. More surely to dismiss them, I leave the circle of firelight and go down to the river, which at a place that I shall always remember runs still and deep—scarcely “lapping with low sounds by the shore.” The moon, an hour risen, stands upon a fringe of pointed firs; its beams define a sharp bend in the stream, beyond which sounds faintly the murmur of rapids. The peace that passes understanding lies upon the wild. No ghostly train intrudes. No darkness can seem fell.

T*HE sun draws out of hazel leaves
A smell of woodland wine.
I wake a swarm to sudden storm
At any step's advance.*

—OUTER AND INNER





MANIFOLD are nature's moods, as seen in the turn of a stream, the curve of a cataract, the banking of hills at a lakehead; — and one may not anticipate these moods. One may view, through rings of pipesmoke, places that he has never actually seen, and when he comes to visit these places they are not in the least as fancy pictured them. This is a common experience, but it is not so common to find reality transcending anticipation.

For several years my winter meditations have focused on the confluence of the River Brule and a smaller stream—a fascinating point on the map; and now, after a week of arduous travel, I am within an hour's march of the goal. There remains less than a mile of burnt land, but this is strewn with hazel thickets—nature in one of her most trying moods. Much has been said by anglers in depreciation of the alder, but for the cultivating of patience there is no better environment than a thicket of hazel. When stung smartly on one cheek you learn to turn the other; and you learn to disengage yourself

and pack, without objurgation, from the detaining tentacles of a plant that rivals the devil-fish. None the less, you have a definite opinion of *Corylus*; you feel that you could barely be civil to a young woman named Hazel, or to any of the sex with hazel eyes. Happily the sun is in the vineyard, making woodland wine, and the air would revive a Sisyphus. Clearing the last thicket I enter the cool wood again, and presently come to the climax of my inland voyage.

The picture is more beautiful than that I imaged on the long winter evenings when, map in hand, I footed the pipesmoke trail. Where the filtered tribute of the little river merges with the clean brown of the Brule is set an island, rising well above the flood and crowned with pointed firs. Curled fallen leaves of birch and ash inlay the surface of the stream with "patines of bright gold." And the broad pool glitters like steel in the sunlight.

Nature now in one of her most romantic moods, and I have my reward for many days of toil.

*SWEET as Eden is the air,
And Eden-sweet the ray.
No Paradise is lost for them
Who foot by branching root and stem,
And lightly with the woodland share
The change of night and day.*

—WOODLAND PEACE





WALT WHITMAN should have done the Song of the Pack; I know of none to do it now—so well. We have minstrels who will sing you a song of the open road, and acceptably; but Whitman would have voiced the joy of toil, the joy of putting down a foot and feeling a weight to lift, and the deep satisfaction in lifting it; the pleasure in physical fatigue, in thirst and sweat, and the clean dirt of the trail. You may fight your pack, as Sindbad fought the Old Man of the Sea, and fling it off at sundown with a great sigh of deliverance, but you will take it up again in the morning without a thought of travail past; and when the new year comes, “reviving old desires,” your shoulders will itch, as mine itch now, for the pull of the leathern bands.

Now, through the pipesmoke, is seen a river crossing; a simple passage when the stream is low, but this day it is swollen with many rains, and races shoulder deep. A raft is the one solution, and all the forenoon is devoted to its construction; slow work when one has to fashion wooden spikes and rob

the spruce for thongs. Not a dead stick stands among the green for rods around; all that offers is live balsam, and when the work is done I am reminded of the boat that Robinson Crusoe built. True, I can launch my craft, but there is so little buoyancy in the green balsam that it will not bear both man and pack. One must swim; so pushing the precious cargo into the current, I follow with the motive power, and save for a few collisions with mid-stream boulders the voyage is accomplished without mishap.

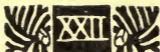
The raft, having served its purpose, is dismissed with a kick, as so many of us are dismissed on this pleasantest of possible planets, and I enter the brush again. I had hoped to follow the Brule to its mouth, but I have made slow progress, due to almost continuous rain, and I am undecided whether to go on with the winding river, which will mean several more days of hard travel, or to strike south-west across the more open country to the shore of the Big Water. A patter of raindrops at evening decides the question.

I am up before the sun. Breakfast over and the tent folded, I have a last look at the magic Brule; then the compass is consulted and S.W. marked by a dead tree on the nearest hill, and the final march is begun.

M*OSTLY* divinest harmony,
The lyre, the dance. We could believe
A life in orb and brook and tree
And cloud: and still holds Memory
A morning in the eyes of eve.

—THE SOUTH-WESTER





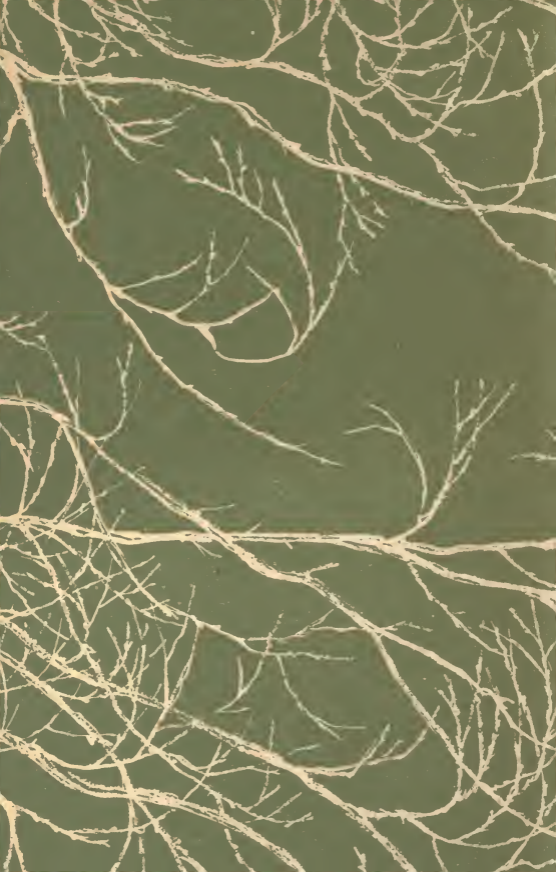
THERE yet floats a ring or two of pipe-smoke, through which is visioned forth as long a trail as ever I footed in a day's work, or likely shall again — a trail that began in the mist of dawn and ended in the dusk of evening. Twelve miles, as the crow might do it, but the crow carries nothing on his back; and who shall measure a trail where track there is none? Who shall take account of hill and gulley, of zigzags where the best footing lies, of swamps and thickets circled, of the thousand little obstructions in a road that's run by compass?

And who shall take account of the thousand little thrills of such a fling through the greenwood? There are days, like symphonies, of such "heavenly length" that recollection of the morning's little happenings is dim at eventide; they might be a part of yesterday. So many are these little happenings that unless one has gone forth with pencil and notebook he shall not recall them singly; they are the notes in the symphony. Yet one does not forget the certain glory of an autumn day. The eyes of evening keep

the blue of morning's sky, and I march with Memory over the road again, through the windless wood, over the burnt hilltops, and across the open places gay with fireweed and asters. I linger at the little brook where tea was brewed and luncheon eaten. What colors there were in the sluggish current beneath the arching alders!—browns that shaded from fawn to the deepest tints of Rembrandt's palette, with milky bars of gray-green that seemed to swim below the surface. How fadeless some impressions are! One needs no written record.

And the coming out from the pathless woods, at sundown, to the lonely shore of Kitchigami. The great lake lies, a rose-flushed plane, under a dome of rose and blue, and over the headland stands one large star. A flock of cedar waxwings flit about me unafraid, and six loons, like stately galleys, go sailing by into the west. Solitude and silence, yet divinest harmony, to which a sparrow adds a rill of plaintive song.





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