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Minnesota's St. Croix River

Hogan-wauke-kin, the Sioux called the St. Croix, and tiny and flat, it drifted south from its lake through great pines, through another lake, gathering its creeks and its streams: the Yellow, the Kettle, the Snake, the Sunrise, swelling across a wilderness of bogs, trees and brush that reached away and away, unbroken, lonely, forever desolate and immense. The current quickened with rapids. The dark plunge of falls drove the stream between torn rock masses, into deeps that caught it and held it, then let it wander through pine-covered hills. The shores widened to haze. And the trees faded toward prairies, and the water swept south in a lake that gradually narrowed and funnelled through more hills, through forests again, through silence and distance and solitude, until at length it merged with the great Mississippi where the far shore gleamed in a bend and diminished, leaving the points clear, scarred with many camp fires and moccasined feet.

For here the Sioux often assembled for their forays toward the Great Lakes. Here the tom-toms throbbed wildly, and echoed. Here the naked bodies circled and weaved, the painted faces grimaced and shifted, the savage orgies of the war dance haunted the flame-glow, and the gaudy canoes started northward, crowded with warriors. The paddles dipped silently. The sun blazed from the horizon and fired the dark river, and the land stretched its forests, its plains, its rivers and lakes to the big woods where the Chippewa lodges huddled, secluded. Further east across the Sault rapids, lay the villages of the Ottawas and the Hurons, and below them were the Iroquois, and in the shadow of Newfoundland's shores Bretons and Normans were already fishing. A few years before, the Cabots had explored the North American coast. The Spaniards plundered the Indies. Cartier sailed up theSt. Laurence and took possession in the name of Frances the First, and DeSoto, driven by lust across a limitless wilderness, broken, half-starved, found his gold in the reflected moonlight of the Great River beneath which he was buried, and in whose muddy and treacherous currents flowed the waters

of the Hogan-wauke-kin. White men had touched the Sioux stream long before any had seen it.

But with Champlain's coming in 1603 its discovery grew nearer. He settled Quebec and sent his agents west across the Great Lakes: Brule, Jesuits, coureur de bois pushed their canoes to the Sault and probably further, and in 1634 Jean Nicolet fired by a desire to find China made his way to Green Bay and the mouth of the Fox where, dressed in a Mandarin's robe and clutching a pistol in each of his hands, he stepped ashore among startled Winnebagoes. The squaws and the children fled wildly from this Manitou who carried thunder and lightning. The Frenchman, however, set about winning their confidence, and after exploring the country to the south, he returned to Quebec, and it was a good many years before a white man again ventured past the Mackenaw Straits.

For the merciless Iroquois whom Champlain had attacked with the Hurons, remembering, taking advantage of the French leader's death, swooped down on the whites and their Indian allies, with fire arms supplied by the Dutch from Fort Orange.

Those bold marauders who a few years before had fled madly from the guns of the French now carried death to the very gates of the forts. And the habitans cowered behind their stockades, the voyageurs no longer pushed their canoes down unknown streams, the Jesuits told their beads in the shelter of settlements, the soldiers prudently kept to the forts, and the Ottawas and the Hurons wandered with their Chippewa friends, homeless, forsaken. Encroaching on the hunting grounds of the Sioux of the Hogan-wauke-kin, the French Indians were driven back to the Sault. There the Iroquois fell on them again, and the unfortunate tribes, hemmed in by their enemies, pursued without pity, driven relentlessly back and forth across the rimy face of the north, fled down lonely trails or crouched in their tepees, listening for the twang of a bowstring, the crash of a shot, hearing the desolate wind that moaned through the trees with the promise of winter, that was like their own hopeless laments, that brought an indescribable loneliness and the knowledge of misery, of hunger and death. Up and down the St. Croix they fought and were killed. At the Sault they battled and died. To the barren shores of the Great Lake, they fled without hope, while the sinister waters, black and far-reaching,

rolled savagely from the horizon charging upon them in furious waves as if inspired with an Iroquian hatred, as if to destroy forever their lands and their homes. And at night, they turned sorrowful faces to the haunted colors of the far northern lights in whose mesmeric flashings they beheld the dancings of the ghosts of their dead. Still they fought on.

Nor did they always retreat. Now and again, desperate, with nothing to lose, they were the aggressors, and at length, when the French could once more venture out, when the coureurs de bois were again threading the back country with firewater and guns to trade for huge profits in furs, and when the Jesuits returned with their holy water and their reliquaries, they made their way back to the Sault. Some of the Hurons passed over the rapids toward their old homes. And in 1658 numbers of them guided two hardy adventurers, Radisson and des Groseilliers who are reputed to have reached the Mississippi, by way of Green Bay, and who also are supposed to have seen the St. Croix a year or two later. However, the claim is disputed, and it was two decades before the Hogan-wauke-kin was reached by a white man who is

sanctioned by history-Duluth, commissioned by Count Frontenac. He blazed the way to the valley.

And few men did more for New France in opening unknown regions. Leaving Quebec with four other Frenchmen in the summer of 1678, he pushed his boats through the Sault and launched them on the broad and menacing waters of the Great Lake Superior, and the following spring he was among the Sioux of Mille Lacs where he planted the arms of the King in three of their villages, and where he lost no opportunity to further his trade. He ranged over most of the district. He circled the lake and led his canoes down streams no white man had seen; he pushed through forests of pine that kept the earth in continual shade; he saw the sun break and blaze over marshes, over plains, over lakes that were like flashes of light in a land of perpetual gloom; he stalked imperiously into the savage incampments, and after he had seen all that he cared to, after he had accumulated enough bales of pelts and after he had sworn the Sioux to allegiance he returned to the end of Superior and passed along its north shore to the future site of Fort William. There he built a post and spent the winter and spring pursuing his trading.

But he wasn't satisfied with his explorations. So in June he left the head of the Lake with four Frenchmen and an Indian in two bark canoes, and, paddling eastward, he swung into the narrow and turbulent Brule. With great difficulty he bucked the strong current. Over huge fallen trees, over rapids and rocks and flat beaver dams the men made their way slowly, and their paddles flashed, dripping, in slashes of sunlight that cut through the shade of the heavy forested banks. The great pines towered in crowded upthrusts of green above the frail crafts. The stream rushed upon them out of massed darkness, out of the gloom of the wilderness that seemed to crush the narrowing river, that seemed to be waiting to smother the explorers in the unknown. But they continued their journey. And at the head waters, they portaged and fought their way to the shores of a lake that lay under the sun like a flame rimmed with the deep and wide shadow of the unbroken forest. A hawk screamed and soared over the trees. The French gazed at the lake a long time, then paddled south, the first whites to reach upper St. Croix. Ahead the waters came slowly together. And after a time they felt the gentle pull of the Hogan-wauke-kin, and the

pines grew above them, and the river led on through an ineffable loneliness, through a vast and rich land that was the womb of a nation, that at this moment was being prepared for its rape by civilization. For Duluth let no opportunity pass to further the fur trade. He made friends with the Indians wherever he could; he picked out likely locations for posts; he noted the richness of resources, the abundance of game, the number of rivers, and he watched the stream-current swell, he saw the Yellow, the Kettle, the Snake and the Sunrise come in; he passed over rapids, between bluffs, through forests that shadowed theheavens, that crowded the skyline with pinnacled green; and at length he heard the murmur of St. Croix Falls, which he portaged around to pause at the Dalles where the Indians told him the spirits of evil pronounced doom on the cowards who aspired to the happy hunting grounds of the brave. Then as now the Devil's chair towered like a threat to the river. Then as now Angle Rock seemed to strangle the stream. Then as now the Wells opened like ~~infernal~~ dismal pits, the lofty ledges of trap jutted and cragged, the crevasses yawned, the boulders and angles clung as if floating, and the mighty and eroded bluffs shelved wildly and

thrust, flinging their splashes of color, their tortured rock masses violently upward, pine-crowned, forever evil and lonely, forever beautiful, majestic, immense. The Frenchmen passed slowly down stream.

But they soon had reason to hasten. For they began to hear from the Indians that three "Spirits" were on the Great River below, and fearing that they might be Spaniards or British encroaching on the lands of the King, Duluth ordered his men to bend to their paddles. The canoes drove with the current through the forested hills and out into the lower Lake of St. Croix, then passed on to the Mississippi where Duluth soon overtook the three Europeans who turned out to be Accault and Hennepin with their companion, and who were practically the prisoners of a Sioux hunting party. Duluth, however, swiftly changed that. He roundly abused the Indians for mistreating his friends, and he called down the priest for submitting to them. Then all of thewhites followed the Sioux to Mille Lacs from which Accault and his party had recently come, and the Indians feasted the French, with Hennepin and Duluth in the places of honor. After much eating and a great many speeches, the party broke up. And with autumn

approaching, the French left for home, descending Rum River, portaging around St. Anthony Falls which Hennepin named, and coasting by the mouth of the Hogan-wauke-kin now soon to be called by its modern name.

For, as the fur trade developed, as the coureurs de bois were seen more often upon it, as the priests and explorers grew thicker, the Sioux word was dropped. No stream of New France could be named by the heathen, and each white man with any reverance for country and church proceeded to name it. Hennepin called it Tomb River because an Indian had been buried beneath it; and when in 1694 LeSueur buklt his stockaded forts at La Pointe on Superior and at Prairie Island below the mouth of the Hogan-wauke-kin, the river was already known as the St. Croix for a coureur de bois of that name who had been wrecked on its banks...or for a cross that had been planted over the grave of a Frenchman. At any rate the name was accepted. The maps of the day carried it. And at night around camp fires, with the darkness clutching at the flickering light, with the wind in the trees and the howl of a wolf echoing over a hill, the traders and priests talked about it, spoke of the opportunities it offered for profit

and the saving of souls. Thus with its new name came a new meaning. It was no longer the stream of the Indians. The French had preempted it.

And they proceeded to exploit it, slowly however, because of lack of money and men for protection, and because of the pressure exerted by the allied Iroquois and English. For a time the French were forced to withdraw from their far western forts, concentrating their trade in and around Montreal. But the coureurs de bois continued to roam. They ranged to the Mississippi and further, and when the hostility of the Sacs and the Foxes closed the Wisconsin and Chippewa rivers, the traders used the St. Croix almost exclusively, coming across the south shore of Superior to the Brule and into that immense region where few whites were known. Their trade was mostly east of Mille Lacs among the Chippewas and the Crees, the Ottawas and the Hurons, and those tribes being friends of the French gradually gained an ascendency in fire arms over their enemies, and they lost no time in avenging their many defeats. War parties pushed into the land of the Sioux. But that hardy people didn't retreat. With their primitive weapons they held off the Chippewas, and legend reports that a war

party of the latter driven back by the former, sought refuge on the summit of Lookout Mountain at the foot of the Dalles where they rolled down great rocks toward off the Sioux, and where the boulders still cling, mute reminders of struggle, of vengeance and death.

But the French guns had their effect. The Sioux began to fall back. The Chippewas slowly fought their way south and west toward the St. Croix, and when the early French fort of tradition named after the river was set up in 1703 on the plateau south of the Dalles, there was already a Chippewa village called Chengwatana at the mouth of Cross Lake on the Snake River. A few years later a war party of a thousand Chippewa braves moved on a Sioux camp at Point Prescott in the darkness of dawn. Sending out scouts, they advanced slowly down a ravine and paused to look over the wigwams silhouetted against the sheen of the river. The waves crackled gently against the sand of the shore. Far off an owl's hoot floated and dwindled, weird and terrible, on the moan of the wind. A Sioux squaw stepped out and stared toward the ravine, then returned to her tepee. Not a dog barked. And the attackers, breathing through clenched, blackened

teeth, deploying, with their painted bodies and faces gleaming in the first paleness of morning, swung out and fell on the camp. The crash of their guns split the silence like the heavens exploding, and their demoniac yells drowned out the sound. A dozen wigwams shot into flame. The Sioux screamed and groped for their weapons, and the women fled shrieking for their canoes, and the day cut over the cliffs like a knife dripping blood. The gun flashes stabbed palely out of the lessening shadows. The wind muttered, rising out of the west as if propelled by the distance.

And the waves, gentle at first, seemed to grow and sweep from the opposite shore in terraced and mounting surges of tumbling fury. The canoes slapped against them and toppled, and the women and children, screaming, gurgling, drowning, scrabbled and fought toward the beach where their scalps were ripped off, and where the Chippewas, scrambling over their enemies' bodies, pushed the remaining Sioux back to the bluff. The blood patterned the sand as though on a gigantic blotter. The war cry of victory swelled and diminished from the attackers. But the beseiged fought without utterance, swinging their clubs and discharging their arrows with each step of retreat, until the Chippewa guns compelled them to break.

Then they scattered for cover. They ducked under ledges, in gulches, behind bushes, and one by one they were slaughtered, and one warrior, skirting the cliff, circled the Chippewas and drove for the beach. The bullets geysered successive whirlwinds of sand all around him. He weaved and dodged, his naked body like a brown flash in the sun that suddenly slashed down the ravine. The river seemed to open a lane of furious fire. He plunged in it and dived, and the Chippewas watched for his head, holding their fire, silent, poised for the shot. In a moment his body gleamed through the waves. The guns crashed ; water plumes fanned about him; he went down and came up toward the center, and the Chippewas shot again and again as he came to the surface. But he kept bobbing and sinking. Each time he dived he was further away, and he dragged himself out on the opposite bank, and with a triumphant cry, disappeared in the brush. The Chippewas shouted their praise. The sun slanted over the bluff, cloud-smothered, shining angry and red from cumulous depths.

And the heavens curved afar off, eruptive and shifting with heaped masses of black, grey and white. A lone hawk, high and unruffled, hung

suspended over the dead. The wind snatched at the sand, and the wilderness hollowed and waved toward the edge of the distance, across thewide land that lay silent and lonely, that held its wastes of forests and plains, of lakes, streams and mountains in unbroken grandeur, immense, beautiful, desolated by death. All over America slaughter was rampant. Tribe battled tribe. And to the east the land-craving, gold-hungry tide of white immigration rolled relentlessly westward, bringing treachery and strife, spreading hunger and murder. From the Alleganies and remote Hudson Bay, the English came with their whiskey, their guns, blankets and trinkets to compete with the French who fought stubbornly to retain their supremacy. Battalions of traders and coureurs de bois plied the Northwestern rivers and lakes to hoodwink the Indians. New posts were founded: one was suppos - edly located on the school land addition of Taylor's Falls. Fond du Lac was enlarged; Prairie du Chein became a flourishing village again, and La Verendrye built a fort on far away Lake of the Woods. But no amount of activity could keep the English goods out.

For the British were masters of artful trade methods. Selling better goods cheaper, they

crowded the French all along the frontier; they connived with the Indians; they stirred the Sacs and the Foxes to the war which for a time nearly drove the French from the region, and at length the struggle began that ended forever the rule of New France in America. Wolfe captured Quebec, and one after another the forts of the Northwest fell to the English. By 1763 the Union Jack floated over most of the wilderness. But Pontiac, the great Indian leader and friend of the French, assembled his allies and massacred the British garrison at Fort Makinaw, and he challenged English authority beyond the Great Lakes, carrying murder and fire to the Ohio, until at length, defeated by superior numbers, he fell by the knife of a treacherous tribesman and was buried on the site of St. Louis where the race he hated with undying fury were soon to rear in towers of greed, envy and blood the civilization he tried vainly to halt. The Anglo-Saxon advance was unceasing. The British got control of the fur trade. Organizations like Hudson's Bay, North West and XY pushed the French out and began to fight one another, and their factors hired the voyageurs and coureurs de bois and spread them across the Northwest like a scattering army. Thomas Connor commanded a post for the North West in 1804. A trader named

Chenier held a stockade for the XY at the head of the rapids of swift Kettle River; La Prairie had a fort at the mouth of the Yellow; Joseph Reaume was stationed at Namai Kowagon, an Indian village about ten miles below the outlet of upper Lake of the St. Croix, and the benefits of the trade were taken to the very doors of the wigwams. Men followed the Indians down the lengths of their trap lines, and an animal was scarcely stiffened in death before the hide was bargained for whiskey or trinkets or powder and shot. Whole tribes were changed into pot-hunters; parties ranged incredible distances killing for furs; game was depleted, and before long a system of credits came into use which kept the Indians slaves to the whites. Misery and starvation stalked the encampments.

But the big companies didn't alter their methods. They made them more stringent, and they continued to build their monopolies, until the year of 1812 when that accomplished monopolist, John Jacob Astor moved in with his American Fur Company. Entering into an agreement with certain partners of the Northwestern concern, he bought up their posts around the Great Lakes and the St. Croix,

got a law lobbied hrough congress which, under the guise of excluding foreigners from the fur trade, enabled him to drive out all individual traders and to clamp down on the Indians a tyranny they couldn't escape. He completed their ruin, perfecting the polices that compelled them to cede their lands for practically nothing.

Nor did the government seem inclined to rear any curbs. Astor's power was too great: his chief factors, among whom was one future governor, Henry H. Sibley, ruled the region like feudal aristocrats, and honest officials protested in vain. Taliaferro, Irwin and others devoted years to the defense of theIndians. Step by step they contested the fur traders methods: they fought the use of whiskey and poor trading goods; they tried to abolish the drinking houses the factors maintained; they sought to keep the red men informed on the true value of furs: and for a time they succeeded in running a non-profit post for the government. But the whiskey and propaganda of the American commanded the trade, and before long the experiment failed. Moreover, settlement aided the fur trader. Immigrants hated the Indians whose land they desired, and they maintained an intense agitation to compel the

United States to throw open the St. Croix valley where the rich forests and land had long whetted their greed. Missionaries came into the valley to educate the natives to respect the ways of the whites. What the priests had begun the preachers continued, and at the old Jesuit post of La Pointe a Protestant mission was founded. The Reverend Ayer was converting the heathen as early as 1833 in a chapel at the outlet of broad Yellow Lake. Others carried on the work elsewhere, until a year or two later when it was decided to merge all the missions in one at Lake Pokegama, and from there the civilizing influence went on, while in the settlements, in Washington and the country back east, the propaganda grew and gave forth. In 1837 a treaty was signed whereby the tribes ceded their holdings between the Mississippi and Chippewa rivers north to the Crow Wing for a half million dollars nearly half of which went to traders and half-breeds for bribes and fictitious debts. Sibley himself headed a delegation to Washington that brought back a good share of the plunder for the American Fur Company. Thus the government paid Astor for degrading the Indians.

But he had plenty of help. The cession itself was the result of one of the greatest frauds ever perpetrated on an ignorant people; and the citizens did all they could to augment it. Most of the prominent men of the day had a hand in it. To

them the Indian was legitimate prey, and long before the treaty was ratified , they had searched through the region locating the best available lands. On ratification they stampeded for the sites they had chosen. Many didn't even bother to wait. Franklin Steele made his way to St. Croix Falls in 1837 to stake out a claim, and he found Joseph R. Brown already there, cutting logs on the west side of the river, and the same year John Boyce passed the Falls with a complete logging outfit, with eleven men and six oxen to build a camp at the mouth of Snake river. Timber operations began then in earnest. Lumbermen worked into the region, and the following spring Steele and his partners chartered the steamboat P Palmyra and came up the river with the supplies and machinery to build a saw mill, and the paddles churned furiously, driving the first steamer to ply the St. Croix past a delegation of more than a thousand Chippewa Indians who had assembled on the site of Stllwater to wait for the first annuity payment. The whole mob pointed and shouted, certain that their supplies had arrived.

But the Palmyra kept on its way, its black smoke painting the distance, its whistle shattering against the pine-grown hills. On either side the trees waved darkly across the horizon, and the river curved through them like a valley of light, and the wilderness seemed to rest,

parted, expectant, eternally waiting. The sun blazed unpitingly in the heatmisted sky. The boat, an awkward and wallowing blotch with its battered decks and weather-marred smokestacks grotesque and menacing on the point of its wake, puffed, chattered, and drove toward the north like a wedge into the heart of the loneliness, like a clumsy and powerful missle hurled at the silence, at the beauty, and the richness of the magnificent land. Desolation hung like a vulture over the river, over the earth. But the people on the Palmyra saw only the forests, the land and the tumbling streams, and they swung the boat up before Angle Rock and threw out the anchor, while the neighboring Indians gathered on the crags and fissured bluffs of the Dalles to stare, terrified, at the big Scota Cheman that snorted and clanked, belching its great clouds of smoke in a smear across heaven. The valley seemed suddenly darkened by the black breath of a monster. The crags thrust their heights through circles of gloom. The Indians increasing, chattering, with their b bodies and faces gleaming, brown, through the leaves, massed behind trees, brush and rocks, darted from boulder to boulder, from trunk to crevice to knoll, expecting the evil spirit to strike. A shrill wailing went up from the children and squaws. The braves crouched, irresolute, and a number discharged their guns at the boat, and the echoes dinned throughthe hills, smothering

themselves in a stillness that seemed to roll over the region. For an instant the boat swung like a spectre between the water and the pall of its smoke. Then the captain jerked open the safety valve of the boiler, and the roar of whistle and steam shattered against the pinnacled crags, smashed between bluffs, canyon and hill and screamed and careened over the trees, sweeping the silence like dust out of the valley. The Indians shrieked and tumbled backward toward flight. Squaws, children and braves clawed through the brush, their cries choking their throats, their gasps propelling their yells, and for days they spoke only in whispers of the monster whose breath was a roar of flame, smoke and death. They carried the tale afar along the St. Croix.

To the Sunrise, to the Snake, to the Kettle, the Yellow and remote Upper Lake, runners came with the story, and signal fires, shafting their smoke columns skyward from high ridges and hills, spelled out the brief words, and the Indians gathered at Stillwater heard and were dimly afraid, wondering whether their payment wasn't consumed by the treacherous whites. For the days went by swiftly. Summer passed on and the fall hunting time, and the Chippewas waited expectant, not preparing for winter, not hunting or fishing or harvesting the wild marshes of rice, and the last leaves clung stubbornly in the bitter and snow-promising wind, twisting and beating forlornly,

floating and driving from the bare trees that stretched their stripped branches hopelessly across the grey sky, that stood cold and forsaken in their dismal thousands like mammoth skeletons moaning of hunger, thrusting into the heart of the redman the truth of his heritage, the agony of his defeat, the certainty and pain of his doom. Frost began to rim the smoke-holes of the lodges, and ice slivered from the banks of the river. The harsh tinge of winter colored the days, and the wind hurtled out of the north like a current of ice, and the Chippewas huddled about their campfires, smelling new snow. The first flakes started to fall slowly, large, scattered. The river rolled heavily, the waves sluggish as if in the act of congealing, and over the skyline , a smudge grew and blew streamers, blew slashes of black that scudded across the tree tops, that twisted and snarled and exploded in fragments lost in the storm. The Indians crowded the beach shivering, making no sound. The boat dipping nearer, pushed its bulk darkly from the haze of the blizzard, and the whistle moaned hoarsely into the wind. There was a sudden movement toward the canoes. A great clamor arose; the paddles tore at the water; the crafts jerked over the waves; the Indians surrounded the Gypsey, crying for food, clambering onto the deck, and the captain cursed them and brought his boat into the wind. The anchor clattered and splashed. The roustabout and the dec khands shoved the Indians aside and started unloading.

Barrels of pork, flour and tobacco, bales of blankets, guns, knives and casks of Mexican dollars, ammunition and food were dumped on the beach where the Chippewas fell on them, gorging themselves. The Gypsey backed into the stream, her bell clanging, her whistle bellowing into the storm that drowned the sound in fast-drifting snow. On the bank the piles of supplies diminished and faded.

And the Indians there clawed and fought, ripping open the boxes, knocking in the heads of the barrels. They snarled, ravenous; campfires blazed higher from the pork being cooked; the wind pushed at the teepees and the encampment looked ghostly, forlorn. The drifts shelved and crawled, the snow smoking over them, whirling up from them, building and cutting and mounting in cOnstant, in white and furious motion that smothered the earth, that engulfed the wigwams and blocked rivers and trails. The Chippewas slowly became aware that the ways to their homes was being cut off: the St. Croix was freezing; the snow grew constantly deeper. They broke camp, panic-mad, loaded themselves with all they could carry, burned their canoes to keep them from the hands of the Sioux, and started north, leaving the bulk of their goods to rot by the river from which the Gypsey barely escaped. Without snowshoes the Indians struggled through the deep drifts. Many perished from overeating; others succumbed to the cold and to hunger

and their bodies marked the trails to their homes where all winter long they suffered and starved. Vainly the hunters scoured the forests for game. The last dog was eaten. There was no rice, no fish, no pemmican, and night after night the children and squaws set up their wailings, dreaming of the piles of food decaying far away on the St. Croix. Thus the supplies which they had hoped would keep them all winter were almost their doom.

But weather and men's inefficiency contrived to cheat them of the pittances which they had received for their lands, and their degradation went on in some form or other. The exploitation of the fur trading period was small compared to the era that followed. The mill at St. Croix began to take shape; another was started the next year at Marine, and squatter outfits moved in to cut government timber. Lumbermen proceeded to preempt thousands of acres of valuable pine. Their cruisers ranged over the valley, selecting and marking, and their camps started rising, and the Indians, seeing their hunting grounds about to be desolated began voicing protest. One operator was told not to cut down the trees; another was commanded to go back where he came from; but the operations went on. Settlement was underway at Prescott and Hudson, at Marine, Chengwatana and St. Croix Falls, and at Lake Pokegama the mission was flourishing, with many Chippewa lodges clustered about it. Under the Reverend Boutwell the Indians prospered.

A number of familes built houses and adopted a more or less stable mode of existence. Gardens and fields were planted

and reaped, and in 1839 Jeremiah Russell was named by the government to teach the Chippewa improved methods of farming, and the same year the bands from Pokegama and Crow Wing, from Mille Lacs and the St. Croix Valley assembled for their annuities at Fort Snelling where they were told that payment would be made from their own agency at La Pointe in Wisconsin, and where they found a large body of Sioux camped near the post. For a time the authorities had all they could do to prevent an outbreak. But at length the peace pipes were smoked; the tribes fraternized freely; there were foot and horse races; a ball game was played in which eighty Sioux athletes contended against the same number of Chippewa; and the enemies pledged themselves not to make war for a year "or longer if practicable," and after a month of feasting and dancing, the Chippewa left for their homes, the St. Croix group accompanied by a trader, William A. Aitkin with plenty of whiskey.

But two braves from the band of Chief Hole-in-the-day, stayed behind ostensibly to mourn at the grave of a relative who had been killed in a brush with the Sioux some time before. They wept there until dark, then made their way to a Sioux camp on the banks of Lake Harriet where they hid and killed a Sioux, Nika, at sunrise. They ripped his scalp off and fled, and the alarm whipped through the encampment. Word went to all the villages. Runners sped through the Sioux country; signal fires blazed; the cries for revenge swelled in a war dance; and two expeditions were instantly formed. One, consisting of a hundred braves from Little Crow's village of Kaposia a few miles south of St. Paul, followed the St. Croix Chippewa who halted at Still-

water in the ravine where the old State Prison now crumbles to dust. The lodges were pitched. And at dawn, as the first blaze of the sun flamed over the river, the Sioux looked down from the bluffs at the camp stilled in the sleep of a drunken debauch. The traders linen tent gleamed incongruously in the midst of the wigwams. The wind brushed gently through the scattering trees. The Sioux fired.

And the Chippewa, coming slowly out of their stupor, jerked to their feet. The guns crashed again. There was a great falling and screaming, and Aitkin and his white helpers fled wildly into the brush. But the Chippewa rallied. Caught in a withering fire, they sought all available cover. Crawling from boulder to tree trunk, from pot hole to brush clump, they returned shot for shot, and the Sioux soon retired with small loss, leaving the field to the Chippewa who had twenty-one killed and twenty-nine wounded, and who paddled on to the Falls, carrying their injured. There the whites gave them medicine, fed them and looked after their wounds, and when they learned that the second Sioux expedition had slain seventy of the Mille Lacs Chippewa at Rum River, their grief overwhelmed them. For days their moans, the throb of their tom-toms, their cries echoed over the settlement.

Then they dispersed to their homes and civilization went back to its work. More timber workers moved in. Building continued on the mill at the Falls, and by autumn the one at Marine was manufacturing lumber, using in part the logs which Boyce had tried to raft down from the Snake and which he

had lost in the high water. Thus the exploitation of the valleys resources got a good start, and save for the Indians would have proceeded with greater rapidity. After the battle of Stillwater, however, fear of an outbreak was general among the white settlers. Wandering bands of Sioux stalked the forests, and the Chippewa weren't any too friendly. Demands for whiskey and food grew during the winter, and in the spring of 1840, after St. Croix County had been named in the Territory of Wisconsin, Russell the farmer at Lake Pokegama, sent two Chippewa down to the Falls for supplies. Fifty Sioux braves immediately surrounded the settlement. The whites secreted the Indians and waited, with the Sioux watching and with fright closing in on the village. No one stirred from his cabin; guards were kept; the Sioux appeared to be preparing for battle. Captain Frazer, Reverend Ayer and W. H. Folsom held a conference with the two messengers and decided to sacrifice the Chippewa who Folsom claimed were ready to leave in order that attack might be averted. At any rate the Indians moved on in broad day, pushing north over the ridge, through the brush where they discovered two of their enemies whom they instantly shot. The gun-noise echoed. The Sioux quickly closed in; the Chippewa started to run; one escaped, but the other was killed, and the Sioux hacked his body to pieces, scattered it to the wind and hung his head in a kettle before his two victims who had been placed in a sitting position, with a gun planted between them, facing the enemy country from a ridge where the mill dam was built. The wind stirred through the ribbons and moss with which they had been ornamented. The

trees swayed.

And the wilderness moaned as if mourning. The Falls murmured and grieved, the rapids swirled, crying, the river swept through the Dalles that cragged and towered like a glorious monument to the unknown dead, and the canyons, the rocks, the crevices seemed imbued with the immemorable sadness of time, with the spirit of forgotten miseries, the ghosts of all the hunger, all the grief and the agony, and the promise of generations of pain clung like a threat, spreading over the region the certainty of achievement and hardship, of exploitation and sorrow, of sacrifice and desolation and wealth. The Indian forays went on. Shortly after the skirmish above, the Sioux returned to bury their dead and swooped down on the village, surprising the whites. The Indians prowled at will through the town, searching for the gun which was missing, and appropriating all the available food. They retired however, without molesting any of the inhabitants whom they held responsible for the theft of the weapon, pointing out that Indians never bothered dead, and after a demonstration close to the settlement they went to Fort Snelling and complained to the commander. He ordered a search by Captain Frazer at St. Croix Falls and the gun turned up under the false bottom of a settler's chest. So the trouble passed over; the Sioux let the village alone, and for a time there was a kind of peace in the valley.

But the following spring, a small party of scalp-hungry Chippewa, stole down the Mississippi to a point not far from Fort Snelling, shot a Sioux chief and made their escape. The

Sioux were furious. They set about organizing a force that would drive the Chippewa forever off their borders. In three bands they moved toward Lake Pokegama: one up the St. Croix, one overland, and one by Knife River. But only the latter reached the Chippewa village. Leaving a small group to guard the west side of the lake, the Sioux moved around to the south and prepared to attack the next morning. However, some scouts fired on three Chippewa runners, and the alarm quickly sounded. The battle was short. The Sioux were repulsed, and the Chippewa were left to mourn their small losses and to conclude that their village was too convenient to danger, and soon they began to break camp, deserting the mission, scattering northward along lonely trails, where there was still game to be had. Somehow they managed to live, mostly on their annuities, on their scanty crops of corn and wildrice, on what they could pilfer or beg.

Nor were they alone in their sufferings. The whites too tasted of hunger. Relying for supplies on a steamboat that came twice a year, they often ran short and barely averted starvation, and in the fall of 1842 the two hundred settlers at St. Croix Falls waited anxiously for the down river boat. Already deficient of food, they watched September and half of October go by. It snowed, ice swirled and plunged down the rapids and massed in the Dalles, and over the land the desolation and darkness of winter seemed like the reflection of hunger. The ice piled up in the gorge until no boat could get through. The families were rationed; day folowed day; and the men and the women thought of the long months ahead, thought of the misery, thought of the

snow piled deep in the forests, of the river impassable and the wind and the cold and starvation closing in on them. They watched the sky hopelessly, listening, listening. Then one day, when the snow clouds were massed at the horizon, when the sky seemed the stronghold of gloom, and when winter surged out of the north in a final, a triumphant blast, a whistle moaned and diminished, fading like the ghost of a breath. The people rushed wildly down to the warehouse. But they saw only the ice and the bluffs and the lonely points of the crags. The pines shuddered against the grey heavens. They strained after the echoes that had already died, and they turned back toward their cabins feeling despair smother down on the wind. There was no hope; another night would blockade the river. Their feet dragged heavily over the stones. Then suddenly a clatter of voices burst in the valley, and the settlers swung to see the boats' officers and passengers scrambling over the rocks. The cargo was being unloaded a half mile down the river. The villagers cheered.

And they proceeded to feast. The winter passed merrily, with plenty of work, and the ring of the axes echoed over the Dalles. The pines crashed, were trimmed and piled near the river, ready for rafting. But toward spring, provisions were again getting short; the people were put on rations once more; now and then a deer or a fish was brought in, yet nothing helped much to stave off a hunger that grew daily more painful. Finally, however, they got a shipment of condemned pork from Fort Snelling that carried them over till the first boat docked at the landing, and they continued their work. They rafted their cuttings down to

the Falls. The boom, a kind of river corral to retain the logs, was strengthened and filled, and suddenly under the pressure of rising spring floods it and the mill race parted and burst, and all the logs swept down the river, crashing and zooming against, and on through the Dalles. The current frothed and boiled savagely. The workers stood, helpless: they saw the results of a long winter's labor snatched from their grasps.

But as it happened, the occurrence opened up for the company and people a new trade with the valley below, which brought profit for one and hard work for the other. It introduced the idea of rafting logs down the river and promoted the building of many saw mills. One was set up in Stillwater in 1844. Another had been already started at Taylor's Falls in 1838 but was never completed, and six years later everything movable was sold and transferred to Osceola down the river, and all over the valley a new kind of activity got under way. Camps grew and burgeoned over the region; loggers poled their bateaux up the streams; whole sections of forest fell under the ax; and huge rafts, with their pilots and crews quartered on them, began filling the river. Bound together by stringers, massive,

awkward and rough, they wallowed in five hundred foot cribs, guided by sweeps, floating cumberously, with stubby and ineffectual sails haphazardly set to catch any favorable breeze. In the shallows and becalmed places, the crews had to tow. Often they stumbled, dragging the heavy tow rope, down narrow shores, over rocks and windfalls for a gain of two or three miles in a sixteen hour day. When the bluffs and impassable banks prevented their progress, they cordelled their way forward, rowing downstream in a boat with several fathoms of rope and a gigantic anchor which they dropped over board, then pulled the raft up to it. The process was repeated time after time. It took days to get a raft through the lower St. Croix Lake.

But the logs and lumber continued to push down the river. Skilled pilots guided the rafts over shoals, bars and rapids, around bends, points and rocks, and Stephen B. Hanks, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln, was of them. He had taken the first raft of logs down the St. Croix. He had piloted many of lumber, and it was he who hit on the idea of using horses to pull the rope in cordelling the strings of the latter.

The logs rafts, however, had to be hauled through by hand, and they had to keep

moving. The men worked in two shifts, never halting, watching the sky, and frequently they saw the horizon-line blacken, the gloom swell, the clouds roll up in great surges of wild plunging darkness that enveloped the heavens and wracked the earth with a destroying wind. The men heard the storm coming, and panting and sweating, they tugged at the sweeps, they hauled at the rope, they dragged at the anchor which often stuck in the muck, and they crouched in the tossing row boats, while the waves lurched and drove, while the rain swirled from the sky and the raft bucked and heaved, until at length it reached shelter or buckled and smashed, strewing raftsmen and logs along twenty miles of river-lashed shore. Risk was great in the lumbering country. Life was cheap. At the camps where they bunked in windowless shacks with open fireplaces, the workers hacked at the wilderness, dodged falling trees, fought snow and cold, propared for an ax slash or a bullet from ambush, for thirty dollars a month and ~~their~~ salt pork and beans. On the drives, they expected numerous duckings in the iced waters, pitted their quickness against plunging logs, battled the jams when a whim of the river might crush them completely and delivered the timber to the saw-mills and booms, depleted in numbers, often injured, probably tired, but triumphant.

For they were a hard race. Privations seemed to mean nothing to them. Work was their life, and they were invariable in the woods an hour before daylight, continuing on until dark. Their labor made the commerce of the river. They built the dams and the mills, they constructed the booms, they erected the towns, and by 1845 Stillwater had not only its mill, but several stores, a smithy, two hotels and numerous houses; Marine was about the same size; St. Croix Falls had besides its mill and its stores, a couple of boarding houses named "Barlow's " and the "Soap Grease Exchange" and several small tenements; Hudson, Point Douglas, Osceola and Prescott were soon thriving villages. One after another, Arcola, Lakeland, Kinnikinic, now River Falls, and Afton were founded, and after 1850 had passed, towns grew beside the St. Croix like cancerous sores with the saw mills, the unpainted shacks, the great piles of lumber, shavings and saw dust crouching, raw, harsh and ugly, above the acres of stumps. Every hamlet usually had more saloons than it did houses. Speculators • came in; cities were platted; brochures were published; fabulous promises were printed extensively and gilded certificates floated over America enticing the wealth of the gullible.

But the lumbermen reaped most of the harvest. The trees were there for the taking,

and althoughthe government soon established an office for the sale of its lands that didn't stop the unscrupulous. It was too easy, with a band of strong-armmers, to silence all bids, buy a section for the nominal dollar and a quarter an acre and cut the timber from fifty. Consequently the camps moved further and further into the valley. On the Willow, the Apple, the Snake, the Sunrise and the Kettle, the Yellow, the Tamarac and the remote Nemakagon lumberjacks swung their big axes, and new methods came with them. As the trees on the stream were removed, the outfits worked into the interior, crude roads were built, and sleds and teams hauled the timber to the banks of the rivers where the logs were held until spring, and where the great rafts were made and propelled now by steamboats downstream. Thus progress came to the St. Croix.

Nor was it lacking in any of its manifestations. Dance halls and vice ruled the boom towns. But the employers did forbid liquor in camp; they sought to keep it out of the woods: they couldn't have brawls, stabbings and killings and get their logs out, and they made a practice of hiring the toughest men in the woods for their foremen. When a lumberjack knocked out a foreman, he was usually offered the job. Nevertheless, whiskey came in. Dives were scattered all through

the valley; there was one at the mouth of Wolf Creek; Balsam Lake had another; Maurice M. Samuels, a Jew who regarded the Indians as his own people--the lost tribes of Israel--was an inveterate dealer in forty-rod whiskey, and at what was called Quailtown, close to St. Croix Falls, there existed one of the worst resorts in the valley.

But the villages were no paragons. Stillwater the pride of the river, probably had as many saloons to the block as any place in the world, and Marine wasn't much better. Nor could the citizens of Hudson make any boasts, unless it was on the side of the spirits. So the lumberjacks, the steamboatmen, and the raftsmen had plenty to drink. And yet, they marched into the wilderness. They wrested the wealth from the earth. They struggled and died, and it was their strength that cleared the first roads. One had already been built from Prairie du Chien to Point Douglas and Hudson; another soon connected the two places with the flourishing town of St. Paul; and Stillwater built a road to Fort Snelling not long after its founding. But there was no land route the

length of the valley, until 1854 when Congress appropriated the money for a road from Point Douglas to Superior by way of Cottage Grove, Stillwater and Marine, crossing the Snake River at Lake Pokegama. The first section wasn't long being finished, and it needed to be.

For the rafts were coming into conflict with the steamboats on the St. Croix. In season, the river was almost solid with logs. Dead heads, sunken or half-submerged timbers, spotted the stream, menacing travel, waiting to rip the bottom out of a steamboat, and the banks, ground slowly by the constant bumpings and passings of rafts, stripped of their trees, began to give way, eroding, running into the channel. The steamboatmen soon started to protest. Open fights broke out between their crews and those of the rafts, and a virtual war started along the navigable length of the stream. More than one river town became the scene of a battle; rafts were wrecked; steamboats were sunk, early newspapers fulminated against one side or the other; lawyers brought innumerable suits, and more than one rustic judge banged his gavel for order.

But the rafts didn't cease. Instead they grew swiftly in numbers, sweeping down the St. Croix in a kind of gigantic chain that wound back through the valley, past all the towns, between the bare hills where now the slashings rotted around the great stumps, where the clay and the sand already gullied, and where far houses multiplied dismal outlines over the slopes and the plains, lonely, bleak, and

forgotten in a land half wilderness, half-civilized, all desolation. The lumbermen cut their way northward. The big men of enterprise chartered railroads, and there followed a period of fraud and land grabbing that was ended only by the disastrous panic of 1857 when the bottom seemed to drop out of the valley. Everywhere there was a stoppage. Mills closed down; camps were idle; steamboats ceased running; prices went down; money was drained from the state; hordes of people moved out; boom towns stood, skeletal, deserted, the brush and the weeds marching the untrodden streets, climbing the rotting heaps of the sawdust, broaching the decaying planks of the wharves. For a time the wilderness seemed about to reconquer the region. Lonely camp fires burned on the ridges and a kind of gloom hung over the earth as if to foretell the Indian's return.

Then gradually, out of hunger and fear, out of suffering and hardship, the settlers fought their way back to a modicum of security. Commerce again plied the river; lumbering got under way slowly, and the schemers began organizing railroads once more to get government land. But the Civil War broke, and the Sioux outbreak followed, and uncertainty again hovered over the St. Croix, so that the people walked in a tenseness, work slackened, and at night they watched the hill tops fearful the Chippewa would join the Sioux. Militia companies were quickly recruited and men marched to war to return and take part in

the resurgence of building which got under way slowly. There was still a reluctance on the part of a good many people. The country was burdened with an enormous debt that was felt in the valley, and in addition fear of the Indians hadn't entirely died down. Two lumber men from Stillwater had been ambushed, robbed and their bodies sunk in Clear Lake in 1864, and scattered Chippewa bands wandered over their old hunting grounds, upset, bitter, dreaming of their vanished glory, living however they could...robbing...begging. Their degradation seemed like a burden on them. Yet they clung to their old homes, averse to leave the scenes of their fathers. For many years, a band lived at Wood Lake, defying the greed and threats of the whites, and annually they staged a festival celebrating their past and their customs which attracted the bands from afar. Arrayed in their finery, they went through the rites of their ancestors. The tom-toms throbbed.

And the fires blazed high through the encampment; outlining the trees, cutting weird patterns out of the night. Overhead the sky was blue-black, starred, mysterious, immense. The monotonous chant of the dancers rose and fell, timless, echoing over the forests with an ineffable sadness, with a plaintive regret for victories already vanished, with a wild and terrible bitterness that had in it the mad years of blood, that told, like an incantation of hate, the wrongs of the red men, that carried a curse and foretold the decline and fall of America. The desert seemed already approaching. Rapidly devastation was sweeping over the valley. The big lumber companies enlarged their activities; more camps

were opened, more logs moved down the river, until at times it was literally strangled, and often the jams completely smothered the channel. In 1865, swept on by the spring floods, the logs plunged over St. Croix Falls, tossed and swirled through the rapids and crashed into the rocky and terrific cliffs about Angle Rock, piling and splintering there in a careening and shuddering wall that mounted and crashed. Fragments of wood geysered and fell, blowing madly over the water. Instantly the gorge was blockaded, and the water frothed through tangled log ends, and the drives grew, and the logs tumbled over the Falls, charging on toward the jam, hurtling and grinding and driving, ~~and~~ end over end, broadside, upthrust, swirling, a wild and frightening stampede, down the white current that flung spray and surged, caught between the upreaching rocks. The crags seemed to shiver with continuing impact. The clouds stood, forbidding and menacing, in the sun-shadowed sky.

And the logs climbed and thrust, locking themselves, banking higher and solidly in the echoing canyon where men's cries mingled with the crash and rumble of timber. Lumberjacks scrambled across the heaving face of the jam, fighting to break it, slashing and jerking at the downriver wall that cemented itself, wedged higher by the pressure behind. The logs climbed the rocks as if madly alive, ascended in layers, rolled onward in gigantic waves that packed the gorge from Angle Rock to the Falls. The whole surface heaved and shuddered with the imprisoned

river ~~water~~ that spurted and trickled through the matted tangle of timber. The stream was almost shut off, and more men tumbled into the gorge, spreading across the base of the jam, swinging axes, prying with peavys, clawing and cursing and sweating to find the key log. Explosives were used. Horses toiled along with the men, and the river rumbled louder each hour, and now and again the whole tangled face shivered and hurled itself forward, halting with a terrific groan and splintering roar. Men's faces went white, and they turned to flee, sobbing from tortured lungs. But they always returned, and finally they dislodged the key timber: the jam gave an ominous and prophetic shudder; teams and lumberjacks scrambled for safety; logs hurtled ~~from the immense and trembling wall~~ outward; the river gushed through; sections collapsed; and the whole jam, smashing, roaring, splintering with a mighty and terrible crash that choked the breaths of the onlookers, started to move. It gathered momentum. The furious water surged from beneath and vomited wave after wave of tumbling logs and instantly the canyon was a wild and gushing expanse of whirling timbers and foam. The river flung itself forward, overwhelming the jam. The people screeched a kind of prayer of triumphant relief.

And the logs plunged on through the Dalles, swirling and tossing, with the lumberjacks leaping from one to the other, toward the boom just above Stillwater. There they were sorted by brands, going to their separate owners. Thus, it was every season. The river, however, began to play a lessening part in the industry, gradually at first

but nevertheless markedly. Steam began to supersede water-power. Engines were installed in the mills, and railroads came into the region, bringing quick transportation to the aid of the people. Remote and inaccessible districts were opened up for the loggers. One after another the northern counties were drawn. Hinckley, Pine City, Kettle River and Sandstone, Balsam Lake, Luck and Grantsburg were founded, and the engines chuffed through the trees, dragging their great trains of logs, blowing smoke and sparks over the slashings, over the miles of great pines. Fires grew more and more frequent and often the skyline was crimson with flame. Several towns, Hudson among them, were nearly wiped out.

But the ax was the greatest destroyer. Behind it there was only a wasteland. The embittered earth lay like an immense victim gashed, broken and bruised by the wrack, like a huge skeleton whitening under the sun, rotting in the rain and the snow. The desolate wind moaned across it. And homeless Indians staggered through it, dreaming of the whiskey that would help them forget. The red men saw their own death in that of the land, and every year they were fewer. Every year their dissipations were greater. Disease and poor food had their effect, and a kind of lethargy came over the tribes. Old customs and habits passed into disuse. Seldom was there a festival now. But in 1880 at Kettle River, the bands gathered as though to resurrect the dead past, as though to dance a last requiem to their homes and the St. Croix valley, and even today, when the wind blows through the canyons, when the

moon stabs out of black clouds at the earth, when the lightening wavers at the edge of the sky and the owl's hoot floats over the brush like a promise of death, the beat of their drums can be heard, the foot-pound of the dance shudders the rocks, the painted and sweat-running faces gleam in the fires, and the bare bodies bound and weave in the flame-darted shadows where the tepees point darkly and the cries echo forever. This is their land: their ghosts guard it. Yet the white man holds sway, and after the dance they wandered again. The towns grew. Each winter the cuttings were greater; each spring the streams carried more logs; each summer the dry wind sucked the moisture out of the earth, the heat waves shimmered over the brush, and the sun baked and shriveled the crops.

Yet the settlers continued to come. Red barns and white houses were strung along the St. Croix like a colorful and interlaced necklace; the stumps and brush were cleared from the land; farmers struggled heroically against insects and drought, and the towns pushed their ugly streets, their dismal houses and mills further into the country, each one proud of its heritage, proud of its progress, its size and existence. Boosters shouted their praises the breadth of America, and many celebrities viewed the St. Croix. Stephen A. Douglas once spoke from a hotel at the head of the Dalles. Stillwater boasted of many of the visiting great. But a kind of Nemesis hovered over the region. The fear of the fires stabbed like a knife

at the well-being of the inhabitants. During the hot summer months the whole population watched the horizon, sniffing for smoke, and too often a faint haze rolled over the sky, thickening, blowing hotter and blacker on the seared wind. The sun gleamed like a menacing ember.

And great clouds stood at the skyline and climbed, claiming the heavens. Soon the light was shut out and afar off a flickering and low line of flame lighted the earth. The air thickened with ashes. A faint roaring mounted with the advance of the blazing horizon where the fires leaped and drove at the sky, engulfing whole sections of forest. Huge trees exploded in flame. Fragments of fire hurtled madly over the land. The very wind seemed ablaze. Camps were wiped out in great waves of fire, and the people fled wildly, huddling helplessy in the doomed towns. The citizens of Hinkley, cut off by the fire of 1894, fought furiously to halt its advance. The entire population swung axes, pumped water, started back fires, wielded shovels and spades and whirled wet blankets and sacks at the flame-laden air. Roofs caught and were immediately smothered. Houses seemed to burst in the heat, and the roar, the crash, the horrible crackle was like the outcry

of an unconquerable fury. One by one the buildings on the outskirts were sucked into the inferno. Then suddenly a maelstrom of flame clutched the whole village and swirled it skyward in a terrific and implacable funnel that whipped and expanded, flinging death and destruction down the terrible wind. Four hundred people were burned, and thousands of acres of pine, many towns and farm homes were destroyed, mostly in the St. Croix valley. The wind sucked up the ashes and flung them afar as if pronouncing the doom of the land.

But the people disregarded all omens. They set to work to rebuild their homes, and in an incredibly short time the buildings stood forth in all their glittering newness, the mills and the towns rose, raw and harsh, above the immense sweep of cinders, the roadways were cleared, and the salvage of resources got underway. Crews were soon ranging the burnt-over area. Outfits again moved into the districts that hadn't been touched by the fire and the pine-belt rapidly lessened, although there had developed an agitation for the preservation of forests. Many individuals and not a few organizations protested against the ruthless devastation of the big lumber companies. But it

seemed to have little effect. By 1900 most of the pine had been stripped from the valley, and people were scouring the streams, raising the dead heads that had sunk in the years of raftings and drives, and the villages lumber had built were soon rotting into the earth. Like husks they stood among the stumps and the ashes, echoing spectrally in the dismal wind.

And the river, calm now, worn and battered as though weary with its furious past, dreamed through the bare hills, swept by the stalemated towns, wandered past the red and white buildings of farms already decaying, and dropped slowly toward the eternal sea, carrying the story of a land's desolation, carrying the savagery and the greed and the hate, mirroring the eroded slopes, the destroyed plains, the forgotten earth where great summer homes looked commandingly over the water, where the proud towers of cities seemed already ghostly, and where the people scratched for a living, fought, wept and died, bewildered, with blind minds, chained memories...

The Hogan-wauke-kin still shimmered under the sun; the crags still stood darkly in evening, and the owl's hoot floated out of the

night; and slowly, like a dream forming, time spread its patina over the land: birch and second growth pine, oak, ash and balsam began to cover the slopes; the grass and the aspen again rooted deeply along the chewed banks. The current grew brighter. The haze, clear now, cleaned of its smoke, hung over the green hills, bluing the distance, bluing the vistas of prairie, of water that stretched like flashes of glory from the bends and the points, and the bluffs, somber still, stood unchanged and nostalgic in beauty, pushed at the sky, with the pinnacles, the tree covered tops, the crevassed and piled rocks shading the sun and pressing their shadows into the stream.

The river stirred, haunting the future.