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An Indian Loon-Hunt

Early in the summer when ice was moving out of the Nepigon River, which flows into Lake Superior at Red Rock, several hundred Chippewa Indians were gathered about the Hudson Bay post near that place.

One day a loon, or great northern diver, was seen in the lake opposite the post, word quickly passed among the listless loungers, and the village was instantly on the move. Birchbark canoes were slid into the water, and a few of the braves took their squaws with them, while others went alone. By one impulse they shot out into the lake to chase the sharp-eyed loon.

The bird, seeing the approach of so many canoes, dove out of sight. That was the signal for a spurt on the part of the canoeists; and they scattered widely, according to each paddler's guess of where the loon would come up.

Having made a long swim under water, he arose far to the south where most of the fifty canoes had run, but an old man and his old squaw were not far from the beautiful black and white head that suddenly arose. The old man tried to get a shot at the loon with his bow and blunt wooden arrow,—the only weapon the Indian used in this chase,—but the loon was too quick for him and went down again.

All the canoes now rushed that way, the men yelled as they forced their light barks through the water. The old man and his shriveled squaw were foremost; his muscular frame locking tense as he rapidly wielded

his paddle.

Spreading out a little near where they deemed the loon would rise, a dozen of the Chippewas waited, with bows in hand and blunt arrows strung—waited with the alertness of cats watching for a mouse. But the loon fooled them by coming up far west of where he was expected. The canoe nearest to him was that of a fourteen-year-old boy, who, with or two three others, put in use less shots.

Again a noisy rush was made toward the place where the bird was expected to reappear, every Indian yelled a deep, sharp—"Wuh! Wuh!" The few squaws in the canoes aided their husbands in paddling, and propelled the canoes when their dusky lords dropped their paddles and seized their bows.

This time the loon, fully alive to the danger he was in, took a wonderfully long swim, coming up far from most of the canoes, and at such a distance from the nearest that he had a moment or two of breathing before the next dip. This would have been his chance to fly had he possessed the power of rising quickly from the water on his wings, as the duck or goose. But loons can not ascend speedily from the surface, and so, when pursued, always try to escape by swimming and diving.

As if by common consent the canoes now spread out more widely to surround the strong and agile bird. He came to the surface within a few feet of two or three canoes, and a quick shot hit him in the neck, but it glanced off as from twig, and down he went again, the scattered canoes dashed toward