

The boat or canoe was manned, according to size and capacity, by a crew consisting of from four to ten Canadian *voyageurs*, or by half-bloods, their descendants. This class, which once occupied so prominent a position in the early recollections of the times, but which has now nearly disappeared from the country they were the first to visit, deserves a passing notice. The Canadian *voyageurs*, as the name indicates, came originally from Canada, principally from Quebec and Montreal. They were employed by the principal traders, under written contracts, executed in Canada for a term of from three to five years—their wages from two hundred and fifty livres (fifty dollars) to seven hundred and fifty livres (one hundred and fifty dollars) per year, to which was added what was termed an "outfit" consisting of a Mackinaw blanket, two cotton shirts, a *capote* or loose sack coat, two pairs of coarse pants, shoes, and socks, and some other small articles, including soap. Their food, when in the "wintering ground," consisted, for the greater portion of the time, of corn and tallow, occasionally enriched by a piece of fat pork—or venison and bear meat, when they happened to be plenty; yet with this spare and simple diet, they were healthy and always cheerful and happy. Their powers of endurance were astonishing. They would row or paddle all day, and when necessary would carry on their backs, suspended by a strap or band crossing their breast or forehead, large packs of furs or merchandize, weighing from one hundred to one hundred and thirty pounds, for whole days, and when night came, enjoyed their frugal meal, and joined in merry jokes, recounted stories of their many hair-breadth escapes by "flood and forest," or perhaps joined in the dance to the music of the violin, if among their companions any were capable of "sawing sweet sounds." In the spring of the year, they returned to the settlements or principal trading-posts, to spend the summer months in comparative ease, and in the enjoyment of the pastimes and frolics they so highly prized. Always improvident, open-hearted and convivial, they saved nothing, nor thought of the wants of the future, but spent