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GOLD-WASHING ON THE BANKS OF THE FRAZER

THE ROMANCE OF THE WORLD
Edited by Herbert Strang

ADVENTURES IN THE FAR WEST

LONDON
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ADVENTURES IN THE FAR WEST

AMONG THE INDIANS

DANIEL WILLIAMS HARMON was a partner in the North-west Company in the days before that organization united with its more famous rival, the Hudson Bay Company. For nineteen years Harmon resided in the North American wilderness, during which time the only marks of civilization that he encountered were in and around the lonely posts of the fur traders scattered here and there throughout the great North-west. His *Journal*, from which the following pages are taken, was first published in 1820. It was written partly for his own amusement and partly to gratify his friends, who, he thought, would like to know how he spent his time during his absence; but the curiosity which, on his return to civilized society, he found to be awakened as to the state of the country of his travels, led him to submit the work to the wider circle of the general public.

Friday, January 1, 1802.—This being the first day of the year, in the morning I gave the people a *dram* or two to drink in the course of the day, which enabled them to pass it merrily, although they had very little to eat; for our

hunters say they can kill nothing. One of them will not go out of his tent; for he imagines that the Bad Spirit, as they call the Devil, is watching an opportunity to find him in the open air in order to devour him. What will not imagination do!

Saturday, 9.—Several days since, I sent a number of my people to Alexandria for meat, as neither of my hunters kills anything, though there is no scarcity of animals in this vicinity. But they have just returned without anything. They say that the buffaloes, in consequence of the late mild weather, have gone a considerable distance into the large prairie. We are, therefore, under the necessity of subsisting on pounded meat, and dried chokeberries. The latter article is little better than nothing.

Sunday, 17.—Last evening our people brought from the tent of our hunter the meat of a moose, which lighted up a smile of joy upon our countenances. We were happy to find that a kind Providence, instead of abandoning, had favoured us with one of the richest dainties that this country affords. There are twelve persons in the fort; and yet, for the last fifteen days, we have subsisted on what was scarcely sufficient for two people! These were certainly the darkest days that I ever experienced in this or any other country.

Tuesday, 19.—I have taken a walk, accompanied by Paget, a short distance from the fort, where we found hazelnuts still on the bushes in such plenty that a person may easily gather a bushel

in the course of a day. I am told that, when sheltered from the wind, all of them do not fall off until the month of May.

Monday, February 1.—For several days past, the weather has been excessively cold; and this has been, I think, the coldest day that I ever experienced. In fact, the weather is so severe, that our hunters dare not venture out of their tents, although they, as well as ourselves, have little to eat.

Sunday, 7.—During the last three days we have subsisted on tallow and dried cherries. This evening my men returned from Alexandria, with their sledges loaded with buffalo meat; and the sight of it was truly reviving. Had this favour been withheld from us a few days longer, we must have all miserably perished by famine. . . .

Saturday, March 6.—I have just returned from a visit to my friends at Alexandria, where I passed four days very pleasantly in conversing in my mother tongue. This is a satisfaction that no one knows, excepting those who have been situated as I am, with a people with whom I cannot speak fluently, and if I could, it would afford me little satisfaction to converse with the ignorant Canadians around me. All their chat is about horses, dogs, canoes, and strong men, who can fight a good battle. I have, therefore, only one way left to pass my time rationally, and that is reading. Happily for me, I have a collection of good books; and mine will be the fault if I do not derive profit from them.

I also begin to find pleasure in the study of French.

Saturday, 20.—The greatest number of our Indians have returned from the prairies; and as they have brought little with them to trade, I, of course, give them as little; for we are at too great a distance from the civilized world to make many gratuities. Yet the Indians were of a different opinion; and at first made use of some unpleasant language. But we did not come to blows, and are now preparing to retire to rest, nearly as good friends as the Indians and traders generally are. With a few exceptions, that friendship is little more than their fondness for our property, and our eagerness to obtain their furs.

Wednesday, April 21.—The most of the snow is now dissolved; and this afternoon the ice in the river broke up. All our Indians, who for several days past encamped near the fort, have now departed to hunt the beaver. While they were here, they made a *feast*, at which they danced, cried, sung and howled, and, in a word, made a terrible, savage noise. Such feasts the Crees are accustomed to make at the return of every spring; and sometimes also at other seasons of the year. By so doing they say they appease the anger of the Evil Spirit, and thus prevent him from doing them harm, to which they consider him as ever inclined. They have, also, certain places, where they deposit a part of their property, such as guns, kettles, bows, arrows, etc., as a sacrifice to the same Spirit. The above-men-

tioned feast was made by the Chief of the band, whose name is Kâ-she-we-ske-wate, who for the long space of forty-eight hours previous to the entertainment neither ate nor drank anything. At the commencement of the feast every person put on a grave countenance; and the Chief went through a number of ceremonies, with the utmost solemnity. After the entertainment was over every Indian made a voluntary sacrifice of a part of his property to the Evil Spirit.

Sunday, May 2.—Accompanied by one of my interpreters, I have taken a ride to a place where I intend building a fort in the ensuing summer. The animals in this vicinity are moose, red deer, a species of the antelope, grey, black, brown, chocolate-coloured and yellowish bears, two species of wolves, wolverines, polecats or skunks, lynxes, kitts, beavers, otters, fishers, martens, minks, badgers, musk-rats, and black, silver, cross and red foxes. Of fowls, we have swans, geese, bustards, cranes, cormorants, loons, snipes, several species of ducks, water-hens, pigeons, partridges, pheasants, etc. Most of the above-named fowls are numerous in spring and autumn; but, excepting a few, they retire to the north in the summer, to brood. Towards the fall they return again; and before winter sets in they go to the southward, where they remain during a few of the coldest months of the year.

Thursday, 6.—This morning I received a letter from Mr. McLeod, who is at Alexandria, informing me that, a few nights since, the Assiniboines, who are noted thieves, ran away with twenty-two

of his horses. Many of this tribe, who reside in the large prairies, are constantly going about to steal horses. Those which they find at one fort they will take and sell to the people of another fort. Indeed, they steal horses, not unfrequently, from their own relations.

Wednesday, 12.—It has snowed and rained during the day. On the 7th inst. I went to Alexandria to transact business with Mr. McLeod. During this jaunt it rained almost constantly; and on my return, in crossing the river, I drowned my horse, which cost, last fall, one hundred dollars in goods, as we value them here. . . .

Monday, 31.—Alexandria. Here, accompanied by two of my people, I arrived this afternoon. In crossing the Swan River, I was so unfortunate as to drown another horse; and I was, therefore, obliged to perform the remainder of the journey on foot with nothing to eat. Here I find a tolerable stock of provisions. Mr. Goedike is to pass the summer with me; also two interpreters and three labouring men, besides several women and children, who together form a *snug* family.

Wednesday, June 23.—On the 16th inst., accompanied by two of my people, I set off for Swan River Fort on horseback. The first night we slept at Bird Mountain : and the day following we arrived at the lower fort. From that place I returned in one day, which is a distance of ninety miles. I, however, took a fresh horse at the Bird River Mountain. One of my people, who travelled less rapidly, has arrived this evening, and informed me that he drowned his horse

at the same place where before I had drowned two.

On my return here, those in whose charge I had left the place had nothing to offer me to eat, excepting boiled parchment skins, which are little better than nothing, and scarcely deserve the name of food. I have, therefore, sent a part of my people to endeavour to take some fish out of a small lake, called by the natives Devil's Lake, which lies about ten miles north from this. If they should not succeed, and our hunters should not be more fortunate than they have been for some time past, I know not what will become of us.

Friday, July 2.—For six days, after I sent the people to fish in the above-mentioned lake, we subsisted at the fort on parchment skins, dogs, herbs, and a few small fish, that we took out of the river opposite to the fort. But now we obtain fish in greater plenty.

One of our hunters has been in and told me what he thought to be the cause why he could not kill. He said that when he went to hunt, he generally soon fell upon the track of some animal, which he followed; but that, as soon as he came nigh to him, he heard the terrible voice of an Evil Spirit, that frightened both himself and the animal. The animal would, of course, run off, and the pursuit would end. I told the hunter that I had a certain powerful medicine; and provided he would do with it as I would direct him, it would not only frighten the Evil Spirit in his turn, but would also render him at

first speechless, and that shortly after it would cause him to die.

I then took several drugs and mixed them together, that he might not know what they were, which I wrapped in a piece of white paper, and tied to the butt end of his gun, and thus armed him to encounter great or little devils; for they believe in the existence of different orders. I told him to go in search of a moose or deer; and as soon as he should hear the voice of the Evil Spirit, to throw the paper tied to his gun behind him into the air, and that it would fall into the mouth of the Evil Spirit pursuing him, and silence and destroy him. I warned him not to look behind him lest he should be too much frightened at the sight of so monstrous a creature, but to pursue the animal, which he would undoubtedly kill.

The same day the Indian went to hunting and fell upon the track of an animal, which he followed, as he has since told me, but a short distance before the Evil Spirit, as his custom was, began to make his horrid cries. The Indian, however, did with the medicine as I had directed him, and heard no more of the frightful voice, but continued following the animal until, approaching him, he fired, and killed a fine fat red deer; and he has since killed several others. Not only he, but the other Indians, place, from this circumstance, perfect confidence in my medicines.

Sunday, 4.—Mr. William Henry and company arrived from the Bird Mountain, and inform us

that they are destitute of provision there. They will, therefore, come and pass the remainder of the summer with us; for we now have provisions in plenty.

Monday, 19.—In consequence of the great increase of our family of late, we are again poorly supplied with provisions. In order, if possible, to obtain a supply, I sent seven of my people several different ways in search of the natives, who will be able to relieve our wants, should our men chance to find them. For this is the season of the year when almost all wild animals are the fattest; and, therefore, it is the best time to kill them, and make them into dry provisions.

Friday, 23.—There are at present, in this vicinity, grasshoppers, in such prodigious numbers as I never before saw in any place. In fair weather, between eight and ten o'clock a.m., which is the only part of the day when many of them leave the ground, they are flying in such numbers that they obscure the sun, like a light cloud passing over it. They also devour everything before them, leaving scarcely a leaf on the trees, or a blade of grass on the prairies; and our potato tops escape not their ravages. . . .

Saturday, August 28.—I have sent Primault, one of my interpreters, with a letter, about six days' march from this, where I expect he will meet Mr. McLeod and company, on their way from the Grand Portage. Two of our people, whom I sent a few days since into the large prairie, have just returned with the news that buffaloes are numerous within two days' march from this.

They say that the natives, during the two days that they remained with them, killed upwards of eighty, by driving them into a park made for that purpose. . . .

Tuesday, November 9.—Bird Mountain. Here I am to pass another winter; and with me there will be one interpreter and six labouring men, etc. Thus I am continually moving from place to place.

Friday, 19.—I have just returned from the lower fort, where I have been accompanied by part of my people, for goods. I find here a band of Indians, who have been waiting for my return in order to procure such articles as they need, to enable them to make a full hunt. The Indians in this quarter have been so long accustomed to use European goods, that it would be with difficulty that they could now obtain a livelihood without them. Especially do they need fire-arms, with which to kill their game, and axes, kettles, knives, etc. They have almost lost the use of bows and arrows; and they would find it nearly impossible to cut their wood with implements made of stone or bone.

Wednesday, May 4, 1803. Alexandria.—Here, if Providence permit, I shall pass another summer, and have with me Mr. F. Goedike, one interpreter, and several labouring men, besides women and children. As Mr. Goedike will be absent from the fort during the greater part of the summer, I shall be, in a great measure, alone, for ignorant Canadians furnish little society. Happily for me, I have lifeless friends, my books, that will never abandon me, until I first neglect them.

Thursday, June 2.—I have set our people to surround a piece of ground for a garden with palisades, such as encompass our forts.

One of our men, a Canadian, gave me his son, a lad about twelve years of age, whom I agree in the name of the North-west Company to feed and clothe, until he becomes able to earn something more. His mother is a Sauteux woman. He is to serve me as cook, etc. . . .

Sunday, 26.—I have just returned from an excursion to the large prairies, in which I was accompanied by two of my people; and in all our ramble we did not see a single Indian. The most of them, as is their custom every spring, have gone to war again. We saw, and ran down and killed, buffaloes, and also saw red deer and antelopes bounding across the prairies, as well as bears and wolves roving about in search of prey. In the small lakes and ponds, which are to be met with occasionally all over the prairies, fowls were in considerable plenty; and with our fire-arms we killed a sufficiency of them for our daily consumption. Although it rained during the greater part of the time that we were absent from the fort, yet the pleasing variety of the objects which were presented to our view made our ride very agreeable. One night we slept at the same place where, a few days before, a party of the Rapid Indian warriors had encamped. They were probably in search of their enemies, the Crees and Assiniboines; and it was happy for us that we did not meet them, for they would undoubtedly have massacred us, as they consider

us as enemies, for furnishing their opponents with fire-arms.

Monday, August 8.—We have now thirty people in the fort and have not a supply of provisions for two days. Our hunters, owing to a bad dream, or some other superstitious notion, think that they cannot kill, and therefore make no attempt, notwithstanding animals are numerous. In the civilized parts of the world, when provisions are scarce in one place they can generally be obtained from some other place in the vicinity. But the case is otherwise with us. When destitute, we must wait until Providence sends us a supply; and we sometimes think it rather tardy in coming.

Thursday, 18.—An Indian has just arrived who brings the intelligence that forty lodges of Crees and Assiniboines, who the last spring, in company with forty lodges of other tribes, set out on a war party, are returning home. They separated at Battle River from their allies, who, the messenger says, crossed that river, to go and make peace with their enemies, the Rapid and Blackfeet Indians. The tribes last mentioned inhabit the country lying along the foot of the Rocky Mountains, between the Saskatchewan and Missouri rivers. Both parties begin to be weary of such terrible wars as have long been carried on between them, and are much disposed to patch up a peace on almost any terms. Thus do ruinous wars, waged by restless and ambitious people, in civilized and savage countries, lay waste and destroy the comforts of mankind. . . .

Sunday, November 6.—On the 26th ult. we sent eight of our men, on horseback, into the plain to look for buffaloes; and they returned this evening with their horses loaded with the flesh of these animals. They say that they are still three days' march from this.

Tuesday, December 27.—Messrs. Henry and Goedike, my friends and companions, are both absent, on excursions into two different parts of the country. I sensibly feel the loss of their society, and pass occasionally a solitary hour, which would glide away imperceptibly in their company. When they are absent, I spend the greater part of my time in reading and writing. Now and then I take a ride on horseback in the neighbourhood of the fort, and occasionally I visit our neighbours, drawn in a "cariol" by horses if the snow is light, or by dogs if it is deep.

Wednesday, February 22, 1804.—Lac La Pêche, or Fishing Lake. This lies about two days' march into the large plains, west from Alexandria, which place I left on the 15th ult., accompanied by twelve of our people. I have come here to pass the winter by the side of the X Y people. For some time after our arrival we subsisted on rosebuds, a kind of food neither very palatable nor nourishing, which we gathered in the fields. They were better than nothing, since they would just support life. When we should procure anything better I knew not, as the buffaloes at that time, in consequence of the mild weather, were a great distance out in the large plains, and my hunters could find neither moose nor deer. We

hoped, however, that a merciful God would not let us starve; and that hope has not been disappointed, for we have now provisions in abundance, for which we endeavour to be thankful.

On the 11th inst. I took one of my interpreters and ten labouring men with me, and proceeded several days' march into the wilderness, where we found a camp of upwards of thirty lodges of Crees and Assiniboines, of whom we made a good purchase of furs and provisions. They were encamped on the summit of a hill, whence we had an extensive view of the surrounding country, which was low and level. Not a tree could be seen as far as the eye could extend; and thousands of buffaloes were to be seen grazing in different parts of the plain. In order to kill them, the natives, in large bands, mount their horses, run them down and shoot with their bows and arrows what number they please, or drive them into parks and kill them at their leisure. In fact, those Indians who reside in the large plains or prairies are the most independent, and appear to be the most contented and happy people upon the face of the earth. They subsist upon the flesh of the buffalo, and of the skins of that animal they make the greatest part of their clothing, which is both warm and convenient. Their tents and beds are also made of the skins of the same animal.

Thursday, March 2.—Es-qui-un-a-wâch-a, or the last mountain or rather hill; for there are no mountains in this part of the country. Here

I arrived this evening, having left Lac La Pêche on the 28th ult., in company with my interpreter and seven men. The men I ordered to encamp at a short distance from this, and to join me early to-morrow morning. On our arrival, we were invited to the tents of several of the principal Indians, to eat and smoke our pipes. Indians show great hospitality to strangers, before they have been long acquainted with civilized people, after which they adopt many of their customs; but they are by no means always gainers by the exchange. . . .

Monday, 5.—This morning I sent six of my people to the fort with sledges loaded with furs and provisions, in order to obtain a further supply of goods, to enable us to go and trade with another large band of Indians who are about two days' march from this into the plains.

Tuesday, 6.—North side of the Great Devil's Lake. As I had nothing of importance to attend to, while our people would be absent in their trip to and from the fort, and was desirous of seeing my friend Henry, who, I understood, was about half-a-day's march from where I was the last night, I therefore set off this morning, accompanied by an Indian lad, who serves as guide, with the intention of visiting this place. After walking all day, without finding either wood or water, and but a few inches of snow, just as the sun was descending below the horizon, we thought we descried a small grove, at a considerable distance, directly before us. So long, therefore, as the light remained, we

directed our course to that object; but as soon as the daylight failed we had nothing by which to guide ourselves, excepting the stars, which, however, answered very well, until even their faint twinkling was utterly obscured by clouds, and we were enveloped in total darkness. In this forlorn condition we thought it best to continue our march as well as we could; for we were unwilling to lie down, with little or nothing with which to cover us and keep ourselves from freezing. There was no wood with which we could make a fire, nor could we find water to drink; and without fire we could not melt the snow for this purpose. We suffered much for want of water, as we had nothing to eat but very dry provisions, which greatly excited thirst. To be deprived of drink for one day is more distressing than to be destitute of food for two. It would not have been safe for us to encamp without a fire; for we should have been continually exposed to be trodden upon by the large herds of buffaloes that are perpetually roving about in the plains, or to be devoured by the wolves which ever follow the buffalo. We, therefore, continued travelling, uncertain whither we were going, until at length the dogs that drew my sledge suddenly passed by us, as if they saw some uncommon object directly before us. We did not attempt to impede their motion, but followed them as fast as we could until they brought us to the place where we now are. It is almost incredible that my dogs should have smelt this camp at such a distance; for we walked vigor-

ously no less than four hours after they passed us, before we arrived here.

We are happy in finding fifteen tents of Crees and Assiniboines, who want for none of the dainties of this country; and I meet, as usual, with a very hospitable reception. The mistress of the tent where I am unharnessed my dogs, and put my sledge, etc., into a safe place. She was then proceeding to give food to my dogs, which labour I offered to do myself; but she told me to remain quiet and smoke my pipe, for, she added, "they shall be taken good care of, and will be safe in my hands, as they would be were they in your own." Notwithstanding it was near midnight when I arrived, yet at that late hour the most of the Indians rose, and many of them invited me to their tents, to eat a few mouthfuls, and to smoke the sociable pipe.

But now all those necessary ceremonies are over; and I am happy in being able to lay myself down on buffalo robes, by the side of a warm fire, expecting to obtain sweet and refreshing repose which nature requires, after a day's march so fatiguing.

Wednesday, 7.—Canadians' Camp. This place is so called from the fact that a number of our people have passed the greater part of the winter here. As there is a good footpath from the place where I slept the last night to this place, I left my young guide and came here alone. Frequently on the way I met Indians, who are going to join those at the Devil's Lake. I came here in the pleasing expectation of seeing my

friend Henry; but I am disappointed. Yesterday morning he set out for Alexandria. I hope to have the satisfaction, however, of soon meeting him at the fort.

Saturday, 10.—In the middle of an extensive plain. Early in the morning, accompanied by my young guide, I left our last night's lodgings, to go to the place where I expect to find my people, which is about two days' march farther into the great plain than where I separated from my interpreter on the 6th inst. After walking all day, without finding either wood or water, at eight o'clock at night, we have concluded to lay ourselves down, in order, if possible, to get a little rest. In the day-time the snow melted a little; but in the evening it has frozen hard, and our feet and our legs, as high as our knees, are so much covered with ice, that we cannot take off our shoes; and having nothing with which to make a fire, in order to thaw them, we must pass the night with them on. A more serious evil is the risk we must run of being killed by wild beasts.

Sunday, 11.—Ca-ta-bug-se-pu, or "the river that calls." This stream is so named by the superstitious natives, who imagine that a spirit is constantly going up and down it; and they say that they often hear its voice distinctly, which resembles the cry of a human being. The last night was so unpleasant to me, that I could not sleep, arising in part from the constant fear which I was in of being torn to pieces, before the morning, by wild beasts. Despondency to a degree took

possession of my spirit. But the light of morning dissipated my fears, and restored to my mind its usual cheerfulness. As soon as the light of day appeared, we eft the place where we had lain, not a little pleased that the wild beasts had not fallen upon us. It has snowed and rained all day.—Here I find my interpreter and eighty tents, or nearly two hundred men, with their families.—Along the banks of this rivulet there is a little timber, consisting principally of the inferior species of the maple; but nowhere else is there even a shrub to be seen. The surrounding country is a barren plain where nothing grows excepting grass, which rises from six to eight inches in height, and furnishes food for the buffalo.

Here again, as usual, I meet with a kind reception. These Indians seldom come thus far into the plains, as the part of the country where we now are, belongs to he Rapid Indians. A white man was never before known to penetrate so far.

Wednesday, 14.—Last evening my people returned from the fort. Being so numerous they made a terrible noise. They stole a small keg of spirits from us, and one of them attempted to stab me. The knife went through my clothes, and just grazed the skin of my body. To-day I spoke to the Indian who made this attempt, and he cried like a child, and said he had nearly killed his father, meaning me, and asked me why I did not tie him when he had lost the use of his reason. My people inform me that there is little or no

snow for three days' march from this; but that after that, there is an abundance all the way to the fort.

Friday, 16.—About twelve o'clock we left the Indians' camp; but being heavily loaded, considering there is no snow and our property is drawn by dogs on sledges, we made slow progress. After we had encamped, we sent our dogs, which are twenty-two in number, after the buffalo; and they soon stopped one of them, when one of our party went and killed him with an axe, for we have not a gun with us. It is, however, imprudent for us to venture thus far without fire-arms, for every white man, when in a savage country, ought at all times to be well armed. Then he need be under little apprehension of an attack; for Indians, when sober, are not inclined to hazard their lives, and when they apprehend danger from quarrelling, will remain quiet and peaceable.

Saturday, 17.—North-west end of Devil's Lake. The weather is extremely mild for the season. The surrounding country is all on fire; but happily for us, we are encamped in a swampy place. When the fire passes over the plains, which circumstance happens almost yearly, but generally later than this, great numbers of horses and buffaloes are destroyed; for these animals, when surrounded by fire, will stand perfectly still, until they are burned to death. This evening we killed another buffalo, in the same manner as we killed one the last evening.

Sunday, 18.—The weather is still mild, and we see many grasshoppers, which appear unusually

early in the season. As I found that we were coming on too slowly with our heavy loads, about twelve o'clock I left our property in charge of three of my people, and am going to the fort with the others, for horses to come for it.

Thursday, 22.—Lac la Pêche. Here we have arrived, and I am happy in reaching a place where I can take a little repose after so long and fatiguing a jaunt. Yet it has been in many respects both pleasant and profitable. The country which I travelled over was beautifully situated, and overspread with buffaloes, and various other kinds of animals, as well as many other delightful objects, which in succession presented themselves to our view. These things made the day glide away almost imperceptibly. But there were times when my situation was far from being agreeable; they, however, soon passed away, and we all have abundant reason to render thanks to a kind Providence for His protection, and for our safe return to our home and our families.

RESIDENCE IN THE FOREST

Sir George Head, an officer in the British army, who served through the Peninsular War, spent several years in Nova Scotia and Canada. In the winter of 1828–9 he made a journey from Halifax to Lake Huron, a distance of more than 1,200 miles, and afterwards wrote an interesting

account of the extensive tract of forest land that intervenes between New Brunswick and Canada proper.

March 15*th*.—At an early hour this morning, Captain Collier, Lieutenant Elliot, and the whole party of shipwrights, were ready for their journey to York, leaving me in sole possession of the log house I was in. I accompanied the party to the beach and a little way over the ice, when, wishing them a good journey, I returned back alone to my solitary demesnes. The fire had been neglected in the bustle of departure, and had got low; remnants of packages and rubbish lay strewed about; my Canadians were at work at some distance in the woods; and nothing disturbed the loneliness and silence of the place. The building consisted of a single room of sixteen feet by twelve. The sides and roof were rude logs laid one upon another, and caulked in so insufficient a manner, that the sky was visible in more places than I was able to count. The door, of thin deal, was too ill fitted to fill its frame, and the remaining light which entered the apartment passed through a small window containing four panes of green inferior glass. A gloomy feeling invariably envelops the mind upon finding oneself suddenly deserted, as it were, and alone. Without stopping to think why, the very act of saying "good-bye," and turning south while a friend or acquaintance walks away to the north, is always sufficient to produce this sensation in a slight degree, and now, at this instant, I did

indeed feel inclined to despond. But a remedy, the best of all others, immediately suggested itself. I seized my axe, and, by a couple of hours' hard work in the woods, reaped the benefit of my prescription.

Returning to my house through the snow, I found my servant had put everything in order. The fire was replenished, and my simple repast was nearly ready. What was to be done? I had no books; and if I had, my house was too cold to sit still in. Reading, therefore, was out of the question. I fashioned a couple of forked boughs with my axe, and fastened them with a cord in a warm place over the fire, to support my gun, which I had taken out of its case, and put together; and, confiding in the private communication I had received, I resolved to fancy myself settled at least for some time in my present abode. The house of the Canadians was about a hundred and fifty yards from mine; and with these men my servant, whose services I seldom needed, resided. When I wanted his assistance I opened my door and shouted. If the wind happened to set the right way, my summons was heard; if not, I was obliged to wade through the slushy snow to fetch him. Rising soon after daylight, I immediately breakfasted; dined at noon, and supped at sunset. To prepare these meals cost little trouble; my toilette less; and the wood for my fire I chopped and piled myself; keeping the latter always alive both day and night. I began to make a bedstead, such as I had at Penetangushene, and spread moss and spruce

boughs before the fire to dry, intending to make a bed whereon I could lie undressed, as soon as the bedstead was finished; for I had, besides my buffalo skin, four small blankets, as many sheets, and a strong rug. These arrangements took up nearly the whole of the day, and served to banish the apathy which, in the morning, had almost rendered me incapable of any occupation.

March 16th.—Before noon I had perfectly finished my bedstead, and heaped upon it as many spruce boughs and moss as I considered necessary, confining the whole by a long cord made of strips of bark tied together, and wound round and round till the whole was tight and compact. It was soft withal to lie upon. This done, I first laid on my buffalo skin, then my sheets and blankets, and all was ready. A large bundle of spruce boughs also, confined with strips of bark, made a good pillow.

Having thus provided for my rest, I took my gun off the newly-arranged hooks over the fire, and sallied forth into the forest, in hopes of finding anything to shoot, no matter what, that would come in my way. The snow was frozen hard, but the top, thawed by the sun of the morning, was so soft, that sometimes I sank in up to my knees. Walking was excessively heavy and difficult, and the solitary appearance of the woods moderated my expectation of success. I wore moccasins during my walk now, as I did at all other times, except when obliged to wear shoes for the purpose of skating. The tracks of squirrels were abundant, and I saw also some

woodpeckers speckled with white and scarlet; and I perceived on the snow the track of a larger bird, which, as it was quite fresh, I followed for a good way. It turned backwards and forwards and round and round, twisting about the trees in such a manner that I had much difficulty to follow the track, and was on the point of giving up the pursuit, when I heard a sound close by me, as of a pheasant rising into a tree. Turning round, I saw the partridge I had been pursuing, sitting on a bough, and shot him. An unsportsmanlike act, certainly, but to be justified, not only by present circumstances, but by the stupid disposition of the bird, which nothing can persuade to fly. A pound of any sort of fresh meat was a prize not by any means to be neglected.

This was a beginning in the way of partridge shooting. With game in the woods, there was an end of solitude; wherefore, blowing upon the feathers of the bird, and minutely examining his wounds and plumage, I put him into my pocket, with the intention of having him, ere long, twirling at the end of a string before my fire. There are two sorts of these birds in this part of the country: the birch partridge, such as the one I had just killed, and the spruce. The former is the larger of the two, and the size of an English grouse. The bones are very slight, and the flesh white, and so extremely delicate a to render it impossible to carry it suspended by the head. The body literally tears off by its own weight and the motion. The spruce partridge is a little smaller than the birch; the flesh, much firmer and darker

coloured, bears a strong flavour of the spruce-fir. Both sorts perch on trees, and are fringed to the feet with feathers.

I pursued my walk, in the course of which I shot also a squirrel and a woodpecker, following the course of a ravine, at the bottom of which the snow lay in some places unusually deep. Here and there, in parts more exposed to the sun, a stream might be detected gurgling through its deep, hollow channel, while the crackling surface, and the icicles which crowned the points of protruding rocks, bore evidence of the severe alternations of temperature. On the summit of the banks, in the warmest and most sheltered spots, the ground was already quite bare, and the green points of the early succulent plants were preparing to burst forth into their first leaves. The buds, too, on some of the trees, were distinctly visible. Thus, while the snow was distributed all over the woods in unequal proportion, so as to confine one's progress within small limits, the increasing power of the sun continued to diminish every day more and more the mass, giving additional strength to the consolatory hopes of approaching spring.

March 17th.—This was a very tempestuous day. An unusually high wind hurried along clouds of small drifting snow, which penetrated the sides and roof of my house from top to bottom. Not a dry place was to be found in it; and upon my table, which stood close to the fire, I could write my name with my finger in the covering of snow which, like powder, lay upon it. The

temperature, too, was exceedingly low. Finding it impossible to stay in the house, I took my axe and went to the most sheltered spot that I could find in the forest, where I worked, without stopping, till I made myself warm, when I returned home to dinner. The partridge served me for supper the evening before, and now the squirrel and woodpecker were put before me in a pudding. The squirrel, being well peppered, tasted like a rabbit, and I believe was perfectly good eating; something, however, told me that it was not right to eat the little animal, nor could I overcome my scruples. For the woodpecker, I had no compunction, nor was it necessary that I should; the colour of his flesh was sufficient protection, as black as that of an owl—absolute carrion! besides lean and stringy. I consoled myself, however, by thinking that I was only a loser by the weight he carried on his bones, which was so little that it did not much signify.

March 18*th*.—This day I walked out again with my gun. I saw a flock of twenty or thirty birds about the size of fieldfares, or a little bigger, and somewhat resembling them in flight and action. They kept together on the tops of one tree after another, and on my pursuing them were very shy, and persisted in keeping out of distance. At the same time they were extremely noisy, and some of them were always chattering, while others whistled. I got near enough to see that their plumage was chiefly blue, and at last shot a straggler as he flew over my head. I found he was a blue jay, a bird resembling the

English jay in shape, and having also a similar black mark on the jaws.

New sounds and new colours now tended to enliven the solitary scene around me, as each feathered stranger thus established his summer residence in the neighbourhood of my dwelling. The forest was day by day more embellished by their brilliant plumage. It was beautiful to see the birds welcoming the budding leaf by a happy return from their long winter's banishment. The eye followed their flitting track through the air while the ear listened to notes lovely in themselves and till then unheard. . . .

March 20th.—Very early this morning I was awakened by a scratching at my door; and on listening attentively, distinctly heard the feet of some animal which evidently had an intention of making its way into the house. It put its nose to the bottom of the door, snuffling and whining from eagerness, after the manner, as I thought, of a dog. Conceiving that it might possibly be either a bear or a wolf, without stopping to put on my clothes, I seized my gun, which was ready loaded over the fire, and keeping my eyes upon the door, which was of such very thin deal, and so imperfectly fastened by a wooden latch, that I could place no confidence whatever in its strength, I remained still a minute or two, not making up my mind what to do. My window was fixed, and the glass so bad that light would barely pass through it. As to distinguishing any object on the other side, that was quite impossible. There was many a hole in the house

of which I might have availed myself, but it was scarcely daybreak, and therefore too dark to discern anything without. So I threw a small log or two upon the fire to blaze up, thinking it best to remain where I was, even in case the creature might break into the house, when I should be sure to have a fair shot at it.

Scarcely a minute had elapsed from the very beginning before I concluded from the sound, the perseverance, and total absence of fear of the animal, that it must be a dog and nothing else; so I opened the door very little and with extreme caution, and discovered to my surprise and satisfaction, that I was right, for a dog it was; and in an instant, a brown, rough water-spaniel bounced into my room, overjoyed at having reached a human habitation. To account at once for the circumstance: my house was but little removed out of the line of march of the North-west traders, to one of which persons, as I afterwards discovered, the dog belonged, and having lost his master, had wandered through the forest, till he came by chance to my dwelling.

Happy to have a companion—an honest friend, whether from the clouds or elsewhere no matter—I greeted him with a most cordial welcome; and wishing his former master, whoever he might be, all sorts of worldly prosperity, my only hope was that he might never show his face in my neighbourhood; and I put a string round the neck of the dog. The poor fellow was, on his part, just as happy to see me as a dog could well be. He frisked and jumped, wagging his tail, and

licking my hands, while his eloquent eyes, plainly as letters engraved on brass, besought me to make trial of the merits of one ready to execute a bond of allegiance. I showed him my gun, holding it down low to his nose; upon which, as he held his head back, a sagacious glance of recognition ratified the treaty. Calling immediately for my servant, I got my breakfast, not forgetting my new guest. I had nothing for myself but bread and salt pork, which I shared with him. He ate voraciously, having been, apparently, a long time without food. I tried all the names of dogs, in order to see to which he answered best; and at last fancied that he attended most to that of Rover. So Rover, at all events, I determined to call him.

To sportsmen, at least, it may be readily imagined that no time was expended in useless preparation, before we sallied forth together, without further ceremony, into the forest in quest of game. The snow in the woods was crisp from the night's frost; the sun was just rising in a clear sky. I, that yesterday had no resource but to track a poor unfortunate bird by its footsteps, had now my gun on my shoulder, my dog before me, and the best of a fine day unexpended. The haunts of a description of game, of which I was totally ignorant, were evidently familiar to my dog; and as he quartered his ground from right to left, I felt the most eager interest and curiosity in the pursuit.

I had walked about half-an-hour, when he suddenly quested; and on going up to him, I

found him at the edge of a swamp, among a clump of white cedar trees, on one of which he had evidently treed some description of bird; for he was looking steadfastly up into the tree, and barking with the utmost eagerness. I looked attentively, but nothing whatever could I discover. I walked round the tree, and round again, then observed the dog, whose eyes were evidently directly fixed upon the object itself, and still was disappointed by perceiving nothing. In the meantime, the dog, working himself up to a pitch of impatience and violence, tore with his paws the trunk of the tree, and bit the rotten sticks and bark, jumping and springing up at intervals towards the game; and five minutes had at least elapsed in this manner, when all at once I saw the eye of the bird. There he sat, or rather stood, just where Rover's eyes were fixed, in an attitude so extraordinary and steady, with outstretched neck, and body drawn out to an unnatural length, that twenty times must I have overlooked him, mistaking him for a dead branch, which he most closely resembled. About twenty feet from the ground he sat on a bough, eight or ten feet from the body of the tree. So, retreating to a little distance, I shot him.

This done, I pursued my way, and in the course of the morning killed four more partridges, which I came upon much in the same way as I did upon the first. My larder was now handsomely stocked with game. The snow was as usual very soft in the middle of the day, so that I never was

otherwise than quite wet through about the feet and legs. To have a house of my own, however, and the advantage of an excellent fire, by far more than compensated for other inconveniences, and I felt a growing interest in everything about me.

March 21*st*.—During the whole of this day the weather was particularly mild, but the hard night frosts continued to preserve the vast quantities of snow, with which the ground and the ice in the bay were covered. I went out again with my dog for a few hours in the morning, and brought in some more partridges. At one of these my gun flashed three times without his attempting to move, after which I drew the charge, loaded again, and killed him. The dog all the time was barking and baying with great perseverance. There is no limit to the stupidity of these partridges, and it is by no means unusual, on finding a whole covey on a tree in the autumn, to begin by shooting the bird which happens to sit lowest and then to drop the one above him, and so on till all are killed; this has very often been done. . . .

April 4*th*.—Shortly after daylight, in the morning, I heard a chattering of birds close to my house, as loud and incessant as if a thousand parrots had perched upon the neighbouring trees. I hurried on my clothes, and taking my gun in my hand, was out of doors in the space of two or three minutes. The day was unusually soft and mild, and there was a fog so dense that I could only see a few yards before me. It was

quite spring weather, and the snow was thawing as fast as it possibly could. I soon perceived that a flock of wood-pigeons had settled themselves all round about me, though I was surprised at the note so little resembling that of any sort of pigeon I had ever heard. Indeed, I can think of no better comparison than the one already chosen.

As I approached towards the busy gabbling which directed my course, the first that struck my eye were perched on the branches of a dead old tree which was literally laden with them. They stuck all over it as thick as they could possibly sit. I no sooner caught sight of them than they immediately rose, and this movement was the signal for legions of others, which I could not see, to do the same. It was unlucky that the fog was so thick, or the sight must have been grand; there seemed to be enough to carry me away with them, house and all. I shot at them as they rose, but I was rather too late and only killed four. However, I no sooner loaded my gun than I perceived the stragglers flying about in circles, and settling themselves in the different trees. I therefore continued the pursuit, and before breakfast bagged in all twenty-two birds.

This description of wood-pigeon which visits the country in such prodigious flocks, is about the size and colour of the English dove-house pigeon; the bill is, however, longer, and the form of the body more tapering and slender. On the wing, the tail being so long, their shape and flight exactly resemble that of a hawk; and, like a hawk,

they twist and turn among the branches of the trees with astonishing strength and rapidity. Towards the middle of the day, the sun broke out through the fog, and it became hot. The ice in the bay, covered with watery slushy snow, now began to put on an appearance of totally breaking up. It had melted away entirely round the edges, and in some places twenty yards or more of clear water intervened between it and the shore. . . .

April 11*th*.—Large cracks now began to appear in the ice, traversing the whole length of the bay. By its extreme thickness it, nevertheless, held together most obstinately. Nearly the whole surface was covered with water. It was now perfectly impassable. I killed a bird about the size of a jackdaw, and very like one, except that he was only grey round the eyes. I also shot a woodpecker, about as large as a dove, with a black mark on the jaws and a bright scarlet spot on the poll. Large patches of ground, quite clear of snow, now appeared in the woods in those places the most exposed to the sun.

I discovered a quantity of wild leeks just shooting up out of the earth, of which I gathered a good many. I was unfortunate in this, my first essay on vegetable diet, for they heated me to such a degree that I was for some time afraid they had possessed some deleterious quality; but the intolerably high flavour of the plant quieted my apprehensions. I was in a burning fever, at the same time quite sure that I had eaten nothing but leeks. Though they abounded

all over the woods, for a long time afterwards I was too well satisfied with my first dose to try another. I shot some partridges, also a striped squirrel, a harmless little creature somewhat smaller than the English squirrel.

April 12th.—The length of the days being considerably increased, the forest assumed every hour a more vernal appearance. Still none but the earliest trees, and those only in the warmest situations, were in forward bud. Relentless winter had not as yet loosened the ice, which bound up the waters in the bay, and every night destroyed the hopes that each morning created of an event now most wofully protracted.

I had walked this morning, with my gun on my shoulder, some distance from my house, considerably farther than I had ever ventured before, having come upon a spot so clear from snow, as to induce me to extend my ramble, as the day was fine, without thinking of my return. Trusting only to my footsteps, and neglecting all other means of precaution, it was not till I began to attempt to return home that I perceived I was bewildered and unable to find my way back. I grew very eager, and hurried backwards and forwards in the hopes of being able to retrace the path by which I had arrived at the spot where I was, but to no purpose.

At last I came quite to a standstill, and very soon was completely puzzled. Very uncomfortable reflections immediately suggested themselves, not at all calculated to assist the dilemma, and these were not much relieved when, having climbed

to the top of a high tree, I could see nothing but the waving summits of trees in all directions. I began to think of my own folly, and the change in my life and prospects thus effected within the space of a few short minutes. I might, by good fortune, find my way back, but should I take a wrong course, the long odds were certainly against me. Not to make a bad matter worse, I thought it as well to sit still and think a little, being, moreover, as near the summit of the tree as I could venture without the immediate chance of breaking my neck. Having observed the highest spot of ground and taken the best observation I could of the direction of this point, I descended and made towards it, notching the branches as I went on with my knife. Then making choice of the highest of the trees, I climbed to the top, where I received payment in full and compound interest for my trouble, by catching a glimpse of the ice in the bay. I very joyfully made towards it, marking the trees in my way as before, and, having arrived at the shore, found I was not more than three miles from my house, to which I bent my steps as straight as possible; so much so as to toil pretty hard in clambering over the trunks of the huge trees which impeded my progress, and floundering through the deep snow.

These exertions brought to my mind indispensable reflections relating to the scanty way I had provided myself with clothes, for I had not calculated upon the extra wear and tear to which my manner of life subjected my wardrobe. What

with working with my axe, moving and piling heavy logs, and such sort of occupations, I had been for some days past very much out at elbows; and when I got home, after this morning's adventure, the state of my dress was a matter of serious consideration. In climbing the trees, I had left parts of my things sticking on the branches, from the eagerness with which I went up and down; and now that I came to take a cool survey of myself, I found that I was literally in rags, and that too without a tailor to help me. I had, however, needles and thread in abundance, which nothing but sheer necessity could induce me to use; but the time was come, and I employed myself upwards of two hours in the evening, by the light of the fire, in cutting out patches, and sewing them on as well as I could. . . .

April 17*th.*—A strong wind having set in during the night, blowing directly out of the bay, I perceived in the morning all the ice broken in pieces, and floating towards the lake. It was moving slowly away, and a considerable extent of water uncovered. This was a joyful sight, for of all things a sheet of water conveys the most lively impressions to the mind; and, confined as I was from the impassable state of the ice to the shores on one side of the bay, the barrier was no sooner removed than I felt a sensation of liberation, which seemed to be participated by the turbulent waves themselves, as, just risen from their bondage, they rallied as it were and held council together, bubbling and fretting in their eagerness to press on the rear of their retiring enemy. The

wind chased the chilly field before it, split into mammocks, and every minute retiring farther from the sight, till, about three o'clock in the afternoon, the lively change was altogether perfect, and Kampenfeldt Bay, long the type of dreary winter, now became a lovely basin of pure water. And, as if to add to the gratifying occurrence, the ice had no sooner disappeared than the wind lulled, and the sun beamed forth to embellish the natural beauties of a spot in themselves very much above the common order.

As the evening advanced it was beautiful to see the enormous pines with which the banks were fringed reflected in the water, while the winding shore presented a pleasing variety of sandy beach and bluff rocky headland. Nor were the animal creation insensible to the moment: the large fish leaped incessantly high out of the water, and it was scarcely dark before a flock of wild fowl flew round and round in circles, lowering themselves by degrees, and then each, one after another, dashing heavily into the favourite element. A sportsman can readily comprehend how animating it was to listen to the wild sounds which now broke upon the ear, as the feathered troop held gabbling conversation together, and, diving and splashing by turns, commenced every now and then a short flight for the sake of a fresh plunge in the water. Everything now was new; Nature had thrown off her homely winter's garb, and began to unveil her beauties. My enjoyments were from that day increased; fish also and fowl were added to my resources.

PIONEERS IN THE GOLD-FIELDS

In the following passage Mr. Kinahan Cornwallis relates his journey to Vancouver and his ascent of the Frazer River in 1856. Gold had been discovered on that river, and Mr. Cornwallis accompanied the eager adventurers who poured from California towards this new Eldorado.

It was a bright and beaming morning in early June on which I embarked on board the steamer *Cortes* for Victoria, Vancouver Island; all things to me wore a riant and festive aspect, for my spirit was elate with hope and buoyed up with the pleasures of anticipation; to my eyes all was gold and glitter, and all that glittered gold.

I stood upon the deck of the vessel as she slowly moved from her place at San Francisco wharf, one of nearly fifteen hundred passengers, and I blended my voice with the farewell of that mighty crowd in a hearty, hopeful cheer to those collected on shore, although I had no friend there to respond.

The cheers of those on shore died faintly away in the distance, as the paddle-wheels flew round; the waving of hats ceased, and the broad bay, with its bounding and picturesque coastlands, lay out before our view. The bright glare of the sun lent a golden tinge to the rippling waters, and all nature seemed clad in her most brilliant array. The majority of those on board were, like myself, alone in California, and had forsaken the city we were so fast receding from, without

compunction or regret, without a shade of sorrow at parting from any beloved object, or a qualm of conscience for the past. But some there were whose anxious, lingering looks proclaimed the inner working of the heart, and as the wharf became entirely hidden from the view, seemed to utter within themselves a benediction on those whom they had left behind—wives and children dear to them—for the gold-digger is a man of deep and generous feelings; his avocations foster affection and endear the remembrance of home, and as he rocks away at his cradle-rocker, and gathers the glittering treasure presented to his eye, he thinks of those to whom he is endeared, and contemplates it more for the sake of the good it will be productive of to those whom he loves, than he does for the mere sake of gratifying his taste for gain. Away went the ship, her sails pouting in the gentle breeze; soon we cleared the strait, and the ocean, calm and expansive, lay spread out before us, with here and there a sail coursing along the horizon, not " small by degrees and beautifully less," but

> Slowly expanding as we nearer drew,
> 'Neath and above the ever-rolling blue.

There were several companies on board, numbering from three to six men each. Some of these had brought whale-boats with them, in which they intended making the voyage up river from Victoria, and all were tolerably well stocked with mining tools and provisions. Swarthy, restless fellows, they walked backwards and forwards,

and "guessed" and "calculated," either on deck or in the cabins, from early morning till midnight. The same restlessness of tongue and manner manifested itself during the consumption of their usual meals, when pork and beans, pickles and molasses, were thrown together on the one plate, and buried into obscurity with all the impetuosity of an ardent gusto and excitement peculiar to themselves.

At length, on the morning of the sixth day from San Francisco, the bold shore of the destined island was presented to our longing view, and in two hours afterwards we anchored within the harbour of Esquimalt, Victoria.

We all went ashore immediately, that is as fast as boats could be had to carry us, so that very shortly the streets of the island town presented an appearance of human traffic not dissimilar to that of Panama after receiving a similar freight. We lost no time in repairing to the Government gold licence office, where we tendered our five dollars each, in exchange for a monthly voucher, privileging us to dig, which also was our necessary passport to travel up river, for without it we could not have proceeded along the mainland. This tax was frankly paid, but heartily denounced.

The town wore a highly flourishing and pleasing appearance, the most noticeable feature in the shop and trading line being the scarcity of anything like hotels; there were five places, however, where liquor was sold, the proprietor of each having to pay the Hudson's Bay Company a

licence fee of no less than £120 per annum for the privilege. For my own part, I strolled a little way inland along green Jamaica-looking lanes, running like channels through a continent of cultivation; acres of potatoes, wheat, maize, barley, and gently-waving rye, were successively presented to my admiring view. The fertility of the soil was everywhere apparent. Limestone-built villas here and there decked the suburbs, and cottages festooned with a profusion of blossoming creeping plants flanked the road a little to the westward of Government House, which from its elevated position seemed to hold precedence over all the lesser architecture around.

The sun with his golden radiance was shedding floods of light over the varied landscape, casting the shadow of Indians on the placid water of a lagoon, which wound like a river in a gently-shelving valley beyond, and giving a glow of life and animation to the bending corn-fields and the Parian habitations of men. The birds were joyfully carolling away in sweet and hope-inspiring unison; the herds at pasture lowed plaintively, and the bleating of sheep and lambkin broke audibly to life as I passed by natural hedges of wild rose and blackberry bushes, and fields redolent of grass and clover, whose aroma was borne on the breeze far away to the uplands, where the wild man still holds sway and civilization has seldom or never trodden.

At five o'clock on the same day I embarked on board the American steamer *Surprise* for the highest navigable point of the Frazer River; the

passage-money being twenty dollars without distinction, whereas the San Francisco steamers' fares varied from thirty to sixty-five dollars. We passed and saluted the steamer *Satellite*, as we entered the mouth of the river, after crossing, or rather rounding, the Strait of San Juan de Fuca, which separates the island from the mainland, and after that, threaded our way amongst the canoes past Fort Langley and the mouth of the Harrison River, towards Fort Hope, which we reached early on the morning of the second day afterwards; having sailed a hundred and sixty miles in all from Victoria. The slowness of our progress was owing to the strong down-river current; had the supply of coal not been limited, the steamer would have advanced as far as Fort Yale. Here I disembarked.

The weather was delightful, and tended to enhance the merry excitement of the gold-hunters. The right bank of the river on either side of the fort and the Que-que-alla River was dotted with miners, each stooping and busy, rocking, digging, or scooping up the gold. Gold glittered amongst the sand on the beach; I stooped down and gathered a few grains, and finding the bait too tempting to resist, I set manfully to work, turning over the sand with a geological shovel I had brought with me from San Francisco. I was but an amateur, and had entered on the Frazer River journey more for the sake of seeing a young nation spring into life than anything else, although I do not disclaim having turned digger for the time being, an avocation too

remunerative and independent to be considered *infra dig.* True, I had dug for gold at the Sonora mines and at Ballarat, on two respective occasions of half-an-hour each, and found a little, but still, as the Yankees would say, I was green at the business; yet, in spite of my greenness and geological shovel, I realized, to use another of their expressions, in the space of three hours, no less than fifteen dollars and sixty cents' worth of particles. I thought myself in for a run of luck, and resolved to set to work on the next morning in the same place; in the meantime, however, I met with several of the red-shirted community, who rather made small of my day's earnings and geological shovel than otherwise, and guessed if they hadn't realized more than that 'ere they'd be looking down flat on their rockers.

"I guess I calculate pretty correctly when I say that I've realized three hundred and seventy-three dollars and fifty-eight cents this ar week," said a gaunt, sleek-haired man with a black beard and restless eyes, and with two revolvers slung to his belt. He stood in front of a large tent used as a boarding house, the only concern of the kind nearer than Fort Langley, and in which I had engaged residence at a charge of three dollars a day, being half a dollar in excess of the charge at the hotel-palaces of New York. It was supper-time and seven o'clock, so I sat down with my successful double-revolvered friend, and commenced with considerable gusto the work of tea-drinking mutton-chop eating, and speculation

as to the probable yield of gold both during and after the freshets. There were fifteen of us in all, including our German host, who had only just set up his canvas hotel, having run down from San Francisco on the previous steamer to the *Cortes*, for the purpose of boarding and lodging the miners in the octagonal tent he brought for the occasion.

"I guess he's realizing a pretty considerable sum," remarked a party with only one revolver, but a terrific pair of moustachios. I nodded assent, guessing at the same time that we should have to sleep on the ground. My companion guessed likewise, but accompanied it with the ejaculation "skins" and a significant point of the head and the eye towards the tent wall; seeing nothing there, I guessed the skins alluded to were outside for the time being. I was right; they were lying *al fresco*, and were destined to constitute our only beds. After dark the skins were brought in and spread along either side of the tent, leaving a space of about half a foot for the purposes of navigation. They were soon covered with the lounging and recumbent bodies of the miners, who kept on talking till about ten o'clock, when silence supervened, or rather snoring was substituted for talking. All slept with their revolvers and gold under their variously improvised pillows, and I did not form an exception to the rule. The host slept in the middle of his pantry, surrounded and almost hidden by pots and pans, and occasionally making commotion amongst his scanty supply of crockery ware.

I did not very readily yield to the embrace of slumber, for the novelty and excitement of my new life kept my thinking powers awake. It was a little past midnight, and the sickly oil lamp which swung from the tent roof still shed its hazy light. Suddenly I heard a rustle and a hissing noise, something between that of a hostler currycombing and stifled laughter. I lifted my head, and directing my eyes towards the tent's opening, beheld a Red Indian, more than six feet in height, holding the canvas drop up, and grinning with evident delight, while the heads and eyes of two or three of his fellows were to be seen peering in the background.

"Hillo!" I involuntarily exclaimed: two or three awoke at the signal, and sprang upon their legs as they heard the glee shouts and tramp of the Indians, who bounded off at the instant. A least a dozen awoke and asked "What's up?" but after ascertaining that it was all over, went to sleep again, including our host, who upset a mustard pot over his whiskers, in his sudden endeavour to attain the perpendicular, and dropped flat on a gridiron when he proceeded to resume the horizontal. At about five o'clock several began yawning, and recommended "the bolt upright."

"I guess, mate, you've had a pretty good hiding?" said one jocularly, in allusion to a good night's rest on the skins.

"Guess I have, it's done me a sight more good than a cow-hiding," was the response.

"What was that about Indians?" some one

asked; and so they talked, meanwhile assuming the bolt upright, and adjourning outside the tent to make their slight and hasty toilet. After that gold was the sole and absorbing theme, the great order of the day.

Already miners were at work along the river's banks, and the lurid sun shot out his rays of fire in dazzling brightness, and hope-inspiring effulgence far and wide, over the river and over the grass land, lighting up the mountains in beauty of many shades, and displaying the mighty foliage of the forest in gilded loveliness, giving gaiety and animation to everything; and while buoying up the hearts of men, making all nature glad and rosy. It was such a morning—the first of my arrival—when I again set to work with my geological shovel, not half a mile from the tent, and about three miles above Fort Hope.

The river was a little lower than on the previous day, and miners were busy, either singly or in twos, rocking the washing stuff. It requires two to work a rocker well, one to dig and the other to wash and collect the "bits." Some who had not brought rockers with them were engaged in making them out of green timber; the bottom, however, a thin metal plate punctured with holes, had to be purchased, and at an exorbitant price—one of my fellow boarders has given forty dollars for one—a thing that in England would cost about eighteenpence, and in San Francisco two dollars and a half. But the necessity for a rocker in wet diggings is all but absolute. For my own part, I gave four dollars for a pan, and worked

that in lieu of a rocker, making four bits each washing, equivalent to two shillings sterling.

This continued throughout the day, so that by nightfall I had realized "pretty considerable," which means more than two ounces of clean gold. In spite of the proverb of a rolling stone gathering no moss, I was impelled by force of reports coming down river of great yields nearer the mountains, as well as by seeing the canoes making their way past me for a higher part of the river, to join in the purchase of a canoe for eighty dollars, with five others; and accordingly we set off at seven o'clock on the next morning for Fort Yale, afterwards to advance as we deemed best. Two or three miles below the latter, however, at a point called Hill's Bar, a sandy flat about five hundred yards in length, we went ashore, having heard reports before starting of good returns there.

We found the place crowded with Indians, at least five hundred of them, men, squaws, and children; with about eighty miners at work on the bar. These were averaging from fifteen to twenty-five dollars a day each man. Provisions were exceedingly dear and scarce, flour selling at eighty dollars the barrel, bacon at seventy-five cents per pound, and butter at a dollar per pound. A party of twenty miners had set out on the previous day to prospect for dry diggings in the interior, under the guidance of a batch of Indians, who said there was plenty of gold to be found, but on tidings of their success had yet been heard of. The population were subsisting

chiefly upon deer's flesh and salmon, both of which were abundant. My companions went "in for a dig" as they termed it, at this place, but being anxious to explore new spots, I did not remain beyond noon on the day following, during which time I ate a "green bear" steak—the first of the kind I had ever partaken of, and worthy of being ranked with shark cutlets, and pieces of a whale's tail, not omitting the morsel of horse-flesh, which I had previously demolished in other regions of land and water.

About half-a-mile higher up than Fort Yale the river rushes between huge and naked rocks, almost perpendicular. Here a portage has to be made along an Indian trackway, and over rugged ground; the scenery on either side, however, is highly picturesque and mountainous.

We ascended the river under the pilotage of an Indian, whom we had engaged at eight dollars a day wages, passing the "Forks," the junction of the Thompson and Frazer, on our way, and making a hundred and seventy miles in all from the river's mouth. During the journey we had to stem and round a rapid where the water fell and swirled rather heavily over rocky shoals; this was about five miles below "Sailors' Diggings," and twenty above Fort Yale, consequently about forty miles from where we now found ourselves.

There were not more than half-a-dozen miners to be seen along the shore in either direction; and these were stragglers, or rather prospecting explorers from the Thompson and Sailors' Diggings lower down, and reported to be very rich,

but whom our party were eager to "beat," and outvie by fresh discoveries.

On shore we jumped, pell-mell and excited, for there is ever an excitement about gold-digging; and blunted must be the susceptibility, and torpid the soul, of that man who can gather naked gold and not feel a throb of delight and an ever unsatisfied longing for more, which keeps alive every faculty of the human mind, and makes imagination picture joys and comforts to be bought, and perhaps castles to be built, with that same lucre. Thus, practical as is the labour of the "digger," it is the strongest incentive to romance of thought, as well as the most ambition-firing of any of the manual occupations of the age.

My companions of the canoe were soon hard at work: three were single-handed, that is, without partners; the other two were in partnership, and had a rocker between them, one filling, the other rocking. I set to work, after a salmon dinner, with my geological shovel and my tin pan, and washed away with all the gusto of a veritable digger. At about sunset I was interrupted by a coarse "Hillo, mate!" from one of my canoe brethren, an Anglo-Saxon Californianized pick and shovel handler.

"The yellow fever's pretty high with you, I guess," he observed.

Of course, I comprehended his metallic joke, and retorted by the ready calculation that it was the same with him.

"Sartinly," was the reply, "it's raging up here awful strong."

After this interesting exchange of feverish ideas we joined the rest of our party, and found that each man, during the six hours we had been working, had realized from three to five ounces, or in other words, from forty-eight to eighty dollars; the market value of gold being sixteen dollars the ounce.

These were good earnings, and as satisfactory as any we had heard of lower down the river; but still the mania was for advancing farther still, by making a land portage with the canoe to avoid the rapids a few miles higher up. The miners had the impression, and truly so, that whatever the yield here might be, it was sure to be still greater higher up, for it was evident that the grains became more plentiful and larger the more we advanced; thus demonstrating that such, during the course of time, had been washed down from the mountains, or other highly auriferous regions adjacent, which, when reached, would far outvie the most sanguine expectations. We looked forward to fields of gold; and our imaginations transformed the very mountains into gold, which we should find in unportable abundance. We thought of gold as a collier does of coal; but still we treasured every grain we gathered, and would have defended it at the revolver's point as desperately as life itself.

As for provisions and habitations, at this stage they were both equally scarce. We had to run down river three miles, towards Sailors' Bar, before we arrived at a newly-constructed store of green timber, where flour was selling at a

hundred dollars the barrel; molasses, seven dollars a gallon; pork, a dollar per pound; tea, four dollars per pound; sugar, two dollars per pound; beans, one dollar per pound; picks at six dollars each, and shovels three dollars each, and where we were taken in for the night at three dollars a head.

For the benefit of the unsophisticated, I may as well mention that five dollars go to the sovereign, the dollar Yankee being here worth forty-eight pence British currency.

The Indians at this spot were straggling in their numbers, but were as well stocked with gold as the white men. They carried it about with them in skin pouches and bags containing from one to five hundred dollars' worth, and manifested the most friendly feelings towards us, frolicking about in the highest glee imaginable; and giving ejaculatory utterance to a more complicated amount of Chinook[1] than I could possibly comprehend. They "absquatulated" as the evening closed in, and sought rest, or revelry, as the case might be, in their encampment, which lay at the distance of a mile or so inland.

As for myself, I "turned in," or rather on to a wooden bench covered over with a bear skin, at about ten o'clock, and so passed the night together with about twenty others, who were variously located about the store, which, of course, consisted of one room only; most of them occupying positions on the top of boxes of merchandise, surrounded by varieties, raw and

[1] The pidgin-English of the Indians.

manufactured, in a manner similar to the German boarding-house keeper amongst his crockery, and constituting in all a perfect chaos of legs, arms, provisions and hardware.

No Red Indian disturbed our slumbers during this night, which, to speak poetically, was beautifully radiant with moonbeams that penetrated with welcome light (through the place where the windows ought to be) into our chaotic dormitory, where molasses and butter were the silent witnesses of our unconscious repose, and where nails were our sharpest bedfellows. By the bye, speaking of nails, they were here selling at a rate equivalent to a shilling each, thus placing their famous brethren, the so-called Ninepennys, completely in the shade.

We were up and at work by six o'clock, and on one of the most lovely mornings that the month of June ever ushered into existence. The air, at once warm and fragrant of the forest and wild clover, was just sufficiently stirring to prevent the heat feeling oppressive, while the enchanting rays of the rising sun decked out the prospect in magnificent array, brightening the more prominent parts of the mountains hundreds of miles away, and leaving the recesses lost in a deeply-contrasting shade; while far and high in the background the lofty snow-capped summits shone in crystal purity, white and dazzling in the midst of a sky of tranquil blue. Farther down, the picturesque shores of the river enhanced the beauty of the scene, and as the eye ranged far and wide over the landscape of forest and

prairie, gentle hill and sloping valley, admiration could not fail to take possession of the beholder, and make even the most practical of gold-diggers feel that he stood up within view of a perfect paradise of scenery—a land as rich and as beautiful, a clime as golden and luxurious, as any upon which Nature ever lavished her inviting treasures.

Not finding the yield to come up to expectation, and being myself equally, or even more, anxious than my partners in the canoe to press on higher up the river, we set out with a newly-engaged Indian, with a view of passing the upper falls, either by land portage or skilful steersmanship. The latter, however, we were warned against trusting to, as two miners and an Indian had been drowned in the attempt to pass through, their canoe being also smashed to pieces, five days previously.

In the vicinity of Fort Hope an American ill-treated an Indian chief, which resulted in a return of hostilities, the former drawing his revolver and shooting the chief through the left side, from the effects of which he died almost instantly. This aroused the wrath of the Indians standing near, one of whom being also armed returned the fire, and shot a miner through the heart, from which he fell dead. The murderer of the chief then made his escape; and some days of commotion and anger elapsed before the Indians were pacified by the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, who very laudably exerted himself in the re-establishment of peace.

On reaching the falls we disembarked, each

man carrying his own kit, and our Indian pilot the canoe. Had it not been for the unusually high state of the river at this particular time and season, we could have easily avoided making the portage, but as the river ran, it was the wisest thing we could do to abstain from trying it. Still the American character—and four out of the five were Americans—is more apt to study dispatch than safety, as, for instance, a go-ahead Yankee would sooner travel by a train that was likely to take him to his destination an hour quicker than another one, although the chances were in favour of his having his neck broken on the journey. The American is eager, pushing, and impetuous; he is fond of risk, if there is the remotest chance of gaining anything by it; and in undertakings of a hazardous and uncertain nature he is without rival in his achievements. He will " drive a trade," and explore, in the hope of gain, farther and quicker into the heart of a country, no matter what the hardships and obstacles to be contended against, than any other, not even his Anglo-Saxon cousins excepted. Civilization follows more briskly in his wake than with any other nation; he has scarcely " set up " in the wilderness before he finds materials for a newspaper arriving and a " spick-span " editor heralding the events of the hour, and that on a spot where the red man dances and the wild animals of the forest are still to be seen.

However, to our portage: after proceeding nearly a mile the canoes were again laid on the water, and our oars plashed away with feathered

spray towards—where we knew not, nearer than the mountains. We seemed hemmed in by mountains, and we positively talked of nothing but the mountains and the probability of our making "big strikes" as we drew nearer them. At dusk, feeling hot and tired, we drew up in a small natural cove on the right bank of the river, partly overhung by a species of water-willow, which for beauty of position might have had the advantages and labour of art and cultivation devoted to its planting and bestowed upon its growth. We stepped ashore with the feelings of pioneers, and the reliant self-confidence which steals upon us when alone in the wilderness and far away from the haunts of civilization. We felt morally armed, and hedged against danger and foreign foes. We expected to meet with unaccustomed things, and hardships that we had hitherto escaped; but fortitude gives strength, and we stood up each as a pillar to brave and to defy.

It is under such circumstances as these that men unite in one common and solid friendship, and are ever ready to join together in the cause of self-defence, mutual protection, and well-being. All conventionalism is quickly banished or thrown aside, and generosity and the better feelings of the human heart preside and unite men in one honest brotherhood.

The singing of a bird, shrill, long, and musical, and the half-seething murmur of the flowing waters of the river, alone disturbed the solitude of the seemingly primeval wilderness into which

we had plunged, and which the rustling sound, gently wafted from the giant forest, only tended to enhance and to render our loneliness the more impressive. But for us solemnity of scene had fewer charms than for those who, fresh from the lap of luxury, may contemplate Nature's beauties in idle peace. For us there was the excitement of danger and uncertainty, the hope of gold and the risk of starvation.

True, all these were powerful incentives to hard work and enterprise; but they, in their sharpening influence, tended to disturb that calm and happy contemplation of the beautiful which, under less adventurous circumstances, could not have failed to soothe and to inspire. We were eager, impatient, and restless; and, as a matter of necessity, our thoughts were more engrossed by the consideration of where our camping-ground should be, and where and when we might be able to renew our stock of provisions, than by the scenery which met our gaze. I must say, however, that, in spite of hope and danger, I dwelt with something like rhapsody on the picturesque region of mountain and forest which delighted my admiring, not to say astonished, gaze. No doubt the brilliant and changing hues of the sky, which were reflected upon the landscape, and threw out the irregular outline and undulations of the mountains, contributed greatly to the fascination of the view; but still I became enamoured of it, and I thought it the loveliest clime it had ever been my changeful lot to wander in.

Not an Indian was to be seen, the woodland was deserted. We began, of course, with our usual avidity, to explore and prospect, from the instant of our mooring the canoe, while our native pilot collected faggots for a fire. I soon saw that the country was not so thickly wooded as at first sight I had been led to suppose. A belt of trees merely flanked the waterside, beyond which deeply-grassed rich prairie land stretched for several miles, bounded to the westward by lofty forest trees, and to the north by the overtowering mountains, but open to the south, and reaching farther than the eye could carry. We returned to our camping-ground near the beach, and a few yards only from the canoe, before darkness set in, and very soon the crackling of the pile of leaves and branches, which our Indian pilot had collected, was heard amid the lively flames of an *al fresco* fire. The weather was warm, so that we would have readily dispensed with such, had it not been for the sake of cooking some dried salmon, and making a decoction of tea.

The fire crackled as if rejoicing; merrily, laughingly curled the flames; and the pleasant smoke, wriggling out of their embrace, sailed up peacefully over our heads and wasted itself away in the pure atmosphere of the forest. We sat ourselves down on the cool turf and partook of the repast with all the gusto of a healthy appetite and relish, and then sat round the cheering fire, which we piled with faggots from time to time, talking of our hopes and fears, but chiefly of

the successes that awaited us,—for the miner is constitutionally sanguine, and hard, indeed, must have been his luck when *he* is bowed down and despairing.

Each man had blankets with him, and for myself I had an opossum rug in addition, which I found highly serviceable. I spread it at the base of a large tree not far from the fire, and there I prostrated myself, the rest of the party following my example, one by one, within a radius of twenty yards. As the night fell, the stars shone out like jets of fire, and the moon again, with steady light, silvered the landscape. Once through an opening in the forest above me I caught a glimpse of her radiant face, and felt glad in the contemplation of such heavenly beauty, which, although a common sight, was nevertheless to me, under the circumstances in which I then lay, peculiarly grateful and soothing; for I am an admirer of the great and beautiful, and a sunny clime to me is earthly paradise.

The howling of a wolf and the cries of other animals of the wilderness were heard from time to time coming faintly from the distance, but did not excite our fears; at any rate, our revolvers were ready, and our Indian pilot was as quick of hearing, whether asleep or awake, as Paddy might say, as he was sure and composed as to our safety and his own.

We were up and " hard at it " soon after daybreak on the following morning. We found gold everywhere; and my only surprise was that a region so long palpably auriferous should have

remained so long unproclaimed and hidden from the gaze of civilization. I found a very choice quartz "specimen," six ounces in weight, half jutting out of the sand on the river's bank, which contained at least four ounces of the precious metal,—in fact, the larger half of the piece was solid gold, and could have been broken off from the quartz to which it was attached.

This was a sure sign to us that large masses of gold must lie somewhere higher up the river than we had yet proceeded, most probably in the recesses, and at the foot of the mountains themselves; and that the gold found on the banks, and which is no doubt equally abundant in the bed of the river, was merely the off-scouring and broken fragments of the great gold region lying farther inland. During this day's work seven "nuggets," varying from about half-an-ounce to five ounces in weight, were picked up, while the average yield of "dust" was no less than four ounces each man, equal to about sixty-four dollars (£12 16*s.*), besides the nuggets. This was glorious; but still the Yankees were anything but satisfied; it seemed as if the more they got the more they excepted to get; and if they could only find out and reach this "source," of which we talked so much, they would have nothing to do but use their picks and shovels in gathering as much gold as they could get horses and canoes to carry.

We appeared to be the first who had tried this spot; and although it was known that another party of six had ascended the river higher than

we were, they were reported to have diverged into the interior, and found diggings at the foot of the Cascade Mountains, many miles in a south-westerly direction, and away from the river altogether. We, therefore, entertained strong hopes of being ourselves the sole discoverers of the prime mine of wealth; and leaving the rich diggings behind us, pushed on for richer diggings and "bigger strikes" still, on the very day following the yield last quoted, assured in our own minds, and moreover with experience in our favour, that we could not but be gainers by the movement, and perhaps—as, indeed, we sanguinely hoped, and I as reliantly as any of them—solve the grand problem as to where the gold came from. So with this hope impelling us, and this achievement strongly before us, we moved away from the newly-baptized Willow Bank (which, by the bye, had been and, if we could do no better elsewhere, still promised to be a very good bank for us); and while the word "Excelsior" rang out from the lips of one on board, we rowed swiftly along a somewhat rapid and now shoaly river, the navigation of which was both intricate and dangerous, towards the mountains, now transformed into visionary gold.

IN THE DOMAIN OF THE BUFFALO

Mr. Henry Youle Hind, professor of chemistry and geology in the university of Trinity College,

Toronto, was in charge of exploring expeditions in the years 1857 and 1858, the object of which was to ascertain the practicability of establishing an emigrant route between Lake Superior and Selkirk Settlement, and to obtain some knowledge of the natural resources of the Valley of Red River and the Saskatchewan. He discovered the immense fertile belt lying between the Lake of the Woods and the Rocky Mountains, now of such importance to Canada and the Empire. The following passage describes his adventures in the Qu'Appelle Valley.

After leaving the Fourth Fishing Lake and the marshes at its western extremity, we paddled, sailed, or tracked up a narrow swift stream, four or five feet deep, seventy feet broad, and winding through a valley of considerable breadth and depth. The hillsides were now absolutely bare, not a tree or shrub was to be seen. We had reached the point where timber ceases to grow in the valleys of the rivers except in peculiar situations; the altitude of the banks could not be less than two hundred and eighty or three hundred feet. The prairie on either side is also treeless and arid. On the 21st of July, after spending a restless night owing to the attacks of multitudes of mosquitoes, we left the canoe in the hands of our half-breeds to track up the stream, and, ascending to the prairie, walked for some miles on the brink of this great excavation. We waited five hours for the canoe to reach us, the windings of the stream involving a course three times as long as a straight line up the valley.

In the afternoon of this day we made many miles by sailing before a strong east wind, notwithstanding a heavy rain and thunderstorm; we were glad to be able to push on through this seemingly interminable and now monotonous valley, as the air from the marshes on either side of the river was fetid and oppressive. A scramble to the summit of the steep hill bank, three hundred feet high, though very fatiguing, was amply repaid by the cool, pure, and delightful breeze blowing over the desolate prairies around us. Roses of three different varieties, red, white, and variegated, were numerous on the upland; and in the morning, when the dew was on them, or at night, when it was falling, the fresh air from above came down in puffs into our deep, hot valley with delicious and invigorating fragrance. On the fourth day after our departure from the lakes we sighted the Grand Forks. Leaving the canoe, I hastened on to a point where the men with the carts and horses were to await our arrival, and found them safely encamped on a beautiful meadow, anxiously looking for us. An empty cart and a couple of horses were dispatched for the canoe, still some miles below us, and in the evening we were joined by Mr. Fleming and the two voyageurs. During the day the temperature of the river was found to be 74°.

Near our camp, on the 23rd, were six or seven log houses occasionally inhabited during the winter months by freemen, that is, men no longer in the service of the Company. The prairie above the freeman's houses slopes gently to the edge

of the valley from the distant horizon on both sides. Clumps of aspen vary its monotonous aspect, and though clothed with green herbage, due to the late abundant rains, the soil is light and poor. Some distance back from the valley it is of better quality, the finer particles not having been washed out of it; the grass there is longer and more abundant, but the greatest drawback is the want of timber.

Soon after sunset our camp received an unexpected addition of six "Bungays,"[1] who were on their way to Fort Ellice with dried buffalo meat and pemmican. They had been hunting between the two branches of the Saskatchewan, and represented the season as very dry and the buffalo scarce. We passed a quiet and friendly night with them, and on the following morning made them a small present and pursued our way to the Grand Forks.

I happened to be about one hundred yards in advance of the carts, after we had travelled for about a quarter of an hour, when, hearing a loud clatter of horses' feet behind me, I looked round and saw the six Indians approaching at a gallop. One of them, who had represented himself as a chief, seized my bridle, drew the horse's head round, and motioned me to dismount. I replied by jerking my bridle out of the Indian's hand. My people came up at this moment, and asked in Cree what this interference meant. "We wanted to have a little more talk," said the chief; "we

[1] Crees and Ojibways of mixed origin.

are anxious to know the reason why you are travelling through our country."

It turned out, after a little more "talk," that they wished to establish a sort of toll of tobacco and tea for permission to pass through their country, threatening that if it were not given they would gather their friends in advance of us, and stop us by force. We knew that we should have to pass through about a hundred tents, so there was some little meaning in the threat. The old hunter, however, knowing Indian habits and diplomacy well, at once remarked that we were taking a large present to the chief of the Sandy Hills, and we did not intend to distribute any tobacco or tea until we had seen him, according to Indian custom. They tried a few more threats, but I closed the parley by unslinging a double-barrelled gun from the cart, and instructing the men to show quietly that they had theirs in readiness. Wishing the rascals good day, we rode on; they sat on the ground, silently watching us, but made no sign.

We crossed to the north side of the Qu'Appelle when we arrived at the Grand Forks, and ascended the hill bank to the prairie. The Grand Forks consist of the junction of two deep and broad valleys bearing a great resemblance to each other; the one on the south is that in which the Qu'Appelle River flows, the other, occupied by Long Lake, or Last Mountain Lake, being in fact an exact counterpart of the Qu'Appelle Valley and Lakes. In its general aspect Last Mountain Lake is similar to the Fishing Lakes. A rapid,

winding stream, thirty feet broad, runs from it into the Qu'Appelle. Both valleys are of uniform breadth and depth, and very little narrower than, when united, they form the main valley of the Qu'Appelle River.

A few miles west of the Souris Forks the Qu'Appelle is nineteen feet wide and one and a half feet deep, but the great valley is still a mile broad and two hundred feet deep. Here on the 25th we caught a glimpse of the blue outline of the Grand Coteau, with a treeless plain between us and the nearest part, which is called the "Dancing Point of the Grand Coteau," and has long been distinguished for the "medicine ceremonies" which are celebrated there. After passing these forks, the country is more undulating; small hills begin to show themselves; the general character of the soil is light and poor; the herbage consists of short tufted buffalo grass and plants common in dry arid plains. This afternoon we saw three fires spring up between us and the Grand Coteau. They were Indians' signs, but whether they referred to the presence of buffalo, or whether they were designed to intimate to distant bands the arrival of suspicious strangers, we could not then tell, and not knowing whether they originated from Crees, Assiniboine, or Blackfeet, we became cautious. In a few days we ascertained that the fire had been put out [1] by the Crees, to inform their friends that they had found buffalo.

The grandeur of the prairie on fire belongs to

[1] A native expression; "put out fire" signifies to set the prairie on fire.

itself. It is like a volcano in full activity; you cannot imitate it because it is impossible to obtain those gigantic elements from which it derives its awful splendour. Fortunately, in the present instance, the wind was from the west, and drove the fires in the opposite direction, and being south of us we could contemplate the magnificent spectacle without anxiety. One object in burning the prairie at this time was to turn the buffalo; they had crossed the Saskatchewan in great numbers near the Elbow, and were advancing towards us, and crossing the Qu'Appelle not far from the Height of Land; by burning the prairie east of their course, they would be diverted to the south, and feed for a time on the Grand Coteau before they pursued their way to the Little Souris, in the country of the Sioux.

"Putting out fire" in the prairies is a telegraphic mode of communication frequently resorted to by Indians. Its consequences are seen in the destruction of the forest which once covered an immense area south of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine, and the aridity of those vast prairies is partly due to this cause.

Wood began to be a great treasure in the prairie after passing the Moose Jaws Forks; we were compelled to go supperless to bed on the night of the 25th, because we had neglected to take a supply at the last aspen grove we passed. No tree or shrub, or even willow twig, could be seen in any direction from our camp on the morning of the 25th. Our customary breakfast of tea and buffalo meat was impossible. We

had to content ourselves with uncooked pemmican and water from a marsh.

Making an early start in search of wood, we came suddenly upon four Cree tents, whose inmates were still fast asleep; and about three hundred yards west of them we found ten more tents, with over fifty or sixty Indians in all. They were preparing to cross the valley in the direction of the Grand Coteau, following the buffalo. Their provisions for trade, such as dried meat and pemmican, were drawn by dogs, each bag of pemmican being supported upon two long poles, which are shafts, body, and wheels in one. Buffalo Pound Hill Lake, sixteen miles long, begins near the Moose Jaws Forks, and on the opposite or south side of this long sheet of water, we saw eighteen tents and a large number of horses. The women in those we visited on our side of the valley and lake had collected a great quantity of the mesaskatomina berry, which they were drying.

In gathering the mesaskatomina, which the Indians represented to be scarce in the valley of the Qu'Appelle they break off the branches of the trees loaded with fruit in order that they may collect the juicy berries with greater ease to themselves, never thinking that this practice continued from year to year must diminish and ultimately extirpate the shrub which they prize so highly, and which forms an important part of their summer food. They announced the cheering intelligence that the Chief Mis-tick-oos, with some thirty tents, was at the Sandy Hills

impounding buffalo. Leaving the hospitable Crees after an excellent breakfast on pounded meat and marrow fat, we arrived at Buffalo Pound Hill at noon. The whole country here assumed a different appearance; it now bore resemblance to a stormy sea suddenly become rigid; the hills were of gravel and very abrupt, but none exceeded a hundred feet in height. The Coteau de Missouri, particularly the "Dancing Point," is clearly seen from Buffalo Pound Hill towards the south, while north-easterly the last mountain of the Touchwood Hill Range looms grey or blue in the distance. Between these distant ranges a treeless plain intervenes.

We now began to find the fresh bones of buffalo very numerous on the ground, and here and there startled a pack of wolves feeding on a carcass which had been deprived of its tongue and hump only by the careless, thriftless Crees. On the high banks of the valley the remains of ancient encampments, in the form of rings of stones to hold down the skin tents, are everywhere visible, and testify to the former numbers of the Plain Crees, affording a sad evidence of the ancient power of the people who once held undisputed sway from the Missouri to the Saskatchewan. The remains of a race fast passing away give more than a transient interest to Buffalo Pound Hill Lake. The largest ancient encampment we saw lies near a shallow lake in the prairie about a mile from the Qu'Appelle Valley. It is surrounded by a few low sandy and gravelly hills, and is quite screened from observation. It may have been

a camping-ground for centuries, as some circles of stones are partially covered with grass and embedded in the soil.

At noon on the 26th we rested for a few hours opposite to a large camp of Crees on the other side of the lake; our sudden appearance at the edge of the prairie threw them into a state of the greatest excitement, as evinced by their haste in collecting their horses and gathering in groups in the valley below. A few of them set out to ride round the lake, but in the wrong direction, so that the chance of their overtaking us was highly doubtful.

Toward evening we arrived at another Cree encampment, where we were again hospitably treated to beaten buffalo meat and marrow fat. Birch bark dishes full of that nutritious but not very tempting food were placed on the ground before us, and we were requested to partake of it. The Indians took a piece of the pounded meat in their fingers, and dipped it into the soft marrow. A hunting knife which I employed for the same purpose excited their admiration; and after allowing them to examine it, I placed it, as I thought, securely in my coat pocket. On the following morning, however, the knife was not to be found, nor did I ever see it again. They were delighted to receive a small present of tea and tobacco, and while I was engaged in the tent with the men, the girls, children, and old women assembled round the carts, asking if we had any rum, and snuffed the boxes and bags containing provisions, in search of that odoriferous stimulant.

We left our hospitable friends in the evening and camped about three miles from the last Cree tent. The chief of the band, an old man, accompanied us for some distance, expressing very amicable sentiments, and hinting that it would be as well to keep a watch over our horses during the night, for there were some young scamps among his band who would think it an honour to steal a white man's horse. Visitors came during the evening, and from their actions we thought it advisable to keep watch and tether the horses; observing these precautions they retired at an early hour after a friendly smoke. On the following morning, when looking for my hunting knife, I was very suspiciously reminded of the old chief's caution; it flashed upon me that the cunning fellow had himself secretly abstracted the knife while pressing his friendly advice.

At dawn we were *en route* again, and towards noon approached the Sandy Hills, the valley continuing about one hundred and forty feet deep and maintaining its width. Two days before our arrival the Indians had been running buffalo, and many carcasses of these animals were scattered over the arid, treeless plain through which our route lay. Several herds of buffalo were visible wending their way in single file to the Grand Coteau de Missouri, distinctly looming south of the Qu'Appelle Valley. After travelling through a dry, barren region until 2 p.m., we arrived at the lake of the Sandy Hills, and on the opposite side of the valley saw a number of tents, with many horses feeding in the

flats. When within a mile of the lake, a buffalo bull suddenly appeared upon the brow of a little hill on our right. A finer sight of its kind could hardly be imagined. The animal was in his prime and a magnificent specimen of a buffalo. He gazed at us through the long hair which hung over his eyes in thick profusion, pawed the ground, tossed his head and snorted with proud disdain. He was not more than fifty yards from us, and while we were admiring his splendid proportions he set off at a gallop towards some low hills we had just passed over.

Our appearance on the brink of the valley opposite the tents surprised the Indians. They quickly caught their horses, and about twenty galloped across the valley, here quite dry, and in a quarter of an hour were seated in friendly chat with the half-breeds. When the men were going to the lake for water to make some tea, the Indians told us it was salt, and that the only fresh water within a distance of some miles was close to their camp on the opposite side of the valley. We were, therefore, constrained to cross the other side and erect our tents near to the spring. Although still early in the afternoon, the difficulty of obtaining water and fuel, as well as a desire to procure a guide from the Indians, induced us to camp at the east end of Sand Hill Lake with the Crees by whom we were surrounded.

Scarcely had we made a distribution of tobacco and tea, when a buffalo bull, appearing on the opposite side of the valley near where we had passed in the morning, afforded one of the young

Indians an opportunity of showing his skill and bravery in attacking this formidable animal single-handed and on foot, a conflict which we witnessed through a good telescope from our camp on the south side of the valley.

Armed with bow and arrows, neatly feathered with the plumes of the wild duck, and headed with a barb fashioned from a bit of iron hoop, the young Plain Cree threw off his leather hunting-shirt, jumped on a horse and hurried across the valley. Dismounting at the foot of the bank, he rapidly ascended its steep sides, and just before reaching the top, cautiously approached a large boulder which lay on the brink and crouched behind it.

The buffalo was within forty yards of the spot where the Indian crouched, and slowly approaching the valley, leisurely cropped the tufts of parched herbage which the sterile soil was capable of supporting. When within twenty yards of the Indian the bull raised his head, snuffed the air, and began to paw the ground. Lying at full length, the Indian sent an arrow into the side of his antagonist. The bull shook his head and mane, planted his fore feet firmly in front of him, and looked from side to side in search of his unseen foe, who, after driving the arrow, had again crouched behind the boulder.

Soon, however, observing the fixed attitude of the bull, a sure sign that he was severely wounded, he stepped on one side and showed himself. The bull instantly charged, but when within five yards of his nimble enemy, the Indian

sprang lightly behind the boulder, and the bull plunged headlong down the hill, receiving after he had passed the Indian a second arrow in his flanks. As soon as he reached the bottom he fell on his knees, and looked over his shoulder at his wary antagonist, who, however, speedily followed, and observing the bull's helpless condition, sat on the ground within a few yards of him and waited for the death-gasp. After one or two efforts to rise, the huge animal drooped his head and gave up the strife. The Indian was at his side without a moment's pause, cut out his tongue, caught his horse—an excited spectator of the conflict—and galloping across the valley, handed me the trophy of his success.

We made ourselves acceptable to the Indians by offering them a present of powder, shot, tea, and tobacco, and in return they invited us to partake of pounded meat, marrow fat and berries. The chief of the band assured us that his young men were honest and trustworthy; and, in compliance with his instructions, property would be perfectly safe.

I visited the interior of most of their tents, and found the squaws almost exclusively engaged in drying buffalo meat. A couple of tablespoonfuls of tea and a small plug of tobacco always ensured a hearty welcome, and in return they generally presented me with a choice piece of buffalo meat from a fat cow, or a small skin of marrow fat. One of the young men took a fancy to a checked flannel shirt I was wearing at the time, and offered me his saddle for it; on my

declining the bargain, he added his bow and a quiver of arrows. I told him to bring the bow and arrows to my tent at night, and I would give him a new shirt for them. He said he should prefer a white one, and then the buffalo would not mind him; and when he came to complete his bargain, he selected a white jersey in preference to a showy coloured check.

From time to time scouts would come in and go out towards the Grand Coteau, on the look-out for Blackfeet, and as nightfall approached, the wandering horses were gathered closer to the camp. The dogs, however, are their great protection; it is almost impossible for any stranger to approach a camp without arousing the whole canine population; and the passage of bands of buffalo during the night-time is signalized by a prolonged baying, which, however suggestive of sport and good cheer, is most wearisome to those who are anxious to rest. During the night a heavy rain filled the hollows with water, and gave us promise of an abundant supply until we arrived at the Sandy Hills, where the main body of Plain Crees were encamped. On the following day, the 28th, I rode to the Eyebrow Hill range, a prolongation of the Grand Coteau, and distant from the Qu'Appelle Valley about four miles. It was there that the Indians told me I should find one of the sources of the Qu'Appelle River. After an hour's ride I reached the hills and quickly came upon a deep ravine, at the bottom of which bubbled a little stream about three feet broad. I subsequently followed

its course until it entered the prairie leading to the great valley, and traced it to its junction with the main excavation, through a deep narrow gully.

In the afternoon I bade farewell to our Cree friends, and riding west, joined the carts on the south side of Sand Hill Lake, on the brink of which we travelled until we arrived at the gully through which the stream from the Eyebrow range enters the Qu'Appelle Valley. It was here nine feet broad and three deep, having received accessions in a short course through the prairie from the hills where I had observed it scarcely three feet broad.

On the morning of the 29th we prepared to visit the main body of the Crees at the Sandy Hills, and, with a view to securing a favourable reception, sent a messenger to announce our arrival, and to express a wish to see Mis-tick-oos, their chief. Soon after breakfast we crossed the valley, and at eight o'clock we came in sight of the Cree camp. Soon afterwards messengers arrived from Mis-tick-oos, in reply to the announcement we had transmitted to him of our approach, expressing a hope that we would delay our visit until they had moved their camp half-a-mile further west, where the odour of the putrid buffalo would be less annoying. We employed the time in ascertaining the exact position of the Height of Land, an operation which we soon found it necessary to close for the present, in consequence of the arrival of about sixty Cree horsemen, many of them naked with exception of the breech

cloth and belt. They were accompanied by the chief's son, who informed us that in an hour's time they would escort us to the camp.

They were about constructing a new pound, having literally filled the present one with buffalo. We sat on the ground and smoked, until they thought it time for us to accompany them to their encampment. Mis-tick-oos had hurried away to make preparations for "bringing in the buffalo," the new pound being nearly ready. He expressed, through his son, a wish that we should see them entrap the buffalo in this pound, a rare opportunity few would be willing to lose.

We passed through the camp to a place which the chief's son pointed out, and there erected our tents. The women were still employed in moving the camp, being assisted in the operation by large numbers of dogs, each dog having two poles harnessed to him, on which his little load of meat, pemmican, or camp furniture was laid. After another smoke, the chief's son asked me, through the interpreter, if I would like to see the old buffalo pound, in which they had been entrapping buffalo during the past week. With a ready compliance I accompanied the guide to a little valley between sand hills, through a lane of branches of trees, which are called "dead men," to the gate or trap of the pound.

A horrible sight broke upon us as we ascended a sand dune overhanging the little dell in which the pound was built. Within a circular fence one hundred and twenty feet broad, constructed of the trunks of trees, laced with withes together,

and braced by outside supports, lay tossed in every conceivable position over two hundred dead buffalo. From old bulls to calves of three months old, animals of every age were huddled together in all the forced attitudes of violent death. The Indians looked upon the scene with evident delight, and told how such and such a bull or cow had exhibited feats of wonderful strength in the death-struggle. The flesh of many of the cows had been taken from them, and was drying in the sun on stages near the tents. At my request the chief's son jumped into the pound, and with a small axe knocked off half-a-dozen pair of horns, which I wished to preserve in memory of this terrible slaughter. "To-morrow," said my companion, "you shall see us bring in the buffalo to the new pound."

After the first "run," ten days before our arrival, the Indians had driven about two hundred buffalo into the enclosure, and were still urging on the remainder of the herd, when one wary old bull, espying a narrow crevice which had not been closed by the robes of those on the outside, whose duty it was to conceal every orifice, made a dash and broke the fence. The whole body then ran helter-skelter through the gap, and dispersing among the sand dunes, escaped, with the exception of eight who were speared or shot with arrows as they passed in their mad career. In all, two hundred and forty animals had been killed in the pound, and it was its offensive condition which led the reckless and wasteful savages to construct a new one. This was formed in a pretty dell between

sand hills, about half-a-mile from the first; and leading from it in two diverging rows, the bushes they designate "dead men," and which serve to guide the buffalo when at full speed, were arranged. The "dead men" extended a distance of four miles into the prairie, west of and beyond the Sand Hills. They were placed about fifty feet apart, and between the extremity of the rows might be a distance of from one mile and a half to two miles.

When the skilled hunters are about to bring in a herd of buffalo from the prairie, they direct the course of the gallop of the alarmed animals by confederates stationed in hollows or small depressions, who, when the buffalo appear inclined to take a direction leading from the space marked out by the "dead men," show themselves for a moment and wave their robes, immediately hiding again. This serves to turn the buffalo slightly in another direction, and when the animals, having arrived between the rows of bushes, endeavour to pass through them, Indians here and there stationed behind a "dead man" go through the same operation, and thus keep the animals within the narrowing limits of the converging lines. At the entrance to the pound there is a strong trunk of a tree placed about one foot from the ground, and on the inner side an excavation is made sufficiently deep to prevent the buffalo from leaping back when once in the pound. As soon as the animals have taken the fatal spring they begin to gallop round and round the ring fence, looking for a chance of escape; but

with the utmost silence, women and children on the outside hold their robes before every orifice until the whole herd is brought in; they then climb to the top of the fence, and, with the hunters who have followed closely in the rear of the buffalo, spear or shoot with bows and arrows or fire-arms at the bewildered animals, rapidly becoming frantic with rage and terror within the narrow limits of the pound.

When Mis-tick-oos was ready to receive me, I proceeded to the spot where he was sitting surrounded by the elders of his tribe; and as a preliminary, rarely known to fail in its good effect upon Indians, I instructed one of my men to hand him a basin of tea and a dish of preserved vegetables, biscuit, and fresh buffalo steaks. He had not eaten since an early hour in the morning, and evidently enjoyed his dinner. Hunger, that great enemy to charity and comfort, being appeased, I presented him with a pipe and a canister of tobacco, begging him to help himself and hand the remainder to the Indians around us. The presents were then brought and laid at his feet. They consisted of tea, tobacco, bullets, powder, and blankets, all of which he examined and accepted with marked satisfaction. After a while he expressed a wish to know the object of our visit; and having at my request adjourned the meeting to my tent in order to avoid sitting in the hot sun, we held a "talk," during which Mis-tick-oos expressed himself freely on various subjects, and listened with the utmost attention and apparent respect to the

AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH THE BUFFALO

speeches of the Indians he had summoned to attend the " Council."

All speakers objected strongly to the half-breeds hunting buffalo during the winter in the Plain Cree country. They had no objection to trade with them or with white people, but they insisted that all strangers should purchase dried meat or pemmican, and not hunt for themselves. I asked Mis-tick-oos to name the articles he would wish me to bring if I came into his country again. He asked for tea, a horse of English breed, a cart, a gun, a supply of powder and ball, knives, tobacco, a medal with a chain, a flag, a suit of fine clothes, and rum. The " talk " lasted between six and seven hours, the greater portion of the time being taken up in interpreting, sentence by sentence, the speeches of each man in turn.

During the whole time we were engaged in " Council " the pipe was passed from mouth to mouth, each man taking a few whiffs and then handing it to his neighbour. It was a black stone pipe which Mis-tick-oos had received as a present from a chief of the Blackfeet at the Eagle Hills a few weeks before. When the pipe came round to me I usually replenished it, and taking a box of " vestas " from my pocket, lit it with a match. This operation was observed with a subdued curiosity, each Indian watching me without moving his head, turning only his eyes in the direction of the pipe. No outward sign of wonder or curiosity escaped them during the " talk."

On one occasion the pipe was out when passed

to the Indian sitting next to me; without turning his head he gently touched my arm, imitated the action of lighting the match by friction against the bottom of the box, and pointed with one finger to the pipe. They generally sat with their eyes fixed on the ground when one of them was speaking, giving every outward sign of respectful attention, and occasionally expressing their approval by a low gurgling sound. When the talk was over, I went with Mis-tick-oos to his tent; he then asked me to produce the match-box, and show its wonders to his four wives. One of them was evidently sceptical, and did not think it was "real fire" until she had ignited some chips of wood from the lighted match I presented to her. I gave a bundle to Mis-tick-oos, who wrapped them carefully in a piece of deerskin, and said he should keep them safely: they were "good medicine."

At noon on the 30th I bade farewell to Mis-tick-oos, and joining the carts, we wended our way by the side of "the River that Turns," occupying the continuation of the Qu'Appelle Valley, to the South Branch of the Saskatchewan. Now and then a fine buffalo bull would appear at the brow of the hill forming the boundary of the prairie, gaze at us for a few minutes and gallop off. The buffalo were crossing the South Branch a few miles below us in great numbers, and at night, by putting the ear to the ground, we could hear them bellowing. Towards evening we all arrived at the South Branch, built a fire, gummed the canoe, which had been sadly damaged by

a journey of seven hundred miles across the prairies, and hastened to make a distribution of the supplies for a canoe voyage down that splendid river.

EXPLORING THE WESTERN COAST IN A YACHT

CAPTAIN C. E. BARRETT-LENNARD, author of the following narrative, spent two years on the Pacific Coast of the North American continent, and cruised in his yacht round the island of Vancouver. He thus enjoyed unusual opportunities of becoming acquainted with the general physical character of the country, and also with the habits and customs of the local Indian tribes. He describes things as they existed in 1861, when flourishing townships were springing up in districts which a few years before had been covered with primeval forest.

THE first two days at sea we found the rolling swell left by the late tempestuous weather very troublesome, especially on the second, as the wind entirely failed us. Though by no means anxious to be too near in shore, as, in the event of a south-east wind springing up, we should have had great difficulty in standing clear, we did not bargain to be carried out as far as eighteen or twenty miles, reducing the appearance of land to a mere blue ridge in the distance. This was no doubt caused by the freshets, issuing from the various

arms of the sea in Nootka Sound, and finding an exit in Esperanza Inlet.

As all things must have an end, on the third day we got a nice breeze from the westward, and, as the moon changed, we hoped to have kept it all day. No such luck, however, was in store for us, and towards evening we found ourselves close to Mocuina Point, at the entrance to Nootka Sound. Could I have foreseen the weather that was reserved for us, I should have endeavoured to make the harbour that night. As it came on very dark, however, none of us being very well acquainted with the navigation of these waters, I deemed it more prudent to lay to and await daylight. Scarcely had we turned in, hoping to make ourselves comfortable for the night, when the gradually increasing motion of the vessel, and the rattle and clatter of the cordage, told us unmistakably that the wind was getting up, and sure enough from about one till four a.m. it blew half a gale. The proximity of Escalante Reef to leeward would alone have been sufficient to keep us awake and watchful, if the violent pitching to which we were subjected had not produced this effect. As the sun rose the wind went down, and we found we had drifted considerably out to sea. This must have been caused in great measure by the combined action of the sea and tide, after the wind failed, which was the case about five in the morning, though a tremendous sea was still running.

About nine, a slight breeze springing up, we had some hopes of getting round the point by

midday. The wind, however, proved light, and we drifted to the northward, the tide setting us up in that direction. About one p.m. we were fast approaching the Bajo Reef, a very ugly ledge of rock running out from Nootka Island. After taking turns at the sweeps at intervals, we got a breeze from the southward and westward, and were enabled to make a fair wind of it about nine at night. As a very thick fog came up, we kept her close round the rocks, leading into Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound. We ran her round the point into Friendly Cove just as the fog was at its thickest, and got our anchor down about ten p.m., all on board being very glad to exchange a sea-watch for an anchor-watch. As we could see neither fire nor light of any kind on shore when the fog lifted, we felt sure that the Indians had left their village at Mocuina. Early in the morning we fired our swivel-gun to attract the attention of any Indians who might be cruising about, as we were desirous of ascertaining where the Mowichats, inhabiting this shore of Nootka Sound, were then located.

Proceeding on shore we rambled through the now deserted Indian village, and making our way over the rocks above, we at length reached the shores of the Pacific. Great was our astonishment, on sighting the ocean again, to behold the unwonted spectacle of a sail on the horizon. We were lost in conjecture as to what vessel could be cruising in these waters at this season of the year, nor did our glass, which we soon brought to bear upon her, at all assist us in arriving at anything

like a satisfactory conclusion. We made her out, indeed, to be a two-masted vessel, but were thoroughly mystified by the nondescript character of her rig, and were almost disposed, while laughing at the absurdity of the idea, to set her down as a Chinese junk of the largest size.

While employed in gathering a crop of fresh greens, in the shape of turnip-tops—the wild progeny of some that had been sown years before by the Spaniards—we were recalled to our vessel by two shots, fired from the swivel-gun, the preconcerted signal of the approach of Indians. Hastening on board, we found that our gun of the morning had been heard, and that the Indians had come from some distance up the sound, fully expecting to find us in our present anchorage of Friendly Cove. Getting under way, we managed, by dint of alternately sailing and being towed, to reach the winter quarters of the Mowichats, Cooptee.

Early the next morning, the chief of the Mowichats and his wife came off to pay us a visit. Of course, it was merely a case of renewing a former acquaintance between ourselves and Mocoola, as the chief of the Mowichats is called. Captain Cook, on the occasion of his visit to Nootka Sound, speaks of the chief of this tribe by the same name. After an interchange of mutual civilities, Mocoola and his spouse seemed to find great pleasure in drawing my attention to a couple of gold rings, of which I had formerly made them a present, and which they still displayed on their fingers.

The chief of the Mowichats himself also again condescended to notice my little four-footed companion, a thoroughbred bulldog, of very small size, which I had brought with me from England, and which had greatly taken his fancy on the occasion of my first visit. So anxious, indeed, was he to become possessed of it, that he had proposed to me to exchange it for an animal of his breeding, a vile mongrel of the most worthless description. I unhesitatingly refused to do anything of the sort. At the same time, with a view of consoling him to some extent for the disappointment, I determined to make him a present of some article of clothing, and, on rummaging my wardrobe, found I could best spare a pair of trousers, which I accordingly presented to him, with all due ceremony, hoping he might be induced to regard them as an article of state attire, to be worn on high-days and holidays. In this, however, I was grievously disappointed, as my gift found no favour in his eyes. He declared them to be vain and foolish inventions of the white man for impeding free locomotion, and actually returned them to me as worthless, after having first cut off all the buttons, the only thing about them to which he attached any value.

It is not, however, so much to the chief of the Mowichats himself, as to his herald, or "spouter," that I would direct the reader's attention, and whom I forthwith beg to introduce as a friend, whose acquaintance we all had great pleasure in renewing, and who, we believe, fully recipro-

cated our feelings. Pe Sha Klim, as he called himself, was a thoroughly good-natured and, in his savage fashion, good-hearted fellow. In person he was stalwart and robust, his expression was good-tempered and agreeable, his countenance being lighted up by a frequent smile, displaying a good set of teeth. At times, however, I am bound to confess that I have seen, when engaged in an excited discussion with his fellows, the true fire of the savage flash into his eye, and give animation to his gestures. The title of "Scokum tum-tum Siwash," or "Strong-hearted Savage," which he was much given to insist upon as being one of his special designations, often seemed to me not inaptly to describe him. Being the herald, or "spouter," of the chief of the Mowichats, whose office it is to deliver messages and proclaim orders in the loudest possible tone of voice, supplying the want of a speaking-trumpet by force of lungs, he was of course selected for the strength and quality of those organs. The way in which he would sing out any announcement from the chief was quite startling when heard for the first time, and we have frequently caught the deep tones of his voice, floating over the still waters of the bay, from an almost incredible distance. He was commonly in the habit of shouting his orders to his men on shore, from the deck of our cutter, at a distance of at least five to six hundred yards.

We went through the ceremony of receiving presents from our various Indian acquaintance, a fine black bear skin being sent us from Mocoola,

which, unfortunately, was not dry enough for us to take away. The sub-chief of the Mowichats was a very cross-grained, churlish sort of a fellow, and having on a previous occasion had experience of his disagreeable temper, we kept studiously aloof from him, hoping he would abstain from making us any present, as we should not then be called upon to make any return; for receiving presents from Indians is merely another name for barter, an equivalent in return being in every case expected. There was no help for it, however, as he, in turn, came off in his canoe, and deposited his gift, a land otter, on our decks. Some few hours afterwards we sent him what we deemed a suitable recompense; but being, it would appear, of a different opinion himself, he again came alongside, and, after bitterly reproaching us with our niggardly spirit, to our great amusement walked off with the present he had lately made us, and which was still lying on the deck, keeping, at the same time, what we had given him in return. We were, however, glad to get rid of him even at this price.

Going ashore with our friend Pe Sha Klim, who, be it known to the reader, was the warlike representative of a line of ancestors illustrious for deeds of arms, he invited me to his tent, and displayed a number of arms and trophies that had descended to him as heirlooms, and of which he was not a little proud. Among these, my attention was especially drawn to a tomahawk of great age, which had evidently seen no inconsiderable share of service. The handle was a

massive club of hard wood, carved in the usual manner, into which the hatchet or cutting part, consisting of the point of an old whale harpoon, was inserted. The head of the animal it was carved to represent was decorated with a fringe or mane of human hair, taken from the heads of the different foemen who had bitten the dust before it, and in which I could plainly distinguish hair of different colours. Pe Sha Klim expressed a confident opinion that the result of his prowess in battle would be to add very considerably to the length of the mane. I made various offers to induce the Mowichat warrior to part with this trophy of savage life, on this and subsequent occasions, but without success.

His hut was decorated with arms of various descriptions, old bows and arrows, knives made of files stolen from the Hudson's Bay Company, and an old blunderbuss; in addition to these he possessed the usual musket carried by Indians generally.

On the morning of the 25th of November we got under way about half-past five. A fair breeze soon took us out abreast of the Escalante Reef, on passing which, however, the wind failed us. About midday we again fancied we made out something like a sail in the distance, and eventually with the aid of our glass we discovered her to be the same two-masted craft we had already sighted, and our curiosity was once more thoroughly aroused. About half-past one we perceived something coming towards us, which we at first supposed to be a boat, but which turned out to be

a canoe. On coming alongside, her Indian crew informed us that the vessel whose singular appearance had caused so much interest and speculation on board our cutter was a large craft, water-logged and in other respects a perfect wreck, and having King George's (English) men on board, who were short of food and water. The additional stimulus of a desire to aid our fellow countrymen in distress being now added to the curiosity we had from the first felt to know what vessel she could be, we resolved to try to board her.

A wind from the south-east springing up, we beat our vessel in a vain endeavour to approach her until near eight in the evening, when we found we could get no nearer. A canoe now put off from her, and we sent back all the food we could spare, being unfortunately very short ourselves just now, together with a good stock of fresh water, and also a note, saying we would try to make her in the morning. This we endeavoured for a long time to do, until, being at length again baffled, we were obliged to return to Friendly Cove about ten a.m.

During the morning, however, as we were going on shore to try to get some geese, we saw the ship herself coming up the sound. We fired our gun and displayed a red ensign from a commanding point of rock to attract the attention of those on board her. Failing to do so, we got under way, and after a troublesome beat, the wind coming down in tremendous puffs, we at length got so near her that two of our number put off in a small boat to go on board. She proved to

be the *Florentia*, of Callao, bound for that port from Victoria, with a cargo of timber. The crew turned out to be Americans, not Englishmen, it being a ruse on their part to describe themselves as "King George's men" to the Indians, in order to secure their good services, as had the latter been aware that they were "Boston men,"—the name by which all Americans of the United States are indiscriminately known among Indians—they would have been more likely to meet with ill-treatment than assistance, such is the hatred borne by the Indian races to the "Boston men."

The story of their shipwreck was one of those touching narratives of suffering, toil and danger that so often form a terrible yet thrilling episode in the lives of those whose destiny is cast upon the mighty waters.

She had capsized at sea in a gale of wind fifty miles south of Cape Flattery, just that day fortnight, it being now the 26th of November. The captain, supercargo, and a Dr. Baillie of Victoria, a passenger, perished by drowning. The remainder of the crew managed to cling to the wreck, owing their preservation from certain destruction solely to the fact of her being timber-laden, and therefore incapable of sinking. After a time she righted, but was, of course, completely water-logged, and sunk to the water's edge, every swell sweeping her deck.

The unhappy survivors found themselves, therefore, in possession of existence truly, but under circumstances which, in the eyes of most men, would seem to render it hardly endurable.

Drenched to the skin, almost without food, entirely without fresh water, without warmth, shelter, or comfort of any kind, in a water-logged and nigh unmanageable craft, on a part of the ocean where there was barely the remotest chance of their attracting the attention of any vessel, their case did, indeed, seem desperate. At first it appeared as if death must inevitably, in a few days, put an end to their sufferings. That they survived to tell the story of their adventures is a signal proof that men should never lose heart, even when things seem at their worst, but trusting in Providence, resolutely, and at once, strive to set them right again. *Nil desperandum* is pre-eminently the motto of the seaman.

By dint of labour and perseverance, they contrived, when the weather moderated, to knock up a rude shed of loose planks on the most elevated portion of the wreck, which afforded them a tolerable shelter. Without being a smoker myself, the narrative of the crew of the *Florentia* has convinced me that the use of tobacco, under certain circumstances, may not be without its advantages, as they undoubtedly owed the preservation of their existence to the fact of one of their number having in his pocket a tin, and therefore water-proof, box of lucifer matches, which he used for lighting his pipe. They were thus enabled to kindle a fire; and another of the crew, who deserves infinite credit for his ingenuity and mechanical skill, managed, with the aid of a few feet of lead pipe, to construct an apparatus for distilling fresh water from the salt sea-water.

The quantity thus provided was but small, it is true; yet, by careful husbanding, it proved sufficient for their wants; at all events, it enabled them to preserve life.

The *Florentia* must originally have been a very handsome craft, a brig of about 400 tons. As we saw her she was, of course, a complete wreck, sunk to the water's edge; her deck cabin was gone—everything, in fact, had been swept away; her lower masts and the mere stump of her bowsprit alone remained standing. The crew had extemporized a foresail out of the foretopsail, and this, with a staysail, was all the canvas she carried. Some remnants of other sails, hanging from the shrouds, were beaten by the elements into mere rags, resembling wet tow. The crew were huddled together in the shed they had erected for themselves, and in which they had contrived constantly to keep their fire burning. Being very short of food, they were very grateful, poor fellows, for the trifling assistance we were able to afford them, especially for a bag of potatoes we had sent on board the day before.

From the account given of us by the Esquihat Indians, who had been our messengers on that occasion, they expected to find our vessel one of the launches of a man-of-war. Being accustomed to wear the jacket of the Thames Yacht Club, with its brass buttons, to which I sometimes added, when it was blowing, on account of its weight, an old cavalry cap, with its gold band, I always passed in this nondescript costume for a man-of-war Tyhee, or officer, among the Indians

of these coasts. The blue ensign of the Thames Yacht Club, which we flew at the peak, no doubt tended to confirm them in this impression, as it differed entirely from anything they had seen in use among trading vessels.

We ran that night into Resolution Cove—thus named by Captain Cook, after his own ship, if I remember right—promising to come and see the crew of the *Florentia* again next day, if they were unable to follow us. During the night it blew hard, and we felt no small anxiety for the fate of our friends on the *Florentia.* On searching for her the next morning we could discover no traces of her in any direction; I therefore set out in our little boat, accompanied by a friend and one other hand, to try to find her. I always used the paddle in preference to the oar in these waters, having by this time become thoroughly expert in handling it; I could thus see where we were going, and steer our craft accordingly. We paddled round the island, between which and the mainland the channel known as Zuciarte Arm runs. Here we found it very hard work against the tide. It rained all day. We could see nothing of the ship, and only sighted one canoe.

On rounding the island opposite Friendly Cove, we met a tremendous sea rolling in from the Pacific, much more than was agreeable in so small a boat. She was, happily, very buoyant; but we more than once began to think we should never see our yacht again, and it soon became apparent that we were in truth paddling for very life. The entrance to Nootka Sound, as I have

before mentioned, is full of rocky islets, on which the sea was now breaking with terrific violence. We had hard work to keep her clear of them; every now and then a gust would come down on us with a fury that made us bow to the gunwale, lest it should capsize us; but our little boat rode the waves gallantly, and at length, after working as men work when their lives are at stake, we succeeded in reaching the *Templar* once more.

Early the next day Pe Sha Klim, and seven other Mowichats, came alongside to inquire after the *Florentia*, and shortly after a canoe of Clayoquot Indians arrived on the same errand. This solicitude and anxiety respecting the fate of the vessel displayed by the Indians, arose no doubt from the fact that the moment a vessel goes on shore they regard her as their legitimate spoil; as a special gift of Providence, in fact, to the poor Indian. At the same time we must do them the justice to say that they are generally willing to lend all the assistance in their power to a vessel in distress, so long as she holds to her anchors. Some years ago a ship of the Hudson's Bay Company, having been driven ashore in Neah Bay, was, in spite of the captain's most strenuous efforts to prevent it, stripped of her copper and other valuables, and then burnt.

The next morning a canoe brought us a letter from on board the *Florentia*, informing us that she was safely at anchor, and telling us where to find her. We at once set sail, making the Indians come on board, and taking their canoe in tow. Soon after we cleared the point round

which Resolution Cove is situated, we sighted the masts of the ship. We made for her, but the wind failing and the tide running down, we put into a small cove in which the Indians reported there was good anchorage. We were about to let go the anchor, when, seeing the rocks very distinctly under the water, we hesitated, and ultimately dropped it in another spot. It was lucky we did so, as these rocks were left quite dry at low water, the tide having fallen two and a quarter fathoms since we entered the cove.

On going on board the *Florentia* we found her crew very much more comfortable; they had roofed in the house on deck, and were endeavouring to pump her dry with the assistance of the Indians. They informed us that she had drifted during the night, but that her anchors had at length brought her up in that spot.

The next day we paid a visit to the "Bocca del Inferno," thus named by the Spaniards in consequence of the violence with which the tide ebbs and flows through its narrow rocky entrance. When once inside, we found ourselves in a landlocked basin of considerable extent.

One morning, while still at anchor, being detained by the wind, which continued obstinately in the south-east, Pe Sha Klim came alongside, and we were not long in remarking from his manner that there was something amiss. On coming on deck he gave us a flurried and excited account of the bad treatment his people were subjected to by the white men on board the ship—how they had been struck and even kicked by them while

working at the pumps, and saying that there would be a disturbance if this was not put a stop to. He requested me to accompany him back to the ship, and expostulate with the white men, saying, that if I would explain to them the proper line of conduct to pursue towards the Indians, he would explain to his own people the steps that had been taken on their behalf. This I willingly consented to do, feeling somewhat indignant that the good name of Englishmen should be brought into disrepute by these Yankees, who had borrowed it for their own convenience and security.

On going on board I represented to them the impropriety and, indeed, the impolicy of their conduct, as by thus recklessly causing ill-blood between themselves and the Indians, they ran the risk of drawing down upon themselves the vengeance of the whole tribe. Pe Sha Klim also used his best endeavours to soothe the irritated feelings of his own people, and we left, after having received the assurance of the crew of the *Florentia* that the Indians should be better treated in future. Having thus restored mutual good understanding between the white men and the redskins, I made arrangements for the Indians to supply the former with potatoes, dried salmon, and rock-cod, for which they were to receive payment in tobacco, which, although much damaged by sea-water, was still acceptable.

Having had so much to say about Pe Sha Klim himself, I feel it would be ungallant to take leave of him without some notice of his spouse, who

as wife of the "spouter" was a person of some importance in the tribe. Mrs. Pe Sha Klim was, undoubtedly, after her peculiar style, a showy dresser, and I should imagine led the fashion among the Mowichat belles. Her wardrobe was extensive and varied, and the really tasteful manner in which the gaily-coloured blankets she wore were ornamented and embroidered, testified to her skill with the needle. Strips of crimson cloth, not inartistically disposed on a ground of blue, and ornamented with an infinite number of small pearl buttons, formed, as may be supposed, a very gorgeous article of apparel. The manner in which she made use of the vermilion paint, so extensively patronized by all Indians, formed a striking contrast to that of other women. She applied it sparingly, and really made it produce the effect of rouge; whereas all the other women we saw laid it on in a thick bright dab, and the wife of Mocoola himself had not sufficient taste to lead her to apply it in any other fashion.

Before leaving Nootka we notified to Pe Sha Klim that we wished to leave a letter for any man-of-war or other vessel that might put into Friendly Cove. With a view of attracting the attention of any such visitor, we painted the word "Notice" in large letters on the transverse beam of an Indian hut, suspending the letter itself underneath in a waterproof bag—Pe Sha Klim enjoining on all his followers not to touch it. Our object in doing this was to give information to any vessel that might arrive in search of the *Florentia*, where she was to be found. Such a

vessel might, in fact, be expected at any moment, as I forgot to mention that a portion of the crew of the *Florentia* had left in an Esquihat canoe for Victoria the day before we first sighted her, conveying intelligence of her wreck.

One interesting fact in connection with the Indians inhabiting the shores of Nootka Sound I must mention before taking leave of them.

Endeavouring one day to elicit all the information we could from them, we found that they preserved a tradition of the visit of white men in a King George's ship many years ago. From the description they gave, very little doubt was left in my mind that it referred to the visit of Captain Cook. They said the ship was in Resolution Cove, and that one of the Indians in getting on board hurt his thigh, the wound being dressed by the surgeon of the ship. An account of this very occurrence will be found in the published narrative of Cook's Voyages.

THROUGH THE TRACKLESS FOREST

In 1863 Viscount Milton, accompanied by Dr. Cheadle, made an expedition through the Hudson Bay Territories into British Columbia, by one of the northern passes of the Rocky Mountains, with the object of discovering the most direct route through British territory to the gold regions of Cariboo. The following passage relates the travellers' adventures in the primeval forest west of the Rocky Mountains.

On the 31st of July we left Slaughter Camp in a pouring rain, and plunged into the pathless forest before us. We were at once brought up by the steep face of a hill which came down close to the water's edge. But the steepness of the path was not the greatest difficulty. No one who has not seen a primeval forest, where trees of gigantic size have grown and fallen undisturbed for ages, can form any idea of the collection of timber, or the impenetrable character of such a region.

There were pines and thujas of every size, the patriarch of three hundred feet in height standing alone, or thickly clustering groups of young ones struggling for the vacant place of some prostrate giant. The fallen trees lay piled around, forming barriers often six or eight feet high on every side; trunks of huge cedars, moss grown and decayed, lay half-buried in the ground on which others as mighty had recently fallen; trees still green and living, recently blown down, blocking the view with the walls of earth held in their matted roots; living trunks, dead trunks, rotten trunks; dry, barkless trunks, and trunks moist and green with moss; bare trunks, and trunks with branches—prostrate, reclining, horizontal, propped up at different angles; timber of every size in every stage of growth and decay, in every possible position, entangled in every possible combination. The swampy ground was densely covered with American dogwood, and elsewhere with thickets of the azalea, a tough-stemmed trailer, with leaves as large as those of the rhubarb plant, and growing

in many places as high as our shoulders. Both stem and leaves are covered with sharp spines, which pierced our clothes as we forced our way through the tangled growth, and made the legs and hands of the pioneers scarlet from the inflammation of myriads of punctures.

The Assiniboine went first with the axe, his wife went after him leading a horse, and the rest of the party followed, driving two or three horses apiece in single file. Mr. O'B. had by this time been trained to take charge of one pack-animal, which he managed very well under favourable conditions. But although it had been hard enough to keep our caravan in order when there was a track to follow, it was ten times more difficult and troublesome now. As long as each horse could see the one in front of him, he followed with tolerable fidelity; but wherever any little delay occurred, and the leading horses disappeared amongst the trees and underwood, the rest turned aside in different directions. Then followed a rush and scramble after them, our efforts to bring them back often only causing them to plunge into a bog or entangle themselves against piles of logs.

When involved in any predicament of this kind, the miserable animals remained stupidly passive, for they had become so spiritless and worn out, and so injured about the legs by falling against the timber and rocks, that they would make no effort to help themselves, except under the stimulus of repeated blows. These accidents, occurring a dozen times a day, caused the labour

to fall very heavily; for we were so short-handed, that each man could obtain little assistance from the rest, and was obliged to get out of his difficulties as well as he could, unaided. When this was accomplished, often only to be effected by cutting off the packs, most of the party had gone he knew not whither, and the other horses in his charge had disappeared. These had to be sought up, and a careful cast made to regain the faint trail left by the party in advance. Another similar misfortune would often occur before he joined his companions, and the same exertions again be necessary. The work was vexatious and wearisome in the extreme, and we found our stock of philosophy quite unequal to the occasion.

With a view of economizing our provisions and making more rapid progress, we reduced our meals to breakfast and supper, resting only a short time at midday to allow the horses to feed, but not unpacking them. Our fare was what the half-breeds call "rubaboo," which we made by boiling a piece of pemmican the size of one's fist in a large quantity of water thickened with a single handful of flour. The latter commodity had now become very valuable, and was used in this way only, three or four pounds being all we had left. Occasionally we were lucky enough to kill a partridge or skunk, and this formed a welcome addition to the "rubaboo." The mess was equally divided, and two ordinary platefuls formed the portion of each individual. Under these trying circumstances we had the advantage of Mr. O'B.'s advice, which he did not fail to

offer at every opportunity. When we stopped for the night, and the work of unloading the horses and preparing camp was over, he would emerge from some quiet retreat fresh from the solace of Paley,[1] and deliver his opinions on the prospects of the journey and his views on the course to be pursued.

"Now, my lord; now, Doctor," he would say, "I don't think that we have gone on nearly so well to-day as we might have done. I don't think our route was well chosen. We may have done fifteen or twenty miles" (we had probably accomplished three or four), "but that's not at all satisfactory. 'Festina lente' was wisely said by the great lyrist; but he was never lost in a forest, you see. Now, what I think ought to be done is this: the Doctor and the Assiniboine are strong, vigorous fellows; let them go five or six miles ahead and investigate the country, and then we shall travel much more easily to-morrow." The two "vigorous fellows" were, however, generally too much jaded by hard work during he day to adopt his advice, and declined the proposal.

The valley continued to run nearly due south, and ranges of mountains separated only by the narrowest ravines came down from the north-east and north-west up to it on each side at an angle of 45°. These proved serious obstacles to our progress, rising about perpendicularly from the water's edge.

[1] The famous Archdeacon of Carlisle (1743–1805), whose book on the *Evidences of Christianity*, published in 1794, is a well-known text-book.

On the 1st of August we came in sight of a fine snowy mountain which appeared to block up the valley ahead, and we hoped this might be the second of two described to us as landmarks by an old woman at The Cache, which she stated was not far from Fort Kamloops. To this Milton gave the name of Mount Cheadle, in return for the compliment previously paid him by his companion. The river also became wider and less rapid, and at one point divided into several channels, flowing round low wooded islands. Only one snowy mountain could be seen to the right, to which we gave the name of Mount St. Anne; but the road was as encumbered as ever.

After cutting a path for two days, the Assiniboine was almost disabled by thorns in his hands and legs, and as we had not accomplished more than two or three miles each day, we attempted to escape out of the narrow valley in which we were confined, in the hope of finding clearer ground above. But the mountain sides were too steep; the horses rolled down one after another, crashing amongst the fallen timber; and we were compelled to imitate the example of the King of France, and come down again. On the 3rd we reached a marsh about 300 yards in length, scantily covered with timber, the first open space we had met with for ten days; and the change from the deep gloom of the forest to the bright sunlight made our eyes blink indeed, but produced a most cheering effect on our spirits. The horses here found plenty of pasture, although of poor quality—a great boon to them after their long

course of twigs and mare's tail. This was altogether a brighter day than common, for we met with several patches of raspberries, as large as English garden-fruit, and two species of bilberry, the size of sloes, growing on bushes two feet high. The woods were garnished with large fern, like the English male fern, a tall and slender bracken, and quantities of the oak and beech fern. We had the luck, too, to kill four partridges for supper, and although the day was showery, and we were completely soaked in pushing through the underwood, we felt rather jollier that night than we had done since the trail ended.

Before evening we came to a rocky rapid stream from the north-west. We all mounted our horses to traverse it except Mr. O'B., who had never become reconciled to riding since his dire experience along the Fraser. What was to be done? Mr. O'B. obstinately persisted that he dare not venture on horseback, and the river was too deep and rapid to be safely forded on foot. After some useless discussion with him, we plunged our horses in, the Assiniboine and his family having crossed already; but before Cheadle's horse had left the bank a yard, Mr. O'B. rushed madly after, dashed in, and grasping the flowing tail of Bucephalus with both hands, was towed over triumphantly. After this great success, his anxiety about prospective rivers was greatly alleviated.

After leaving the little marsh above mentioned we were again buried in the densest forest, without any opening whatever, for several days, and worked

away in the old routine of cutting through timber, driving perverse horses and extricating them from difficulties, and subsisting on our scanty mess of "rubaboo." Tracks of bears were numerous, and we saw signs of beaver on all the streams, but our advance was necessarily so noisy that we had small chance of seeing game, and we could not afford to rest a day or two for the purpose of hunting.

On the 5th the Assiniboine's single hand became so swollen and painful from the injuries caused by the thorns of the azalea, that he was unable to handle an axe, and the task of clearing a path devolved upon Cheadle. This misfortune retarded us greatly, for he was, of course, not so expert a pioneer as the Assiniboine, and his assistance could ill be spared by the horse drivers, who were now reduced to Milton and the boy—with Mr. O'B., who began to afford more active assistance than he had done hitherto. During this day the valley appeared to open out widely a few miles ahead, and we reached a rounded hill, from which we could see some distance to the south. But we were bitterly disappointed; vast woods were still before us without a sign of open country, and in the distance the hills closed in most ominously. At the foot of this eminence we crossed a rapid stream, flowing into the main river by two channels some twenty yards in width, which Mr. O'B. crossed with great success by his improved method.

The following day we struggled on from morning to night without stopping, through difficulties greater than ever; but on the 7th of August, the

eighth day of our being lost in the forest, we crossed another stream, about thirty yards wide, clear and shallow, and evidently not fed by mountain snows. We named it Elsecar River. Soon after we were greatly encouraged by entering upon a tolerably level space, about a square mile in extent, the confluence of five narrow valleys. Part of this was timbered, some of it burnt, and the rest marshy meadow, with a few stunted trees here and there. In the burnt portion we found large quantities of small bilberries, not yet ripe, on which we stayed and dined, and then forced our way to the marshy open, where we encamped.

The hopes of speedy escape which had sprung up when we first observed the retreat of the hills to the west, were quickly dispelled. The flat proved to be a mere oasis in the mountains, surrounded by steep, pine-clad hills, from which the narrow gorges between the different ranges afforded the only means of egress. On this evening we ate our last morsel of pemmican, and the only food we had left was about a quart of flour. The distance from Tête Jaune Cache to Kamloops was, according to our man, about two hundred miles; but this estimate might be very erroneous, the exact latitude of either being probably unknown when our map was made. Calculating that we had travelled ten miles a day, or seventy miles when the road ended, and had done three miles a day, or thirty altogether, since we began to cut our way, we had still one hundred miles to travel before reaching the Fort. Nearly the

whole of this distance might be country similar to what we had already encountered. At any rate, the prospect around gave us no hope of speedy change for the better.

We progressed so slowly, at the best only five or six miles a day—often not one—that it must take us many days yet to get in. There seemed no chance of any assistance, for since leaving Slaughter Camp we had seen no sign that man had ever before visited this dismal region. No axe mark on a tree, no "blaze" or broken twig, no remains of an old camp fire had greeted our eyes. Animal life was scarce, and the solemn stillness, unbroken by note of bird or sound of living creature, and the deep gloom of the woods, increased the sense of solitude. We had become so worn out and emaciated by the hard work and insufficient food of the last ten days, that it was clear enough we could not hold out much longer.

We held a council of war after our last meal was ended, and Mr. O'B. laid down his one-eyed spectacles and his Paley, to suggest that we should immediately kill "Blackie," as he affectionately denominated the little black horse he usually took charge of on the way. The Assiniboine and Cheadle proposed to starve a few days longer, in the hope of something turning up. Against this Mr. O'B. entered a solemn protest, and eventually Milton's proposal was agreed to. This was that the Assiniboine should spend the next day in hunting; if he were successful, we were relieved; and if not, the "Petit Noir"[1] must die.

[1] *i.e.* "Blackie."

There seemed some chance for his life, for the Assiniboine had caught sight of a bear during the day, and the dog had chased another. Their tracks were tolerably numerous, and the Assiniboine we knew to be the most expert hunter of the Saskatchewan.

Early next day the Assiniboine set out on his hunt; Cheadle and the boy went to a small lake ahead to try to get a shot at some geese which had flown over the day before; Milton gathered bilberries; and Mr. O'B. studied; whilst the women essayed to patch together shreds of moccasins. The party was not a lively one, for there had been no breakfast that morning. Mr. O'B. wearied of his Paley, declared that he was beginning to have painful doubts concerning his faith, and would read no more. He did not keep his resolution, however, but resumed his reading the same evening, and brought out his book afterwards at every resting-place with the same regularity as ever. In the afternoon Cheadle and the boy returned empty-handed. The Assiniboine arrived about the same time, and producing a marten, threw it down, saying dryly, "J'ai trouvé rien que cela et un homme—un mort."[1] He directed us where to find the dead body, which was only a few hundred yards from camp, and we set off with the boy to have a look at the ominous spectacle.

After a long search, we discovered it at the foot of a large pine. The corpse was in a sitting posture, with the legs crossed and the arms

[1] "I have found nothing but that and a dead man."

clasped over the knees, bending forward over the ashes of a miserable fire of small sticks. The figure was headless, and the skin, brown and shrivelled, was stretched like parchment tightly over the bony framework. The clothes, consisting of woollen shirt and leggings, with a tattered blanket, still hung around the shrunken form. Near the body were a small axe, fire-bag, large tin kettle, and two baskets made of birch-bark. In the bag were flint, steel and tinder, an old knife, and a single charge of shot carefully tied up in a piece of rag. One of the baskets contained a fishing-line of cedar bark, not yet finished, and two curious hooks, made of a piece of stick and a pointed wire; the other, a few wild onions, still green and growing. He was probably a Rocky Mountain Shushwap, who had been, like ourselves, endeavouring to reach Kamloops, perhaps in quest of a wife. He had evidently intended to subsist by fishing, but before his tackle was completed, weakness—perchance illness—overtook him; he made a small fire, squatted down before it, and died there.

But where was his head? We searched diligently everywhere, but could find no traces of it. If it had fallen off we should have found it lying near, for an animal which had dared to abstract that would have returned to attack the body. It could not have been removed by violence, as the undisturbed position of the trunk bore witness. We could not solve the problem, and left him as we found him, taking only his little axe for our necessities, and the steel, fishing-line and hooks

as mementoes of the strange event. We walked back to the camp silent and full of thought.

Every one took a rather gloomy view when we discussed our prospects that evening, and "Blackie" was unanimously condemned to die at daybreak. The marten, made into a "rubaboo," with some bilberries, formed our only supper that evening, the nauseous mess being distasteful even to our ravenous appetites.

Early on the 9th of August "Blackie" was led out to execution, but although all were agreed as to the necessity of the step, every one felt compunction at putting to death an animal which had been our companion through so many difficulties. The Assiniboine, however, at last seized his gun and dispatched him with a ball behind the ear. In a few minutes steaks were roasting at the fire, and all hands were at work cutting up the meat into thin flakes for jerking. All day long we feasted to repletion on the portions we could not carry with us, whilst the rest was drying over a large fire; for although doubts had been expressed beforehand as to whether it would prove palatable, and Milton declared it tasted of the stable, none showed any deficiency of appetite. The short intervals between eating we filled up by mending our ragged clothes and moccasins, by this time barely hanging together.

Before turning into our blankets we crowned the enjoyment of the feast by one last smoke. We had not had tobacco for weeks, but now obtained the flavour of it by pounding up one or two black and well-seasoned clays, and mixing

the dust with "kinnikinnick."[1] But this was killing the goose with the golden egg, and as pure "kinnikinnick" did not satisfy the craving, we laid our pipes by for a happier day. We had tea, too, not indeed the dark decoction of black Chinese indulged in by unthrifty bachelors, or the greenish beverage affected by careful, mature spinsters, but the "tea muskeg" used by the Indians. This is made from the leaves and flowers of a small white azalea which we found in considerable quantities growing in the boggy ground near our camp. The decoction is really a good substitute for tea, and we became very fond of it. The taste is like ordinary black tea with a dash of senna in it.

By noon on the following day the meat was dry. There was but little of it, not more than thirty or forty pounds, for the horse was small and miserably lean, and we resolved to restrict ourselves still to a small "rubaboo" twice a day. As we had now two axes, and the Assiniboine's hand was nearly well, he and Cheadle both went ahead to clear the way, and we again entered the forest, still following the Thompson Valley. The same difficulties met us as before, the same mishaps occurred, and the horses proved as perverse and obstinate as ever.

The weather was fine and exceedingly hot, and the second evening after leaving "Black Horse Camp"—as we named the scene of "Blackie's" fate—the Assiniboine, worn out by the continual toil, became thoroughly disheartened, protesting

[1] Indian substitute for tobacco, made of leaves and bark.

it was perfectly impossible to get through such a country, and useless to attempt it. We anxiously discussed the question, as on every evening, of how many miles we had come that day, and whether it was possible that the river we had struck might not be the Thompson at all, but some unknown stream which might lead us into inextricable difficulties. We had got out our imperfect map, and showed the Assiniboine that according to that the river ran due south through a narrow valley shut in by mountains up to the very fort, in exact correspondence, so far, with the stream along the banks of which we were making our way. This encouraged him a little, and he worked away next day with his usual untiring perseverance. We found our diet of dried horse-meat, and that in exceedingly small quantity—for we still kept ourselves on half-rations—very insufficient, and we were frightfully hungry and faint all day long. We rarely killed more than two partridges in the day, and sometimes, though not often, a skunk or a marten, and these were but little amongst six people.

Cheadle at this time discovered three fish-hooks amongst the wreck of our property, and made some night-lines which he set, baited with horse-flesh. These produced three white trout the first night, one of which weighed at least a couple of pounds; but, although they were diligently set every night afterwards, we never had such luck again, occasionally killing a fish, but not a dozen in all during the rest of the journey.

The aspect of the country now changed, and

on the 12th of August we entered a region rocky and barren, where the timber was of smaller size, but grew much more thickly, and the surface of the ground was covered only by moss and a few small lilies. The ravine suddenly narrowed, its sides became precipitous, and the river rushed over a bed of huge boulders, a roaring mighty rapid. The fallen timber lay as thick and entangled as ever, and we had literally to force our way by inches. We met with a godsend, however, in the way of provisions, shooting a porcupine which had been "treed" by the dog Papillon. We found it delicious, although rather strong flavoured, a thick layer of fat under the skin being almost equal to that of a turtle. The road at this point became so impracticable from the steep, encumbered hillsides which came down to the water's edge, that we were frequently obliged to pull up and wait for hours whilst the Assiniboine found a way by which it was possible to pass. We expected every day to come to some barrier which would completely prevent our farther advance. What course could we take then? Take to a raft, or abandon our horses and climb past on foot? We feared the alternative, yet were unwilling to confess the probable extremity. We had come too far to turn back, even if we had been willing to retreat.

After three days' travelling along the banks of this rapid, to which we gave the name of Murchison's Rapids, never out of hearing of its continual roar (offensive to the ears of Mr. O'B.), the valley became narrower still, and we were

brought to a standstill by a precipice before us. We were shut in on one side by the river, and on the other by hills so steep and embarrassed that it seemed hopeless to attempt to scale them, for we had tried that before, and miserably failed. There was nothing for it but to camp at once and seek a way by which to pass the barrier. The horses had not tasted grass since leaving the marsh, four days ago, and for the last three had fed upon the moss and lilies growing amongst the rocks. They wandered to and fro all the night, walking in and out between us, and stepping over us as we lay on the ground. Mr. O'B., too, passed a restless night in consequence, and aroused us continually by jumping up and whacking them with his great stick. The poor animals grubbed up the moss from the rocks, and everything green within their reach had disappeared by morning.

The indefatigable Assiniboine started at day-break to search for a path, whilst the rest of us packed the horses and awaited his return. He came back in an hour or two with the news that the country ahead grew more and more difficult, but that we could, with care, lead the horses past the present opposing bluff. This relieved us from the fear that we might be compelled to abandon our horses here, and have to make our way on foot. We had to mount the hillside by a zigzag, over loose moss-grown rocks, leading the horses past one by one. The accidents which occurred, though perhaps not so numerous as on some occasions, were more extraordinary, and will serve to illustrate what occurred daily. All

the horses had safely passed the dangerous precipice except one which Cheadle was leading, and Bucephalus, in charge of Mr. O'B., who brought up the rear.

The length of the zigzag was about a quarter of a mile, and when the former had got nearly over, he turned to look for those behind him. They were not to be seen. Cheadle, therefore, left his horse, and going back to see what had happened, met Mr. O'B. climbing hastily up the mountain-side, but minus Bucephalus. "Where's the horse?" said Cheadle. "Oh," said Mr. O'B., "he's gone, killed, tumbled over a precipice. He slipped and fell over, you know, Doctor, and I have not seen him since. It's not the slightest use going back, I assure you, to look for him, for he's comminuted—smashed to atoms — dashed to a thousand pieces! It's a dreadful thing, isn't it?" Cheadle, however, sternly insisted that Mr. O'B. should accompany him back to the scene of the accident, and the latter reluctantly followed.

The place where the horse had slipped and struggled was easily found, for the bark torn off the recumbent trunks marked the course of his headlong descent. The place from which he fell was about a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty feet above the river, and the last thirty or forty feet of this a perpendicular face of rock. Cheadle crept down and looked over the edge, and on a little flat space below saw Bucephalus, astride of a large tree, lengthwise. The tree was propped up by others horizontally

at such a height that the animal's legs hung down on each side without touching the ground. The two then descended, expecting to find him mortally injured, but, to their astonishment, he appeared quite comfortable in his novel position. The packs were taken off, and Cheadle by a vigorous lift (Mr. O'B. declining the suggestion that he should haul at the tail, on the ground of the dangerous nature of the service) rolled the horse from his perch. He was uninjured, and Mr. O'B. led him past the most dangerous part, whilst his companion toiled after, carrying the packs up the brow to safer ground.

After the horse had been reloaded, the two pursued their way, but before many yards were passed, the other horse slipped and rolled down the hill. He luckily brought up against some trees, before reaching the bottom; but again the pack had to be cut off, again carried up, and the horse hauled on to his legs and led up the steep. Soon after they joined the rest, another horse, refusing to jump some timber in the path, bolted aside and fell into a regular pit, formed by fallen trees and rocks; every effort to extricate him was useless. We were alone, for the rest of the party had gone on, and after trying in vain for nearly an hour, Milton ran ahead, caught them up, and brought back the axe. It was another hour's work to cut him out and repack, but we found our companions not far before us, and indeed there was little danger of their leaving us any great distance behind.

The river still continued a grand rapid, and

a short distance more brought us to a place where the ravine suddenly narrowed to about fifty feet, with high straight-cut rocks on either side, through which, for about a hundred yards almost at the right angle, and down a swift descent, the waters raged so frightfully about huge rocks standing out in the stream, that it was instantly named by the Assiniboine the "Porte d'Enfer."[1] No raft or canoe could have lived there for a moment, and we thankfully congratulated ourselves that we had decided to make our way by land.

We camped for the night close to where we had started in the morning, and the Assiniboine, having cut his foot to the bone on the sharp rocks, amongst which we walked nearly barefoot, was completely disabled. That night he was thoroughly disheartened, declared the river we were following was not the Thompson at all, and we must make up our minds to perish miserably. Mr. O'B. of course heartily concurred, and it required all our powers of persuasion, and an explanation by the map, to restore hope.

Another day similar to the last brought us to the end of the rapid. The woman had bravely taken her husband's place ahead with an axe, and worked away like a man. The last of the dried horse-flesh, boiled with the scrapings of the flour-bag, formed our supper. We had only three charges of powder left, and this we kept for special emergency. The Assiniboine, however, and his son had succeeded in "nobbling" a brace of partridges, knocking the young birds out of

[1] Hell-gate.

the trees with short sticks, missiles they used with great dexterity. We had been cheered during the day by observing the first traces of man, except the dead body of the Indian, we had seen for sixteen days. These were old stumps of trees, which bore marks of an axe, though now decayed and mossed over.

The next day, however, was cold and wet, and we felt wretched enough as we forced our way for hours through a beaver swamp, where the bracken grew higher than our heads, and tangled willows of great size required cutting away at every step. Slimy, stagnant pools, treacherous and deep, continually forced us to turn aside. At last a stream, whose banks were densely clothed with underwood, barred the path, and we could not find a practicable ford. Drenched to the skin, shivering, miserable, having had no food since the previous evening, we felt almost inclined to give way to despair, for we seemed to have gained nothing by our labours. There was no sign of the end.

Our journey had now lasted nearly three months; for five weeks we had not seen the smallest evidence of man's presence at any time in the wild forest in which we were buried.

After several futile attempts to cross the stream, the Assiniboine sat down with his wife and son, and refused to go any farther. We did not attempt to argue the matter, but, merely remarking that we did not intend to give in without another struggle, took the axes, and renewed the search for a crossing-place. Having at length

discovered a shallow place and cut a path to it, we led the horses into the water, but the mud was so soft and deep, and the banks so beset with slippery logs, that they could not climb up, and rolled back into the water. At this juncture the Assiniboine, fairly put to shame, came to our assistance, and we unpacked the animals and hauled them out. We were quite benumbed by standing so long up to our waists in the ice-cold water, and after we had got the horses across, as the rain still poured down, we camped on a little mound in the midst of the dismal swamp. There was no chance of finding any other provision, and we therefore led out another horse and shot him at once. Another day was occupied in drying the meat and in mending our tattered garments as before.

We discussed our prospects, and various plans were proposed. It was certain that the horses, already mere skeletons, could not hold out many days longer, unless they found proper pasturage. For a long time past, indeed, we had expected some of them to lie down and die in their tracks. Their bodies mere frames of bone covered with skin, their flanks hollow, their backs raw, their legs battered, swollen, and bleeding—a band for the knackers' yards—they were painful to look upon.

The project of rafting was renewed, for the river now flowed with a tempting tranquillity; but the recollection of the Grand Rapid and Porte d'Enfer decided us against it, and doubtless we thus escaped great disaster, for we afterwards met with several dangerous rapids in the river

below. We agreed to stick to our horses as long as they could travel, then kill some for provisions, and make for the fort on foot. The Assiniboine was utterly dispirited, and continued gloomy and morose, dropping from time to time hints of desertion, and reproaching us bitterly with having led him into such desperate straits. He camped apart from us, with his wife and boy, holding frequent and significant consultations with them; and it required all the forbearance we could command, to prevent an open rupture with the man and his family.

On the morning of the 18th, before we started, our ears were greeted by the cry of that bird of ill omen, a crow, to us proclaiming glad tidings, for it was a sure indication of more open country being at hand. Our spirits were raised still more by observing, during the day's journey, signs of man's presence as recent as the preceding spring, —a few branches cut with a knife, as if by some one making his way through the bushes.

A heavy thunderstorm which came on obliged us to camp very early; but the next day we struck a faint trail, which slightly improved as we advanced, and towards evening we found the tracks of horses. The path disappeared and reappeared again during the next two days, and was still very dubious and faint, so that we were afraid it might be a deceptive one after all; but on the night of the 21st we came to a marsh where horse tracks were very numerous, and found on the right side, where we camped, a large cedar felled, from which a canoe had been made. On

A DIFFICULT LANDING

a tree was an inscription which was not legible, although the words seemed to be English.

To our intense delight, the next morning we hit upon a trail where the trees had been "blazed," or marked with an axe a long time ago, and old marten-traps at intervals informed us that we had at last touched the extreme end of an old trapping path from the fort. The valley began rapidly to expand, the hills became lower, the trail continued to become more and more beaten, and at noon on the 22nd we fairly shouted for joy as we emerged from the gloom in which we had so long been imprisoned, on to a beautiful little prairie, and saw before us a free, open country, diversified with rounded hills and stretches of woodland. We stopped with one accord, and lay down on the green turf, basking in the sun, whilst we allowed our horses to feed on the rich prairie grass, such as they had not tasted since leaving Edmonton.

The day was gloriously bright and fine, and the delight with which we gazed upon the beautiful landscape before us will be appreciated, if the reader will reflect that we had travelled for more than eleven weeks without cessation, and for the last month had been lost in the forest, starving, overworked, almost hopeless of escape. Even Mr. O'B., who had resumed the study of Paley with renewed zest, looked up from his book from time to time, and ventured to express a hope that we might escape after all, and offered his advice upon the course to be pursued in the happier time at hand.

IN THE WILD NORTH-WEST

The Canadian government in 1869 bought out the monopoly of the Hudson Bay Company. During the subsequent official survey the half-breeds, for the most part children of French settlers and Indian wives, imagined that their rights to the prairie lands on the banks of the Red River were threatened. A rebellion was organized by a young half-breed named Louis Riel, and a boat expedition to suppress it was placed under the command of Colonel Garnet Wolseley (afterwards Lord Wolseley). Among his officers was Lieutenant William Butler, who wrote a brilliant account of the three months' expedition, and of his subsequent adventurous wanderings in the Saskatchewan Valley and the Indian countries of the west as far as the Rocky Mountains. The young lieutenant afterwards became the famous general Sir William Butler. The following narrative relates incidents in October 1870, at the beginning of Butler's journey to the west.

I remained only long enough at Fort Ellice to complete a few changes in costume which the rapidly increasing cold rendered necessary. Boots and hat were finally discarded, the stirrup-irons were rolled in strips of buffalo skin, the large moose-skin "mittaines" taken into wear, and immense moccasins got ready. These precautions were necessary, for before us there now lay a great open region with treeless expanses that

were sixty miles across them—a vast tract of rolling hill and plain over which, for three hundred miles, there lay no fort or house of any kind.

Bidding adieu to my host, a young Scotch gentleman, at Fort Ellice, my little party turned once more towards the North-West and, fording the Qu'Appelle five miles above its confluence with the Assiniboine, struck out into a lovely country. It was the last day of October and almost the last of the Indian summer. Clear and distinct lay the blue sky upon the quiet sunlit prairie. The horses trotted briskly on under the charge of an English half-breed named Daniel. He was to bear me company as far as Carlton on the North Saskatchewan. My five horses were now beginning to show the effect of their incessant work, but it was only in appearance, and the distance travelled each day was increased instead of diminished as we journeyed on. I could not have believed it possible that horses could travel the daily distance which mine did without breaking down altogether under it, still less would it have appeared possible upon the food which they had to eat. We had neither hay nor oats to give them; there was nothing but the dry grass of the prairie, and no time to eat that but the cold frosty hours of the night. Still we seldom travelled less than fifty miles a day, stopping only for one hour at midday, and going on again until night began to wrap her mantle around the shivering prairie.

My horse was a wonderful animal; day after day would I fear that his game little limbs were growing

weary, and that soon he must give out; but not not a bit of it; his black coat roughened and his flanks grew a little leaner, but still he went on as gamely and as pluckily as ever. Often during the long day I would dismount and walk along leading him by the bridle, while the other two men and the six horses jogged on far in advance; when they had disappeared altogether behind some distant ridge of the prairie, my little horse would commence to look anxiously around, whinnying and trying to get along after his comrades; and then how gamely he trotted on when I remounted, watching out for the first sign of his friends again, far-away little specks on the great wilds before us. When the camping-place would be reached at nightfall the first care went to the horse. To remove saddle, bridle, and saddle-cloth, to untie the strip of soft buffalo leather from his neck and twist it well around his fore-legs, for the purpose of hobbling, was the work of only a few minutes, and then poor Blackie hobbled away to find over the darkening expanse his night's provender.

Before our own supper of pemmican, half-baked bread, and tea had been discussed, we always drove the band of horses down to some frozen lake hard by, and Daniel cut with the axe little drinking holes in the ever-thickening ice; then up would bubble the water and down went the heads of the thirsty horses for a long pull at the too-often bitter spring, for in this region between the Assiniboine and the South Saskatchewan fully half the lakes and pools that lie scattered about

in vast variety are harsh with salt and alkalis. Three horses always ran loose while the other three worked in harness. These loose horses, one might imagine, would be prone to gallop away when they found themselves at liberty to do so; but nothing seems farther from their thoughts; they trot along by the side of their harnessed comrades apparently as though they knew all about it; now and again they stop behind, to crop a bit of grass or tempting stalk of wild pea or vetches, but on they come again until the party has been reached; then, with ears thrown back, the jog-trot is resumed, and the whole band sweeps on over hill and plain. To halt and change horses is only the work of two minutes—out comes one horse, the other is standing close by and never stirs while the hot harness is being put upon him; in he goes into the rough shafts, and, with a crack of the half-breed's whip across his flanks, away we start again.

But my little Blackie seldom got a respite from the saddle; he seemed so well up to his work, so much stronger and better than any of the others, that day after day I rode him, thinking each day, "Well, to-morrow I will let him run loose;" but when to-morrow came he used to look so fresh and well, carrying his little head as high as ever, that again I put the saddle on his back, and another day's talk and companionship would still further cement our friendship, for I grew to like that horse as one only can like the poor dumb beast that serves us. I know not how it is, but horse and dog have worn themselves into my heart

as few men have ever done in life; and now, as day by day went by in one long scene of true companionship, I came to feel for little Blackie a friendship not the less sincere because all the service was upon his side, and I was powerless to make his supper a better one, or give him a more cosy lodging for the night. He fed and lodged himself and he carried me—all he asked in return was a water-hole in the frozen lake, and that I cut for him. Sometimes the night came down upon us still in the midst of a great open treeless plain, without shelter, water or grass, and then we would continue on in the inky darkness as though our march was to last eternally, and poor Blackie would step out as if his natural state was one of perpetual motion. On the 4th of November we rode over sixty miles; and when at length the camp was made in the lea of a little clump of bare willows, the snow was lying cold upon the prairies, and Blackie and his comrades went out to shiver through their supper in the bleakest scene my eyes had ever looked upon.

About midway between Fort Ellice and Carlton a sudden and well-defined change occurs in the character of the country; the light soil disappears, and its place is succeeded by a rich dark loam covered deep in grass and vetches. Beautiful hills swell in slopes more or less abrupt on all sides, while lakes fringed with thickets and clumps of good-sized poplar balsam lie lapped in their fertile hollows.

This region bears the name of the Touchwood Hills. Around it, far into endless space, stretch

immense plains of bare and scanty vegetation, plains seared with the tracks of countless buffalo which, until a few years ago, were wont to roam in vast herds between the Assiniboine and the Saskatchewan. Upon whatever side the eye turns when crossing these great expanses, the same wrecks of the monarch of the prairie lie thickly strewn over the surface. Hundreds of thousands of skeletons dot the short scant grass; and when fire has laid barer still the level surface, the bleached ribs and skulls of long-killed bison whiten far and near the dark burnt prairie. There is something unspeakably melancholy in the aspect of this portion of the North-west. From one of the westward jutting spurs of the Touchwood Hills the eye sees far away over an immense plain; the sun goes down, and as he sinks upon the earth the straight line of the horizon becomes visible for a moment across his blood-red disc, but so distant, so far away, that it seems dream-like in its immensity. There is not a sound in the air or on the earth; on every side lie spread the relics of the great fight waged by man against the brute creation; all is silent and deserted—the Indian and the buffalo gone, the settler not yet come. You turn quickly to the right or left; over a hill-top, close by, a solitary wolf steals away. Quickly the vast prairie begins to grow dim, and darkness forsakes the skies because they light their stars, coming down to seek in the utter solitude of the blackened plains a kindred spirit for the night.

On the night of the 4th of November we made

our camp long after dark in a little clump of willows far out in the plain which lies west of the Touchwood Hills. We had missed the only lake that was known to lie in this part of the plain, and after journeying far in the darkness halted at length, determined to go supperless, or next to supperless, to bed, for pemmican without that cup which nowhere tastes more delicious than in the wilds of the North-west would prove but sorry comfort, and the supper without tea would be only a delusion. The fire was made, the frying-pan taken out, the bag of dried buffalo meat and the block of pemmican got ready, but we said little in the presence of such a loss as the steaming kettle and the hot, delicious, fragrant tea. Why not have provided against this evil hour by bringing on from the last frozen lake some blocks of ice? Alas! why not? Moodily we sat down round the blazing willows. Meantime Daniel commenced to unroll the oil-cloth cart cover—and lo, in the ruddy glare of the fire, out rolled three or four large pieces of thick, heavy ice, sufficient to fill our kettle three times over with delicious tea. Oh, what a joy it was! and how we relished that cup! for remember, cynical friend who may be inclined to hold such happiness cheap and light, that this wild life of ours is a curious leveller of civilized habits—a cup of water to a thirsty man can be more valuable than a cup of diamonds, and the value of one article over the other is only the question of a few hours' privation.

When the morning of the 5th dawned we were covered deep in snow. A storm had burst in the

night, and all around was hidden in a dense sheet of driving snow-flakes; not a vestige of our horses was to be seen, their tracks were obliterated by the fast-falling snow, and the surrounding objects close at hand showed dim and indistinct through the white cloud. After a fruitless search, Daniel returned to camp with the tidings that the horses were nowhere to be found; so, when breakfast had been finished, all three set out in separate directions to look again for the missing steeds. Keeping the snow-storm on my left shoulder, I went along through little clumps of stunted bushes which frequently deceived me by their resemblance through the driving snow to horses grouped together. After a while I bent round towards the wind and, making a long sweep in that direction, bent again so as to bring the drift upon my right shoulder. No horses, no tracks anywhere—nothing but a waste of white drifting flake and feathery snow-spray. At last I turned away from the wind, and soon struck full on our little camp; neither of the others had returned. I cut down some willows and made a blaze. After a while I got on to the top of the cart, and looked out again into the waste. Presently I heard a distant shout; replying vigorously to it, several indistinct forms came into view, and Daniel soon emerged from the mist, driving before him the hobbled wanderers; they had been hidden under the lee of a thicket some distance off, all clustered together for shelter and warmth.

Our only difficulty was now the absence of my friend the Hudson Bay officer. We waited some

time, and at length, putting the saddle on Blackie, I started out in the direction he had taken. Soon I heard a faint far-away shout; riding quickly in the direction from whence it proceeded I heard the calls getting louder and louder, and soon came up with a figure heading right away into the immense plain, going in a direction altogether opposite to where our camp lay. I shouted, and back came my friend no little pleased to find his road again, for a snow-storm is no easy thing to steer through, and at times it will even fall out that the Indian with all his craft and instinct for direction will not be able to find his way through its blinding maze. Woe betide the wretched man who at such a time finds himself alone upon the prairie, without fire or the means of making it; not even the ship-wrecked sailor clinging to the floating mast is in a more pitiable strait. During the greater portion of this day it snowed hard, but our track was distinctly marked across the plains, and we held on all day. I still rode Blackie; the little fellow had to keep his wits at work to avoid tumbling into the badger-holes which the snow soon rendered invisible. These badger-holes in this portion of the plains were very numerous; it is not always easy to avoid them when the ground is clear of snow, but riding becomes extremely difficult when once the winter has set in. The badger burrows straight down for two or three feet, and if a horse be travelling at any pace his fall is so sudden and violent that a broken leg is too often the result. Once or twice Blackie went in nearly to the shoulder, but

he invariably scrambled up again all right—poor fellow, he was reserved for a worse fate, and his long journey was near its end!

Day dawned upon us on the 6th of November camped in a little thicket of poplars some seventy miles from the South Saskatchewan; the thermometer stood 3° below zero as I drew the girths tight on poor Blackie's ribs that morning. Another long day's ride, the last great treeless plain was crossed, and evening found us camped near the Minitchinass, or Solitary Hill, some sixteen miles south-east of the South Saskatchewan. The grass again grew long and thick, the clumps of willow, poplar and birch had reappeared, and the soil, when we scraped the snow away to make our sleeping-place, turned up black and rich-looking under the blows of the axe. About midday on the 7th of November, in a driving storm of snow, we suddenly emerged upon a high plateau. Before us, at a little distance, a great gap or valley seemed to open suddenly out, and farther off the white sides of hills and dark tree-tops rose into view. Riding to the edge of this steep valley I beheld a magnificent river flowing between great banks of ice and snow 300 feet below the level on which we stood. Upon each side masses of ice stretched out far into the river, but in the centre, between these banks of ice, ran a swift, black-looking current, the sight of which for a moment filled us with dismay. We had counted upon the Saskatchewan being firmly locked in ice, and here was the river rolling along between its icy banks, forbidding all passage.

Descending to the low valley of the river, we halted for dinner, determined to try some method by which to cross this formidable barrier. An examination of the river and its banks soon revealed the difficulties before us. The ice, as it approached the open portion, was unsafe, rendering it impossible to get within reach of the running water. An interval of some ten yards separated the sound ice from the current, while nearly 100 yards of solid ice lay between the true bank of the river and the dangerous portion; thus our first labour was to make a solid footing for ourselves from which to launch any raft or make-shift boat which we might construct. After a great deal of trouble and labour, we got the wagon-box roughly fashioned into a raft, covered over with one of our large oil-cloths, and lashed together with buffalo leather. This most primitive-looking craft we carried down over the ice to where the dangerous portion commenced; then Daniel, wielding the axe with powerful dexterity, began to hew away at the ice until space enough was opened out to float our raft upon. Into this we slipped the wagon-box, and into the wagon-box we put the half-breed Daniel. It floated admirably, and on went the axe-man, hewing, as before, with might and main. It was cold, wet work, and, in spite of everything, the water began to ooze through the oil-cloth into the wagon-box. We had to haul it up, empty it, and launch again; thus for some hours we kept on, cold, wet and miserable, until night forced us to desist and make our camp on the tree-lined shore. So we hauled

in the wagon and retired, baffled, but not beaten, to begin again next morning.

There were many reasons to make this delay feel vexatious and disappointing; we had travelled a distance of 560 miles in twelve days; travelled only to find ourselves stopped by this partially frozen river at a point twenty miles distant from Carlton, the first great station on my journey. Our stock of provisions, too, was not such as would admit of much delay; pemmican and dried meat we had none, and flour, tea and grease were all that remained to us. However, Daniel declared that he knew a most excellent method of making a combination of flour and fat which would allay all disappointment—and I must conscientiously admit that a more hunger-satiating mixture than he produced out of the frying-pan it had never before been my lot to taste. A little of it went such a long way, that it would be impossible to find a parallel for it in portability; in fact, it went such a long way, that the person who dined off it found himself, by common reciprocity of feeling, bound to go a long way in return before he again partook of it; but Daniel was not of that opinion, for he ate the greater portion of our united shares, and slept peacefully when it was all gone.

Fortified by Daniel's delicacy, we set to work early next morning at raft-making and ice-cutting; but we made the attempt to cross at a portion of the river where the open water was narrower and the bordering ice sounded more firm to the testing blows of the axe. One part of the river had now closed in, but the ice over it was unsafe,

We succeeded in getting the craft into the running water and, having strung together all the available line and rope we possessed, prepared for the venture. It was found that the wagon-boat would only carry one passenger, and accordingly I took my place in it, and with a make-shift paddle put out into the quick-running stream. The current had great power over the ill-shaped craft, and it was no easy matter to keep her head at all against stream.

I had not got five yards out when the whole thing commenced to fill rapidly with water, and I had just time to get back again to ice before she was quite full. We hauled her out once more, and found the oil-cloth had been cut by the jagged ice, so there was nothing for it but to remove it altogether and put on another. This was done, and soon our wagon-box was once again afloat. This time I reached in safety the farther side; but there a difficulty arose which we had not foreseen. Along this farther edge of ice the current ran with great force, and as the leather line which was attached to the back of the boat sank deeper and deeper into the water, the drag upon it caused the boat to drift quicker and quicker downstream; thus, when I touched the opposite ice, I found the drift was so rapid that my axe failed to catch a hold in the yielding edge, which broke away at every stroke. After several ineffectual attempts to stay the rush of the boat, and as I was being borne rapidly into a mass of rushing water and huge blocks of ice, I saw it was all up, and shouted to the others to rope in

the line; but this was no easy matter, because the rope had got foul of the running ice, and was caught underneath. At last, by careful handling, it was freed, and I stood once more on the spot from whence I had started, having crossed the River Saskatchewan to no purpose. Daniel now essayed the task, and reached the opposite shore, taking the precaution to work up the nearer side before crossing; once over, his vigorous use of the axe told on the ice, and he succeeded in fixing the boat against the edge. Then he quickly clove his way into the frozen mass, and, by repeated blows, finally reached a spot from which he got on shore.

This success of our long labour and exertion was announced to the solitude by three ringing cheers, which we gave from our side; for, be it remembered, that it was now our intention to use the wagon-boat to convey across all our baggage, towing the boat from one side to the other by means of our line; after which, we would force the horses to swim the river, and then cross ourselves in the boat. But all our plans were defeated by an unlooked-for accident; the line lay deep in the water, as before, and to raise it required no small amount of force. We hauled and hauled, until snap went the long rope somewhere underneath the water, and all was over. With no little difficulty Daniel got the boat across again to our side, and we all went back to camp wet, tired and dispirited by so much labour and so many misfortunes. It froze hard that night, and in the morning the great river had its water

altogether hidden opposite our camp by a covering of ice. Would it bear ? that was the question. We went on it early, testing with axe and sharp-pointed poles. In places it was very thin, but in other parts it rang hard and solid to the blows.

The dangerous spot was in the very centre of the river, where the water had shown through in round holes on the previous day, but we hoped to avoid these bad places by taking a slanting course across the channel. After walking backwards and forwards several times, we determined to try a light horse. He was led out with a long piece of rope attached to his neck. In the centre of the stream the ice seemed to bend slightly as he passed over, but no break occurred, and in safety we reached the opposite side. Now came Blackie's turn. Somehow or other I felt uncomfortable about it, and remarked that the horse ought to have his shoes removed before the attempt was made. My companion, however, demurred, and his experience in these matters had extended over so many years, that I was foolishly induced to allow him to proceed as he thought fit, even against my better judgment. Blackie was taken out, led as before, tied by a long line. I followed close behind him, to drive him if necessary. He did not need much driving, but took the ice quite readily.

We had got to the centre of the river, when the surface suddenly bent downwards, and, to my horror, the poor horse plunged deep into black, quick-running water! He was not three yards in

front of me when the ice broke. I recoiled involuntarily from the black, seething chasm; the horse, though he plunged suddenly down, never let his head under water, but kept swimming manfully round and round the narrow hole, trying all he could to get upon the ice. All his efforts were useless; a cruel wall of sharp ice struck his knees as he tried to lift them on the surface, and the current, running with immense velocity, repeatedly carried him back underneath. As soon as the horse had broken through, the man who held the rope let it go, and the leather line flew back upon poor Blackie's head. I got up almost to the edge of the hole, and stretching out took hold of the line again; but that could do no good nor give him any assistance in his struggles. I shall never forget the way the poor brute looked at me—even now, as I write these lines, the whole scene comes back in memory with all the vividness of a picture, and I feel again the horrible sensation of being utterly unable, though almost within touching distance, to give him help in his dire extremity—and if ever dumb animal spoke with unutterable eloquence, that horse called to me in his agony; he turned to me as to one from whom he had a right to expect assistance. I could not stand the scene any longer.

"Is there no help for him?" I cried to the other men.

"None whatever," was the reply; "the ice is dangerous all around."

Then I rushed back to the shore and up to the camp where my rifle lay, then back again to the

fatal spot where the poor beast still struggled against his fate. As I raised the rifle he looked at me so imploringly that my hand shook and trembled. Another instant, and the deadly bullet crashed through his head, and, with one look never to be forgotten, he went down under the cold, unpitying ice!

It may have been very foolish, perhaps, for poor Blackie was only a horse, but for all that I went back to camp, and, sitting down in the snow, cried like a child. With my own hand I had taken my poor friend's life; but if there should exist somewhere in the regions of space that happy Indian paradise where horses are never hungry and never tired, Blackie, at least, will forgive the hand that sent him there, if he can but see the heart that long regretted him.

Leaving Daniel in charge of the remaining horses, we crossed on foot the fatal river, and with a single horse set out for Carlton. From the high north bank I took one last look back at the South Saskatchewan—it lay in its broad deep valley glittering in one great band of purest snow; but I loathed the sight of it, while the small round open hole, dwarfed to a speck by distance, marked the spot where my poor horse had found his grave, after having carried me so faithfully through the long lonely wilds. We had travelled about six miles when a figure appeared in sight, coming towards us upon the same track. The new-comer proved to be a Cree Indian travelling to Fort Pelly. He bore the name of the Starving Bull. Starving Bull and his boy at once turned

back with us towards Carlton. In a little while a party of horsemen hove in sight: they had come out from the fort to visit the South Branch, and amongst them was the Hudson Bay officer in charge of the station. Our first question had reference to the plague. Like a fire, it had burned itself out. There was no case then in the fort; but out of the little garrison of some sixty souls no fewer than thirty-two had perished! Four only had recovered of the thirty-six who had taken the terrible infection.

We halted for dinner by the edge of the Duck Lake, midway between the North and South Branches of the Saskatchewan. It was a rich, beautiful country, although the snow lay some inches deep. Clumps of trees dotted the undulating surface, and lakelets glittering in the bright sunshine spread out in sheets of dazzling whiteness. The Starving Bull set himself busily to work preparing our dinner. What it would have been under ordinary circumstances, I cannot state; but, unfortunately for its success on the present occasion, its preparation was attended with unusual drawbacks. Starving Bull had succeeded in killing a skunk during his journey. This performance, while highly creditable to his energy as a hunter, was by no means conducive to his success as a cook. Bitterly did that skunk revenge himself upon us who had borne no part in his destruction. Pemmican is at no time a delicacy; but pemmican flavoured with skunk was more than I could attempt. However, Starving Bull proved himself worthy of his name,

and the frying-pan was soon scraped clean under his hungry manipulations.

Another hour's ride brought us to a high bank, at the base of which lay the North Saskatchewan. In the low ground adjoining the river stood Carlton House, a large square enclosure, the wooden walls of which were more than twenty feet in height. Within these palisades some dozen or more houses stood crowded together. Close by, to the right, many snow-covered mounds with a few rough wooden crosses above them marked the spot where, only four weeks before, the last victim of the epidemic had been laid. On the very spot where I stood looking at this scene, a Blackfoot Indian, three years earlier, had stolen out from a thicket, fired at and grievously wounded the Hudson Bay officer belonging to the fort, and now close to the same spot a small cross marked that officer's last resting-place. Strange fate! he had escaped the Blackfoot's bullet only to be the first to succumb to the deadly epidemic. I cannot say that Carlton was at all a lively place of sojourn. Its natural gloom was considerably deepened by the events of the last few months, and the whole place seemed to have received the stamp of death upon it. To add to the general depression, provisions were by no means abundant, the few Indians that had come in from the plains brought the same tidings of unsuccessful chase—for the buffalo were "far out" on the great prairie, and that phrase "far out," applied to buffalo, means starvation in the North-west.

DAYS WITH THE NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE

The formation of the North-west Mounted Police was recommended by Sir William Butler. The author of the following narrative, Mr. J. G. Donkin, left Liverpool in 1884, and after spending a few months in the service of a farmer at Brandon, he joined the Mounted Police, in which he became a corporal, and took part in the fighting which ensued upon Louis Riel's second rebellion. Riel had been exiled after his first abortive revolt, but being allowed to return after fourteen years, he at once began to foment trouble. He obtained some early successes over the Mounted Police; but after a series of fights at Batoche he was captured by two scouts, brought to trial, and sentenced to death.

It was known in May that Major Jarvis and the troop head-quarters were to occupy their former station at Wood Mountain. I was detailed to accompany a subaltern officer, who was to command the Moose Mountain district, and the extreme eastern section of the frontier line.

The morning of Friday, May 13th, 1887, broke under a leaden sky, and torrents of rain were falling, as réveille rang across the gloomy square. At breakfast in the mess-room, every one was glum, for we were tired of the perpetual grind of riding-school, drill, parades, stables, and guards,

and longed once more for the comparative freedom of duty away out of the plains. We sipped our coffee, and ate our eggs and hash almost in silence while the rain splashed in the stable-yard without. One corporal wished to wager ten, twenty, or fifty dollars that we should not move out of barracks for another month. As he was vociferating his infallibility of prediction, an officer entered, and we immediately sprang to attention. Beckoning to me, he said, "Have your party ready in half-an-hour to march down to the station, the wagons loaded, and everything complete, parade mounted in the square. The train will be at Regina in half-an-hour."

This sort of thing must be expected, but no one seems ever to be ready for such an emergency. Brown has his washing out, Jones is up at the hospital, while Robinson is off on pass. I hastened to look up my men, and a nice flutter and hurry there was in the barrack-rooms. The horses had to be saddled, the two transport wagons were to be loaded with supplies of all kinds, including camp equipment; the men to dress in marching order, pack up their kits, roll up their bedding, be in the saddle, on the square, and down at the railway station, all in the brief space of one half-hour! Any one who knows the amount of a mounted policeman's kit will appreciate the difficulty. Luckily, the Wood Mountain party were not to leave until the following day, so our comrades came to the front with cheerful alacrity, and willing hands, to help us. Each of us had five different attendants busied in various ways.

One was engaged in fixing up a man's accoutrements, another had hurried off to saddle up his horse, a third was employed in rolling up bedding, while a fourth was ramming his kit into its proper receptacle. I was supposed to possess the miraculous properties of Sir Boyle Roche's famous bird, for, in addition to performing all the above duties for myself, I was to watch the loading of the wagons, and check every article off on Form No. 12,070, or some such figure. At length, with soddened cloak and pulpy helmet, I was at liberty to splash through the lake in front of the stables, and mount my trooper, Chocolate George. This was a fine-looking animal, and one of the few remaining Ontario horses. He was always on the dance. A series of musical rides had taken place in the school since the establishment of the band at head-quarters, and this species of dissipation seemed to have imbued him with the frantic desire to excel as a circus horse. Consequently, his chief happiness was in attempting some new ornamental move. If I took him out for exercise alone to town, he must needs "passage" up the street. Fortunately, every one was on parade in time. The major gave us a very short inspection, saying curtly, "March them off, Mr. McGibbon."

We went out of the square at the trot, and away over the soaked and sloppy prairie at the gallop. We were bespattered with mud from head to foot, and the pipe-clay from our white helmets came down in a Niagara of dirty water. Our gauntlets were saturated. It was a foretaste

of the coming summer's wet. On entering the town, we observed the two box-cars, which were to receive our horses and wagons, standing on the line. These were to be attached to the freight or luggage-train by which we were to travel to Moosomin. The loading of these cars was not by any means a labour of love in all the rain and mud. We had to take off our juicy gauntlets, and "wire in." The cincha—as the woven horse-hair girth is termed on a Californian saddle—upon one of the saddle-horses, slipped back, and he, in consequence, commenced a vigorous course of buck-jumping, and did not cease throwing his heels to heaven until he had sent the saddle flying into a convenient pond, whence it was dragged in anything but a regulation condition. The wagons had all to be taken to pieces, and the component parts and contents lifted into the car. The slimy mud was upon everything. Then the harness and saddlery was piled in. After this the horses had to be marched up the railed-in "shoot," into their compartment. The bronchos went up readily enough, but the Canadian horses seemed to regard it as a species of cunning trap to be obstinately avoided.

But after much tugging in front, and persistent walloping behind, we got them safely housed, and as soon as the doors were fastened, the train made its appearance in the distance, steaming slowly over the level prairie. We were a rough-looking lot, streaked with dirt, and plastered with mud. The inspector handed me the men's tickets which I distributed, and when the train came

alongside the platform, we all entered the conductor's caboose. This is a house upon wheels, and is very comfortable. At one end is a cooking-stove and cupboards, and a table. There is an elevated platform where the conductor and brakesman sit when on duty; they can see ahead through small windows above the roof. The body of the car is furnished with cushioned seats along the sides. There was a small lavatory also, where we gladly performed our much-needed ablutions. We carried towels and soap in our haversacks. The private car of the superintendent of the line was also hooked to this freight train, and the officer was invited therein.

As we neared Qu'Appelle, he came out and informed me that the above official had kindly consented to allow of a delay of half-an-hour at this station (formerly Troy), so that the men might have dinner. I was to see to this, for which he gave me the requisite funds, and I had also to take care that the allotted time was not exceeded. On our arrival, a good repast was ready for us at the Queen's Hotel, the conductor having telegraphed ahead. We created some excitement in the quiet village, and many "citizens" asked me if the Indians had broken out anywhere. On our return we made ourselves cosy, and smoked and sang, while the rain pattered against the blurred and streaming windows. Broadview was reached at six o'clock in the evening. The surrounding landscape was almost under water, while the rain continued to pour down with a steady persistency. We here discovered that

we should be unable to proceed until the following morning. Our cars were shunted, and we watered and fed our chargers. One man entered the car, and the buckets of water and forage were handed up to him. This is a risky proceeding with strange horses, as they are simply packed loose in the caravan, head to tail. Rooms were engaged for our party, and we took our meals in the refreshment-room. The Pacific express came clanging into the station, and fresh arrivals from England stared wonderingly at us, as we stalked about in rusty spurs, muddy boots, bedraggled cloaks, and dingy helmets.

Broadview is 264 miles west of Winnipeg, and is in the centre of a fairly good farming country. According to the pamphlets it is a well-laid-out town, and I have no doubt it is—on paper. There are three or four stores, and a handful of houses, which are prettily situated at the head of Wood Lake, and the C.P.R.[1] have workshops here. We set off for Moosomin on the morning of the 14th at seven o'clock, and passed through a level country sprinkled with birch and poplar bluffs, and drew up at Moosomin at half-past ten. After unloading the cars, putting together the wagons, and taking our horses to water, we went to the hotel for dinner. Lovely clumps of trees, with lakelets gleaming through the foliage, surround this town. There are churches and stores in abundance, and the growth of timber gives Moosomin an advantage over other prairie towns, and saves it from the generally unfinished appear-

[1] Canadian Pacific Railway.

ance which distinguishes these rising cities. It is 219 miles west of Winnipeg. We marched out at two in the afternoon, amidst an enthusiastic group of the inhabitants. The corporal in charge of the detachment here had kindly volunteered to saddle Chocolate George for me, while I was engaged in looking after the purchase of some supplies, and this I acquiesced in, to my subsequent discomfiture. The trail led through a finely-wooded and well-settled country. Good frame-houses, neat and brightly painted, characterized all the farms we passed. Lady Cathcart's crofter colony is situated out here. All this air of snug prosperity seemed strange to me, accustomed as I had been to life in the wilderness. This is the most thriving grain-farming country in the Territory, and is conterminous with the western boundary of the province of Manitoba.

My horse had been in the most exuberant spirits since starting, and in order to allow some of his superfluous joyousness to evaporate, as I was with the advance guard, I gave him his head and myself a little practice in the sword exercise. As I was bending over to a low guard, my saddle turned completely round, and off I went like a bolt from a catapult! My face was almost bare of skin, and I am afraid I was not very grateful for my brother non-commissioned officer's laxity in fixing up my saddle-girth.

Reaching the edge of the lofty cliffs that stand above the Big Pipestone Creek, we made a careful descent into the broad valley, by the rugged trail of stones and yellow mud that turned and twisted

among the hanging bushes. We pitched camp for the night by the side of the swollen stream as the sun was setting.

We were to proceed to the prairie settlement at Carlyle about eighty miles south of Moosomin, and to pick up a sergeant and five constables, who had been stationed at the outpost during the winter. Thence our march would lie in a south-easterly direction, and a camp was to be established on the Souris, where it crosses the frontier into Dakota. Leaving a detachment at this spot, the officer was to move westward with the rest of his command, following the boundary-line, and set up his head-quarters upon Long Creek, a sluggish stream that winds through the plains to the north of the Missouri Coteau.

Our camp upon the Pipestone nestled in a most romantic scene. The towering heights were robed in shaggy woods; and white farm-houses with roofs of red, or brown, peeped out from among the foliage. The vale was cultivated and laid out in fields with snake fences. Our horses were picketed by long ropes attached to iron pins by a ring. These pins were shaped like corkscrews, so that you could wind them into any ground. A broncho, when startled, is apt to draw the straight style of picket-pin. If a horse persistently drags his fastening from the ground, your best plan is to attach the rope to a hobble around one of his fore-feet; as a rule it is fixed around the neck by a loop. A couple of men were told off to look after the horses, dividing the night into two watches. Then the

blankets were spread in the tents; and only loud snores or the puffs of a pipe were heard from beneath the canvas.

A cold and cloudy morning, with occasional showers of snow, ushered in the 15th. We often grumble and growl, in this tight little island of ours, at the fickleness of that arch coquette spring; but her smiles are never to be depended upon in any climate. Even in the Riviera, a day of genial warmth may be followed by one on which the hideous mistral sends you shivering home. Evidences of prosperity and good farming lay on every side during the first period of the day. But any degree of success, out here in the north-west, is only to be attained by stern determination and rugged perseverance. The life of a pioneer is lonely and disheartening at first. And let him not hope to win a fortune from the soil. If he make a living, he should rest content. This is, emphatically, a hard land to dwell in; and existence is a struggle. Want of rain may paralyze his efforts one season; and a blighting frost in August may shatter his hopes the next. And for any one to stake his hopes on grain alone, is utter folly; but if he goes in for mixed farming, he may succeed.

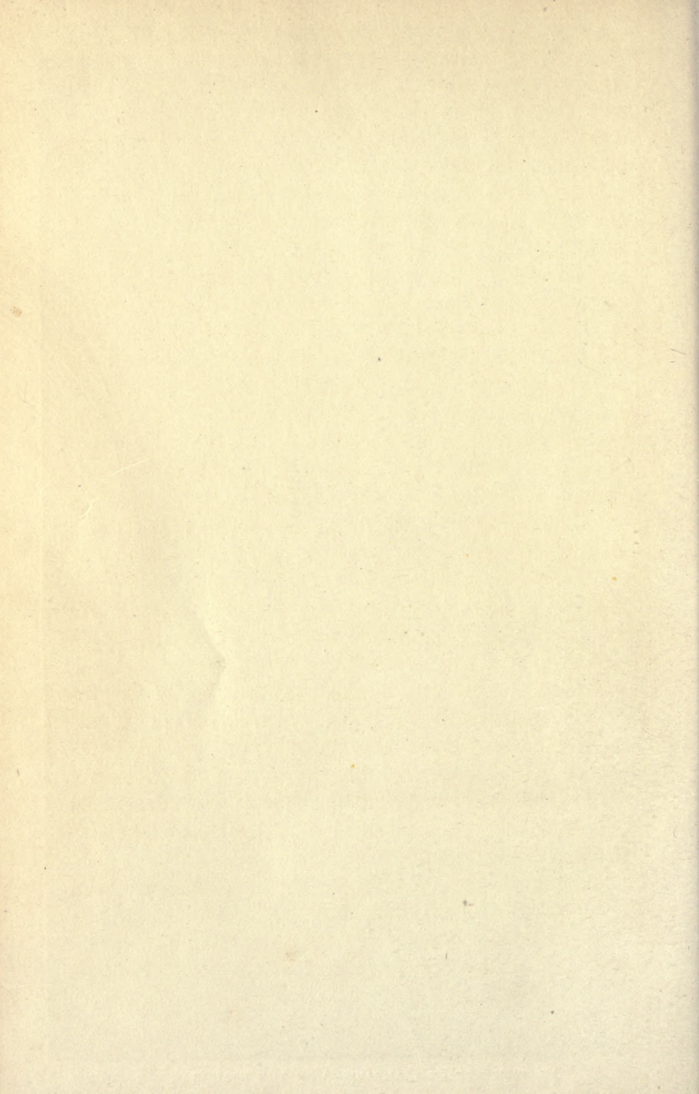
The scenery through which we were passing was park-like and dotted with lovely groves of white oak. We entered a bleaker stretch about noon, and lit a fire, on the edge of the little Pipestone, to cook our bacon and boil our water. The surroundings were very bare, and a searching breeze swept down the slopes. The horses were

picketed in different places where the feed was good; and we rigged up a shelter by hanging horse-blankets from the wagons, to windward, behind which we lay upon the grass and smoked or slept. As we were riding down into the hollow, before we halted, I noticed the tops of some teepes [1] peeping above a few bushes upon the opposite hills. I mentioned this casually to the inspector, but he made no reply, as it was not a startling incident. We rested about two hours, and when we resumed our march, these nomad dwellings had disappeared.

When we had proceeded a few miles upon the trail, which was now dry and dusty, we came upon a band of Indians moving in extended order across the prairie. They seemed to increase their pace on our approach; but we merely exchanged the usual salutation of "How! How Koola!" and went ahead. Away in front a young brave and a pretty squaw were walking together, evidently bound by that one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. A few Red River carts contained blankets and sprawling youngsters in rags of gaudy hues. Some pack-horses carried bundles of teepe-poles. The men were mounted, while the women trudged on foot. This is the noble red man's way. He rides on horseback while the patient squaw shuffles alongside with her papoose strapped to a board behind, like a knapsack. Comic-looking objects are these same papooses, peeping from their dirty swaddling clothes with little black bead-like eyes. A few

[1] Indian tents.

AN EXCHANGE OF SALUTATIONS ON THE PRAIRIE



sick were borne on travoies, which consist of two long poles crossed and attached to the neck of a horse; while the other two ends drag on the ground. Between these two sticks, behind the animal's tail, a blanket is slung, and in this uncomfortable couch the invalid reclines. It is indeed a case of the survival of the fittest.

Towards evening we again entered a lovely country magnificent in rolling woodlands, with the blue range of the Moose Mountains rising behind. We camped in a beautiful glade, with a velvety carpet of bright green; in the centre sparkled a tiny lake, its limpid waters tinged with the hues of a blushing rose by the long lines of crimson light flashed from the setting sun. It was a glorious evening, though cold, but we were well sheltered here. The white tents made a picture against the vivid emerald of the boughs, clad in their freshest tints. The birds sang among the leafy branches ; and the gophers scampered off, sitting on their haunches with drooping paws and arch look for one brief minute before making a sudden dive into their burrows. The horses rolled upon the sward, and munched the grass, and the grey smoke of our fire curled up into the magic sunset. I told off the picquet, and after some welcome tea, entered my tent, unrolled my blankets on the clean springy turf, and lit the soothing pipe.

When winding our way over an excellent trail through thickets, vocal with the music of birds, it did not need a very strong imagination to make one fancy we were moving through some fine old

park in merry England. A flourishing homestead stood on a gentle rise, with barns, and byres, and folds. Sheep and cattle clustered round the outbuildings, some plethoric ducks waddled down to a pond, poultry cackled round the doors, and a group of chubby children gazed in awe as the red-coated soldiers went jingling by. After passing this glimpse of comfort, so painfully suggestive of the dear land across the sea, we faced once more the desolate plains, with lonely, ugly log shanties standing in hideous solitude here and there. A line of bush fringed the base of the Moose Mountains which rose to the right. This range is beautifully varied with wood and water; and there are three Indian reserves in its recesses.

The inhabitants are Assiniboines under the three chiefs, Pheasant Rump, Ocean Man, and White Bear. The total population amounts to 311. Elk, deer, partridge, and rabbits are fairly plentiful as yet, the lakes swarm with wild fowl and fish, while prairie chicken and snipe abound on the plains. The view here across the prairie shows a line of thick bush to the left, and in front the everlasting level stretches as far as the eye can reach, till it blends with the horizon.

We arrived at Carlyle about midday, and could see the familiar scarlet on some figures moving among the few houses while we were some distance off. These were the men of the winter detachment, and they were extremely glad to see us. They occupied a barrack-room attached to the hotel, and took their meals at the *table d'hôte* at Government expense. We pitched our row

of tents some short way from the village. Carlyle is situated in the centre of a vast flat plain, as I have stated, and is the centre of a fairly settled region. I have seen more buildings around a farm-house at home, and yet this bantam hamlet is styled a city. It consists of three or four dwelling-houses, a general store, a blacksmith's shop, and the hotel. It was mail-day, and the place was thronged with people who had come in for their weekly supply of letters and newspapers, which arrive by stage from Moosomin.

There was also a civil trial proceeding, which seemed to excite some interest. The court of justice was an empty log-house, and tobacco-juice was freely squirted on the floor by the mob of settlers who crowded around in patched and seedy garments of homespun. These pioneers often flutter about in rags, and every one wears a battered slouch hat. After a wash and a shave in the barrack-room, the sergeant and I proceeded down-stairs to dinner. On regarding my features in a mirror, I found that I resembled a Tonga Islander in full rig, or an urchin after an interview with an irate cat. My face was a mass of scrapes and scratches from my tumble. The morning of the 17th was spent in an inspection of the Carlyle detachment by our commanding officer, in fixing up stores and equipment, and in making arrangements for the ensuing summer. The merchant at Carlyle had obtained the contract for furnishing us with provisions. We were to receive half a ration extra, daily, per man, all through the season's campaign. This would give

each individual per diem 2¼ lbs. beef, 2¼ lbs. bread, 1½ lbs. of potatoes, and other things in proportion, an exceedingly liberal allowance, and I will venture to say no other troops in the world receive so much. Any surplus at the end of each month we were at liberty to exchange for luxuries we fancied.

One of the Moosomin detachment came galloping into camp this afternoon, bearing a telegram for our officer, to the effect that nine families of Indians had left the Crooked Lakes Reserves, and that, if we came across them, we were to escort them back. These reserves are four in number, and lie along the right bank of the Qu'Appelle River, which widens into two lakes, bearing the above name, at this point. The chief, Mosquito, holds sway over 136 Indians on the west side. Next comes O'Soup (a name suggestive of an Irish king) with 345 redskins, and the nine families had deserted from his patriarchal jurisdiction.

It was at once surmised that the parties wanted were those Indians whom we had passed near the Little Pipestone; and men were at once dispatched to watch the various trails. On the 18th one of the constables returned with the intelligence that he and his comrade had run the Indians to earth on the trail in the mountain. He had left his companion to hold them there, and had himself ridden in, "with hoof of speed," to report the matter. A party of us were at once ordered off with wagons ; but when we conducted the captives to the interpreter's house on Pheasant

Rump's reserve, we found them to be Sioux from Oak Lake, in Manitoba, on their way back to the Assiniboine camp at Indian Head for the annual Sun Dance. We allowed them to proceed on their journey, which they did with much hilarity. The Sioux are not a long-faced race by any means, but rather jovial and pleasant fellows. One of White Bull's braves used invariably to greet me with the most comic grin and hearty hand-shake; a contrast to the frigid hauteur of the dignified savage of romance.

The Sun Dance is a mighty festival, attended with many barbarous ceremonies. A large council lodge is erected fully 100 feet in diameter. The sides are formed of poles, with boughs of trees interlaced. The roof is constructed in the same manner with strong cross beams. In this place all the tribe and their visitors assemble; the medicine-men are in full uniform, wearing many charms; and the chiefs, councillors, and braves are in all the glory of paint and feathers. The squaws are seated on the ground. Those of the young bucks who are to be initiated as braves are stripped of all clothing except a breech-clout. Two parallel incisions are made with a knife in the neighbourhood of each breast, and through the muscles of the chest, thus laid bare, thongs of raw hide are passed. The other ends of these are attached to the beams above. The tomtoms are beaten, there is wild shouting, the medicine-men vociferate invocations to the Manitou, and a species of fierce frenzy epidemic in such scenes as these seizes upon all. The candidate dances

in ferocious ecstasy at the extremity of his bonds, and if the sinews of the chest give way and he has borne the torture well he is forthwith saluted as a brave. If, however, the lariat should break, then it is very "bad medicine" indeed for the unlucky youth. Sometimes the incisions are made in the back. I have seen Indians point to the cicatrices with a glow of pride. They are the badges of their manhood.

On Sunday, May 22nd, our arrangements being completed and our men all gathered together, we resumed our march to the south. A detachment of one corporal and one man who had been stationed at a settler's on the Souris during the winter were to join us *en route*. After leaving Carlyle, we had nothing but the prairie before us, with here and there a few scattered homesteads, looking gaunt and depressing amid their bare surroundings. We made a halt at noon by the side of a reed-fringed sleugh. At sunset we reached Alameda, dusty and tired. We had ridden the entire thirty miles at a walk. We were leg-weary and thirsty at the finish. It was this officer's fad to travel at a snail's pace. He had a pleasant theory that a horse was of more value than a man, and he once had the politeness to express this idea aloud before all his command. Unfortunately for the truth of his remark, all men were not of the same value as himself. I found to-night that a thoughtful teamster had brought a keg of cider in his vehicle, and I enjoyed a hearty draught.

Alameda, in spite of its flowery title, consists

of a few log shanties stuck here and there about the prairie above the valley of the Souris. There is a frame store, and post office. The Souris River rises near the Yellow Grass Marsh, south of Regina. It flows in a south-easterly direction at first, to within six miles of the American frontier; thence its course winds away northward to Alameda, where it takes a semi-circular curve and enters Dakota. In American territory it becomes the Mouse River. After forming the letter U it sweeps into Manitoba and joins the Assiniboine, not very far from Brandon.

The morning of the 23rd was lovely; the river prattled gaily, the dew sparkled on the grass, the birds trilled out their orisons, and a thousand pleasant perfumes floated in the air. We struck camp, and climbed the southern boundary of the valley, on our way to cross the Ox Bow. This is the name given to the stretch of prairie between the two arms of the river, from the peculiar form taken by the windings of the Souris. It is a sparsely settled region. Those who have pitched upon this spot hail for the most part from that abode of pine-trees, rocks, and bears, Manitoulin Island, on Lake Huron. They have chosen the lesser of two evils.

In the distance to the south-west, we could see the hazy contour of the low hills of the Grand Coteau du Missouri blending with the sky. Nearer still rose the lofty ridge of the solitary Hill of the Murdered Scout. A march of five hours brought us to the Souris again at the point where it enters American territory. The trail led

through a gully into a lovely vale, still and hushed. Oak and elm trees of vigorous growth spread their shade in dense clusters by the river's side, or stood in pleasant groves in the rich tall meadow-grass that grew in fragrant richness up to the foot of the hills. It was a charming scene, tinged with the gilding of a summer's afternoon. The trail which was formerly made by the Frontier Delimitation Commission crosses the Souris at this point by a dangerous ford just upon the boundary. This line follows the 49th parallel of north latitude, and is marked by mounds at intervals of half-a-mile. There was some difficulty in finding a comfortable spot upon which to make our permanent camp for the summer. The commanding officer left it to my judgment, as I was to be in charge, and I pitched upon a small level terrace with the slopes of the valley behind, and about 200 yards from the river in front.

On the morning of the 24th of May, the officer, sergeant and party set off for Long Creek, and I was left in undisturbed possession of my outpost.

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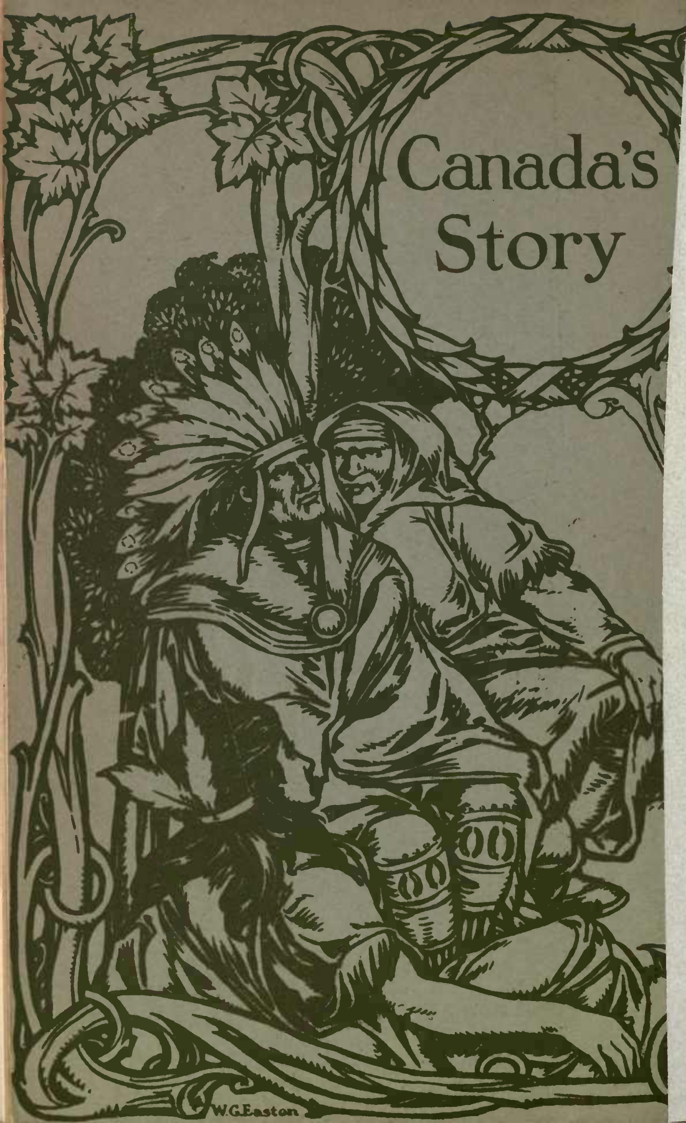
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