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p. 2 In 1863, at the request of a little band of Dogribs and Hareskins whose hunting grounds were situated on the shores of Great Bear Lake, the Hudson's Bay Company delegated a Savanois, a civilized Christian named John Hope, to reconstruct Fort Franklin for the second time under the name Fort Norman; for it had been decided in the Council of the Company that this post, up to then situated at different places along the MacKenzie River, should be moved to Great Bear Lake.

As early as the following year the factor, Mr. Nichol Taylor, went there to set up his migratory household.

Having come down myself to Fort Good Hope during the autumn of that same year, 1864, I had conceived the project of visiting the Indians obliged to supply the new store and at the same time exploring the neighbourhood of Great Bear Lake. To that end I had to go back up to the source of the Hareskin River, which the Indians told me was close to Great Bear Lake. I had to have guides, a sled, and sled dogs, and provisions for a fortnight's march. It was a veritable arctic expedition. Many expeditions, still more pressing and more attractive, which I have undertaken with the Dindjie, the Loucheux, and the Eskimos oblige me to recall the spring of 1866. At that time, the abandonment of Fort Anderson, in making me set sail for another point on the horizon, permitted me to reach the cape on Great Bear Lake which no Frenchman nor missionary of any denomination had ever before seen or walked upon.

I returned there in 1867, 68, 69, 71, 72, 77 and 78. I, indeed, made two trips in 1867. I left in the ordinary way on foot and snowshoes at the beginning of March on a mission to take north what was entrusted to me by the officer in charge of Fort Good Hope; and I returned to my home at that post in mid-June in a bark canoe on the MacKenzie River once again open to navigation. In 1869 I departed for Great Bear Lake and stayed there alone for six months, with a Hareskin servant.

But in 1866 there were no guides at Fort Good Hope capable of conducting me across that distant region, new to me. The Hareskins who frequented Fort Good Hope never crossed the line separating the tributaries of the MacKenzie from those with Great Bear Lake. They knew only the shortest way to get to this sweetwater sea, which was to go up the Hareskin River, to the height of which no white had ever penetrated. According to Sir John Richardson this river flowed out of Great Bear Lake, as well as the Anderson, the river of Lac la Martre, and the outlet of Great Bear Lake into the MacKenzie, all of which made four outlets for this sea of sweetwater.

That theory was too absurd to be true. My expeditions give a flat contradiction to his view, as they show this huge lake to have a single and unique outlet; and this is much more in conformity to the laws of hydrostatics.

But I had learned from the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company that the Gens-du-Poil or Hareskins had cut a new trail between Smith Arm, which I could attain by way of the Hareskin River, to Keith Arm on the shores of which the new Fort Norman was situated.

On the basis of this information, a little vague as to truth, I did not hesitate to set out with two Indians still younger and more inexperienced than myself. Neither one had seen those parts, and I counted more on my compass than on their knowledge. I was then 26 years old.

My first servant, Hyacinthe Dzan-You, or Dirty Clothes, was married and had served the mission two years. He fulfilled the function of guide, in the sense that he walked or ran in front of the dogs to break trail. I followed after, fitted out like him on snowshoes. He had never gone to Great Bear Lake.

My second servant, Arsene Beh-foule, or Empty Sled, was a Kha-tcho-gottine from the interior on the testimony of Fort Good Hope, where he had been granted to me for three months in exchange for 25 francs per month, board and lodging not included.

He was a good sort of fellow, equal to any test, cordial and thoroughly honest. But he knew no more of Great Bear Lake than his companion.

On arrival at Fort Norman I sent Hyacinthe back to Good Hope with my dogsled and kept Arsene with me until the month of June.

We left on the 4th of March, traversed Brochet Lake, Bluefish, Allonge, and Cache-a-viande, skirting Musk Ox Plateau, Yakkray-die on foot, and there we spent the first night. The snow was very ...

The Journey

p. 49 On the same sound, (Keith Arm) on a naked beach, and surrounded with low-lying swamps which the melting snow water fills each spring, stands the new Fort Norman, if it is permissable to use so hyperbolical an expression to designate four low structures of hewn spruce trunks, peeled and chinked with mud, which expose their simple and humble single storey, with no appearance of the martial about them, on that flat barren shore. So little difference in elevation exists between the shore and the lake in that place that Fort Norman seems as though constructed on the ice.

To the south extends Keith Arm; to the west vast plains and the outlet of the lake; to the north the wooded heights from which I descended and which would shelter the fort if it were nearer to them; finally, to the east is the little Grey Geese Lake and the site of the old Fort Franklin.

This last is a sandy hillside about 25 feet high, rising from a marsh which extends along the shore and in which stand some rare shented spruce trees. Wide spaces alone indicate the ruins of the overwintering of the celebrated navigator; for of these ruins only traces remain; all has been used or burned.

As I had absolutely no place to stay at Great Bear Lake in 1866, I made an appeal to the hospitality of the commandant of Fort Norman, to whom I was recommended warmly in a letter of introduction from Mr. W. L. Hardisty, the chief of the MacKenzie district. I was received with open arms by the factor, Mr. Nicol Taylor, a good Orkney man, about 60 years of age, who had come into the country in the retinue of the expeditions for the discovery of the Northwest Passage, and who was thereafter known by the title 'fisherman'. He had almost always lived at Great Bear Lake for the supply of Fort Simpson, the headquarters of the district. At last, his intelligence and his services had merited his elevation to the grade of 'post master', and the Hudson's Bay Company had entrusted him with the little Fort Norman after the departure of Mr. Brisebois, clerk of the post. Mr. Taylor had changed the location of the fort five or six times, thanks to the liberty and independence which chiefs of stations enjoy in the Northwest. He had put (?) it on all the banks and islands of the MacKenzie from the Castor-qui-deboule and the mouth of the Great Bear River. Finally he had come ashore on the remote and savage beach of this lake. But Fort Norman did not stay there long; for in 1869 the little character transported it once again to the mouth of the aforementioned river, where it remains to this day.

"Father," cried the little Orkney man, shaking my hand and simultaneously spitting out the juice of his eternal tobacco plug, "You are at home with me. No manners, not with me. I am an old fisherman of the Company. I am a man; I go straight to the point and I like to be treated the same."

His Metis-Canadian French was very tolerable and perfectly comprehensible. His manner, childlike and frank, of putting people at ease pleased me very much. He had a way of looking at you with a jovial air and winking his eye which was very droll. This brave fellow divided his house up with me. This tiny dwelling, small, but in proportion to the littleness of its owner, was composed of only three rooms with a small kitchen at the back.

Of the middle room, which was only an antichamber, a sort of corridor, he made his reception room for the Indians. He kept a room giving on the west, and gave me the one that faced east, and which had an independent entrance. It received the light from the south and east through two square windows of 80 cm. and it had one of those big American stoves capable of taking an armload of firewood...(?)

Mr. Taylor himself brought me an excellent feather bed sewed up in a moosehide, two pillows, a table, a little armchair with a wooden seat, a basin, and a wrought iron candlestick. I have not been better treated, not even by the amiable Mr. Roderick MacFarlane at Esquimo Fort the previous winter. Here one sees what one can only call true Scottish hospitality, the like of which one would find only rarely in France.

"It's been more than thirty years," the old explorer told me, chewing on his execrable plug, "that I've known this place. Do you see that white spot down there, Father, at the end of the shore on the edge of Gray Geese Lake? Ah well, that's the spot where I put up a cabin in my young time, when I was a man * (* a significant Canadian expression: when I was a servant, employed) and I was fishing for Master Dease, who's dead now."

"In 1848 I spent the winter there with Lt. Hooper, who gave me this as a present." And the little old fellow shoed me a great marine telescope which served him to explore the surfact of the lake.

"When I was a man" was an expression one came across frequently in the stories, more or less embroidered and cleverly amplified, of Mr. Taylor, the wag of his colleagues in commission, and who, like many other employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, loved to speak of his humble origins from a matelot, from fisherman, from labourer, in his life as a self-made man; a title, on my word, very honorable and very glorious where one recognizes that it is carried by an honest man.

p. 25 This rogue of an old man had taken for the emblem of his fort: the Three Francois. He had surrounded himself with three Metis French Catholics who rejoiced in that name: Francois Gendron, Francois Richard and Francois Nadaud. All three were steersmen, and had also the functions of fishermen, voyageurs, sawyers, and builders. The Savon protestant, John Hope, of whom I have already spoken in my second volume (Autour du Grand Lac des Esclaves) was interpreter to the fort, but only in form and for the emoluments; for he understood not one word of the Dene language, speaking only the Slave dialect, and had for a master a man who understood his savage clients perfectly.

Four Scottish Presbyterian bachelors completed the personnel of that little post.

Mr. Taylor was not alone. He had with him his daughter Jenny from his first wife, a Slavey of the MacKenzie and Laura Collins, daughter of his second wife, an American, whom he had lost in the preceding December after one year of marriage. The unhappy woman had died in giving birth to a little boy whom the old gentleman raised on the feeding bottle, thanks to the help of the step-sister Laura, who served the child in lieu of a mother.

p. 59-60 Such was the family with whom I dwelt and took my meals ...

p. 62 I found among the Indians of the lake the same erroneous belief I had met among the Hareskins of Fort Good Hope: that there exists a secret antipathy between the fish and the caribou, of such a kind that the first disappears and hides itself when the second appears on the lake, and vice versa.

p. 62 On my arrival at Great Bear Lake, the 20th of March, 1866, there were already ten thousand kilograms of caribou flank smoked and dried in the storehouse at Fort Norman; what, consequently, made ten thousand dead caribou.

But how many others had been devoured up to the flank, the only part of the animal, with its tongue and its skin, was an object of trade. How much fresh meat I saw tied up and hanging in the same storehouse, Mr. Taylor could not put any more than an approximate figure to. He had not weighed it. But he told me he was possessed of 400 kilos of flesh (fondue en pains?) and 2000 smoked tongues, which he did not touch. We ate only fresh tongues, and I am assured that in the fort a daily consumption occurred that was incredible, since all the servants received some of it for pay and at each meal. Before my departure from the fort in June 1887 (?), Mr. Taylor made me a present of a sack which contained 80 kilos of caribou tongues, which he had salted expressly for my journey to the Arctic Ocean. The excellent fellow!

p. 64 furs trapped in the area - very few marten, foxes or muskrats. On the contrary, one finds there the glouton (?) or carcajou, white and grey wolves, mink or fontreau, as well as the otter, which is large and very beautiful.

In the whole district of MacKenzie the steppes of Great Bear Lake have acquired a well-merited reputation of horror, of desolation and of melancholy ...

p. 65 Admirable compensation of divine Providence, this region so frightening that death seems to have adopted it as a preferred dwelling place, from which men ought naturally to withdraw with haste and without regret, is yet every year and from time immemorial the pasturage of an excellent and inexhaustible herd of caribou, the butchery where it is slaughtered in insensate quantities, the promised land of the Indians, where, in truth, the milk and honey do not run in streams but where the fat meat, the flesh and tongues of the caribou accumulate in heaps. Thus, the savages, in the midst of this frightful desert, pass the major part of their lives in the abundance and the pleasures of the chase, renewed without cease.

Before the reconstruction of Fort Norman of 1863 these Danites, although they overwintered on their rich steppes were obliged to travel to sell their furs and their dry meat in the forts of the MacKenzie or at Fort Rae on the north of Great Slave Lake. They made these considerable journeys many times and they constituted an obstacle to the success of their hunting, for which there was a necessity that they remain in one place. But since the establishment of the new trading post, these Indians became definitely attached to Great Bear Lake and hunted at such a short distance from Fort Norman that we could hear their gunshots and see the smoke of their camp. Meanwhile the entire red-skin population of the region served by Fort Norman did not exceed 250 souls, and I doubt if it has been augmented since. I made the exact census in 1866. This handful of Indians divided into four tribes or people: The gens du Poil who had for a fetish the white wolf. They lived on the big peninsula north and east of Smith Arm; The Boat People (gens des Canots) who revered the dog. Their hunting ground was south and east of Great Bear Lake; the Willow People (gens du Bout des Saules) of whom the Manitou of choice was the otter. They affected the shores of the Telini-die and the country situated on the east side of the MacKenzie; finally, the People of the Rocky Mountains, who respected the lynx, and hunted in the valleys of the western range.

According to the tradition of the gens du Poil, none of these tiny tribes originated at Great Bear Lake, and I can well believe that. But long before the coming of the whites, there lived a people whom men today designate by the epithet People of the Lake, People of the Water. I think that this ought to be the Eskimos from the mouths of Hearne's Coppermine River. The Hare-Skins represent them as simple and timid. They never abandoned the shores and lived without vigilance (?) as they knew themselves or believed themselves the sole inhabitants of Great Bear Lake and perhaps of the whole world.

When the Danite tribes arrived on the shores of Great Bear Lake, the tradition continues, it was from the Northwest and by the high point that separates Smith from Keith Arm. The Dene camped in view of the lake on the summit of the mountain, preparing themselves to descend the following morning into the steppes where they had seen the lodges and the smoke, but above all troops of caribou wandering at will. The T'oune, not wondering at the unaccustomed fires, prayed to them stupidly as newly appearing stars. They mounted no guard but went to sleep as usual, full of security, in ignorance of the danger they were in. At dawn they were all massacred by the Hareskins of Gen du Poil, who, not content with their easy victory, still sing of the unhappy Eskimos, in whose mouths they ironically put words which depict the extreme credulity of the T'oune: "At the height of the track, what are those great stars that sparkle in the firmament?"

Since that heroic epoch the central promontory of the Great Point carried the name the Height of the Track ...

p. 68 The oldest document I possess in that regard (concerning European settlement & exploration at Great Bear Lake) came to me from an old French Metis, Beaulieu, who was the Chipewyan interpreter and hunter for Sir John Franklin at Great Bear Lake, where he left many natural children who bear his family name. He delivered it to me at Great Slave Lake, where I wrote to his dictation in the month of June 1863. I translate from the text; translating out of the Athabasca dene, his mother tongue:

"In the spring of 1799, that is to say, ten years after the discovery of the MacKenzie River, another MacKenzie also employed by the Franco-Scottish Northwest Company, and whom the Canadiens had nicknamed 'Big Neck' to distinguish him from Sir Alexander MacKenzie, the explorer, constructed a trading post on the north shore of Keith Arm, on the shore of a little lake and in the wood of Hare Point - Kha-tcho-ehta.

"Mr. MacKenzie Big-Neck, who was the factor, had under his command a French Canadian bookkeeper, Mr. LeBlanc. He had also brough with him some Canadiens in his employ, who cordially detested him because of his haughtiness and his harshness.

"At that time, the citizens of the Northwest Company wore the costume of gentlemen, that is to say, a tricorne hat, a greatcoat adorned with long tails and Pierrot buttons, a long waistcoat, and short culottes, a wig, and a sword at the side. A costume that appeared to us extraordinarily ridiculous.

"Mr. MacKenzie Big-Neck rewarded the work of his servants, which he allotted by the day, with the sole nourishment of six herrings, while he gorged himself on fresh caribou meat, tongues, cakes and whisky. Soon the discontent burst out into the open.

"One day, when MacKenzie went to inspect his timber yard, he found his men seated on a hewn block smoking their pipes, in the middle of work. I was then a pure savage of 15 years of age, and I was with them, as my uncle was the interpreter for the fort. Immediately, the citizen reprimanded his servants, in this fashion:

"Go on! Go on! To work, you bunch of loafers!" he cried.

"Sir, one is not a loafer because one stops for breath for a few moments, smoking a pipe," a Canadien name Desmarest, who had been making a door, replied with no insolence. "Especially, added to that, when one has for rations only herring boiled in clear water".

"Shut your mouth and go to work!" cried MacKenzie, red with rage, "and if you don't-!" And drawing his sword awkwardly, he menaced the workman with it.

"Ah, you rogue!" exclaimed the Canadien, losing all control of himself and all respect for his chief, "You threaten me! Do you think you can treat us like slaves, because we are your servants? You eat meat four times a day, and besides that you work us to death and give us only boiled herring for food. Put your sword in its sheath, or else I'll take up my axe."

"But Desmarest had not finished speaking when he received from Mr. MacKenzie a great cut on the thigh. The blood spouted forth, and the Canadien fell down, crying:

"Ah! Rogue, you've killed me!"

"I was only a Metis," continued Francois Beaulieu, "and a Metis born savage, without baptism, without religion, an epicurean, a sultan of the desert; but I knew that I was the son of a Frenchman, and there came to me a great urge to avenge the injury done to a compatriot. I charged my musket and took the citizen in my sights (?). If he had made another move, I would have killed him."

"But the Scotsman wiped his bloody sword on his boot; he put it back in the sheath, and turning his back on us ingloriously, he went to shut himself up in his house, bolting the door."

This account proves that there were already finished buildings in the new commercial post, of which the name has not been revealed to me. Meanwhile, Desmarest's wound was not a mortal one, and in a country so cold and healthy as the great north it soon ought to have healed. "Four of us carried him under cover and Mr. LeBlanc bandaged him immediately. But this adventure revolutionized the Canadiens who, angrily took up their packs with the intention of quitting the service of the Northwest Company and going to live in the woods with the Dog Ribs. Mr. LeBlanc reasoned with these indignant people, calmed their fury, and interposed himself between them and Mr. MacKenzie Big-Neck. Then he took out of the storehouse provisions of fresh meat, caribou tongues, flour, tea, and sugar, and gave them to the employees, saying:

"Take this, my friends, eat and regale yourselves. Here is what Mr. MacKenzie sends you, as an expression of regret whereby he shows that he has made a move without thinking, out of anger. Please forget what has happened."

"With these northern delicacies, the citizen cleverly closed the mouths of the malcontents, and persuaded them to continue with the work."

p. 72-73 Franklin's arrival in 1825

p. 79 Richardson departs Fort Franklin by way of the MacKenzie in 1826.

p. 80 Death of Thomas Simpson by suicide.

p. 81 exact placement of Fort Franklin.

p. 85-94 the travails of Elisa Kotew, la Vrille, sister-in-law of Nicol Taylor.

p. 95 Europeans called 'those who bring disease'

p. 96 visit of some Dog Ribs

p. 102 The people wish to leave the camp around the fort. They explain:

"Good-bye," they said to me, "we're going to leave. We do not want to live with the Gens de la Pierre (a Dene name for the English and Scots.) In truth, they do us no harm, they don't fight with us, they don't get angry; they are gentle and love to laugh; but with them, there is no virtue possible for our wives and daughters. They are satyrs. We are far from imitating them or resembling them, even in the woods! Come with us; for we are leaving this place."

They were right, and vainly did I complain to Mr. Taylor. He laughed at the humour of his young countrymen, calling it their jokes. There was nothing bad in it, he said, since it was only teasing.

Seeing that I could get nowhere with the old boy, as frivolous and outspoken as his servants, I came to terms with the three Metis of the fort and we undertook to construct a little chapel, 300 paces from Fort Norman. It was only a log house of 20 ft. square, which served me as both chapel and dwelling; but it was the sole means of keeping the savages by me, by getting them away from the fort, where every day, the public morality was openly outraged. About the 10th of May I was able to celebrate the opening of the chapel, and on the 23rd of May, I installed myself there altogether to the great sadness of Mr. Taylor. Meanwhile, so as not to make an enemy of the poor old man who had always treated me like a gentleman, I continued to take my meal with him every Sunday after Mass.

Unfortunately, in the month of June, when the snow had melted, I perceived a little late that the ground on which I had placed my church ... was a cemetery from the preceding autumn. I was surrounded by the dead on three sides. I resolved then to have constructed for myself a more spacious residence not far from the forest, at a kilometer from the fort, but I never had the means of bringing that enterprise to a good end, although I had all the wood cut and shaped in the following summer.

p. 106 I saw also, among the Dogribs, an old woman named Ninttsi-ratcho, the month of the Great Wind (January) who, in the time of Franklin, had been the cause of the murder of eleven of her compatriots by three French Metis in the employ of the Northwest Company. One of these was so enamoured of Great Wind that he wanted to force her to be his wife. She took refuge with her tribe in the forests surrounding Smith Arm, where the three miserable fellows followed her, surprising the unhappy Indians asleep or in bed, and assassinated eleven of them in order to seize this girl, whom they took back to Fort Franklin in spite of herself. The principal instigator of this abominable massacre was cleverly attracted to go to Fort Simpson by the company, put under guard and taken to Montreal, where he was hung, as he deserved.

Meanwhile, the Dogribs of Great Bear Lake were renowned for their hardness of heart and their penchant for murder. Sir John Franklin enumerated 31 assassinations which were undertaken between 1799 and 1826 among the Indians, of which 17 took place during his sojourn there; an enormous number. But I had the sadness of verifying that many murders were also perpetrated since my first visit to the lake, although in my absence and by heathens given to shamanism and trickery. Many of these are more distressing in that they had as their objects weak beings. A little child was devoured by dogs almost before the eyes of his family. (unreadable sentence.) Another child was torn from the womb (?) of his mother, who was giving birth for the first time (?) in order to save her life; something that happens rather frequently they tell me. Finally, a third child was buried alive by his brother-in-law before the eyes of his own sister and of all the tribe on the march.

This last victim was a poor child named Paul Tekwiti, 5 years old, and orphaned since 1865. He had been taken in by his elder sister, Kha-Khie-monne (the edge of the Hare Skin), wife of the magician slave, Nitajye, a man thoroughly hostile to the Christian religion. Little Paul was sick since birth ...

I had baptised and taken care of him in 1866. After my departure, the sickness became worse and his health deteriorated. Nitajye judged that the child would never be strong or in a condition to be useful, and he therefore rid himself of him.

p. 108 (Petitot continues with a dramatic description of the murder.)

p. 113 His servant could not forgive the mother who had attempted to expose him in infancy.

p. 119 mourning customs observed at the fort in 1866

p. 119 After the religious ceremony, the Dene population grouped itself around the graves that contained the dead of the previous year. The parents tore up the turfs and took away the pieces of wood that closed the coffins and all looked avidly at the remains, which were very little putrified, of what had been a son, a daughter, a wife or husband ...

p. 121 Then when the tribute of tears had been paid to the dead of the year, my Hareskins began sadly the feast of souls, on the edge of the open graves. Each took out of his game bag the meat which he had brought and all undertook to eat in silence, nourishing their sight with the contemplation of their dear dead.

Then the pieces of wood were placed anew over the coffins, the tombs were recovered with earth and stones and the pieces of turf, and everyone, having lightened his heart with the hommage of tears, and gathered new strength from the food taken in communion with the dead, returned to his dwelling place.

p. 133 a camp after a hunt

p. 134-5 some observations concerning the reception of a priest, alone or with companions.

p. 138 success in hunting during March - April due to snow blindness among the animals.

p. 139 celebration of an eclipse of the moon

p. 141 the Dogribs did not practise circumcision "like the Slaves, the Mountain people, and the Dindjie." (Dinjie = Loucheux)

p. 146 urges the Hudson's Bay Company to encourage the domestication of caribou

p. 148 a hunt

p. 151 feast at a hunting camp (how cooking was done.)

p. 152 larvae in caribou flesh eaten as a delicacy.

p. 152 In springtime this deer has its back covered with great white larvae which cling under the skin between flesh and epidermis. In size, form, and appearance, they resemble the maggot of a cockroach, which our peasants in the north call a mulot. These maggots, who live on the dorsal flesh or hide of the caribou, and which must cause it intense itching, excite the taste buds of the Dene, worthy rivals in this of the Malgaches or the Chinese. They suck them down with a sickening delectation as fast as they skin a caribou. Nothing is so disgusting as to see them crunch their teeth down on these maggots, swollen with flesh and all swarming. At the same time, for them it is a veritable feast.

p. 153 many names of the caribou in Dene languages.

p. 157 a hilltop near Blackwater Lake which the Slaveys used as a look-out for caribou.

p. 158 Slaveys and Dogribs hunting in the same area.

p. 158 his welcome from the women in camp.

p. 161 hears about slanderous attacks on himself from the employees of Taylor.

p. 161 (Taylor was jealous of Petitot's influence and popularity)

Up to that point there was no bad in it. But it appeared that he (Taylor) and his protestant servants had used certain slanderous lies to alienate the heart and spirit of the Indians from me. He had told them that my baptism made them die, that the Catholic religion sent the caribou away from their country, that it was the cause of secret illnesses or wounds which had erupted in the country - and other insanities unworthy of an honest man, or a man of good sense.

"But," added Zouze-tcho, who reported these stories to me, "the falsehood of this talk is so evident that they are not able to take us in by it.

They are vicious, while we see very well that you love us, that you concern yourself only with our good and think only of our health. You have proved to us long ago by the long trips you undertook to visit us and to help us; by the patience with which you assist us; by the pleasure you show in living among us. It is not Tele (Mr. Taylor) or his little Englishmen who do anything of the sort, those people who work only to make pagans of us, who come here only to court our wives and our daughters, to ruin our lodges, and to wield a heavy hand over all that pleases them."

"For four winters since you visited us they have sent two protestant ministers and two school teachers, the latter in order to make our children protestant. Ah well, what have we done, we whom they call Slaves? We have obliged them to leave, by our indifference and our disdain. You were not there; they had a fair chance. Ah well, but they were not able to get around any of us. They took three children by force. Your own servant, Klele, is one of them; they reclaimed him because he is the illegitimate son of Mr. Brisebois. (The servant Klele was Paul Brisebois.) Ah well, ask them a little about how it goes in their protestant school? Instead of profiting them, they become mischievous and idle. These children have abandoned them, and today their camp is no longer there ... When we learn of your coming our hearts sing and dance ... You see, there is not the least danger of the protestants ever turning our heads."

p. 164 his old host denounces modern youth

p. 165 Several Indians of this camp asked me whether they ought to believe that a new nation of whiteskins whom Tele (Taylor) asserted had taken possession of Alaska and who should soon, he said, invade the MacKenzie district to massacre all the Dene. The portrait that the young Scots of Fort Norman had made of these Yankees or people of the long knives, Bie-tcho-gottine, was more than exaggerated: three inch long teeth like a beaver, jaws of a tiger, a beard like a male caribou, protruding eyes.

The poor Indians added in low voices, with an air of mystery and consternation which made me want to laugh that they had come the previous autumn, these man-monsters, with great chests full of long knives, of revolvers and Bowie knives, with which they intended soon to perpetrate their work of extermination.

If these bedtime stories were a tactic of Mr. Nick to further attach the Danites of Great Bear Lake, exploiting by fear their child-like credulity and inspiring in them a fine terror for the new competitors of the Hudson's Bay Company, it must be said that he had little judgment; for sooner or later lies are discovered, and injustice repays itself. I thought that it was only a joke of his employees.

Needless to say to my readers that I undeceived the poor Slaveys assuring them that there would truly never be any Americans in the MacKenzie so long as the Honourable Company resided there; and that, even if they were to become the masters of it someday, it was little probable that the Dene would lose by it; that in any case, we, French priests, would never abandon them and that we would know very well how to recommend them and to protect them.

p. 166 ... after my meal, that same day, I visited another Slavey named Betso-bie-kka-enli, surnamed by the whites, Carillon or Father Carillon who put my patience and moderation to a rude test.

This man had been struck by an attack of epilepsy the preceding summer, the cause of which was unknown. Since then he had had such an attack and had been so much affected by it that it was to be feared that his reason had been damaged.

I did my best for him, I forgave him his sins, and gave him the medicines I was able to dispense, although I could not count on their efficacy, when my attention was attracted by some crying that came from the wall of the invalid's lodge. I lifted my head and what did I see? A poor baby of six or eight months, all naked, and without any covering, in a skin bag filled with caribou hair, and suspended in this bag from the pole of the tent.

I asked about this and was given to understand that the unhappy child, the offspring of illegitimate commerce between the Dogrib Tatsiezele and the sister of Carillon, came to lose his mother a few days before my arrival and that his barbarian of a father had disowned him ...

The infant was doomed to death by starvation. They had hung around his neck a piece of caribou meat attached to a string, and the poor little thing was sucking this morcel of fat day and night to deceive his hunger. These people had the hardness of heart to contemplate without pity the contractions of this little face, aged from starvation, wrinkled and contorted by the slow, cruel agony that deprived him little by little of his flesh ...

Carillon was not an infidel. He was a Christian. I begged him to send that baby by me to a woman with milk, assuring him that I would convey it to the orphanage in Providence where it would be brought up for free. I promised to reward him if he would do something of the sort. He replied that if I wanted myself to carry the child on my back, and to nourish it on the way to Fort Norman, he would voluntarily consent, since that baby was condemned to death, but that nobody would want to carry him so far, because a little child was not worth the effort. Deprived of its mother, disowned by its father, it deserved to die. It finished with me asking for a piece of meat for the poor orphan, whom nothing would save, and who besides, was incapable of eating meat.

p. 168 The cruel response of this heartless importunate whose tent was overflowing with provisions, and who prayed to God on his knees to be cured, yet who allowed the child of his own sister to die.there beside him, transported me into such indignation that, fearing to pass the bounds of moderation, I left him abruptly and without saying another word. The villain brought to my mind the fact that there was no law which obliged him to feed his nephew, even were it to prevent him dying of hunger!

I brought the whole camp together and declared publicly what was happening at the epileptic's tent, and I enjoined the mothers mothers of families to take turns in giving the breast to that poor child in order to save his life. I said it was a duty of their conscience to bring him up (?) until I could send him to the Sisters of Charity. They promised, but on my return I waited in vain for the arrival of the child. A short while afterwards I discovered no one had taken my word and that the poor little martyr had finally been buried alive by his own father, the man who slaughtered 60 caribous a year!

Such crimes disconcert the priest. They make him doubt the good faith of his new converts. I well knew that the greater part of the Indians of that camp were still unbelievers; that the father of the child was a shaman and of an uncurably harsh character; that other Dog-ribs lived openly, and flaunting it at me, with three wives, always changing the oldest one for younger ones; but the Christians, the Christians, why did they not show the courage which made them brave Tele (Taylor) and his Protestant servants?

In any case, infanticide accomplished with such barbarity and cruelty explains the rapid and always increasing extinction of the Indians of America. When parents are so unnatural as to coolly murder the fruits of their own entrails, they lose the right to mumur against the Lord. They abandon their lives to the angel of death ...

The following evening, the savages told me that they wanted to honour my visit with a great dance and general festival. They prayed me to say I would accept the one and the other and preside over their merry-making.

Knowing that the Danite dance offered no danger to good morals if one did not participate excessively or without moderation, I acquiesced paternally to their desire, and the dance began on Sunday night after dinner, around a great fire in the open air, at 35° below zero centigrade. There must be a virtue in dancing at such a temperature, they avowed, but it is plausible that it was more folly than virtue that set their limbs in motion.

After having sung all their tunes and danced to the same rhythm, which was only a single figure, the circular, my Slaveys passed in review all the Digrib songs, then all the Hareskin, and also those of the Loucheux. That is what makes their dances excessively boring, because they are always the same in all the tribes of the Danite race, in regard to the imitation of everyone by everyone else.

However, I saw for the first time the dance of the birds. One repeats ceaselessly the following words:

Ey! Ey! Ey! Ayitli! Ayitili!

Ey! Ey! Ey! Sekke Koyin! Sekke

It resembles more a Koyin! dance of bears than the hopping of birds, but it matters little, we must accept what we are given.

Who would not wish to hear speak, for example, that Yettanetel, the man who let Nitajiye kill his little brother-in-law. In a serious account, which he came to tell in my ear with the air of a scandalized man, he reported that the song and the dance of the birds had a very evil magical character which related to the repertoire of shamans. He prayed me to make them stop doing it immediately. So it is that imagination or intention alone can transform inoffensive or indifferent actions to evil.

I smiled at Yettanetel, and replied that I did not see anything worse in that foolish song, than all the other things that had come to my ear since the beginning of the fete.

I wished after having hopped around in a circle for a couple of hours, pressing the grape in the air - an exercise that would be much appreciated and very diverting at Bicetre or Charenton - that my neophytes had enough of this amusement so virtuous and heroic, and were eager to go to bed.

But it was not so. I perceived that at the end of Great Bear Lake, as at the Paris Opera, it is easier to set the dancers in motion than to stop their legs when they are launched for a time. However monotonous and macabre the tunes which they had ululated in unison were to my tase; however supremely boring were variations of the single figure, my good Danite Slaveys found it a very great artistic pleasure, such that I did not have the heart to interrupt a diversion so innocent and so well designed to extinguish the fries of concupiscence.

It was a heart-rending spectacle - I dare not say ridiculous - the sight of this little act of human folly, of these old men, these grandmothers, the heads dripping with sweat, their grey hair become white with hoar frost, and frozen, stiff with cold, shaking themselves foosihly and jumping to the echoes of the everlasting desert and the always re-born vocalisations of their naive score.

I passed 10 whole days in this camp, where my servant, the Metis French Dogrib, Paul Klele Brisebois, had a maternal uncle, Yakkay, or Musk-ox. Going home in the company of this young man, brought up in the woods as a true savage, I was again obliged to run before my dogs as soon as we attained Smith Arm, because my guide lost his head ...

p. 227 I have already said elsewhere that the sole apprant and known outlet of Great Bear Lake is the river of the same name, a tributary of the MacKenzie River, N. lat. 65° 50', W long. 127° 32' from Paris. The Indians call it Telini-Die, River of the Outlet, and I propose to geographers to give it the name of the famous Franklin, who went up it in 1825-26. But as I have not discovered it myself, I abstain from changing the name.

That explorer assigned to the river draining Great Bear Lake a distance of 91 geographic miles (1852 metres), i.e., 168 kilometers 532 metres or 42¼ French leagues. But his companion, Dr. Richardson, thought it was only 80 miles. Which of the two was correct?

One covers that short distance in twelve hours of travel by boat, in the descent of the current, k.e. 3½ leagues per hour, on the average. But one's speed is not continuously equal. For the Great Rapid, which measure 15 miles, is crossed in one hour with the help of rowing; whereas, towards its mouth the Telini has a relatively slow current.

The width of the river varies between 300 and 500 metres. At its mouth it measures a mile ...

p. 228 The Telini-Die flows out of Keith Arm at its eastern extremity, at two and one half kilometric leagues from Fort Norman. Great Bear Lake being obstructed with thick ice and completely closed to navigation from the first of November to the 15th of July, one cannot cross this distance by water in the month of June, the period during which the boats of the Hudson's Bay Company are brought over the Portage de la Loche for the transport of furs and dry provisions which have been bartered during the year. One is therefore obliged at Fort Norman to cart this merchandise by sled over the ice to the opening of the river out of the great lake, and then to drag the barques themselves on rollers, using all the dogs one can get for the purpose.

p. 230 further description of navigation on the river

p. 232 At the confluence of the Carcajou River, Non-a-te, I found reunited in 1867, the Dene of Willow Lake. They were waiting there for me to bless the sepulcre of Suzanne Sele, wife of the old trickster, Good-for-Nothing. They had buried her in the old Danite way, that is, with a sarcophagus raised nearly a metre off the ground between four spruce trees brought together so that the trunks formed the supports of the rough coffin. The sides were held together with dog's heads (dovetails) like the walls of a log house. After the absolution the body of the poor woman, sewn into a deerskin, was lifted back up on the beir and covered again with heavy pieces of wood.

A twenty foot pole ending in a cross painted red with ochre was planted at the head of the sarcophagus and a second pole fixed at the foot received a string, suspended over the coffin from one pole to the other, and on which the widower fixed strips of red and white cloth.

At this river bank meeting I saw an octogenarian baptised in 1861 by Mr. Grollier and named Adam. Kha-nda, Eyes of the Hare, who in his youth had eaten, this new saturn, eleven members of his family, without doubt people likeable enough to eat. To wit: his two wives, out of an excess of love, he said; his brother-in-law, through a remarkable fraternal affection, his mother-in-law, through legitimate aversion, three of his children from a movement of pure compassion, and four other people merely out of appetite.

Excellent excuses, but an insufficient intention, it seems, to guarantee his goodness of heart!

p. 234 Mr. Taylor recounts finding a human hand in Khanda's game bag.

p. 235-6 Khanda deserted by his tribe in a time of famine.

p. 234 When Fort Norman was on the left bank of the MacKenzie at Castor-Qui-Deboule.

p. 235 Khanda died miserably during the winter of 1871. His tribe was on the march, beating the countryside vainly in search of game in a passing period of famine. The eighty year old followed them at a distance, plodding along, because of the weakness old age and the terrible hunger had plunged him in.

A young man accompanied him as weak as he; this was a certain Michel Kfwitewe, Great Head, who had been baptised in 1864 at the age of 14, and who was dying of a disease of the lungs (?) on his first visit to Portage de la Loche. He was then convalescent; but so weak and feeble, so good for nothing, that his parents had decided to abandon him with Khanda.

I know well that the Indians are too often devoid of the sent-entiment of humanity that we call sensibility. But it is necessary to grant that they also find themselves placed sometimes in alternatives so cruel that if they hesitate to sacrifice one or two useless mouths, it would be the loss of the entire tribe. This is one consideration that too often escapes the missionaries whose native goodness and charity, of which they make profession, leads them to condemn these apparent acts of insensibility.

p. 239 At the bottom of the Great Rapid, one passes between two precipitous promontories, of which the one, that on the right, plunges straight into the current. The other is a cliff of phonolith (?) entirely covered with debris of all sizes of that volcanic rock ... It is Onkkaye-besse, Stomach of the Magpie, or Onkkaye-Kfwe, Magpie Rock, of the Slavey Dene, so named because the rock is the colour of the stomach of the blue jay of Canada, the only magpie of the extreme northwest.

p. 240 comes to the MacKenzie without event and sees the ruins of Fort Norman no. 3.

p. 241 another trip down the Great Bear River in May, 1868

p. 243 My young servants were not assured of great success in our perilous voyage, but, like me, young and also in love with hazardous experiences, as soon as they turned to me resolved to attempt the chances of the current, all their irresolution and timidity evaporated. They parted as joyously as for a holiday. I vow that their confidence did not repose on a very firm foundation, objectively speaking, but as far as they were concerned, it was as strong as the confidence that we Christians repose in God himself.

"Can any evil come to him who confides in the sacred power of a priest?" they asked. "Of course not! That is not possible. It would be well worth the pain of being a servant of God in order to have more power and opportunity than common mortals."

p. 246 On the right bank (of the Great Bear River) there exists an Indian road along the summit of the cliffs the length of the Great Rapid ...

p. 249 A glacier at the confluence of the Kfwe-tu-delin and the Great Bear River.

p. 250 ff fording the Bear River

p. 252 a near accident in the current

p. 256 view from the mountain at the St. Charles Rapids

p. 259 a storm holds them up

p. 262 saved by Hudson's Bay Company boats

p. 265 returns to Great Bear Lake in 1867 to spend the summer

p. 266 tracking up river with 3 guides from Fort Good Hope

p. 267 ... on the 4th of July (having entered the Great Bear River) I met the tribe of Indians KK ay-lon-Gottine, who had departed Willow Lake to the Rocky Mountains to spend the summer.
(Spends the day baptising them, and sends two orphans to the nuns in Providence)

p. 272 flowers in bloom on the plain by Fort Norman

p. 273 (The people) had not yet departed for their summer hunting on the North Shore of Smith Arm. They were awaiting the breakup of the lake, constructing canoes, praying from the East wind to grant them their freedom by ridding the lake of its skin of ice ...

I conferred baptism on 15 adults, which raised the number of Christians at Great Bear Lake to 268. Of that number, the Hareskins accounted for 188 souls, the Dogribs 80.

p. 271 the transmigration and reincarnation of souls as held by the Dene (the Hareskins.)

p. 277 Ralli, the Rattling of Water, told me then, partly in jest, partly seriously, that in conformity with ancient Danite,belief, the first child conceived by a woman after the death of someone in her tribe is considered to be indubitably the reincarnation of the one who is dead.

One sees that on this view, the ancestors live always with their tribe and that one Dene is able easily to be his own grandfather.

p. 278 ff the Chief of the Hareskins tricked by his daughter into becoming a convert.

p. 280 description of huge trout.

p. 281 I had brought for fishing a boat smaller than the one we had brought and that I had repaired. One rowed it with a claade-ttoh (?) or double oar. I took delicious little trips with it on the lake ... (He occupies his time cutting and shaping wood for the construction of the mission, but) as I had no time to transport it to my house, I did not find it the following winter. An Anglican school master who had been sent to Great Bear Lake had decided to possess himself of it in my absense to construct his house. Truly, he assured me, it was only a loan, but the pieces of wood were never returned to me.

p. 282 The lively and piquant cold of those nights which were so short was sufficient to form a bed of ice along the shore and the centigrade thermometer went down to -4° and -5° below zero; such that, during the whole year 1867 I had experienced not more than 15 days free of ice in that western bay of Great Bear Lake. All summer long the ice floe had not ceased to wander at the will of the wind. Even in warm years it never has time to thaw completely and on the eastern shore the ice never disappears and is the basis for the following winter. The days from germination to the full growth of plants were a little more than 40 in 1867. On the third of August the several types of grasses which grew sparsely between the rocks of the shore, in the places where there were no lichens, were dry underfoot. The lichen-covered plains had already acquired again that colour of dead leaves which gives them in autumn and spring the appearance of a vast field of sponges.

How did that change of colour come to occur? It was scarcely comprehensible for lichen does not seem to die, to fade and then to grow again.

In sum, I found that in the far north Great Bear Lake is the most dismal and rigorous place to stay for a European. One finds there only three compensations among a great number of disadvantages; the extreme abundance of Barrenland caribou, the exquisite quality and exceptional size of the fish, and the prompt dissipation of the clouds of knats or mosquitoes, which, at the end of June leave the waters and the plains to swarm over the whole countryside, like one of the ten plagues of Egypt.

p. 285 journey through the devil's country, i.e. behind the Norman[2] Range from Fort Good Hope to Tulita

p. 286 various spirits and lake monsters inhabit this country

p. 289 sees sundogs

p. 296 belives he has opened up this country for the Dene, who now inhabit it after this exploratory trip

p. 297 As the only known monsters that I met on these beautiful lakes were some caribous who were walking slowly passed, I baptised them with Christian names, those of two friends in Fort Good Hope, Mr. Keary and Mr. Gaudet.

p. 309 he undertakes a journey to Fort Simpson in the footsteps of Franklin.

p. 313 Two other lakes, still more vast followed on the map of the great explorer (Franklin). That is why I gave them the name of that great man. It was via them that he reached the MacKenzie, of which I could see the shore line in the distance. But I turned away from that line of travel, because at 10 o'clock that morning, the guides happened upon the old beaten track, evidently that which led to Fort Simpson.

At the same time as we found the road, we also found a fat caribou which the Slavey hunters had abandoned after taking the tongue and the ribs. This proved to us how these Indians swam in an abundance of caribou meat and how far they were from being in need of transporting the meat of that animal.

We regaled our dogs with it.

We regaled our dogs with it.

p. 313 some etymological observations on the names of mountains, showing that the emigration pattern of the Dene was north to south.

p. 314 a forest fire set by carelessness

p. 315 going sick from Good Hope to Providence, he arrived well, on snowshoes!

CHAPTER IX

I accomplished five great voyages of exploration in the country between Great Bear Lake and the sources of the Anderson River, of which two were in 1871, another two in 1872, and the last in 1877. These five trips were the more fertile in incident the farther I got from the MacKenzie, the more unknown to whites residing in the Northwest, and the more virgin from the point of view of European incursion. The country was represented on all the maps of North America, by an eloquent empty space. To occupy myself with such a country was to provoke numerous discoveries, to enrich the map with a multitude of geographic gifts, not to speak of the glory of God which I probably added to, in making it known, praised and loved by those unfortunate people who had ignored it till then; an object which is in another way as grand and important as that of adding to the store of human knowledge.

My first exploration of that terra incognita took place at the beginning of the autumn of 1871. I came to revise, entirely, by correcting and completing it, the dictionary of the Loucheux language that my excellent brother, M. Jean Sequin, had previously composed with the help of a patient woman, patient, but in truth, of little intelligence. It had been a long and fastidious effort for me, which had taken every minute of my time, and in which my master in the Loucheux language acquitted himself with all the intelligence and wisdom one could ask for.

It is true that, speaking and possessing the two languages, Loucheux and Hareskin, he had all the necessary means to carry out this task with honour. I went through that dictionary from one end to the other with him.

Our servants determined to leave us, to fish or hunt till Christmas. They left without regret, without a sigh.

p. 319 What a joy for them again to live in the fresh air, to exchange the roof and the prosaic chimney corner for the deerskin lodge, the green branches scattered on the frozen ground, and the great fire of spruce wood flaming in the middle of the lodge. They would follow the caribou in their peregrinations, they would live on their spoils (?), have 8, 10 or 20 meals per day, if it seemed good to them; pull down large sections of the forest to warm themselves; and they would enjoy complete freedom, beyond any outside control.

The prospect of this happy vagabondage made them depart with speed. I heard under the canopy of the forest their shouts of laughter and the chants which awakened the sleeping echoes. These notes of gaiety afflicted me, not with envy or jealousy for their good fortune, like that of caribou or birds of passage; but in default of my own abandon, from my voluntary and accepted misfortune as a hermit and a celibate.

I followed them then from afar and with their knowledge, I comforted my soul as a man without wife, my heart of a father without children, and when I had paid this tribute to my rebellious nature, and calm had been restored in my being by that relaxation of the nervous fiber, I returned alone to my house to take up my daily occupations.

p. 320 undertakes a journey

p. 321 with two guides from Fort Good Hope

p. 321 After a day and one half on the trail I arrived, between woods and lichen plains, at the Hareskin River, which I crossed at its confluence with the Bluefish, Ttae-niline, in order to gain the right bank of the former.

Their meeting formed a delta of vegetation between which and the southern channel the Hareskin Dene had constructed a dam and made slides. In the month of June the bluefish, or Back's Codfish abounds there and one can catch them easily with a net. (?) These fish are then the principal food of these Indians, who eat them fresh and dry what they do not consume on the spot, fatten their dogs, and make pemmican, with shockfish and lamp oil ( ).

This replaces cod liver oil successfully.

p. 323 According to the traditions of the Hreskins, they saw of old the sky on fire over the lake of Sulphur, Ya-dikk-on-t one (literally, lake when one saw the sky burn); melted sulphur and bitumen fell down in a rain which created that sort of sea of Death, which has no apparent outlet and which is (?) only a thin stream of water. Its environs are rich in swamps which contain a semi-liquid asphalt under a bed of lichen and peat. The inhabitants of that new Sodom were all destroyed by this conflagration, which is without doubt an oral and traditional memory of the more important and ancient conflagration of the Pentateuch. (?)

p. 325 reaches Colville Lake

p. 325 meets a Hareskin family named Sida-Kha-ya living in three log houses on the northwestern shore of the lake.

p. 326 visited only once before by Europeans - in this case M.R. MacFarlane of Anderson River in 1862.

p. 326 Soon the great cauldron was filled with fresh caribou meal and suspended on the pot hook; the unique cooking of the Indians consisting of boiling and roasting, without any type of condiment or dressing.

The old Sida-Khaya had been one of the guides of Sir John Richardson in his arctic exploration of 1848 in search of the remains of Sir John Franklin although the famous surgeon did not make the slightest mention of it.

There is one of the little hypocricies of the explorer that I am pleased to reveal. It is not necessary to ask too much of the extreme credulity of the good poeple who travel only in books and explore only their fire wood and the four corners of their room, like Xavier de Maistre. But many French people, even those who are members of geographic societies, even among the learned and the big wigs of our academies, believein all simplicity that the travellers who are called explorers because they were or have been the first to visit, go through, describe, draw and map a country, have awed their discoveries to their wisdom alone, to their own light, to their own astronomical calculations ...

Poor naive people, I would like them to see it.

For of the arctic explorers I am able to testify that all, even Franklin, even Back, Hearne, MacKenzie and Richardson had not only a number of companions they had chosen from among the people of the country, French Canadians or Metis, and whom they had the good faith to enumerate the names under the title of labourers, woodcutters, or carpenters; but this is not sufficient to pay respect to the truth; for all, without exception had recourse in all their travels to the knowledge of the Indians or the Eskimos and resorted to true guides, whose advice, unfortunately, they did not always heed ...

In all my works, I have always had the good faith to give the names of the Indian or Indians who guided me in my explorations of "discovery" and at the same time I have shown my appreciation down to the last word. Our "discoveries" are only reports to Europeans, to civilized people who have never visited, travelled through or lived in the countries which are their object.

p. 329 comment on Richardson's lack of linguistic ability

p. 329 description of the buildings at Colville Lake

p. 330 description of the European life style of this family

p. 332-3 playing a violin with caribou sinew strings

p. 333 meets some people at Colville ill of dysentery (?)

p. 333 Since my departure from Fort Good Hope in 1878, I learned that poor Norbert Ta-ti-Koye-tay, he who is seated on the ground, had died of his terrible illness, dysentery. He had a daughter whom I had baptised as a baby and who grew up before my eyes. I married her the preceding year, but since her marriage she had separated from her husband, on the pretext that God had revealed to her that she would be the mother of his son, Jesus. In other words, the unhappy woman either hypocritical or mad, played the role of the Virgin Mary, just like Koundatak-tsi, the young Loucheux widow of the Anderson plains, of whom I have spoken in another book.

Her father led me to her by the hand with a religious respect and robust faith, advising me that she saw the Virgin Mary and was called to replace her soon, for the great glory of the Danite nation in general and the Hare tribe in particular.

Being acquainted with religious maniacs, I received them with the pity and mockery that they merited. The young girl confirmed to me with imperturbable aplomb the statements of her father and asked forthwith to be alone with me to tell me the tale of the high revelations of which she was, she said the object. But straightway we were alone, the unhappy woman threw herself into my arms, asking of me another kind of revelation which my conscience as an honest man did not allow me to give her.

I knew then quite well what sort of Virgin Mary she saw, and from whom she wished to conceive her reborn son of God. I asked her to describe to me the being from whom she received the visions under the name of Virgin Mary.

"He is as big as that," she replied, lifting her hand to the height of one meter. "He has pointed ears and a tail, and gray hair over his whole body like a mouse. He often comes to me to dance on my lap."

I saw that the poor creature was mad and I prayed for the repose of her spirit, for no one could care for her in that terrible desert. She died less than a year later without having brought into the world her reincarnated god, but also without having been cured of her religious mania.

p. 336 an accidental shooting at Colville

p. 337 Louison confided his second son, Charles, to me, to be my guide and companion.

"I am very glad that you are taking him away," he said. "There is a rather young widow here whom he loves and who makes him waste all his time, even though I have told him that she will never become his wife. She is his fifth cousin and you must agree that I cannot tolerate such incest." ("Our national customs expressly forbid it.")

p. 338 " ... widows are ... sought out by the young men in preference to girls.

I have seen the same thing among the Chipewyans, without having been able to explain it. When I asked the boys the reason, they replied: "Young girls are good for nothing... married woman are already broken in to the work of the household, they have experience, know how to do everything, look after us, pamper us, love us for ourselves, and they are faithful to death.

It was self-love, egotism, and self-interest ... Love was entirely foreign. It is not less true that there was a more ridiculous practise, conforming to the ancient customs of these people whereby it was admissable for a young man to adopt and bring up a little girl of 11 or 12 years old, instructing her in obedience and respect, and the care of the household, until she was marriageable and was able to become his wife.

p. 339 goes south to explore Lac des Bois

p. 343 In the neighbourhood of my lake there was an asphalt marsh that I crossed with Charles. Although the Hareskins had spoken to me of it as of a marvel, it is hardly a curiosity, and it is not rare in the exploration of the extreme northwest. These deposits of liquid naphtha are quite abundant in the country near Ti-della, and Fort Good Hope goes to supply itself near Lac Laporte, source of the Lockhart River, a country I have entirely covered four times between 1865-68.

p. 345 his guide suggests they go to the source of the Anderson River.

p. 346-7 they mistake a cloud over the moon for distant campfires.

p. 349 they come upon a camp of Hareskins from Great Bear Lake.

p. 351 two of Taylor's employees arrive at the camp. Petitot is jealous of his discovery of the source of the Anderson River.

p. 352 a supposed metamorphosis of caribou into human beings.

p. 353-5 a father explains how his daughter turned into a caribou

p. 355 a Loucheux sorcerer describes having seen the fire of hell recently. Petitot is reminded of his recent mirage that the rising moon was a campfire.

p. 356 the sorcerer insists he saw a fire, possibly a fire made by the caribous.

" ... I asked my neighbour, Ralli, the rattling of the riverbank, in a low voice, if the Loucheux was mad.

"He never had much spirit," replied the Indian, "although what he says there is true. You ought not to overlook the fact, Father, that during the winter all the animals warm themselves just as well as men do.

How do you think that the caribou, wolves, mushoxen, partridges, grouse, martens, etc., are able to pass nine long months of intolerable cold, out in the fresh air and without a fire, when we, intelligent men, are not able to stand a half day of it in spite of our furs and warm clothing. No, Father, one must know how to understand things. All the animals warm themselves, you see, and the poor dead themselves, that is to say, their souls, pass the night comfortably before a warm fire. Only it is this way: not everybody can see this mysterious fire. Only the Seers, Nakohin, perceive them, and if you and Charles have had this advantage last night, then you are Nakohin, do not doubt it.

p. 358-9 a discussion of not working on Sunday.

p. 360 returns to Good Hope

p. 364 agrees to go back to Lac des Bois to attend some sick people (in 1872). Takes an orphan of Fort Good Hope to be his guide, and four Siberian huskies as dogs.

p. 365-6 They meet 4 Loucheux hunters. Describes Loucheux tent as a "yurt" in the shape of a dome.

p. 367 When the moment arrived for the evening meal to be ready, La Pointe de Canot cried out with a penetrating voice:

"Yaze boer oulle, taoti!" It was a hackneyed phrase. I had known it of old. "There is not the littlest piece of meat in my house," signified for the Dene, "I have no tobacco; give me some and you will have as much meat as you want. I had a little money with me to procure me the means of life on the route; but as I was copiously supplied for going to Kopa's camp, I did not want to spend it uselessly. And when I speak of money, my reader knows already that I mean trade goods, such as tobacco, rassades (?), handkerchiefs, lace, needles, little knives, wire, combs, etc., since in the northwest, payment is always made in kind.

I did not reply to La Pointe at all, but asked my guide Tadi ale to go look for the provisions on my sled, since I wanted to help these poor starving people. The child returned with some pemmican which I placed politely before La Pointe.

But he cried out again:

"They are funny, these whites, my God! are they funny! Do they have their heads on backwards? Who has ever seen a white man give a Dene hunter food? ... Do you think that I do not have a meal of fresh meat to offer you?"

p. 369 smoke in the yurt of the Loucheux

p. 370 how smoke is vented (unknown to the other Dene)

p. 371 conversion of the sorcerer

p. 374 in 1865 and again in 1867 epidemics came to the MacKenzie: 1865 - scarlatine, 1867 - measles; the latter claimed 1000 victims

p. 376 Some children kill a squirrel. It is thought that squirrels are the incarnation of the Angel of Death.

p. 378 Beliefs and practises concerning the caribou in conflict with Christiantiy.

In other times, Fortunata said then, we had another excellent meals of procuring meat for ourselves. During the month of the rut of the caribou, all the young women and marriageable girls wore a large bonnet (caribourne?) which they put on their heads in such a way as to entirely hide the chest and the shoulders. And the caribou were abundant; and we lacked for nothing.

Today there is no more of that. No more hood, no more cowled girls, all the good old customs are gone, and the caribou is more difficult to find.

p. 381 the significance of dreams

p. 384 a hunter disguises himself as a caribou to deceive the animals

p. 392 how his orphaned guide had been brought up

p. 395 meeting wolves

p. 400 they come to the encampment of the sick people

p. 401 ff wolf stories

p. 405 taboo to shoot a wolf or a dog with the gun used for shooting animals for food

p. 496 But he had another superstition that I had to attack frontally, as it had no foundation in mosaic law; it is that which holds the wolfe, pele, for a Lare, or tritelary fetish of the Dene in general and the Hareskins in particular.

Lazare did not tell me this, but I well knew it already. The Hareskins do not ever kill this animal for the same reason that make the Kaffirs of Africa respect the life of the lion.

p. 409 at the camp of the Yellow Marmot, also known as the original on Lac des Bois.

p. 411-12-13 jealousy among Band leaders

p. 414 they try to separate him from his guide

p. 415 thinks he has been brought on a false report of sickness because of the envy of Marmot for Sida 'Khaya, whom he visited the preceding winter.

p. 416 Before leaving the camp of Noneni, I wanted to know the etymology of the last point of ground I had crossed before arriving there and that Tadi ale (his guide) had not been able to explain to me. The old Essa-da-ta, (?), known more often by the name Banlay tcho, or the Big French One, father-in-law of the Marmot, took it upon himself to explain it to me.

"It was," he said, "in the time that the two rival companies, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company were contending for the savages and snatched our furs and provisions from one another. A bloody drama happened on the shores where we lived nearly fifty years ago. (It was during the winter of 1825 - footnote.) I was still young, but I remember it perfectly. The fur trading employees of the two companies vexed us in a thousand ways trying to supplant each other. Always armed with swords and pistols they made us tremble."

"At that time Fort Good Hope was exclusively affected by the Loucheux or Dindjie, and was situated lower down on the MacKenzie at a placed called the Fox, Yekfwee. As for us, Dene Natle ta Gottine, or people of the Caribou Plains, we traded our furs and smoked goods at the forst on Great Bear Lake. It was constructed on the Point of the Big Hares, Kha-tcho-ehta (footnote - This is the fort of MacKenzie Big Neck, of which I spoke on p. 69.) whence comes our relatively recent name Kha-tcho-Got-tine, Hareskins, or Hair.

"At that time, as I said, no white had penetrated east of the MacKenzie further than the Point of the Big Hares. But then three Metis Canadiens came to the bay Non-eni to find their deaths there and here is how it happened:

"All the servants of the Northwest Company lived with Hareskin girls whom they had stolen or persuaded to cohabit with them. There also was a captain there who had constructed a new fort (footnote - Sir John Franklin and the fort which bears his name) and whose young men also had mistressed whom they had taken from us or from the Dog Ribs.

"During the summer which followed their arrival, these young men left Great Bear Lake for somewhere else, I don't know where. (footnote - to the Arctic Ocean, as I have also told on p. 77) In their absence, their concubines, tired of living with whites whose language they did not understand, settled themselves in the woods, each in her camp. Three of them crossed the peninsular plain Klo-tsen-ewa, as well as Smith Arm, and returned to their parents (?).

"These people dreaded the anger of the whites, who were always armed to the teeth. They did not want to receive the three girls and tried to persuade them to return to the French. (footnote - needless to say, he refers here to Franklin's Englishmen.) But they said that they were so unhappy in the role they filled in their company that they absolutely refused to return. Then three young men offered themselves and accepted them as wives seance tenante (?) in the presence of the whole tribe.

"Autumn came and no one wanted to go to the fort for fear of being maltreated by the French. But, one fine day, three Metis came to us, the same whose wives were taken. They were angry. They proffered terrible threats if their women were not given up to them. My people were numerous, and these men only three; nevertheless, they were dreaded and the three young girls were given up to them, with the prayer that they would return quickly to the fort. We treated them nicely and they slept in our tents. The next day we invited them again to leave, but they continued to stay on and regale themselves with our fattest meat. We began to fear that they had evil designs, and we begged them politely to go away. But they persisted in staying with us.

"Then we ordered their death, if they persisted in wanting to stay a second night in our camp. Their presence, their conduct, everything about them was hateful to us."

"Sooner than being killed by them, we'll kill them ourselves," we we said. It was not long since one of the men of the fort had killed eleven persons for a woman named Great Wind, or the Month of January, that you know about, a Slavey.

"The next day all was done. The one received a knife wound in the middle of his chest, the second had his head shattered with a stone axe, Kfwekfwin, struck with a bullet on the shoulder, tried to escape. We let him go.

"Several days afterwards, we decamped to go to the low point that you have crossed from the other side oftthe bay. The first night that we passed there, we heard a dog gnawing some bones a few feet away from the lodges. We went to see, and found in the mouth of the animal a human arm, that of the third Metis who had been wounded. He had gone to die of hunger and exposure on that very point, where our dogs had discovered and devoured his body.

(footnote (p. 420) - I ask myself if Essadata did not add an interpolation here; if the murder of eleven persons of his tribe was not committed in reprisal for the assasination of the three Metis in question. I know that the massacre of eleven Hareskins was perpetrated by three Metis, of whom one was taken to Montreal and hanged. I saw the second at Fort Isle a la Crosse in 1862, and the third, named LaFleur, at Fort Athabasca, where he died suddenly in the first month (?) of the year 1879. Are they not the three Metis that the Hareskins glorify themselves as having assasinated in order to change the opinion and oppose the belief that three isolated men, three strangers, had been able to massacre eleven persons for a woman with impunity in the middle of a Dene camp.)

p. 422 they arrive at Kopa's camp (about 125 people)

p. 424 by a trick of his the whole camp is converted into malades imaginaires

p. 425 The thoroughly timid character of the Dene makes them see without cease enemies where there is no shade of an enemy. They imagine themselves to be always surrounded by ambushes, teasing, attacks, to be oppressed and followed by the rabid enemy. They are all delirious with persecution. One says to me that it is an unhappy relic of their ancient internal quarrels from tribe to tribe, that it is a result of their kind

of miserable life, living alone, lost in the middle of the woods, being always in the same company; that it is probably the consequence of their nomadic life in these frightful deserts, nomadism to which they assign as determinative cause the poor treatment that a powerful people of whom they became the slaves made them submit to.

I admit all these reasons, but I assert nonetheless that the Danite nation is troubled by a persecution mania, and only in the summer. As soon as winter arrives with its accompaniment of snow, fog and ice, spirits assume their normal height and all these mental phenomena are dissipated. No one thinks of Dene-djere, or dream figures, of Nakane, or enemies, of Eyounne, or phantoms and each sleeps peaceably ...

"Last summer," Kopa began to tell me, "we were terribly plagued. Our country was invaded by innumerable enemies."

"It is true," I told him. "Never have our cousins the mosquitoes been so numerous and never have they so attacked human blood. They hummed also around the fort and the mission. What an abominable breed!"

"We are speaking of real enemies, flesh and blood, like us. We have seen their compfires near the Great plateau Kha dier. On the banks of the Dease River, where we go to hunt one cannot live without being harassed by them."

"How many of them have you killed! Have you wounded many?"

"Tsk! Tsk! You always please yourself when one wants to tell you something seriously. It is nothing to laugh about. Six foot tall men, dressed in good fine cloth, carrying chests adorned with gold or with ribbons in their hats, and having a forked beard and long red hair."

"Good! Then it was the English! Naval Officers! Your description approaches them very closely. But these enemies must not be very shy if they allow you to observe them so closely. Have you captured a living one?"

"My friends, our father is incredulous," cried Kopa, a little over-excited, but nonetheless still self possessed and smiling out of politeness. "Take a living one you say? Better than that, Eou-tsie, the Pointed Tooth, whom you saw in the camp of the Original has killed two on his part alone. We have seen the blood. There was a lot of blood. Yes, there was a lot of it."

p. 434 the Dene depart from Christianity in accepting divorce and polygamy

p. 435 divorce particularly in the case of sterility

p. 441 a persistent raven

p. 442 Seeing that he was lingering to kill the poor fox who was gasping with pain, like the raven, in the cruel grip of the trap, I gave a great blow to the head of the animal with a stick. Suddenly the Mountain recovered his voice.

"Enedjin. See here my Father who does not want me to take any more foxes!" he exclaimed. "See how he goes to kill a fox with a stick like a wolf or a dog! ... Wait, wait. I am going to show you how to dispatch a fox properly and in the good way."

Before he had finished his speech, my man had taken from his sled a long and strong rod, hardened and sharpened in the fire, and had thrust it without pity into the anus of the animal. He walked it about, in every sense, in the body of the animal, who leaped in anguish, and perforated all the visera of it and, finally, the heart.

Then he let it down onto the ground, dying, and cruelly impaled by his hardened staff, like a sodomous mussulman pierced by a paratonnerre.

"See," said the Mountain, "you see, Father, what is called the proper way to kill a fox. You see, that does not damage the skin, while hitting it with a stick, the skin itself gets bruised. Further, you would have prevented the trapping of others hereafter, because there is a gofwen (taboo) on each thing in this lower world, and as soon as one neglects or ignores it, crack! - no more success for a man."

p. 415 they come to the log houses of the Soldier and Joseph Norqway, his half-brother

p. 446 Unfortunately, first his daughter and then his wife died there in 1867-68 and in conformity to danite taboo which insists that one abandon or demolish all habitation in which the soul of human creature has departed he newly left his house and came to reconstruct it at Ton-Koyintti, where I found him that day with his brother-in-law and twenty Hareskins.

p. 446 The Soldier is attempting to convert his wife to Christianity by hanging a picture of the devil on her back.

p. 451 "Long ago," began Dek-ke-woya, "all the trees which we see around us, the flocks of white partridges (ptarmigan) which we meet, the herds of caribou which cross our path, the bands of wolves which follow them, were men like us. I do not know for what reason or by what means they were metamorphosed into trees, birds or four-legged animals; but I am very well assured that they often return to their former state. During the day, they live as you see them, but, the night coming on, they become men again and persecute the living. Only it is not given to everyone to see these marvels, to be witness to these transformations. Christians do not see it, and still less the priests, but the conjurers and charmers see it, and it is why one calls them seers, nakohin, and why all young people aspire to become conjurors, even in our day."

p. 452 a story about meeting a party of dead people reincarnated as ptarmigan

p. 453 another story of a tree-man

p. 455 a point on Smith Arm where the spruce trees are the reincarnation of an invading party of Chipewyans, transformed magically

p. 455 ... La Lavette had been the hero and the victim of a terrible drama, whether he had been interred in a state of lethargy or whether, as his parents told me, he had deceived them, simulating death and after having made them promise not to bury him before three days were passed, because he was going to rise on the third day, like Jesus Christ.

Ought one to belive that he was afraid of being buried alive, knowing in what haste the Redskins proceed with the obsequies of the departed, without even waiting for 24 hours to pass. Or rather, ought one to admit that that man wanted to impose on his fellows by making them believe that he was a saint.

I hesitate to pronounce absolutely, but here are the facts.

La Lavette died or appeared to have died, and his parents, instead of respecting his last wishes, thought that the shaman had spoken in delirium. They paid no attention to his request and hastened to stitch his woollen shroud and to bury him not far from the camp. They encircled the grave mound with pegs and were content not to decamp immediately, as the gofwen (taboo) decreed; but decided to stay in the same place until the three days were over, in order to see what was going to happen.

But, as always with the Indians (?), it happened that the same night of the funeral, during the night, a dark night of wind and blowing snow, the dogs of the camp made an infernal din around the tomb of La Lavette, from which came lugubrious cries and repeated calls.

But they did not go and save the unfortunate magician. No one had the courage and the whole camp was frozen with fear. Only the following day, when it was light, did they risk going to see. It was finished by that time. La Lavette was really dead, but previously he had tried to lift up the top of his earth grave, which was not very heavy, and which covered his body, and to dress himself sittingly, enveloped in his shroud. Partly relieved of this covering, the unfortunate man perhaps intended to succeed in extricating himself from the grave, and to go surprise and frighten his parents, had not the pack of guedets (dogs) of the camp frightened by these unexpected movements, and not recognizing La Lavette, precipitated themselves upon the false corpse and throttled him well and good."

p. 458 travelling towards Great Bear Lake they come to the camp of a sorcerer, the Big Loucheux, Yettanetel

"I have three great protectors in the woods," (he said), "I must let you know. These are the raven, ta-tson, the fishing eagle or haliete, ton-tae, and the mink or foutreau, te-wa. All three sing for me during the night."

p. 461-3 a dangerous lake crossing in severe cold

p. 463 In January 1877 I made the same trip with Tadiale and a young Batard-Loucheux named Tchane or le Veillard. My aim was the installation at Great Bear Lake of my successor in that mission, Fr. Georges Ducot of Bordeaux, a young missionary who had arrived in 1874.

p. 461 I gave my last mission to the Indians at Great Bear Lake from March to June 1878. I had the opportunity to see sixty of the Secauais Dene who had come from the western side of the Rocky Mountains under the guidance of a little Chief with a fierce reputation, Head of the White Beaver, Tsa-pfui-pa.

These Indians are white-skinned, with big black eyes like halved almonds. I have not seen a single one who had eyes that were oblique or crossed.

Their wives and daughters are beautiful and resemble the Tamils a little. Like these Hindus, they wear rings in their noses, but they insert these in the septum and not in one or the other of the nostrils.

The Hareskins told me that they were mostly circumcised.