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# A New Year's Carnival in the Wilderness

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

OR days they had been coming in and infinite mystery, on which was pointed richness of the odors that were already from forest, swamp and wind-swept that little flash of life below. Recommend of daily which had already been sorted and gone down in the "accounts" of the Company's There were probably a hundred souls. including a dozen women and a few children; and there were two hundred dogs. There were the big, soft-footed Mackenzie hounds, whose forbears were reared in the country of the Athabasca, and still farther west; soft-footed, soft-throated, poor fighters -but with the slow strength of oxen in their big bodies; and with these there were the fiercer Malemutes, and the still fiercer Huskies with their wild-strain of wolfred-eyed, white-fanged; snarling for fight, their only equals in battle the little Eskimo terrors from the north. From the southalways from the south-there had come a pathetic jumble of mongrels, the blood that had found its way up from the edge of probable victims of the first fight with real gathered, sniffing the air and waiting wolf blood, no matter what their size or But it was about the larger fire that the strength.

It was the "big night" of the mid-winter carnival. To-morrow, or the next day, men carnival. To-morrow, or the next day, men stakes for fifteen feet into the air, with and dogs would begin trailing back to their crotches at the top; and from crotch to forests and swamps, to spend another lonely three months along their trap-lines. It was their one "big time" of the year, and the Hudson Bay Company's factor and his men had prepared for it. Huge piles of dry fuel had been dragged into the clearing, and as the first gloom of the early night settled upon the wilderness these piles were lighted. Half an hour after the torch had been applied I went to the cap of a bare ridge a quarter of a mile away to look down upon the scene. From there, I had been told, I would see something that would remain these same men back again at the end of with me for all time.

from forest, swamp and wind-swept that little flash of life below. Because of drifting in the air had drawn them close up barren to join in the New Year that vastness of the canvas itself, because behind their masters, their lips dripping, carrival. There were French, Indians and of the littleness of the living picture which their large snapping in an eagerness that halfbreeds; there were Chippewayans from it swallowed as night engulfs a spark, it the rast, Crees from the south and west, and could never be forgotten. The tlames from Under the dripping roasts stood men with from the Barrens that swept far northward the great piles of logs and smaller fuel were long hooked poles, and now and then they to the Arctic sea and eastward to Hudson mounting skyward, and as the conflagration turned the carcasses a little on their spits, Bay there had come down a dozen little grew brighter, lighting up the tops of the and propped them with their sticks so that dark men with their fierce little dogs—the forest trees, the sounds of the carnival broke [fresh surfaces were presented to the hottest Eskimo. They had come by dog-siedge and forth; first in the howling of dogs, then in points of the fire. As the cooking proceeded snowshoe, but chiefly by sledge, bringing the shouts and cries of men, until at last with them their mid-winter catch of furs, there came a wild burst of savage voice, the firing of guns, a still greater tumult from the turn of the carcasses was made on their spits dogs, and I knew that the "caribou fire" had been lighted.

Even the silent-tongued Eskimo were joining in the noisy festivity when I rethe first words of that song that is known turned to the clearing about the post. The from Athabasca to the Bay. opening was a blaze of light from a dozen great fires, and the night was robbed of its cold by that circle of flame. In the center were two fires close together about which were gathered most of the revellers. Over one of these fires hung a huge copper kettle from out of which there already rose the fumes of that one great treat of the New Year—coffee. Close by there were two or three big boxes heaped high with real their haunches and howled up to the billion bread, and with this bread there was to be distributed a wonderful tub of real butter that had come all the way over from London civilization; a mixture of Collie, Mastiff, for the purpose. About this treasure of end, and above all other sound there rose Great Dane, "hound" and "just dog"— rare food and drink men and dogs had the fierce shout of the factor's chief man—

chief interest was centered. On each of three sides of that fire there rose two six inch homes and trapping shacks deep in the crotch there ran a stout birch sapling, stripped clean of bark, on which was spitted almost licking the juice-dripping flesh, shrill voices rose in meaningless cries above the crackling of the fire. Caribou whips snapped fiercely. Chippewayans, Crees, Eskimos, and breeds crowded in the red glare. factor's men shouted and sang like mad, for this was the Company's annual "good time"—the show that would lure many of ith me for all time.

It was a weird and awesome picture; cordon of men—men dressed in all the wild perhaps more of an impression than a pic- and savage habiliments of the wilderness, ture, for all detail was lost. The wilderness some in furs, some in buckskin, some in the was black. It reached black to the Arctic heavy Company coats and caps; men with sea; it was black through a thousand miles of fox and fisher and lynx and sealskin caps lifelessness and desolation to the coast of on their heads, and moccasins, "packs," and Labrador; it was sullen and black to the high Company boots on their feet—beyond

the tumult of sound and movement great less and less, and when at last the third the circle of men edged still closer, and their hands dropped to the hilts of knives in their belts. Then, of a sudden, burst forth

Oh, ze cariboo-oo-oo, ze cariboo-oo-oo He ross' on high,
Jes' under ze sky.
Ze beeg white cardoo-oo-oo!

Numbers gave these silent men of the forests the courage of voice, and they joined in, following the shouting lead of the factor's men, while the dogs sat back on stars that gleamed in the sky. At the beginning of that song the men with the hooked poles caught the long spits at each

the herce shout of the factor's chief man—
"Now! Now—ze cariboo-oo-oo—" and
in savage enthusiasm the last verse of the wilderness song burst forth.

Oh, ze caribooi, ze cariboo-oo-oo, ze cariboo-oo-oo. He brown 'n' juice 'n' sweet! Ze cariboo-co-oo, he ver' polite-Re ross' on high Jes' under ze sky.

He ready now to come 'n' eat!

With yells that rose above the last words of the song the men with the poles tugged at the huge roasts and the sizzling carcasses plunged down upon the melting snow. Scarcely had they fallen when the feasters were upon them, crowding and jostling good-naturedly in their efforts to be among the first to plunge their knives into the juicy flesh. With big chunks of meat in their hands they turned then and hurried to the other fire, where men were waiting to supply them with huge chunks of bread, lumps of butter, and cups of steaming hot coffee.

Not until the last man had helped himself to his portion of the roast did the dogs move. Then, in one wild, wolfish horde they rushed in from all sides to finish what edge of civilization. It was an almost im-measurable canvas of darkness, and silence, and wolfish, waited the horde of dogs. The derness.

# Let Buyers Beware-Need of One-price System

be that we are about ready for the next know that it is exactly the same whether we step—got only the same price to all in each buy it at Smith's or Brown's. This is true

(Continued from page 12.)

and the user. All others are agents or set the retail price as low as possible in order middlemen. They are not concerned in to promote the largest sale. He dare not concerned to the promote that would only provide. unless he enjoyed an advantage that the making of any particular article or set it high because that would only provide he supposed was denied his neighbor, interested in its future. Neither do they an opening for other makers to underself One-price-to-all was heralded as a great use it. They simply sell it for profit. If him and take away his market. Not a One-price-to-all was heraided as a great use it. They simply sell it for pront. It mim and take away his market. You a moral business advance. It was an appeal the country were not so big, the user would single case can be cited where manufacturers to the instinct for fair play and time has go direct to the maker. As it is, when we proved its soundness economically. To-day go into a store and ask for so-and-so's soap dealers under the patent law. The public is the country were not so big, the user would single case can be cited where manufacturers to the instinct for fair play and time has go direct to the maker. As it is, when we have allowed an unreasonable profit to proved its soundness economically. To-day go into a store and ask for so-and-so's soap dealers under the patent law. The public is the dealer is rare who dares to run counter we are buying on our knowledge of the repu- is safe and the whole industrial fabric is to the universal sentiment for this open tation, integrity and ability of the maker, strengthened by such a system. It insures, and above-board policy. We know its If we go to Smith's store we don't ask for for many other reasons which space will not public worth, we understand its benefits Smith's goods. We know he is a vendor, permit to be detailed here, the lowest averand who would go back to the trickster's day not a producer. We are dealing essentially age possible cost to the consumer. Suffice it age possible cost to the consumer. Suffice it that prevailed before it? And may it not with the maker of the thing we buy and we to point out that uniform prices mean uniform consumption. Uniform consumption permits uniform production and uniform of all goods of reputation and standing which in turn mean stable containing in all stores?

Whither would this lead? Just a little to foster.

There is no question involved here onto more and involved here and involved here.