

Camp. Taltayow L. B.C.

Sept 5. 1875.

My dear Mother,

I fancy the family now all home again from Mexico, & settled down again to Montreal life, but doing so, & writing you is an act of faith when I have not heard from anyone for so long. Today being a wet day & a Sunday, & a mail carrier going to Soda Creek from Mr Cambie's Camp tomorrow, I am trying to make up arrears of Correspondence. I think I told you before of the composition of our small party. Of the two Indians, or Siwashes as they are called here there is not much to say. They are quite semi-civilized kind & from Tiltot on the Fraser R. One named Tommy & the other known as Jimmy; which names are no ~~far~~ doubt as good as any others for the purpose of designating their respective owners. They are brothers, & Jimmy, being the elder, seems to consider that

They should do the hardest work.
They both speak & understand English to a limited extent, so that my knowledge of Cherokee does not advance so fast as it otherwise might. Like most Indians their capacity for food is about double that of white men, & their capacity for work about one half. Who can wonder that under these circumstances the Indian races should go to the wall in the "struggle for existence". However you Indians in general it may be said that they can eat many things which white men cannot. For example, the woods all through this part of the country consist largely of a small species of pine which I believe to be P. contorta; & almost everywhere the natives have peeled great slabs of bark of the trees to get at the soft Cambium layer beneath. In spring this is scraped off & eaten. Instance no 2. Two little Indian children are now squatting close to the fire just outside my tent - a boy & a girl I believe - clothed inexpensively

but not neatly in dirt, & a few rags of
skin & cloth — & sharing between them bits
about a piece of tanned kind of about
the consistency of shoe leather; but with
evident Satisfaction. The Indians about here
belong to the Chilactin bands, & are known as
Stoneys (not to be compounded with the Stoney
of the plains) & are many of them so barbarous
as not to understand the Chinook jargon. They
are good Catholics however — I see the children
have little brass medals strung round their necks —
do not eat meat on Fridays, & some of them
even cross themselves & say a grace before
sitting down to a cup of tea. It was on the
Hornet R. which flows out of the lake, &
not many miles from here, that Waddington's
party were massacred by the Indians in 1864.
They were engaged in cutting out a trail for
pack trains, which was destined to reach from
Bute Inlet to the Fraser R., but were attacked
one night, the tent ropes cut suddenly, & before
they could get out, or make any effectual
resistance all but two or three were killed.

Volunteers were through this country scattered about all the succeeding summer, looking after the guilty parties. The Indians rarely dared to come down to the lakes to fish, & were afraid to fire off a gun in the woods, starvation at last reduced them, & I believe they gave up the Mont-Quepable; & there were shortly afterwards tried & hung at Quersville.

— All this by way of a digression, as I was describing the Material of the party. The third component—Reeves, is quite a character. Picked up & engaged by Mr Richardson in Victoria. He acts as cook, but is very useful generally, & a good hand at getting up in the morning & calling the Camp, which saves me the trouble. He is a sophisticated Cockney of I suppose about 50 years old, & as I have little by little learned, kept a Cook Shop or eating-house in London, but suffering from Rheumatic Gout, took the advice of his ~~sister~~ physician & voyaged abroad to see his sister who is married & lives in Vancouver Island. Finding it arduous to have nothing to do, he engaged as cook successively in various surveying parties

It is as he says "seeing the country" with
the intention of returning to England in a
year or two. He is a most copious
individual, full of all sorts of yarns &
stories, & with many queer ideas. He devotes
himself to cooking. However, even under the
most adverse circumstances, & makes
better Camp fare than I have seen before, so
that it is to be hoped I may grow fat.

Thanks to your & Anna's care all travelling
arrangements turn out excellently. I shall
not be able to write to Anna this time,
but please tell her it shall be next opportunity.
I have done very little in the way of sketching
yet, though plenty of subjects present
themselves, for so much time & energy
are expended on travelling, that what with
giving some attention to the geology, not
much yetter remains for anything else.
Now that you are home again I hope
you will make up your mind not to
worry about domestic management
so much as last winter, & especially I think

you should make it a rule to go
out for a walk every day, even if
there is no absolute out door business to
be done.

I want to write a few lines to William
so must reserve a little time for that
purpose, & pull up here.

Love to Eva, & to yourself
from your affectionate Son
George

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