FOREST, LAKE AND PRAIRIE

M. Dougall

KA-KAKE AND THE BUFFALO—(*See page 155*).

FOREST, LAKE,

AND

PRAIRIE.

TWENTY YEARS OF FRONTIER LIFE IN WESTERN CANADA—1842-62.

BY

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TO

My Dear Mother

THIS BOOK

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FOREST, LAKE AND PRAIRIE.

CHAPTER I.

Childhood—Indians—Canoes—"Old Isaiah"—Father goes to college.

My parents were pioneers. I was born on the banks of the Sydenham River in a log-house, one of the first dwellings, a very few of which made up the frontier village of Owen Sound. This was in the year 1842.

My earliest recollections are of stumps, log heaps, great forests, corduroy roads, Indians, log and birch-bark canoes, bateaux, Mackinaw boats, etc. I have also a very vivid recollection of deep snow in winter, and very hot weather and myriad mosquitoes in summer.

My father was first settler, trapper, trader, sailor, and local preacher. He was one of the grand army of pioneers who took possession of

the wilderness of Ontario, and in the name of God and country began the work of reclamation which has ever since gone gloriously on, until to-day Ontario is one of the most comfortable and prosperous parts of our great country.

God fitted those early settlers for their work, and they did it like heroes. Mother was a strong Christian woman, content, patient, plodding, full of quiet, restful assurance, pre-eminently qualified to be the companion and helper of one who had to hew his way from the start out of the wildness of this new world. My mother says I spoke Indian before I spoke English.

My first memories are of these original dwellers in the land. I grew up amongst them, ate corn-soup out of their wooden bowls, roasted green ears at their camp-fires, feasted with them on deer and bear's meat, went with them to set their nets and to spear fish at nights by the light of birch-bark flambeaux, and, later on, fat pine light-jack torches. Bows and arrows, paddles and canoes were my playthings, and the dusky forest children were my playmates.

Father, very early in my childhood, taught me how to swim, and, later on, to shoot and

skate and sail. Many a trip I had with my father on his trading voyages to the Manitoulin and other islands of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, where he would obtain his loads of fish, furs and maple sugar, and sail with these to Detroit and other eastern and southern ports. Father had for cook and general servant a colored man, Isaiah by name. Isaiah was my special friend; I was his particular charge. His bigness and blackness and great kindness made him a hero in my boyish mind. My contact with Isaiah, and my association with the Indians, very early made a real democrat of me. I never could bear to hear a black man called a "nigger," nor yet an Indian a "buck." Isaiah was an expert sailor, as also a good cook, but it was his great big heart that won me to him, and which to-day, though nearly fifty years have passed since then, brings a dampness to my eye as I remember my "big black friend."

On some of his voyages father had a tame bear with him. This bear was a source of great annoyance to Isaiah, for Bruin would be constantly smelling around the caboose in which the stove and cooking apparatus were placed, and where

Isaiah would fain reign supreme. One evening Isaiah was cooking pancakes, and was, while doing so, absent-minded—perhaps thinking of those old slavery days when he had undergone terrible hardships and great cruelty from his ignorant and selfish brothers, who claimed to own him, "soul and body." Whatever it was, he forgot to watch his cakes sufficiently, for Mr. Bear was whipping them off the plate as fast as Isaiah was putting them on. Father and a fellow-passenger were looking on and enjoying the fun. By and by Isaiah was heard to say, "Guess he had enough for the gentlemans to begin with;" but, lo! to his wonderment when he went to take the cakes, they were gone; and in his surprise he looked around, but there was no one near but the bear, and he looked very innocent. So Isaiah seemed to conclude that he had not made any cakes, and accordingly went to work in earnest, but, at the same time, determined that there should be no mistake in the matter. Presently he caught the thief in the act of taking the cake from the plate, and then he went for the bear with the big spoon in his hand, with which he was dipping and beating

the batter. The chase became exciting. Around the caboose, across the deck, up the rigging flew the bear. Isaiah was close after him, but finally found that the bear was too agile for him, for presently he came back, a wiser and, for the time, a more watchful man.

When I was six years of age I had two little brothers, one between three and four, and the other a baby boy, about a year old—the older one named David, who is still living, and is now my nearest neighbor. The other we called Moses; he was a beautiful little fellow, and father almost idolized him. Once we lost him. What excitement we had, and also great alarm! By and by I found him in a sort of store-room behind the door, digging into a "mo-kuk," or bark vessel of maple sugar, face and hands smeared with it. What joy there was over the little innocent!

But one summer, while father was away on one of his fishing and trading trips, our baby boy "sickened and died." This was my first contact with death; it was terrible to witness baby's pain and mother's grief. We buried our loved one in the Indian burying-ground at Newash (now Brook).

ISAIAH AND THE BEAR —(*See page 15*).

Two years ago I looked in vain for the grave; it is lost to view, but I never will forget those sad, sad days and nights during little brother's sickness. Our Indian neighbors did all they could to help and comfort. Neither will I forget the hard time of meeting father at the beach, when he came ashore and found that his darling boy was dead and buried. Often since then have I come into contact with death in many shapes, but this first experience stamped itself on my brain.

Sometimes I went with father to his appointments to preach in the homes of the new settlers. What deep snow, what narrow roads, what great, dark, sombre woods we drove through. How solemn the meetings in those humble homes! How poor some of the people were—little clearings in great forests; rough, unhewn logs, with trough roofs. How those people did sing! What loud amens! I almost seem to hear them now.

I had an uncle settled in the bush not far from Owen Sound. I remember distinctly going with him and his family to meeting one winter's day. We had a yoke of oxen and a big sleigh.

"Whoa! Haw! Gee!" and the old woods rang as we drove slowly to that "Gospel meeting" through the deep, deep snow in those early days. Then, as now, the cursed liquor traffic was to the front, and many a white man went by the board and ruined himself and family under its baneful influence. Many a poor Indian was either burned, or drowned, or killed in some other way, because of the trade which was carried on through this death-dealing stuff. The white man's cupidity, and selfishness, and gross brutality too often found a victim in his weaker red brother.

Very early in my childhood I was made to witness scenes and listen to sounds which were more of "hell than earth," and which made me, even then, a profound hater of the vile stuff, as also of the viler traffic.

My father, who was a strong temperance man, had many a "close call" in his endeavors to stop this trade, and to save the Indians from its influence he incurred the hatred of both white and red men of the vilest class.

Once when I was walking with him through the Indian village of Newash, I saw an Indian

under the influence of liquor come at us with his gun pointed. I was greatly startled, and wondered what father would do; but he merely stood to face him, and, unbuttoning his coat, dared the Indian to shoot him; and this bold conduct on father's part made the drunken fellow slink away, muttering as he went. Ah! thought I, what a brave man father is; and this early learned object-lesson was not lost on the little boy who saw it all.

Whiskey, wickedness and cowardice were on one side, and on the other, manliness, pluck and righteousness.

About this time, when I was between six and seven years of age, my father arranged to go to college. He left my brother David with our uncle, who lived up in the bush, and myself with a Mr. Cathey, who taught the Mission School at Newash.

I well remember the stormy winter's morn, when father and mother started for the long journey, as it seemed to me, through the forests of Ontario, from Owen Sound to Cobourg. I thought my little heart would break, and mother was quite broken up with grief with the parting

from her boys, and, no doubt, father felt it keenly; but his strong will was master, and believing in Providence, he took this step, as he thought, in the path of duty and in the interest of each one of us.

CHAPTER II.

Guardians—School—Trip to Nottawasaga—Journey to Alderville—Elder Case—The wild colt, etc.

My guardians were good and kind people, and I never can forget the interest they took in me, but they believed in industry and thrift, and indeed had sore need to, for the salary of a teacher on an Indian mission in those days was very small. My time was spent in going to school, in carrying wood and water, and running errands.

During this time my guardians made a trip to the Nottawasaga country, and I went along. Our mode of transport was an open boat, and we coasted around Cape Rich and down the bay past Meaford and Thornbury, and I remember one night we camped on the beach where the town of Collingwood now stands. There was nothing then but a "cedar swamp," as near as I can recollect. Finally we came to the mouth of

the Nottawasaga River, where we left our boat, and made a walking trip across country to Sunnidale, and while to-day the whole journey is really very short "by rail" or "steamboat," then to my boyish mind, the distance was great and the enterprise something heroic.

Those deep bays, those long points, those great sand-hills, how big then, and long, this all seemed to me; and yet, how all this has dwindled down with the larger "experience of life."

While at Sunnidale, I spent some of my time fishing for "chubb" in a small mill-pond, and, one day to my great surprise, caught a most wonderful fish or animal, I could not tell which. It finally turned out to be a "mud-turtle." How to carry it home puzzled me. However, eventually I succeeded in bringing the strange thing to the house. Somebody told me to put it down and stand on its back, and it was so strong and I so little that it could move with my weight.

Often since then I have seen a big Indian, with a big saddle, and load of buffalo meat all on the back of a small pony, and I have thought of my "mud-turtle" and my ride on its back.

Father did not remain very long at "college."

An opening came to him to go to Alderville and become the assistant of "Elder Case," in the management of an industrial school situated at that place.

Father in turn opened the way for my guardian, Mr. Cathey, who became teacher at this institution, and accordingly we moved to Alderville.

This was a great trip for me—by steamboat from Owen Sound to Coldwater, by stage to Orillia, by steamboat to Holland Landing, by stage to Toronto, and by steamboat from Toronto to Cobourg. All this was an eye and mind opener—those wonderful steamboats, the stage-coach, the multitude of people, the great city of Toronto, for even in 1850 this was to me a wonderful place. To be with mother and father once more, what joy! New scenes, a new world had opened to my boyish imagination. I felt pity for the people away there in Owen Sound, shut in by forests and rocks. I commiserated my little brother in thought, left as he was on the bush farm, under the limestone crags. What did he know? What could he see? Why, I was away up in experience and knowledge. In

vain, folks might call me "Little Johnnie." I was not little in my own conceit, for I had travelled ; I was somebody.

Here I saw the venerable Elder Case ; I think I may safely call him the Apostle of Indian Missions in Canada. He took me on his knee, and placing his hand on my head, gave me his blessing. Then there was his sweet womanly daughter. She was as an "Angel of Grace" to my boyish heart. She lifted me into the realm of chivalry. I would have done all in my power at her bidding. How these memories have been as a benediction all through life and kept me from going astray, many a time in my youth !

In the meantime a little sister was born. We named her Eliza, after Miss Case. The Indians called her No No-Cassa, or humming-bird, for she was a great crier ; nevertheless, she grew to womanhood, became the wife of a Hudson's Bay Company's officer, who later on was made an Honorable Senator. To-day my sister is a widow, and is living near the historic city of Edinburgh, overseeing the education of her youngest son, who is attending one of the famous schools of "Old Scotland."

Father's life at Alderville was a busy one: the boys to manage, and some of those grown into young men were very unruly; the farm to run, coupled with circuit and mission work. Many a ride I had with him to meetings in that vicinity. Elder Case had a fine mare; no one else could handle her like father. She had a colt, now grown to be a great big horse, black as coal and wild also. He had broken all his halters heretofore, but father made one of strong rope which held him, and then proceeded to break him in.

One day as father was leading this colt, he called me to him, and lifted me on his back. Fear and pride alternated in my mind, but finally the latter ruled, for I was the first one to ride him. Many a broncho have I broken since then, but I never forget the ride on Elder Case's black colt.

CHAPTER III.

Move into the far north—Trip from Alderville to Garden River—Father's work—Wide range of big steamboat—My trip to Owen Sound—Peril in storm—In store at Penetanguishene—Isolation—First boat—Brother David knocked down.

OUR stay at Alderville was not a long one. Within a year my father was commissioned by the Church to open a mission somewhere in the north country, among the needy tribes who frequented the shores of lakes Huron and Superior.

After prospecting, he determined to locate near the confluence of the "Soo" and Garden rivers.

Behold us, then, moving out by wagon, on to Cobourg, and taking steamboat from there to Toronto; from thence staging across to Holland Landing. Then going aboard the steamer *Beaver*, we landed one evening at Orillia, took stage at once, and pounded across many cor-

duroy bridges to Coldwater, where, in the early morning, we went aboard the little side-wheeler *Gore,* and then out to Owen Sound, where my brother David joined us, and we sailed across Georgian Bay, up through the islands into the majestic river which connects these great lakes, and landed at the Indian village of Garden River.

I am now in my ninth year, and, as father says, quite a help.

We rented a small one-roomed house from an Indian, and into this we moved from the steamboat. Whiskey was king here. Nearly all the Indians were drunk the first night of our arrival. Such noise and din! We children were frightened, and very glad when morning dawned.

Things became more quiet, and now we went to work to build a mission house, a church, and a school-house.

Father was everywhere—in the bush chopping logs, among the Indians preaching the Gospel, and fighting the whiskey traffic. I drove the oxen and hauled the timber to its place. I interpreted for father in the home

and by the wayside. My brother and myself fished, picked berries, did anything to supplement our scanty fare, for father's salary was only $320, and prices were very high. In our wanderings after berries I had to be responsible for my brother. The Indian boys would go with us. Every little while I would shout, "David, come on!" They would take it up, "Dape-tic-o-mon!" This was how the sounds came to their ears. This they would shout; and this they named my brother, and the name still sticks to him in that country.

My Indian name was "Pa-ke-noh-ka" ("the Winner"). I earned this by leaving all boys of my age in foot-races. After some months of hard work we got the home up, and moved into it. Then the school-house was erected.

A wonderful change was going on in the meantime. The people became sober. To see any drunk became the exception. A strong temperance feeling took hold of the Indians. Many of them were converted. Though but a boy, I could not help but see and note all the changes. What meetings I attended with father in the houses, and camps, and sugar-bushes of the people!

Our means of transport were, in summer, by boat and canoe, and in winter, by sleigh and snow-shoes.

Many a long trip I had with father in sail or Mackinaw boat, away up into Lake Superior, then down to the Bruce Mines, calling *en route* and preaching to a few Indians who lived at Punkin Point. We sailed where the wind would let us. Then father would pull and I would steer, on into the night, across long stretches and along what seemed to me interminable shores.

How sleepy I used to be! How often I wondered if father ever became tired. He would preach, and pray, and sing, and then pull, as if he was fresh all the time.

Then, in winter, with our little white pony and jumper, which my father had made, we would take the same trips. Sometimes the ice would be very dangerous, and father would take the reins out of the rings and give them to me straight from the horse's mouth, saying, "If she breaks through, John, keep her head above water if you can." And then father would take the axe he carried and run ahead, trying the ice

as he ran. And thus we would reach those early settlements and Indian camps, where father was always welcome.

In summer, in coming to or from Lake Superior, we always portaged at the "Soo," on the American side.

Coming down father would put me ashore at the head of the rapids, and he would run them.

While we were in that country the Americans built their canal.

Father was chaplain for the Canal Company for a time.

I saw a big "side-wheeler" being portaged across for service on Lake Superior. It took months to do this. By and by I saw great vessels locking through the canal.

Our Indians got out timber for the canal. Some of my first earnings I made in taking out timber to floor the canal.

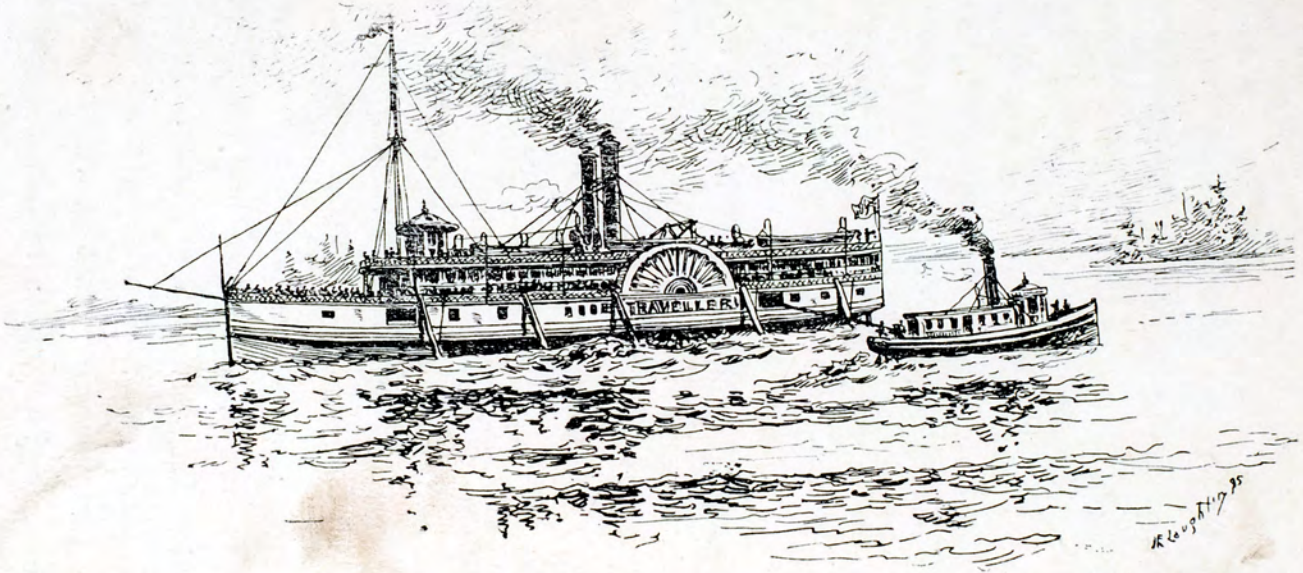
Father became well acquainted with the Canal Company. Once a number of the directors with the superintendent came to Garden River in one of their tugs, and prevailed on father to join the party. He took me along.

Away we flew down the river, and when near

the mouth on the American side, we met a yawl pulling up stream. Who should this be but the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Sir George Simpson. He stood up in his boat and hailed us, and told us that a big steamer named the *Traveller*, was aground over between the islands. She had started to cross over to the Bruce Mines and come up the other channel. He said you will confer a great favor if you go over and give her all the help you can. She is loaded with passengers, and they are running great risks should a storm come on before she is got off.

Accordingly we went to the rescue, and as a messenger from Providence were we welcomed by the great ship. We launched a nice little log canoe that father had taken along, and he got into it and felt and sounded a way for us, for our small vessel drew almost as much water as the big one; but father piloted our tug close to the great vessel. Soon we had a big hawser hitched to the stern of the steamer.

I well remember the time, for I was in the cabin at supper when our tug, with all steam on and with a jump, gathered in all the slack.



THE "TRAVELLER" IN DISTRESS—(*See page 31*).

What a jerk! and then snap went the big rope as though it had been so much thread, and away I went to the other end of the small cabin. Crockery, cutlery, and boy brought up in a promiscuous heap. Then we broke another big rope in vain, and it was concluded that the most of our passengers should go on to the steamer, and father should p lot the tug over to the Canadian side, where there was a big scow or lighter, and bring the latter, and thus lighten the ship.

Darkness was now on the scene, and the big ship, all lit up, presented a weird sight stuck on a bar and in great danger if the wind should come off the lake, which fortunately it did not.

Father started with the tug at first peep of day, and about two o'clock in the afternoon came back to us with the big barge in tow. This was placed alongside the steamer, and all hands went to work to lighten her.

In the meantime two anchors were got out astern. One of these was to be pulled upon by the windlass, and the other by the passengers—for there were some three hundred on board. Everybody worked with a will, and soon all was ready. Steam up on the steamer, our tug hitched to her

ready to pull, the passengers ranged along the rope from one anchor away astern, the other rope from another anchor on the windlass. Some of the crew rolled the ballast barrels to and fro, to cause the ship to roll, if possible. When all was ready the whistle blew, and all steam was put on both big and little ships, the passengers pulled as for life, the capstan turned, the big vessel seemed to quiver and straighten, and after moments of great suspense began to move backwards off the shoal. What shouting, what cheering, once more the huge ship was afloat!

As it was now late we started for the Bruce Mines, our tug taking the lead and the steamer following. About dark we reached the docks at the Bruce Mines, where we lay all night.

Our watchman slept at his post, and allowed the big ship to get away ahead of us in the morning, but when we did start, we flew. Our superintendent was determined to overhaul her before she could reach the "Soo," and so he did, overtaking and passing her in Big Lake George, while she was scratching her way over the shoal, which at that time was not dredged out as now.

Then, when the last boat went east in the fall, all that western and upper country was left without communication until spring opened again.

Under these circumstances you can imagine with what eagerness we looked for the first boat of the season.

I well remember I was hauling timber to the river bank with a yoke of oxen, some little ways down from the Mission, when the boat came along. All I could do was to wave my gad and shout her welcome. Looking up the river, I saw my brother Dave, with father's double-barrelled gun, standing to salute the first steamer. Dave either did not know or had forgotten that father had put in an unusual big charge for long shooting, and when the boat came opposite to him he fired the first barrel, and the gun knocked him over. The passengers and crew of the steamer cheered him, and, nothing daunted, he got up, fired the second barrel, and again was knocked over. This was great fun for the steamboat people, and they cheered David, and threw him some apples and oranges, which he, dropping the gun, and run-

ning to the canoe, was soon out in the river gathering.

Some of this time mother was very sick, and David and I had all the work to do about the house—wash, scrub, bake, cook, inside and outside. We found plenty to do. When not wanted at home we went fishing and hunting. Then I found employment in teaming.

I worked one winter for an Indian, hauling saw-logs out of the woods to the river bank. He gave me fifty cents per day and my board. In the summer. I sometimes sold cordwood on commission for Mr. Church, the trader, and when he put up a saw-mill, a couple of miles down the river, I several times got out a lot of saw-logs and rafted them down to the mill.

I also hauled cordwood on to the dock with our pony and a sleigh, for there were no carts or wagons in the country at that time, nor yet had we the means to buy them.

I think I made a good investment with my first earnings, a part of which I expended in the purchase of a shawl for my mother, and a part I saved for the next missionary meeting as my subscription thereto.

Father was stationed for six years at Garden River.

During this time he sent me down to Owen Sound for one winter, in order that I might attend the public school, there being none nearer to which I might have access. I must have been eleven or twelve years of age at this time. My parents put me on the steamer—the *Kalloola*. I was placed in care of the mate, and away we went for the east. All went well until we reached Killarney; then we struck out into the wide stretch of Georgian Bay. It must have been the middle of the afternoon that we took our course out into the "Big Lake." In the evening the wind freshened, the sky became dark, the scuds thickened, and there was every indication of a storm. The captain shook his head; old Bob, the mate, looked solemn; everything was put ship-shape.

Down came the storm, and for some hours it seemed doubtful whether we should weather it. Some of the bulwarks of our side-wheeler were smashed in. Our vessel labored heavily. Passengers were alarmed; some of them who had been gambling and cursing and swearing during

the previous fine portion of the voyage, were the most excited and alarmed of the lot. The captain had to severely reprimand them at last.

Again I took mental note that loudness and profanity are not evidences of pluck or manliness.

Old Bob was about to lock me in my stateroom, but I pleaded to be allowed to remain with him on deck. Signals of distress were made. The captain thought we were in the vicinity of an island, and if we could be heard, some fishermen might light a beacon-fire, and thus we might be saved by getting under the lee of the island.

The danger was imminent. Anxiety and sustained suspense were written on every face, when suddenly through the black night and raging storm there flashed in view a glimmer of light. Presently this assumed shape, and the captain was right, and we were near an island; and in a little while, by dint of strong effort, we were in the lee of the same and safe for the while. Then I went to sleep, and when I awoke we were far on our course, and in due time reached Owen Sound. I went to my uncle's, about two miles in the country, but still it was hard to distinguish very much between town and country.

From my uncle's kind but humble home, I wended my way every school-day to the old log school-house in Owen Sound. The teacher believed in "pounding it in," for, like now, "*Children's heads were hollow.*" I saw a great deal of flogging, but somehow or another, missed being flogged at that school. Through the rain and mud, through the snow and slush, through the winter's cold, I plodded back and forth morning and evening from school to the little log-house under the limestone cliffs.

This last autumn, in company with my cousin, Captain George MacDougall (who was born in this log-house), we drove out to look at the spot once more. The farm, hill, and cliffs were there, but the house was gone. Here we had sheltered and played and grown, and felt it was home—now it was gone. A strange home was built near the spot, stranger people lived in it, and with feelings of melancholy we turned away.

Twice during that winter I had intermission from school. Another uncle came along and took me down to Meaford, where my grandparents lived, and this gave me a delightful visit and a holiday as well.

Another time I was chopping and splitting wood in the morning, before starting for school, when the axe slipped, and I almost cut my foot in two. Alas! I had my new boots on—long boots at that. No one knows how much sacrifice my father and mother made to provide me with those boots. I went and got my measure taken. Every other day or so I went to see if the village shoemaker had finished them. At last, after weary waiting, they were finished. How proudly I carried them home. With what dignity I walked to school with them on! Very few boys in those days had "long boots," and now alas! alas! I had cut one of them almost in two. That was the thought that was uppermost in my mind, while my aunt was dressing my foot and saying "Poor Johnnie," and pitying me with her big heart; and I was, so far as my foot was concerned, rather glad, because it bespoke another holiday from school. But my boot—could it ever be mended? would it ever look as it had? Oh, this worried me a lot.

Early next summer I went back to Garden River, and was delighted to be home again. Then

father found a place for me in the store of Mr. Edward Jeffrey, at Penetanguishene, and to which place I went on the same old steamer. We happened to reach there late one evening, when the whole town was in a blaze of burning tallow. Every window had a candle in it, and we on the boat, as we steamed up the bay, could not help but wonder what had happened, but presently as we neared the wharf someone shouted across to us, "Sebastapol is taken; Sebastapol is taken!"

Here was a "national" spirit in earnest. Away in the heart of Europe British soldiers were in conflict; they and their allies won a victory, and out here in the heart of this continent, a hamlet on the shore of this distant bay is aflame with joy. Why, I walked from the wharf to my future home amid a blaze of light. Every seven-by-nine had a tallow-dip behind it.

Here, for about nine months, I worked in the store and on the farm. The greater part of our customers were "French," and I soon picked up the vernacular, and became quite at home in serving them.

One day when I was in the store alone, a

drunken Indian came in and wanted me to give him something; in fact, demanded it. I refused, and he drew his long knife and started around the counter after me. When he came near I vaulted over the counter, and for some time we kept this up, I hoping someone would come in, and failing that, I wanted time to reach the door, which I finally secured, and throwing it open, called for help, when the crazy fellow took to his heels. I would have thankfully informed on the man who gave him the liquor, but did not like to push the poor Indian.

Here I was given one suit of clothes and my board for my work, which always was so much; besides I learned a lot which has been useful to me all through life.

Summer came, and with it my father, who took me home with him. This time we drove to Barrie, and then took the train to Collingwood.

This was my first ride on a railroad; my thought was, how wonderfully the world is progressing.

CHAPTER IV.

Move to Rama—I go to college—My chum—How I cure him — Work in store in Orillia — Again attend college—Father receives appointment to "Hudson's Bay"—Asks me to accompany him.

AFTER six years of great toil, and a good deal of privation, father was moved to Rama, and now a bright new field was opening before me, for father had determined to send me to Victoria College. I was now nearly fourteen years old, and would have been better suited at some good public school, but father had great faith in "Old Victoria," and at that time there was a preparatory department in connection with the college. So, soon after we were settled at Rama, I went on to Cobourg.

I was early, and it was several days before college opened. Oh, how lonesome I was, completely lost in those strange surroundings. I had a letter to Dr. Nelles, and because of my father

he received me graciously, and I felt it was something to have a grand, good father, such as I had; but it was days before I became in any way acquainted with the boys.

I was looked upon as an Indian; in fact, I was pointed out by one boy to another as the "Indian fellow." "Oh," said the other boy, "where does he come from?" and to my amazement and also comfort, for it revealed to me that these very superior young gentlemen did not know as much as I gave them credit for, the other said, "Why, he comes from Lake Superior at the foot of the Rocky Mountains;" and yet this boy was about voicing the extent of general knowledge of our country in those days.

I was given a chum, and he was as full of mischief and conceit as boys generally are in the presence of one not so experienced as they are.

My father thought I might be able to go through to graduation, and therefore wanted me to take up studies accordingly.

Latin was one of the first I was down for; this was in Professor Campbell's room.

We filed in the first morning, and he took our

names, and said he was glad to see us, hoped we would have a pleasant time together, etc., and then said, "Gentlemen, you can take the first declension for to-morrow."

What was the first declension, what did you do with it, how learn it, how recite it? My, how these questions bothered me the rest of the day! I finally found the first declension. I made up my mind that I would be the first to be called on to-morrow. Oh, what a stew I was in! I dared not ask anybody for fear of "ridicule," and thus I was alone. I staid in my room, I pored over that page of my Latin grammar, I memorized the whole page. I could have repeated it backwards. It troubled me all night, and next day I went to my class trembling and troubled; but, to my great joy, I was not called upon, and without having asked anyone, I saw through the lesson, and a load went off my mind.

After that first hour in the class-room, I saw then that after all I was as capable as many others around me, and was greatly comforted. But my rascal of a chum, noticing that I stuck to my Latin grammar a great deal, one day when I was out of the room, took and smeared

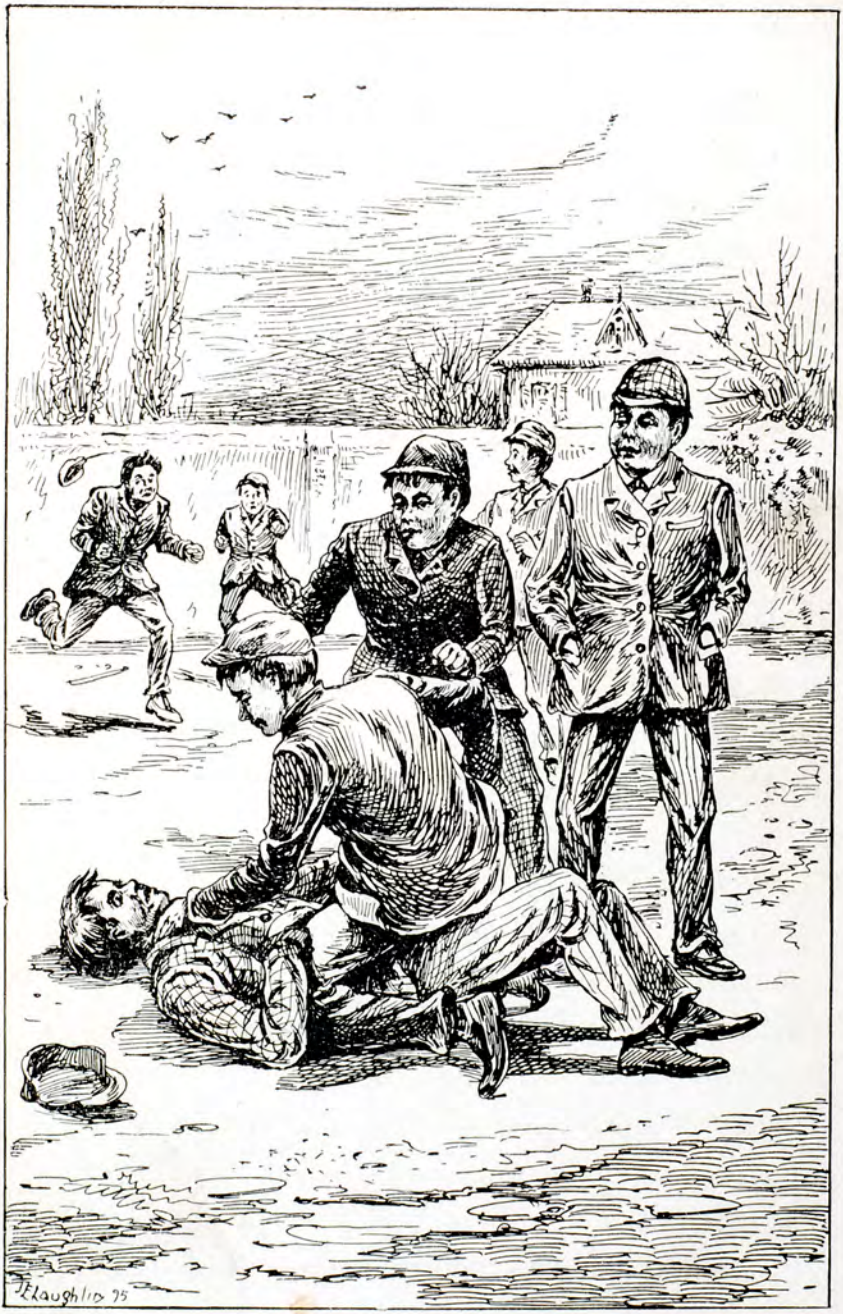
the pages of my lesson with mucilage and shut the book, and destroyed that part for me, and put me in another quandary.

However, I got over that, and "laid low" for my chum, for soon he was again at his tricks. This time he knotted and twisted my Sunday clothes, as they hung in the room.

And now my temper was up, and I went out on to the playground, and found him among a crowd, and caught him by the throat and tripped him up and got on him, and said, "You villain! You call me an Indian; I will Indian you, I will—scalp you!" And with this, with one hand on his throat, I felt for my knife with the other, when he began to call "Murder!" The boys took me off, and I laid my case before them, and showed them how the young rascal had treated me. And now the crowd took my part, and I was introduced.

After that everybody knew me, and I had lots of friends.

Before long I cleaned out the crowd in running foot-races, and was no slouch, as the boys said, at "long jump" and "hop, step and jump." This made me one of the boys, and even my chum began to be proud of me.



HOW I CURED MY CHUM—(*See page 46.*)

But my greatest hardship was lack of funds, even enough to obtain books, or paper and pencils. Once I borrowed twenty-five cents from one of the boys, and after a few days he badgered me for it, and kept it up until I was in despair and felt like killing him. Then I went to one of the "Conference students" and borrowed the twenty-five cents to give to my persecutor; and then daily I wended my way to the post-office, hoping for a remittance, but none came for weeks, and when one came, it had the great sum of "one dollar" in it. How gladly I paid my twenty-five cents debt, and carefully hoarded the balance of my dollar. Christmas came, and most of the boys went home; but though I wanted to go home and my parents wanted me very much, and though it took but a few dollars to go from Cobourg to Barrie, the few were not forthcoming, and my holidays were to go back to Alan-wick amongst my father's old friends, those with whom he had worked during his time under Elder Case, and who received me kindly for my father's sake.

Soon the busy months passed, and then con-

vocation and holidays, and I went back to Rama and enjoyed a short holiday by canoeing down to Muskoka, having as my companions my cousin Charles and my brother David.

We had a good time, and when we came home I engaged to work for Thomas Moffatt, of Orillia, for one year, for $5.00 per month and my board.

My work was attending shop, and one part especially was trading with the Indians.

Of these we had two classes—those who belonged to the reserve at Rama, and the pagans who roamed the "Muskoka country." Having the language and intimate acquaintance with the life and habits of these people, I was as "to the manner born," and thus had the advantage over many others.

Many a wild ride I have had with those "Muskoka fellows." If we heard of them coming, I would go to meet them with a big team and sleigh, and bring them and their furs to town, and after they had traded would take them for miles on their way.

While in town we would try and keep them from whiskey, but sometimes after we got

started out some sly fellow would produce his bottle, and the drinking would begin, and with it the noise and bluster; and I would be very glad when I got them out of my sleigh and had put some distance between us.

Right across from us was another store, the owner of which had been a "whiskey trader" the greater part of his life.

One morning I was taking the shutters off our windows, when a man galloped up in great haste and told me he was after a doctor, that there was someone either freezing or frozen out on the ice in the bay, a little below the village; and away he flew on his errand.

"The old whiskey trader" happened just then to come to the door of his store, and I told him what I had heard. With a laugh and an oath he said, "John, I'll bet that is old Tom Bigwind, the old rascal. (Poor Tom, an Indian, was the victim of drunkenness, and this man had helped to make him so.) He owes me, and I suppose he owes you also. Well, I will tell you what we will do; you shall take his old squaw, and I will take his traps."

My boyish blood was all ablaze at this, but as

he was a "white-headed old man," I turned away in disgust.

I then went in to breakfast, and when I came out I had an errand down the street, and presently met the "Old Trader," all broken up and crying like a child. I said, "What is the matter?" and he burst out, "Oh, it is George! Poor George!" "What George?" said I; and he said, "My son! my son!" And then it flashed upon me—for I knew his son, like "Old Tom," the Indian, had become a victim of the same curse.

Ah! thought I, this is retribution quick and now.

I went on down to the town hall, into which the lifeless body had been brought, and there, sure enough, was *poor George's body, chilled to death out on the ice while drunk!*

One of the gentlemen present said to me, "John, you must go and break this sad event to his wife."

I pleaded for someone else to go, but it was no use. I was acquainted with the family, had often received kind notice from this poor woman who now in this terrible manner was widowed, and with a troubled heart I went on my sad errand.

What had spoken to her? No human being had been near the house that morning, and yet, with blanched face, as if in anticipation of woe, she met me at the door.

I said, "Be calm, madam, and gather your strength," and I told her what had happened. It seemed to age me to do this; what must it have been to this loving wife to listen to my tale! She sat as dead for a minute, and then she spoke. "John, I will go with you to my husband;" and, leaning and tottering on my arm, I took her to where her dead husband lay.

It is awful to stand by the honorable dead when suddenly taken from us while in the prime and vigor of life, but this seemed beyond human endurance. No wonder I hate this accursed traffic.

I was very busy and happy during my stay in Orillia. My employer and his good wife were exceedingly kind, and I became acquainted with many whose friendship I value and esteem today. At the end of the year I had saved all but $10 of my $60 salary, and with this to the good and with father's hearty encouragement, I started for college once more.

This time I was at home at once. Even the old halls and class-rooms seemed to welcome me. Dr. Nelles took me by the hand in a way which, in turn, took my heart. I received great kindness from Dr. Harris and Dr. Whitlocke, Mr. (now Dr.) Burwash and Mr. (now Dr.) Burns. I had these grand men before me as ideals, and I strove to hold their friendship.

That year at college, 1859-60, is a green spot in my memory. It opened to me a new life; it gave me the beginnings of a grip of things; it originated, or helped to, within me a desire to think for myself. Everywhere—on the playground, in the class-rooms, in the college halls, in the students' room—I had a good time. I was strong and healthy, and, for my age, a more than average athlete. I could run faster and jump farther than most of the students or town-boys. I knew my parents were making sacrifices to keep me at college, and I studied hard to make the most of my grand opportunity.

Thus the months flew almost too quickly, and college closed and I went home; and, being still but a young boy, was glad to see my mother and brothers and sisters, and to launch the canoe and

fish by the hour for bass and catfish, and even occasionally a maskinonge.

Why, even now I seem to feel the thrill of a big black bass's bite and pull.

What excitement, what intense anxiety, and what pride when a big fellow was safely landed in my canoe !

One day I was lazily paddling around Limestone Point. The lake was like a mirror. I was looking into the depths of water, when presently I saw some dark objects. I slowly moved my canoe to obtain a right light, so as to see what this was, when to my surprise I made out the dark things to be three large catfish.

Quietly I baited my hook and dropped it down, down, near the mouth of one. They seemed to be sleeping. I gently moved my baited hook, until I tickled the fellow's moustache. Then he slowly awoke and swallowed my hook. I pulled easily, and without disturbing the others put him in my canoe, and repeated this until the trio were again side by side.

This was great sport—this was great luck for our table at home.

In a little while Conference sat, and my father was appointed to Norway House, Hudson's Bay.

This news came like a clap of thunder into our quiet home at Rama. Hudson's Bay—we had a very vague idea where that was; but Norway House, who could tell us about this?

Now, it so happened that we were very fortunate, for right beside us lived Peter Jacobs. Peter had once been a missionary, and had been stationed at Norway House and Lac-la-Pliue; therefore to Peter I went for information. He told me Norway House was north of Lake Winnipeg, on one of the rivers which flow into the Nelson; that it was a large Hudson's Bay Company's fort, the head post of a large district; that our mission was within two miles of the fort; that the Indians were quiet, industrious, peaceable people; "in fact," said he, "the Indians at Norway House are the best I ever saw."

All this was comforting, especially to mother. But as to the route to be travelled, Peter could give but little information.

He had come and gone by the old canoe route, up the Kaministiqua and so on, across the height of land down to Lake Winnipeg.

We were to go out by another way altogether. I began to study the maps. This was somewhere I had not been told anything about at school.

In the meantime father came home. And though I did hope to work my way through college, when my father said, "My son, I want you to go with me," that settled it, and we began to make ready for our big translation.

CHAPTER V.

From Rama to St. Paul's—Mississippi steamers—Slaves —Pilot—Race.

EARLY in July, 1860, we started on our journey. I am now in my seventeenth year. We sailed from Collingwood on an American propeller, which brought us to Milwaukee, on Lake Michigan. Here we took a train through a part of Wisconsin to Lacrosse, on the Mississippi River, which place we reached about midnight, and immediately were transferred to a big Mississippi steamer.

Here everything was new—the style and build of the boat, long and broad and flat, made to run in very shallow water.

The manner of propelling this huge craft was a very large wheel, as wide as the boat, and fixed to the stern, and which in its revolutions fairly churned the waters in her wake.

The system of navigation was so different;

the pilot steered the boat, not by his knowledge of the fixed channel, but by his experience of the lights and shadows on the water which by day or night indicated to him the deep and shallow parts.

Passengers and mails had no sooner been transferred, than tinkle! tinkle! went the bells, and our big steamer quivered from stem to stern, and then began to vibrate and shake as if in a fit of ague, and we were out in the stream and breasting the current of this mighty river.

Dancing was going on in the cabin of the boat when we went on board; but soon all was quiet except the noise of the engines and the splash of the paddles.

Next morning we were greeted with beautiful river scenery. Long stretches, majestic bends, terraced banks, abrupt cliffs succeeded each other in grand array.

During the day we came to Lake Pepin, and here were joined to another big steamer. The two were fastened together side by side to run the length of the lake, and also to give the passengers of the other boat opportunity to come aboard ours, and be entertained by music and dancing.

The colored steward and waiters of our boat were a grand orchestra in themselves.

One big colored man was master of ceremonies. Above the din of machinery and splashing of huge paddles rose his voice in stentorian tones: "Right!" "Left!" "Promenade!" "Change partners!" "Swing partners!" And thus the fun went on that bright afternoon; while, like a pair of Siamese twins, our big stern-wheelers ploughed up the current of the "Big River," this being the literal translation of the word Mississippi.

Both boats had crowds of Southern people and their slaves as passengers; and if what we saw was the whole of slavery, these were having a good time. But, as the colored barber on our boat said to me, "This is the very bright side of it."

And then he asked me if we were not English. And when I told him we were Canadians, he wanted me to ask father to help some of these slaves to freedom. But it was not long after this when the mighty struggle took place which resulted in the freeing of all the slaves.

These were the days of steamboats on the Mississippi, which Mark Twain has immortalized.

From port to port the pilot reigned supreme.

What a lordly fellow he was! As soon as the boat was tied to the bank the captain and mate took the reins, and they drove with a vengeance, putting off or taking on freight at the stopping-places, and taking in cordwood from the barge towed alongside in order to save time.

They made those "roust-abouts" jump. The captain would cuff, and the mate would kick, and the two would vie with each other in profanity, and thus they rushed things; and when ready, the pilot with quiet dignity would resume his throne.

When the channel narrowed our boats parted, and to change the excitement began a race.

Throw in the pitch pine-knots, fling in the chunks of bacon! Make steam! more steam! is the meaning of the ringing of bells, and the messages which follow each other down from the pilot house to the engine room.

This time we seemed as yet to be about matched, when our rival pilot undertook to run between us and the bar, and in doing so ran his boat hard and fast in the sand.

We gave him a parting cheer and went on, reaching St. Paul some twenty-four hours ahead.

St. Paul, now a fine city, was then a mere village.

CHAPTER VI.

Across the plains—Mississippi to the Red—Pemmican—Mosquitoes — Dogs — Hunting—Flat boat—Hostile Indians.

We had reached the prairie country, woodland and plain intermixed.

We were now at the end of our steam transport service for this trip.

We did hope to catch the only steamer on the Red River of the North, but in this were disappointed.

The next question was how to reach the Red River; hundreds of miles intervened.

We found on inquiry that there were two means of crossing the country in sight—one by stage-coach, the other by Red River cart.

A brigade of these latter having just then come in from the north, father and I went out to the camp where these carts were, and the sight of them soon made father determine not

to travel with them. Our first sight of these Red River chariots was not favorable. I climbed into one, but did so carefully, fearing it would collapse with my weight. All the iron on it was a thin hoop on the hub, the whole thing being bound together with rawhide. "No, gentlemen, we were as yet too much 'tender-feet' to risk such vehicles."

Imagine mother and my sisters jogging hundreds of miles in those springless carts !

Father then went to interview the proprietors of the stage line, and concluded a bargain with them to take us from St. Paul to Georgetown, which place is on the Red River. Accordingly, one morning bright and early, and long before breakfast, we were rolling away up the eastern bank of the Mississippi—father, mother and sisters inside the coach, and myself up with the driver. Our pace was good, the country we were travelling through beautiful in its scenic properties.

We stopped for the first stage at St. Anthony's Falls. Here we had our breakfast.

If anyone that morning had said, "Just across yonder will stand one of the finest cities in

America, and that before many years," all the pessimists in the party would have laughed at such a prophecy, but I verily believe, father would have said, "Yes, it is coming."

Our drive that day took us across the Mississippi to the village of St. Cloud, where father, learning that the steamer on the Red River would not come up to Georgetown for some time, concluded to stay over until the next coach, one week later.

In the meantime we made a tent, and hunted prairie chicken, and studied German, or rather Germans, for these made up the greater part of the population.

Taking the next coach the following week, we continued our journey. Soon we left settlement behind, the people of the stage-houses and stopping-places being the only inhabitants along the route.

Many of these were massacred in the Sioux rising which took place shortly afterwards.

Our stages ranged from twelve to twenty miles, and we averaged seventy miles per day.

A great part of the route was beautifully undulating, and fresh scenes were before us all the while.

MY DELIGHT WAS TO DRIVE THE FOUR-IN-HAND—(*See page 65*).

My delight was to drive the four-in-hand, and the good-natured drivers would give me many an opportunity to do so.

It seemed like living to hold those reins, and swing around those hills and bowl through those valleys at a brisk trot or quick gallop.

By and by we reached the beginning of the Red River. We were across the divide; we were coursing down the country northward.

Hitherto it had been "up north" with us, but now, for years, it would be "down north."

These waters flowed into Hudson's Bay.

Presently we were on the great flat plain, which largely constitutes the valley of the Red River.

At the stopping-place, on the edge of this flat country, the stage people were about to leave the coach and hitch on to a broad-tired, springless wagon, but father simply put his foot down and we went on with our coach.

Talk about mosquitoes here, they were there by the millions. Such a night as we put in on the Breckinridge flats!

The stopping-place was unique of its kind —a dugout with a ridge-pole and small poles

leaned against this on two sides, and earth and sods placed over these poles, and some canvas hung at either end. The night was hot, the dugout, because of the cook-stove, hotter still, and the mosquitoes in countless numbers.

Mother and my sisters were in misery; indeed, we all were, but we comforted each other with the thought that it was for one night only, and that respite would come in the morning.

My bed was under the table on the mud floor. My companion for the night was the proprietor of this "one-roomed mud hotel." The next morning the driver for that day said to me, "Now, young man, make a good square meal, for to-night we will reach Georgetown, and you will have only dogs and pemmican to eat." I asked him what pemmican was, but he could not tell me. All he could do was to talk about it.

All day we drove over this great flat plain —rich soil, long grass; the only break was the fringing of timber along the river.

We had dinner and then supper, and again the driver would admonish us to partake heartily of bacon and bread, for to-night, said he, "we reach the land of pemmican."

My curiosity was greatly excited as to what pemmican might be.

Late in the evening we reached Georgetown. Here we were on the banks of the Red River, and at the end of our stage journey, and where we hoped to find a steamer to take us down to Fort Garry. Georgetown was situated a little north of the junction of Buffalo Creek with the Red River. The town consisted of one dwelling house and a storehouse, both belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Here, though not yet in the Hudson's Bay country, we were already in touch with this great company whose posts reached from here to the Arctic and dotted the country from the Labrador to the Pacific coast.

The gentleman in charge, a Mr. Murray, learning of our destination, with the usual courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, welcomed us heartily, and gave up his room to our family, and himself took up quarters with me in our tent, which we speedily pitched near the bank of the river.

That night, before we went to sleep, I inquired of Mr. Murray if he knew anything

about pemmican, and with a laugh he replied, "Yes, my boy, I was made acquainted with pemmican many years ago, and will be pleased to introduce you to some in the morning." I would fain have inquired about dogs, but my kind friend was already snoring. I could not sleep so soon. This strange, wild, new country we had travelled through for days, these Indian, and buffalo, and frontier stories I had listened to at the stopping-places, and heard from the drivers as we travelled—though born on the frontier yet all this was new to me. Such illimitable plains, such rich soil, such rank grass—there was a bigness about all this, and I could not help but speculate upon its possibility.

With the early morn we were up, and using the Red River as our wash-dish, were soon ready to investigate our new surroundings.

The first thing was pemmican. Mr. Murray took me to the storehouse, and here, sure enough, was pemmican in quantity. Cords of black and hairy bags were piled along the walls of the store. These bags were hard, and solid, and heavy. One which had been cut into was lying on the floor. Someone had taken an axe and

chopped right through hair and hide and pemmican, and here it was spread before me. My friend stooped and took some and began to eat, and said to me, "help yourself," but though I had not eaten since supper yesterday, and we had driven a long way after that, still the dirty floor, the hairy bag, the mixture of the whole, almost turned my stomach, and I merely said, "Thank you, sir." Ah! but soon I did relish pemmican, and for years it became my staple food.

It was a wonderful provision of Providence for the aboriginal man and the pioneer of every class.

For days we waited for the steamer; not a word reached us from anywhere. In the meantime, father and I hunted and fished; we shot duck and prairie chicken, and caught perch and pickerel, and catfish and mud-turtles, and explored the country for miles, though we were cautioned about Indians, a war-party of whom one might strike anywhere and any time.

The Red River was a sort of dividing line between the Ojibways and the Sioux, the former to the east and the latter to the west of this long fluid line of natural division.

By and by the steamer came, and, to our great disappointment the captain said he could not run her back down for the water was too low.

This captain was not of the kind of pioneer men who laugh at impossibilities.

The next thing was to load a flat-bottomed barge and float her down.

We were allowed to erect our tent on a portion of the deck of the scow, and soon we were moving down stream, having as motive power human muscle applied to four long sweeps.

Day and night, with change of men, our scow kept on down this slow-currented and tortuous stream. The only stop was to take on wood for our cooking stove. Here I learned to like pemmican.

CHAPTER VII.

From Georgetown on the Red to Norway House on the Nelson—Old Fort Garry—Governor MacTavish—York boats—Indian gamblers—Welcome by H. B. Co. people.

I THINK it was the sixth day out from Georgetown that we again entered Canada. Late in the evening of the eighth day we rounded the point at the mouth of the Assiniboine, and landed at Fort Garry.

It was raining hard, and mud was plentiful.

I climbed the banks and saw the walls and bastions of the fort, and looked out northward on the plains and saw one house.

Where that house stood, now stands the city of Winnipeg.

Fortunately for us a brigade of York boats was then loading to descend the rivers and lakes, and cross the many portages to York Factory on Hudson's Bay.

Father lost no time in securing a passage in one of these, which was to start the next morning. In the meantime, Governor MacTavish invited father and mother and sisters to quarters in his own home for the night.

My work was to transfer our luggage to the York boat, and then stay and look after it, for it was evident that our new crew were pretty well drunk.

Near dark we heard a strange noise up the Red, and one of the boatsmen said, "Indians coming!" And sure enough a regular fleet of wild, Red Lake Ojibways hove in sight, and singing and paddling in time, came ashore right beside us. Painted, and feathered, and strangely costumed, these were real specimens of North American Indians.

As was customary the Hudson's Bay Company served them out a "regale" of rum, and very soon the night was made hideous with the noise of their drunken bout.

I had a big time keeping them out of our boat, but here my acquaintance with their language served me in good turn.

Until near morning I kept my vigil in the

I HAD A BIG TIME KEEPING THEM OUT OF OUR BOAT—

(*See page 72*).

bow of our boat, and then our steersman woke up, and was sufficiently sobered to relieve me, and I took his blanket and slept a short time.

Early in the day we made our start for Norway House. This we trusted was our last transfer.

Our craft was an agreeable change to the clumsy barge. This was more like a bateau built and used on our eastern lakes, but lighter and stronger, capable of standing a good sea, and making good time under sail. We were manned with eight men and a steersman. One of the eight was the bowman.

With our eight big oars keeping stroke, we swept around the point and again took the Red for Lake Winnipeg and beyond. Our quarters in the open boat were small, and for our party, crowded, but we hoped to reach our destination in a few days.

We had but four hundred miles more to make to what was to be our new home.

We were now passing through the old Red River settlement, St. John's, St. Boniface, Kildonan, the homes of the people on either bank, many of these making one think that these folk literally believed in the old saw, "Man wants

but little here, nor wants that little long." Here, as everywhere in the North-West, the influence of the great herds of buffalo on the plain, and big shoals of fish in the lakes and rivers, was detrimental to the permanent prosperity of a people. You cannot really civilize a hunter or a fisherman until you wean him from these modes of making a livelihood.

We passed Stone Fort and Archdeacon Cowley's Mission, where for a lifetime this venerable servant of God labored for the good of men, on to the mouth of the Red, which we camped at the second day. We had many delays coming through the settlements, but now we were fairly off.

Up to this time father and I had not let our crew know that we understood the Ojibway, or as it was termed here, the Salteaux.

Often had we been much amused at the remarks some of these men had made about us, but seeing a muskrat near the boat, I forgot all caution and shouted in Indian to a man with a gun to shoot it. The man let the muskrat go because of his wonder at my use of the language. "Te wa," said he, "this fellow speaks as ourselves;" and then we became great friends.

Here for the first time in my life I found myself amongst "Indian gamblers."

Whenever we were wind-bound, some of the various crews (for there were a number of boats) would form gambling circles, and with drum and song play "Odd or Even," or something similar.

Here the man most gifted with mind-reading power would invariably come off the winner.

Our men seemed passionately fond of this kind of gambling, and it was one of the habits the missionary had to contend against, for to the Indian there was associated with this the supernatural and heathenish, and often these gambling circles break up for the time with a stabbing or shooting scrape.

Sometimes wind-bound, sometimes sailing, sometimes pulling, merely calling at Berens River post, where some ten or twelve years later Rev. E. R. Young began a mission, and presently we had gone the greater part of the length of Lake Winnipeg, had entered one of the outward and sea-bound branches of the Nelson, had crossed the island-dotted and picturesque Play-green Lake, had come down the Jack River, and on the tenth day from Fort Garry, pulled up at

Norway House, and met a very kind welcome from the Hudson's Bay Factor and his lady, and indeed from everbody.

We were still two miles from Rossville. Our new friends manned a boat and took us over. Here we found the Rev. Robt. Brooking and family; and as no news had preceded us, we brought them word of their being relieved. And great was their joy, and ours was not a little, for we had now reached our objective point for the present. Here was our home, and here were we to work and labor, each according to his ability.

CHAPTER VIII.

New mission—The people—School—Invest in pups—Dog-driving—Foot-ball—Beautiful aurora.

ROSSVILLE is beautifully situated on a rocky promontory which stretches out into the lake. All around are coves, and bays, and islands, and rivers. The water is living and good, the fish are of first quality, and in the season fowl of many kinds were plentiful. Canoe and boat in summer, dog-train in winter—these were the means of transport.

The only horse in the country belonged to the Mission, had been brought there by James Evans, and was now very old. We used him to plough our garden, and sometimes haul a little wood, but he was really a "superannuate."

The Indians were of the Cree nation, and spoke a dialect of that language, known as the Swampy Cree.

As there is a strong affinity between the Ojib-

way and the Cree, I began very soon to pick it up. As Peter Jacobs told me, these Indians were the best we had ever seen—more teachable, more honest, more willing to work, more respectful than any we had as yet come across.

Their occupation was, in summer, boating for the Hudson's Bay Company and free traders, and in winter, hunting.

There were no better, no hardier tripmen in the whole Hudson's Bay country than these Norway House Indians.

Between Lake Winnipeg and York Factory there are very many portages, and across these all the imports and exports for this part of the country must be carried on men's backs, and across some these big boats must be hauled. No men did the work quicker or more willingly than the men from our Mission at Rossville.

When we went to them their great drawback was the rum traffic. This was a part of the trade, but I am glad to say that soon after this time of which I write, the Hudson's Bay Company gave up dealing in liquor among the Indians.

This was greatly to their credit.

No wonder the Indian drank, for almost all white men with whom he came in contact did so; and even some of our own missionaries, greatly to my surprise, had brought into this Indian country those Old Country ideas of the use of stimulants.

But father soon inaugurated a new *régime*, and many of the Hudson's Bay people respected him for it, and helped him in his efforts against this truly accursed traffic.

In a few days Mr. Brooking and family left on their long journey to Ontario, and we settled down to home-life at Rossville.

My work was teaching, and I had my hands full, for my daily average was about eighty.

I had no trouble, the two years I taught at Norway House, to gather scholars. They came from the mainland and from the islands and from the fort, by canoe and dog-train.

My scholars were faithful in their attendance, but the responsibility was a heavy one for me, a mere boy. However, I was fresh from being taught and from learning, and I went to work enthusiastically, and was very much encouraged by the appreciation of the people.

After school hours I either took my gun and went partridge-hunting, or went and set my net for white-fish, to help make our pot boil.

On Saturdays I took one of my boys with me in my canoe, and we would paddle off down the lake or up the river, hunting ducks and other fowl.

When winter came—which it does very soon out there—I got some traps and set them for foxes.

Many a winter morning I rose at four o'clock, harnessed my dogs and drove miles and back in visiting my traps, reaching home and having breakfast before daylight, as it was necessary, for a part of the winter, to begin school as soon as it was good daylight.

Soon after we arrived I invested in four pups. I paid the mission interpreter, Mr. Sinclair, £2 sterling for the pups, on condition that he fed them until they were one year old.

In the meantime, for the first winter Mr. Sinclair kindly lent me some of his dogs. Everybody had dogs, and my pups promised to make a good train when they grew.

All my boy pupils were great "dog-drivers."

Many a Saturday morning, bright and early, my boys would rendezvous at the Mission, and we would start with staked wood-sleighs across the lake or up the river to the nearest dry wood bluff.

This, in my time, was three and four miles away, and what a string we would make—twenty-five or thirty boys of us, each with three or four dogs, all these hitched tandem; bells ringing, boys shouting, whips cracking, dogs screaming—away we would fly as fast as we could drive. What cared we for cold or storm!

When we reached the wood we would race as to who could chop and split and load first. What shouting and laughter and fun! and, when all were loaded, back across the ice as fast as we could go, all running.

Then we would pile our wood at the school-house or church, and, again agreeing to meet at the mission house in the afternoon, away home to their dinner my boys would drive, and by and by turn up, this time with flat sleds or toboggans; and now we would race across to the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, every man for himself, and when we got there we would challenge the

Company's employees to a game of foot-ball, for this was the national game of the North-West, and my boys were hard to beat.

Then back home by moon or Northern Light, making this ice-bound land like day. Ah! those were great times for the cultivation of wind and muscle and speed—and better, sympathy and trust.

Father, when home, held an English service at the fort once a week, and the largest room available was always full. Then we organized a literary society, which met weekly at the fort. Thus many a night we drove to and fro with our quick-moving dogs.

Sometimes we were surrounded by the "Aurora." Sometimes they seemed to touch us. One could hear the swish of the quick movement through the crisp, frosty atmosphere. What halos of many-colored light they would envelop us in! Forest and rock, ice and snow would become radiant as with heavenly glory. One would for the time almost forget the intense cold.

No wonder the Indian calls these wonderful phenomena "The Dancers," and says they are "the spirits of the departed." After all, who knows? I do not.

CHAPTER IX.

First real winter trip—Start—Extreme fatigue—Conceit all gone — Cramps — Change — Will-power — Find myself—Am as capable as others—Oxford House—Jackson's Bay.

DURING our first winter I accompanied father on a trip to Jackson's Bay and Oxford House. This is about 180 miles almost due north of Norway House, making a trip of 360 miles.

Our manner of starting out on the trip was as follows : William Rundle, father's hired man, went ahead on snow-shoes, for there was no track ; then came John Sinclair, the interpreter, with his dogs hitched to a cariole, which is a toboggan with parchment sides and partly covered in, in which father rode, and on the tail of which some of the necessary outfit was tightly lashed ; then came my train of dogs and sleigh, on which was lashed the load, consisting of fish for dogs and pemmican and food for men, kettles,

MY FIRST WINTER TRIP—(*See page 85*).

axe, bedding—in short, everything for the trip; then myself on snow-shoes, bringing up the rear.

Now, the driver of a dog-sleigh must do all the holding back going down hill; must right the sleigh when it upsets; keep it from upsetting along sidehills, and often push up hills; and, besides all this, urge and drive the dogs, and do all he can to make good time.

This was my first real winter trip with dogs, and I very soon found it to be no sinecure, but, on the contrary, desperate hard work.

Many a time that first day I wished myself back at the Mission.

The hauling of wood, the racing across to the fort—all that had been as child's play; this was earnest work, and tough at that.

My big load would cause my sleigh to upset; my snow-shoes would likewise cause me to upset. The dogs began to think, indeed, soon knew I was a "tenderfoot," and they played on me.

Yonder was William, making a bee-line for the north, and stepping as if he were going to reach the pole, and that very soon, and Mr. Sinclair was close behind him; and I, oh!

where was I, but far behind? Both spirit and flesh began to weaken.

Then we stopped on an island and made a fire; that is, father and the men had the fire about made when I came up. Father looked mischievous. I had bothered him to let me go on this trip.

However, the tea and pemmican made me feel better for a while, and away we went for the second spell, between islands, across portages, down forest-fringed rivers and bluffs casting sombre shadows. On my companions seemed to fly, while I dragged behind. Oh, how heavy those snow-shoes! Oh, how lazy those dogs! Oh, how often that old sleigh did upset! My! I was almost in a frenzy with mortification at my failure to be what I had presumed to think I was. Then I did not seem to have enough spirit left to get into a frenzy about anything.

When are they going to camp? Why don't they camp? These were questions I kept repeating to myself. We were going down a river. It was now late. I would expect to find them camped around the next point, but, alas! yonder they were disappearing around another

point. How often I wished I had not come, but I was in for it, and dragged wearily on, legs aching, back aching, almost soul aching.

Finally they did camp. I heard the axes ringing, and I came up at last.

They had climbed the bank and gone into the forest. I pushed my sleigh up and unharnessed my dogs, and had just got the collar off the last one in time to hear father say, "Hurry, John, and carry up the wood." Oh, dear! I felt more like having someone carry me, but there was no help for it.

Carrying ten and twelve feet logs, and you on snow-shoes, is no fun when you are an adept, but for a novice it is simply purgatory. At least I could not just then imagine anything worse than my condition was.

Snow deep and loose, by great dint of effort get the log on to your shoulder and then step out; bushes and limbs of trees, and your own limbs also all conspiring, and that successfully, to trip and bother, and many a fall is inevitable, and there is a great number of logs to be carried in, for the nights are long and cold.

William felled the trees and cut them into

lengths, and I grunted and grumbled under their weight in to the pile beside the camp.

At last I took off my snow-shoes and waded in the deep snow.

Father and his interpreter, in the meanwhile, were making camp—this was no small job. First, they went to work, each with a snow-shoe as a shovel, to clear the snow away for a space about twelve feet square, down to the ground or moss; the snow forming the walls of our camp. These walls were then lined with pine boughs, and the bottom was floored with the same material; then the fire was made on the side away from the wind. This would occupy the whole length of one side; except in the case of a snow-storm, there would be no covering overhead.

If the snow was falling thick some small poles would be stuck in the snow-bank at the back of the camp, with a covering of canvas or blankets which would form the temporary roof of the camp.

At last we were done; that is, the camp was made, the wood was carried, the fire was blazing.

Then the sleighs must be untied and what you

wanted for that time to take to camp, and then carefully must you re-wrap and re-tie your sleigh, and sometimes even make a staging on which to hang it to keep it and its contents from your dogs.

Many a time when provisions were short, and our dogs were very hungry, I have had to hang up not only all eatables, but the sleighs and harness also, for these were largely bound and made of leather and rawhide, and the hungry dogs would eat all of this if they had the chance.

Now comes supper, and while this is cooking we stand our frozen white-fish around the fire in order to thaw them, before we feed them to the dogs.

These we feed at night only; the poor fellows must go the twenty-four hours on one meal.

The ration at this time is six white-fish to each train of four dogs.

Each driver takes his dogs apart and stands, whip in hand, to prevent them robbing one another.

Supper and dogs fed, those who smoke light their pipes, and we dry our moccasins and duffils if these need it, and accounts of old trips and camp storms, etc., are in vogue.

Our fire is a big one, but our room is a big one also, being all out of doors, and while your face and front are burning, your back is freezing, and you turn around every little while to equalize things.

While all this was going on, my legs, unused to the snow-shoes' strain and the long tramp, are every little while causing me great pain by taking cramps. I do not say anything about this, but I think a lot. I know father understands the case, but except a twinkle of his eye he does not say anything.

Presently we make up our beds, and sing a hymn, and have prayer.

We lie down as we travelled, except our belts —coats and caps all on—and in order to keep warm, we should lay perfectly still. The least move will let the cold in.

But how was I to remain still when my legs refused to remain quiet. Every little while a cramp would take hold and the pain would be dreadful, but with desperation I would strive to keep still, for I was sleeping with father. I could not sleep, and when my legs ceased to pain, and I was about to fall asleep, father lit a

match and looked at his watch, and said, "Hurrah, boys, it is time to get up."

There was no help for it, and up we got.

The extreme cold and the dire necessity there was to brace up kept me alive that morning.

It was now about three o'clock, and we made a slight breakfast on pemmican and tea, had a short prayer, and tied on our bedding and camp outfit and harnessed our dogs—and mind you, this lashing and tying of sleds, and catching and harnessing of dogs, was hard on the fingers, and often very trying to the temper, for those cunning dogs would hide away in the bush, and sometimes we had to catch and tie the worst ones up before we made any move towards a start, or else they would run away.

It was now about four o'clock or a little after, and we retraced our track to the river and again turned our faces northward.

My companions seemed to leave me almost at once.

The narrow winding river, with its forest-clad banks, was dark and very cold and dreary. My legs were stiff, and my feet were already sore with the snow-shoe strings. My dogs were

indifferent to my urging. They knew I would not run out of the trail to get at them with my whip. I verily believe each dog thought he had a soft thing in having this "tenderfoot" as a driver.

Many a time that cold, dark winter's morning I wished I was at home or in Ontario.

I became sleepy. Even my slow-going dogs would leave me, and I would make a desperate effort and come up again, and thus the hours passed and we kept the river. After a long time, a terrible time to me, the day sky began to appear. Slowly the morning dawned, the cold intensified. I was in misery. I began to wonder where my friends would stop for breakfast.

Presently we came to a large lake. Out a mile or two, I could discern an island. Oh! thought I, there is where they will stop. They were near it already, and I began to hope for transient help and rest. Again I looked, and straight past it William took his course, and away yonder like a faint streak of blue, was a point he was making for.

How my hopes were dashed, and it seemed for a little I would have to give up.

I was now a considerable distance behind my dogs, when, all of a sudden, a feeling took hold of me, and I began to reason in this wise to myself. What is the matter with you? You are strong, you are capable. What are you doing behind here, ready to give up? Come! be a man. And I stepped out briskly, I began to run on those snow-shoes. I came up to those lazy dogs, and gave them such a shout; "they thought a small cyclone had struck them." Soon I was up opposite the island, and I ran away to its shore, and broke a long dry pole, and after my dogs I went, and brought it down alongside of them with another shout, and made them bound off, and picking up the pieces of broken pole, I let them fly at those dogs, and away we went, and presently I was in a glow, and the stiffness in my limbs was gone, and soon I came up to my companions, and said, "Where are you going to have breakfast?" And they said, "Across yonder," pointing to the blue streak in the distance. "Well, then," said I, "why don't you travel faster, and let us get there?" William looked at me, and father turned round in his cariole, to see if I was in earnest, and from

thenceforth, on that trip, as ever since I was all right.

I had found the secret. I had the capability to become a pioneer and frontiersman, and now I knew this, what a change came over me and has remained with me ever since.

No more whining and dragging behind, after that. My place was to the front, and in all the tripping and hardship and travel of the years I have kept there.

When we stopped for breakfast, father smiled upon me in a kind, new way. I had come up in his estimation. I overheard William say to Mr. Sinclair, "John is all right, he has found his legs."

Across Lake Winnipegoosis, over the portages, through the forests, up and down rivers, steadily we kept on our course.

At one of our encampments we made a "cache" of some fish and some pemmican.

This was for our return journey.

The manner of our doing so was to rake away the embers and coals from where we had the fire during the night and morning, and then dig a hole in the thawed ground, and put our provi-

sions in this hole, then cover with a few sticks, and put the earth back, until the place was full, then make a small fire just over the spot, and in going away kick some snow into the fire-place. This would soon freeze hard, and the ashes and embers would destroy the scent, and thus the cunning wolverine did not find our "cache."

We saw tracks of moose and cariboo. We saw a few foxes, and hundreds of white partridge.

At the southerly end of Oxford Lake we found a single camp of Indians, and stopped with them for the night.

They feasted us on young beaver, which was an agreeable change from pemmican.

There were seventeen of us in that camp for the night. It was circular, and may have been twelve feet in diameter. On the ground we lay, with our feet to the fire.

During the night I felt my foot very hot, and springing up, found that my part of the blanket was burned through, and my duffil sock was on fire.

This was another "tenderfoot" experience.

These people were Christians, and delighted to see father, and listen to his counsel and exhortation.

The next day we reached Jackson's Bay, where we received from Mr. and Mrs. Stringfellow, the missionary and wife, a very hearty welcome.

If Norway House, with its one mail in six months and its small community of English-speaking people, is thought out of the world, where would you place Jackson Mission ? This little man and his good wife (and for a good part of the year many of the Indians away from the mission) and the Hudson's Bay Company's post, with its small company, are fifteen miles distant in winter, and, I should judge, twice that in summer.

Why, Norway House is on the front compared with this!

We spent Saturday and part of Sunday here. Mr. Stringfellow went with us to the fort, and father held a service in the evening, and Mr. Sinclair afterwards gave us this address, which was in English, to those who only understood Cree, almost *verbatim*—which seemed to me a remarkable feat of memory, seeing he had not taken other than mental notes.

We returned on Monday to Jackson's Bay, and left on Tuesday for Norway House; found our

"cache" all right, and reached home on Friday afternoon, averaging forty-five miles per day, which, considering there had been a good deal of storm and our down track in many places not to be seen, was not bad time.

CHAPTER X.

Enlarging church—Winter camp—How evenings are spent—My boys—Spring—The first goose, etc.

SOME time after this father determined to enlarge the church, and the Hudson's Bay Company offered to send their carpenters to do the work, if the missionary and Indians got out the timber and lumber.

The Indians went into this work heartily. The first thing was to chop and hew the timber and saw-logs, and haul all these to some lake or river, from which it might be rafted to the Mission.

Some good timber was found on an island in Play-green Lake, about twenty miles away. To this place we went by dog-train and on snow-shoes, father and the men chopping and hewing the timber, and myself and my school-boys hauling this out to the shore and piling it ready for rafting in the summer.

We were several days at this work—men, boys and dogs, all busy as we could be. The woods fairly rang with chopping and shouting.

An Easterner could hardly credit the strength of a good big train of dogs, helped by a stout boy.

Then, when the load is out, the return trip is made on the jump, there being no time lost by the way.

My boys and I had the roads to make, as well as the timber to haul.

Our open camp was a unique sight at night. Big fires stretched along the centre, a brush floor down both sides, fish thawing, fish boiling, fish roasting, fish frying.

Our pemmican we saved for breakfast and dinner; it did not require time to cook. Then fish is more digestible, therefore better for supper. Men and boys sitting and standing, some cooking, some mending moccasins, others drying them —all good-natured and happy.

Behind all this, but still in the light of the fire, are the dogs. These are of all breeds and of all colors; some lounging, some snarling, some fighting—all waiting, perforce of necessity, for their supper, which is being thawed at the fire.

After supper, the dogs are fed, and then the woods would echo with hearty singing.

Father was a good singer, and between us we taught these people many new songs and hymns.

Then father would open their eyes and minds by describing some Eastern lands and scenes; and thus the shorter evenings of slowly approaching spring would pass quickly, and all would stretch out to sleep, for all were tired.

A few weeks after this there was great excitement in the village. The first goose of the season had been seen. To men who had been living for the most part on fish during the winter months, the coming of the geese from the south is a welcome change. Presently from all over the village the boys are imitating the wild goose's call, and the old hunters are getting their decoy heads ready. As for the bodies, they can make them out of logs near or at the place they may select for a hunting-ground.

Father and I went several times to places near by. We would go Friday evening and come home Saturday evening. Father was an ardent sportsman and a good shot.

I will never forget my first goose. I broke

his wing, and he came down on the ice, and started to run out on the lake. I had a single-barrelled muzzle-loading gun, and I loaded it before starting after the big fellow. When he saw me coming he spurted, with legs and wings. He made good time, and I ran, and ran, and after a long chase came close enough to shoot him again, and stopped him.

The Hudson's Bay factor and clerks went a long distance and were away some weeks on the goose hunt.

CHAPTER XI.

Opening of Navigation — Sturgeon fishing — Rafting timber—Sawing lumber.

ABOUT the last of May the ice went off the lake, and navigation was open, and we made up another bee to go to raft our timber down. Father sent William and I one day ahead of the party, in order that we might set nets for sturgeon, which we did; and when father and men came up next day, we had fourteen large sturgeon to begin with. While white-fish is the staple food in that north country, these sturgeon come in at seasons as an extra luxury; indeed, they are the beef and bacon of the northern Indian. Sturgeon oil is both lard and butter for these people, and blessed is the wife and mother who has many vessels full of it.

We made a big raft of our timber, and both wind and current favoring us, we soon had it hauled out and piled up on the beach near the

church, and the sawing of the timber was gone into by the Indians in turn, each doing his share. This we carefully piled, to season, and in the autumn the Hudson's Bay Company, as per offer and promise, sent their carpenters, and the enlargement went on, and there was great rejoicing and a grand reopening when the work was finished.

CHAPTER XII.

Summer transport—Voyageurs—Norway House—The meeting place of many brigades—Missionary work intensified.

As the summer months are few in that northern climate, the need to push transport matter is imperative.

Norway House was the first depot post in the interior, coming from York Factory on the Hudson's Bay. Here were wintered the most of the "green hands," those men who had been brought out by the ship the previous summer, and from this point these men were distributed to the various districts in the further interior.

To Norway House, in the early summer, came the brigade of boats, from the Mackenzie River, the Athabasca, and English River, and Cumberland districts.

Down from the west, the Saskatchewan and Swan River districts, came the "Braroes" (I give

the word as it was pronounced), the men from the great plains. Down from the south, the Red River Brigade added their quota to these fleets of inland transport.

For all these, Norway House was the common centre. At these times the old fort was *en fete.* The river banks were lined far up and down with boats and tents. The smoke of many camp-fires hung over the place. The prattle of many tongues in different languages was heard. English and French, and Norwegian, and Ojibway, or Salteaux, and Chippewayan, and Caughnawaga and Cree—these were most common at these gatherings, but through and over all the Cree dominated and was most generally understood and spoken.

Here were the Governor and chief factors and chief traders and clerks of various grades in the service of this honorable Company. Here were the steersman and bowsmen and middlemen, the hardy voyageurs whose strength of brain and muscle, and whose wonderful pluck and daring, as well as prudence, made possible the import and export traffic in vast regions which would have seemed to other men impossible and inac-

cessible. Some of these men would leave their distant inland posts on snow-shoes, and reaching what was the frontier post to them in their sublime isolation, would then take to the boats with the first break of navigation; then, descending rivers and running rapids and portaging falls, they would finally reach York Factory, and unloading and reloading, would turn and retrace their course, and only arrive at the frontier post of their own district at the beginning of winter. Then with snow-shoes and dog-train they would travel to their own homes. The toil and hardship of such a life is beyond the conception of most minds, and yet these men endured all this uncomplainingly and without a murmur, in their loyalty to the honorable Company they served.

What an object-lesson they were and have been to me!

These gatherings were periods of great responsibilities and also of intense anxiety to the missionary stationed at Norway House.

These were the days of temptation to the people. Rum and evil association were rife during these days.

Then there came within the range of his influ-

ence men who had seldom been at service and many who had not had the opportunity of attending a regular preaching service for a long time. To say the right word to those who in a few days would scatter, who in a few weeks would be located at widely distant posts, but who now gathered in the mission church, and eagerly listened to the preached Gospel —truly this was a great responsibility for the missionary.

Then the men of our own mission would now be starting with their brigade of boats for the summer's transport work. To counsel with these, to arrange the work of the class-leader and local preacher, to readmonish as to Sabbath observance and general deportment—all this kept the missionary busy and anxious.

Father was instant in season and out of it. Both among Indians and white men, his influence was very apparent and became widespread in its effect for good.

CHAPTER XIII.

Canoe trip to Oxford—Serious accident.

In the autumn of 1861, father and Mr. Sinclair and William made a canoe trip to Oxford House. On the return journey they had an accident in the upsetting of their canoe in a rapid. It was in the early morning, and father had his heavy coat on, and was otherwise handicapped for such a time. But faithful William swam to the overturned canoe, and then pushed it end on to father, and at the same saying, "Keep up, master. I am coming!" and when near with the canoe, "Now, master, take hold. Hold hard, master!" and these two thus passed through the rapid, and swinging into an eddy at its foot were saved. Mr. Sinclair swam ashore at once, being in light working costume.

They lost most of their outfit, including my gun which father had taken along.

That same fall, William was bitten on the

THE UPSET—(*See page 110*).

point of the finger by a jack-fish he was taking out of the net. He caught cold in the wound and inflammation set in, and though father and mother did all they could to help him, mortification followed and he died.

Night and day father was with the poor fellow, and we all mourned for him, for his was a noble heart and he was one of God's heroes.

CHAPTER XIV.

Establish a fishery—Breaking dogs—Dog-driving, etc.

THIS was just at the beginning of the fall fishing, and as the Indians were scattered for miles in every direction, my school was broken up, and my father sent me to establish a fishery.

So with a young Indian as my companion we went into camp across the lake, and went to work setting our nets and making our stagings on which to hang the fish, as all fish caught before the ice makes are hung up on stagings.

You put up good strong posts on which you lay logs, and across these you place strong poles about two and a half feet apart; then you cut good straight willows about an inch in thickness and three feet long. You sharpen one end of these, and, punching a hole in the tail of the fish, you string them on the willows, ten to a stick, and with a forked pole you lift these to the staging, hanging them across between the poles;

and there they hang, and dry, and freeze, until you haul them away to your storehouse.

After ice makes, the fish freeze almost as soon as you take them out of the water, and are piled away without hanging.

When the fish are plentiful you visit your nets two and three times in the night, in order to relieve them of the great weight and strain of so many fish.

Overhauling the nets, taking care of the fish, mending and drying your nets—all this keeps you busy almost all the time. In taking white-fish out of the net, one uses teeth and hands. You catch the fish in your hand, lift it to your mouth, and, taking hold of its head with your teeth, you press down its length with both hands meeting, and thus force the fish from the net without straining your net. When the fish is loose from the net, you give a swing with your head, and thus toss the fish into the boat behind you or away out on the ice beside you.

All of this, except mending the nets in the tent, is desperately cold work. The ice makes on your sleeves and clothing. Your hands would freeze were it not that you keep them in the water as much as possible.

In my time hundreds of thousands of white-fish were thus taken every year for winter use, the principal food for men and dogs being fish.

When the lakes and rivers are frozen over, you take a long rope about a quarter of an inch in thickness, and pass it under the ice to the length of your net. To do this you take a long dry pole, and fasten your rope at one end of this; then you cut holes in the ice the length of your pole apart in the direction you want to set your net; you then pass this pole under the ice using a forked stick to push it along, and in this way bring your line out at the far end of where your net will be when set. One pulls the rope and the other sets the net, carefully letting floats and stones go as these should in order that the net hang right.

My man and I put up about two thousand white-fish, besides a number of jack-fish. These were hauled home by dog-train.

My four pups which I bought from Mr. Sinclair over a year since were now fine big dogs, but as wild as wolves. I had put up a square of logs for a dog-house, and by feeding, and coaxing, and decoying with old dogs, I

finally succeeded in getting them into it. Then I would catch one at a time, and hitch him with some old and trained dogs. Father would go with me, and fight off the other three while I secured the one I was breaking in, and by and by, I had the whole four broken, and they turned out splendid fellows to pull and go. Very few, if any, trains could leave me in the race, and when I loaded them with two hundred hung fish, they would keep me on the dead run to follow.

I was very proud of my first train of dogs, and also of my success in breaking them.

Many a flying trip I gave father or mother and my sisters over to the fort or out among the Indians. Sometimes I went with father to visit Indian camps, and also to the Hudson's Bay shanties away up Jack River, where their men were taking out timber and wood for the fort. What cared we for the cold! Father was well wrapped in the cariole, and I, having to run and keep the swinging cariole right side up, had not time to get cold.

CHAPTER XV.

Winter trip to Oxford—Extreme cold—Quick travelling.

DURING this second winter father sent me down to Oxford House. I had quite a load for the Rev. Mr. Stringfellow. One item was several cakes of frozen cream which mother sent to Mrs. Stringfellow. We had a cow; they had none. We happened to strike the very coldest part of the winter for our trip. There were four of us in the party—two Indians returning to Jackson's Bay, my man and myself. I was the only one of the party not badly frozen. When we reached the Bay, my companions were spotted with frost-bites—great black scars on forehead and cheeks and chin. I do not know how I escaped, except that I had been living better and my blood was younger and warmer.

When we reached Mr. Stringfellow's in the morning, the thermometer registered 56° below zero. We had camped the night before on an

island in Oxford Lake, and started out at three o'clock, and one can imagine what it must have been about daylight that morning with heavy snow-shoeing, making progress slow.

Mr. Stringfellow asked me to accompany him to the fort. His man hitched up his dogs, tucked him into the cariole, and started to lead the way; but the dogs went off so slowly I concluded to stay for some time before I followed, so I sat and chatted with Mrs. Stringfellow. When I did start, my dogs soon brought me up, and I went flying past, and reached the fort a long time before Mr. Stringfellow. He said when he arrived that he would be afraid to ride behind such dogs.

On the way back, my young Indian and I made the return trip in three days, averaging sixty miles per day.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mother and baby's upset—My humiliation.

In the meantime there came to our house a baby brother. We named him George. My sisters were delighted with this new playfellow. When he was about two or three months old, I undertook to take mother and baby over to the fort for a ride and short visit. Father helped us to start, holding my leader until all was ready. The trail went down a considerable hill, and then turned sharply for a straight line to the portage between us and the fort. Away we went, but in turning the curve I lost my balance, and over went the cariole, and out spilled mother and the babe into the snow. My heart was in my mouth. What if either or both should be hurt! What if father should have seen the accident! In a very short time I had the cariole turned right side up, and

I LOSE MY BALANCE—AND SOME CONCEIT—(*See page 120*).

mother and baby seated and tucked in, and off we went, no one hurt, and father had not seen the upset. But a lot of my conceit as a skilful driver was gone, and I learned a lesson for the future; but, oh! those dogs were quick and speedy, and anyone driving them had to look sharp.

All of this fishing and dog-driving and travelling was just so much practice and experience for the years to come in farther and far more difficult fields. I did not know this at the time, but so it has turned out.

CHAPTER XVII.

From Norway House to the great plains—Portaging—Pulling and poling against the strong current—Tracking.

As the missions on the Saskatchewan were under father's chairmanship, he concluded to visit them during the summer of 1862, and to take me along. He arranged for me to go as far as Fort Carlton on the Saskatchewan by boat, and he, at the invitation of the Hudson's Bay officers, went with them to Red River, and then rode on horseback across the plains to the same point.

Bidding mother and sisters and little brother and many friends good-bye, behold me then taking passage in one of a fleet of boats, the destination of which was the Saskatchewan country.

Our route was up the Jack River, across the Play-green Lake to Lake Winnipeg, and then

across the northern end of Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of the Saskatchewan River, and on up this rapid river to our objective point.

There were nine, and in some cases ten, men in each boat. There were perhaps a dozen passengers scattered through the fleet. I was alone in my boat, but nearly always at meal times and at night the fleet was together.

Favoring winds and fine weather in two or three days brought us to the mouth of the Saskatchewan.

Here are the Grand Rapids. They are about three miles long. Up the first two miles the boats are pulled and poled and tracked; then comes the tug-of-war. Everything must be taken out of the boat and carried across the portage. Then the pulling of the boats across comes next. This is done on skids and rollers, and all by man's strength alone.

The ordinary load is two pieces. These pieces average one hundred pounds each. The man carries one piece on his back, sustained by a strap on his forehead; then upon this the other piece is placed. This leans up against his neck and head and acts as a brace; and away trots the

man, with his two hundred pounds, on a run across the portage. Mosquitoes and "bull-dogs," and mud, valley and hill, it is all the same a necessity; he must "get there."

Some men carried three pieces each trip, and thus got through more quickly.

The whole matter was slavish, and in the long run costly; for, after all, there is no greater wealth in this world than humanity, if properly handled.

The second day, in the evening, we were across and loaded up, all ready for a new start, which we made early next morning. Still the current was rapid and our progress was slow. Now poling, now pulling, then with a line out tracking, slowly we worked up the big Saskatchewan. Crossing Cedar Lake, we entered the steady current of this mighty river.

Here we were overhauled one evening by a couple of big inland canoes, manned by Iroquois Indians, conveying Governor Dallas, who had succeeded Sir George Simpson as Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and who was now, in company with Chief Factor William Christie, as escort, on his way to visit the posts of the Company in the far north and west.

These big birch-bark canoes formed a great contrast to our heavier and clumsier boats. They were manned by stalwart fellows, who knew well how to swing a paddle and handle their frail barque in either lake-storm or river-rapid. With grace and speed and regular dip of paddles, keeping time to their canoe-song, they hove in sight and came to land beside us, and we camped together for the night.

Up and away they went early next morning to ascend the tributaries of the Saskatchewan which flow from the north country; then to make the "long portage," which would bring them to the head-waters of the great Mackenzie system; then up the Peace to the foot of the mountains, and from thence to return by the same route; while the dignitaries they have conveyed thus far will now turn southwards across long stretches of woodland prairie, and on horseback and with pack-saddles, will again come out on the Saskatchewan at Edmonton.

With a cheer from our crews, and a song from their lips as they bent to their paddles, they left us; but their coming and going had given us a unique experience, and a still further

insight into the ways and means of transport and government which obtained in this great territory.

For days our progress was very slow. Our men had to ply their oars incessantly.

Many times in one day we crossed and recrossed the river, to take advantage of the weaker currents. From the break of day until the stars began to twinkle at night, only stopping for meals, our men kept at it, as if they were machines and not flesh and blood.

The sweltering heat, the numberless mosquitoes—who can begin to describe them? But if these hardworked men can endure them, how much more we, who are but passengers, and have just now nothing else to do but endure. For myself, I now and then relieved one of the men at the oar, or took the sweep and steered the boat for hours, letting my steersman help his men.

By and by we came to where there was a beach along the shore, and then our men gladly took to tracking instead of the oar. Four men would hitch themselves with their carrying-straps to the end of a long rope, and walk and

run along the shore for miles, thus pulling their boat up the stream at a rapid rate. Then the other four would take the collars and our progress become faster. Sometimes we came to extra currents or rapids; then the rope was doubled, and all hands went on shore to pull and strain past the difficulty. Occasionally two crews had to come to each other's help, and take one boat at a time up the rapids, and though our men welcomed this as compared with the monotonous pull, pull at the oars, yet it was very hard work.

Along miles of rocky beach, then up and over steep-cut banks, now ankle or knee-deep in mud and quicksands, then up to the armpits in crossing snags and channels, and mouths of tributary streams; then, "All aboard," and once more bend to the oars, to cross over to better tracking on the other side of the river: thus in constant hardship did our faithful crews slowly work their way up this mighty river.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Enter the plains—Meet a flood—Reach Fort Carlton.

We now caught glimpses of prairie every little while. The country was changing, the banks were becoming higher, the soil richer. We were on the divide between the swampy and rocky regions of the east and north, and the rich pastures and agricultural lands of the Saskatchewan valley. Several times as the boats were being tracked up the river, I jumped ashore and ran across land, and was delighted to breathe the air of the plains, and scent the aroma of the wild roses, and behold for myself the rich grass and richer soils of this wonderland, for I had never dreamed of such a country as was now presenting itself on every hand. Being a loyal Canadian, I was delighted with what I saw, and already began to speculate on the great possibilities of such a land as I was now entering. We

passed Fort la Corne, and later on the mouth of the south branch.

I remember distinctly climbing the bank near where the town of Prince Albert is now situate, and the present terminus of the Regina and Prince Albert Railway. Then it was without a single settler; but the whole land seemed to me as speaking out in strong invitation to someone to come and occupy.

When near Fort Carlton, we met a fresh volume of water. Suddenly the river rose, the current strengthened, and the work became harder. The summer heat had loosened the ice and snow in the distant mountains. Fortunately for us we were near our objective point when this heavy current met us, and presently the bows of our boats were hugging the bank at the landing-place at Fort Carlton.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Fort—Buffalo steak—"Out of the latitude of bread."

FORT CARLTON I found to consist of some dwellings and stores, crowded together and surrounded by a high palisade, with bastions at its four corners, and built on a low bench, on the south side of the river.

The high banks of the river, alternating with prairie and woodland, formed a fine background to the scene. A few buffalo-skin lodges added a fresh item to my experience, and told me I was now in reality in the famous buffalo country.

Very soon I had another proof of this, for on going ashore I was told to run up to the fort, as dinner was now on.

Finding the dining-room, I sat down at the only vacant place, and was asked by the gentleman at the head of the table if I would have some buffalo steak. I assented gladly, and enjoyed it heartily. I had eaten pemmican and

dried meat, but this was my first steak, and I relished it very much. Presently mine host asked me to have some more, but I thought I had eaten enough meat, and inadvertently I said to my nearest neighbor, "Will you please pass the bread." This produced a laugh all around the table, and an old gentleman said to me, "Young man, you are out of the latitude of bread." And so it was; for looking down the table, I saw there was no bread, no vegetables, only buffalo steak. This was an entirely new experience to me; though born on the frontier I had never until now got beyond bread. I was sorry I had not taken some more steak, but determined to be wiser next time.

CHAPTER XX.

New surroundings—Plain Indians—Strange costumes—Glorious gallops—Father and party arrive.

HERE I was to remain till father came across the plains, which might be any day now, as we had taken a long time to come up the river.

My surroundings were now entirely different from anything heretofore in my life. The country was different, the food was different, and the Indians were distinctly different from all I had previously met. Their costume, or rather lack of any often, their highly painted faces and feathered and gew-gaw bedecked heads, their long plaits or loosely flowing hair, their gaudy blankets or fantastically painted buffalo robes, their ponies and saddles and buffalo hide and hair lines, their sinew-mounted and snakeskin-covered bows and shod arrows, their lodges and travois, both for horses and dogs—all these things were new to me. I was among a new

people, and in a new land I had plenty to do in taking in my new surroundings.

Previously canoe and dog-train had been our means of transport; now horses took the place of canoes. This was a big grass country. Horses and ponies were at a premium here.

The gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company were exceedingly kind to me. Mr. P. Tait, who was in charge of the fort, lent me horses, and I took glorious rides out on the prairie.

Some of us arranged a party to go and meet those we expected to be now near by on the long trail from Red River to this point. Some Hudson's Bay clerks and myself formed the party. Several horses had been driven into the yard, but I was not on the ground when they came, and when I got there all were taken but one, which seemed to me unfit to ride any distance. Just then Mr. Tait came along and whispered, "Take him, and when you reach the horse-guard, who is not far from here on your road, tell him to catch my horse Badger for you." I thanked him, and saddled the "old plug," and off we rode. Many a joke I took because of my sorry steed; but I could very well stand it all, for I had

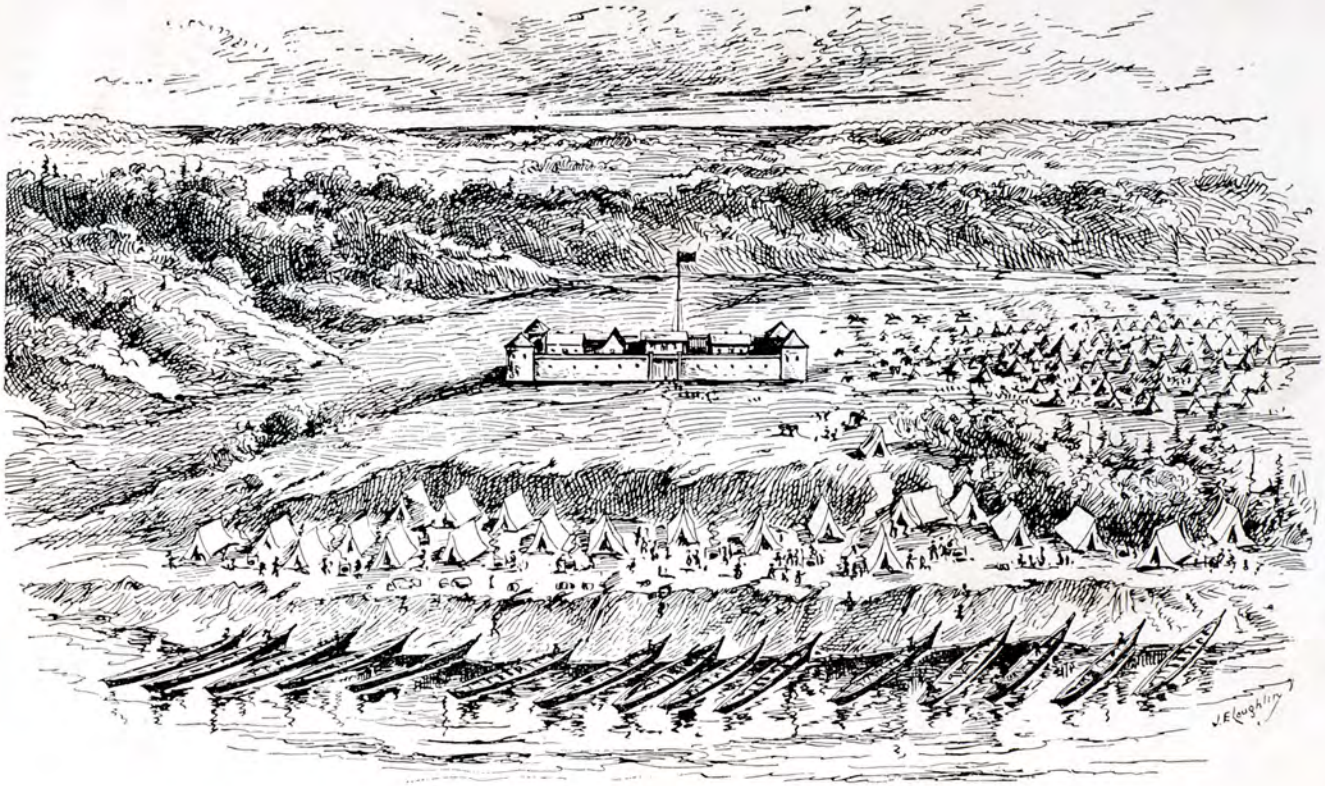
quietly asked the Indian boy if he knew the horse "Badger," and his eyes glistened as he said, "I think I do; he is one of the best saddle horses around here." So I was patiently waiting my turn; and it came, for we soon reached the horse-guard, and I told him what Mr. Tait had said. He took his lariat and went and caught a beautiful bay, "fat and slick," and handsome as a picture. I saddled him and came up to my companions on the jump, and astonished them with the magnificence of my mount. Now I was the envied of the party, and proud I was as my horse frisked and jumped and played under me.

Ah, those first gallops on the plains! I will never forget them. They seemed to put new blood in me, and I felt even then how easy it would be for me to cast in my lot with such a life in such a land as this. We galloped past Duck Lake, which long years after became the scene of the first actual outbreak in the rebellion in 1885. We rode down to the north bank of the south Saskatchewan, and camped there without any bedding; and waiting part of the next day, finally turned back without any sign

of our friends, and went into a grand duck hunt on the way back to Carlton, which we reached late in the evening.

At this time the old fort and the plain around was a busy scene—our crews from the boats, hunters from the plains, parties of Indians in to trade, the air full of stories about the southern Indians and the tribal wars to and fro, scalps taken and horses stolen, the herds of buffalo said to be within a hundred miles from the fort, or less than two days out. Buffalo-skin lodges and canvas tents dotted the plain in every direction. Horse-races and foot-races were common occurrences. I championed older Canada against Indians, half-breeds and Hudson's Bay officials and employees, and in the foot-racing and jumping—high, long, and hop, step and jump —"cleaned out the crowd" and made a name for myself and country, and amid such doings spent fifteen days, when father and his party came up and we moved on.

Father told me that the first two days in the saddle had been trying times with him. The everlasting jog of the all-day journey made him feel so stiff and sore the first night that he was



FORT CARLTON—(*See page 136*).

hardly able to mount his horse the next day. But after three or four days this wore off, and the trip had been to him not only a pleasant one, but a revelation as to the resources and beauty of our own country. "Why," said father, "every mile we came is abundantly fit for settlement, and the day will come when it will be taken up and developed."

CHAPTER XXI.

Continue journey—Old "La Gress"—Fifty miles per day.

MR. HARDISTY, the Hudson's Bay officer who had brought father across the plains thus far, soon made arrangements for our continuing our journey westward. He furnished us with horses and saddles and a tent, and also a man as a guide. Swimming our horses across the north Saskatchewan opposite the fort, and crossing ourselves and saddles in a boat, we saddled up and packed our one pack-horse and set out up the big hill, ascending it with more ease than the American I once met at the top of it, who said to me, "That is the mostest biliousest hill I ever did climb."

We were now on the north side of the north Saskatchewan, and away we went at the orthodox jog-trot for Fort Pitt, the next post in the chain established by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Our guide was an old man with the name of La Gress, or as the Indians called him, "Grease." Mr. Hardisty had said of him, "He is a good traveller and a quick cook," all of which we found to be true.

He was small and wiry, and sat his horse as if he had grown there.

When on the jog his little legs incessantly moved, and his pipe seemed to everlastingly smoke.

He had been to Red River and had crossed the mountains several times, had been on the plains and in the north, had been chased many a time by the enemy, had starved and almost perished once for the lack of food on one of his trips.

He was the man of whom it is told that as he sat picking the bones of a raven, he vehemently maintained to his partner that "this was a clean bird." Indeed our guide was a man full of adventure and travel; to me he was full of interest, and I plied him with questions as we jogged side by side through the country.

And what a country this was we were riding through—bluff and plain, valley and hill, lake and stream, beautiful nook, and then grand vistas covering great areas! Every little while

father would say, "What a future this has before it!"

We rode through the Thickwood Hills. We skirted the Bear's-paddling Lake. We passed the springs into which tradition said the buffalo disappeared and came out from occasionally. Trotting by Jack-fish Lake, on for miles through most magnificent land and grass and wood and water, we crossed the valley of the Turtle River. We rode at the foot of Red Deer Hill and Frenchman's Butte, where in 1885—just twenty-three years later—our troops retreated before an unknown and practically invisible foe.

We picked up Peter Erasmus, who was associated with the Rev. Henry Steinhauer, and was now freighting for the latter from Red River to White-fish Lake. Peter was, and is, an "A 1" interpreter, and father concluded to take him on as guide and interpreter for the rest of our journey.

We ate up all the rations, consisting of a ham of buffalo meat and a chunk of hard grease. This we accomplished the last day at noon, and we rode into Fort Pitt the evening of the fourth day from Carlton, having averaged about fifty miles per day, which was not so bad for men new to the saddle.

CHAPTER XXII.

Fort Pitt—Hunter's paradise—Sixteen buffalo with seventeen arrows—"Big Bear."

FORT PITT we found on the north bank of the Saskatchewan, standing on a commanding bench near the river, and having a magnificent outlook —a wide, long valley, enclosed by high hills, which rose terrace beyond terrace in the distance, and the swiftly flowing river coming and going with majestic bends at its feet.

This was then the buffalo fort of the Saskatchewan District, the great herds coming closer and oftener to this point than to any other of the Hudson's Bay posts.

This was also a famous horse-breeding spot, the grasses in the vicinity being especially adapted for that business.

Here was a hunter's paradise—plenty of buffalo and fine horses. No wonder good hunters would be the result!

AN EXPERT HUNTER—(*See page 144*).

From here the party went out which had the Indian with it, to whom the Hudson's Bay officer gave seventeen arrows, and said, "Now, let us see what you can do;" and the Indian modestly answered, "I can but try," and killed sixteen buffalo in the straight "race set before" him.

This was the trading home of Big Bear, who for years was hunter for the fort, and who, later on, much against his own will, was deceived and persuaded to join the foolish rebellion of 1885.

CHAPTER XXIII.

On to White-fish Lake—Beautiful country—Indian camp —Strike northward into forest land.

We remained over Sunday at the fort. Father held service, and Monday morning saw us away, mounted on fresh horses, which had been provided by the gentlemen in charge of the fort.

Our course was now more northerly, and the country increased in interest as we travelled. Away in the distance to the south and west, we caught glimpses of the winding valley of the big river. Around us, on every hand, were beautiful lakes with lawn-like banks; gems of prairie with beautiful clumps of spruce and poplar, and birch and willow artistically intersecting them; great hills, and broad valleys, and gently rippling streams; a cloudless sky; an atmosphere surcharged with ozone above us; good horses under us; father, and guide, and myself all thoroughly optimistic in thought and

outlook. No wonder that I, in the full tide of strength, and health, and youth, was fairly intoxicated amid such surroundings! Father was only a little more sober or a little less "drunk" than I was.

We were travelling steadily and fast, and amused ourselves by locating farms and homesteads, and villages and centres of population, and running imaginary railroads through the country as we trotted and cantered from early morn until night, through those never-to-be-forgotten lovely August days of 1862.

For food we had pemmican and dried meat.

Occasionally we shot chickens or ducks, but the distance we had to travel and the limited time father had at his command forbade us doing much shooting while pemmican or dried meat lasted.

We rode over the Two Hills; we galloped along the sandy beach of Sandy Lake; we saw Frog Lake away to the right; a few miles farther on we crossed Frog Creek, then Moose Creek, then the Dog Rump.

Here I missed my first bear. He was down in a deep ravine, almost under me, and, as is

usual with a "tenderfoot" at such a time, I shot over him, and as my gun was a single-barrelled muzzle-loader, the bear had plenty of time to disappear into the thick brush down the ravine. We had no time to follow him.

On we went, over hills and across broad plains, thickly swarded with pea-vine and rich grasses, passing Egg Lake to the left.

Early the third day we came to Saddle Lake, on the north side of which we found a camp of Cree Indians.

Some of these belonged to White-fish Lake, and were nominally Christians. Others were wood and plain Indians, still pagan, and without any settled home, but all glad to see us. Most of the leading men and hunters had gone across the river and out on to the plains for a hunt.

From these people we learned that Mr. Steinhauer and his people, still at the Mission, contemplated a trip out to the plains for provisions, and that they and these were but awaiting the return of the hunters to this camp to decide from the report they would bring as to the direction of their trip. This determined father

to hurry on to White-fish Lake, and catch Mr. Steinhauer at home if possible.

We spent about three hours with this camp, and had lunch in one of the tents, where we were the guests of Mrs. Hawke, who very kindly loaned father a fresh horse, a fine animal, to take him to the Mission.

Father held a short service, and late in the afternoon we started on, two of the patriarchs of the camp accompanying us to where we stopped for the night.

Many were the questions they asked, long was the talk father held with them, and it was late when we rolled into our blankets and went to sleep. Early next morning we parted company with our venerable friends and continued our journey.

Our course lay almost north-east. We were entering the fringe of the forest lands of the north country. We were going farther out of the course of the war-paths of the plain Indians. The more bush and forest, the less danger from these lawless fellows.

A plain Indian dreads a forest, does not feel at home in it, and this was the reason for the

selection of White-fish Lake as a mission centre, a place where the incessant watchfulness and unrest (the prevailing condition of the times) on the plains south of the Saskatchewan might, for the time, at least, be largely laid aside. On into this thickening forest-land we trotted, a narrow bridle-path our road.

Water became abundant, and mud correspondingly so.

Within a few miles of the Mission we came to the thickly wooded banks of a stream where we had to swim our horses. Here we met some Indians who were starting out on a moose hunt, and, to my astonishment, one of them seemed to be speaking English—at least I thought so. He was shouting "*Dam, dam,*" but like all men who presume on a too hasty judgment, I was mistaken, for the old fellow was only calling to his horse, "Tom, Tom," urging him to swim across the stream. With his accent, "t" was "d."

Resaddling and galloping on, early in the afternoon we came to the Mission, and found Mr. Steinhauer and family well; and as we had heard at Saddle Lake, Mr. Steinhauer and people were making preparations for a trip out to the plains for provisions.

As with everybody in the West in those days, their storehouse and market was the buffalo, which, after all, was exceedingly precarious, for pemmican, dried meat, or any kind of provision, and even fish, were alike at a premium when we arrived at White-fish Lake, and it behoved all parties, both residents and visitors, to move somewhere very soon.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The new Mission—Mr. Steinhauer—Benjamin Sinclair.

In the meantime father was delighted with what he saw.

Here in the wilderness was the beginning of Christian civilization. Mr. Steinhauer had built a mission house and school-house, and also assisted quite a number of Indians to build comfortable houses. Quite a settlement had sprung up, and this mission seemed to have a bright future.

Of course, the bulk of all effort had rested on the missionary, but he proved equal to his work. Preacher, judge, doctor, carpenter, sawyer, timberman, fisherman, hunter, and besides this a great deal of travel in that country of long distances. Mr. Steinhauer had his time fully occupied.

Here we met Benjamin Sinclair, who had come into the Saskatchewan country as assistant to the Rev. Robert Rundel, who was the

first missionary of any church to the tribes of this western country.

Benjamin was a swampy half-breed from the Hudson's Bay region. Big, strong and honest, and a mighty hunter, was old Ben Sinclair. In his use of English he made "r" "n," and "t" 'd," and used "he" for "she." For instance (introducing us to his wife), he said, "He very fine wo-man, my Mangened" (Margaret being his wife's name).

He had settled close to the Mission, and was a great help to the missionary. Side by side these worthies labored, and side by side sorrowing families and a sorrowing people some years later laid them to rest.

A few hours after our arrival, "the Hawk" and a few of the Indians whose families we had passed at Saddle Lake came in.

They had returned from their hunt and had been successful, and brought Mr. Steinhauer some of the meat. They had been attacked by a crowd of Indians, who turned out to be friends from Maskepetoon's camp, and thus they brought us word of the whereabouts of the chief and his people, whom father was most

anxious to see before he returned to Norway House.

Accordingly it was arranged that we should meet some fifteen or twenty days later on the plains "somewhere." This was very indefinite, but as near as you could plan under the conditions of the time.

Mr. Steinhauer would go with his people, and joining those at Saddle Lake, cross the Saskatchewan and on to the plains and buffalo; and we would go to Smoking Lake, and finding Mr. Woolsey, would then strike out also for the plains and buffalo, and there we hoped to meet in a large gathering before long.

CHAPTER XXV.

Measurement of time — Start for Smoking Lake — Ka-Kake—Wonderful hunting feat—Lose horse—Tough meat.

NIGHTS and days, and months and seasons, I found, were the measurements of time out here. Minutes and hours would come by and by with railroads and telegraphs. If you questioned anyone about time or distance, the answer would be, "In so many nights, or days, or moons." The Indian had no year; with him it was summer and winter.

We left White-fish Lake Friday evening, having with us for the first few miles "Ka-Kake," or "the Hawk," and some of his people, who were returning to Saddle Lake. "Ka-Kake" was far more than an ordinary personality. His very appearance denoted this. The elasticity of his step, the flash of his eye, the ring of his voice —you *had* to notice him. To me he was a new

type. He filled my ideal as a hunter and warrior.

From Peter I learned that he was brave and kind, and full of resource, tact, strategy and pluck; these were the striking traits of this man, by whose side I loved to ride, and later on, in whose skin-lodge I delighted to camp.

He had figured in many battles, and been the chief actor in many hunting fields. He had surpassed other famous buffalo hunters, inasmuch as he had ridden one buffalo to kill another.

To do this, it is related that he and others were chasing buffalo on foot, and coming to an ice-covered lake, the surface of which was in spots like glass, some of the buffalo fell, and Ka-Kake, with the impetus of his run, went sliding on to one of them, and catching hold of the long, shaggy hair of its shoulders, seated himself astride of its back. Then the buffalo made an extra effort and got to its feet and dashed after the herd, and Ka-Kake kept his seat. In vain the animal, after reaching the ground, bucked and jumped and rushed about. Ka-Kake was there to stay—for a while, at any

rate. Then the buffalo settled down to run and soon overtook the herd, which spurted on afresh, because of this strange-looking thing on the back of one of themselves. Now, thought Ka-Kake, is my chance. So he pulled his bow from his back, and springing it and taking an arrow from his quiver, he picked his animal, and sent the arrow up to the feather in its side, which soon brought his victim to a stop. Then he took his knife and drove it down into his wild steed, just behind his seat, and feeling that the buffalo was going to fall, he jumped off to one side, and thus had accomplished something unique in the hunting-field.

Around at the end of the lake our roads diverged, or rather, our courses did, for we found very little road through the dense woods, as we bore away north and west for Smoking Lake, where we expected to find Rev. Mr. Woolsey. Pathless forests, and bridgeless streams, and bottomless muskegs were some of the features of the scene we now entered. Our progress was slow, and instead of reaching Mr. Woolsey's Saturday night, or early Sunday morning, we lost one of our horses by the way, and did not

reach Smoking Lake until Monday afternoon. By this time our provisions were about finished, and had not Mr. Woolsey killed an ox the day we arrived, we, and others also, would have gone supperless to bed that night. As it was, we had the privilege of chewing at some of the toughest beef I ever tackled—and my experience along that line has been a very wide one.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. Woolsey—Another new mission.

MR. WOOLSEY, his interpreter, and two hired men comprised this settlement at the time. One small house and a roofless stable were the only improvements. Mr. Woolsey had begun here within the year, and his difficulties had been neither few nor small. Any Indians who might look upon this place as a home in the future were now either moose-hunting in the north, or out on the plains after buffalo.

The reason for establishing at this place was like that at White-fish Lake, to be somewhat out of the way of the contending tribes; and it was thought that thirty-five or forty miles into the wooded country north of the northernmost bend of the Saskatchewan would give some respite from the constant danger and dread which was a condition of this western country at that time.

Father's plan was that Mr. Woolsey should accompany us out to the rendezvous, already arranged for with Mr. Steinhauer and his people, and as most of Mr. Woolsey's Indians were out on the plains, he expected to see the people of both missions as also the missionaries together.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Strike south for buffalo and Indians—Strange mode of crossing "Big River"—Old Besho and his eccentricities—Five men dine on two small ducks.

THURSDAY evening found us striking southward, Mr. Woolsey and his interpreter, William Monckman, making our party up to five. Peter was guide and father's interpreter. Both positions he was well able to fill.

Because of Mr. Woolsey's physical infirmity, we were obliged to travel more slowly than we had thus far.

Our road ran along the east side of Smoking Lake, and down the creek which runs from the lake to the Saskatchewan. We had left most of the ox for the men at the Mission, and were to depend upon our guns for food until we should reach the Indian camp on the plains. We shot some ducks for supper and breakfast the first night out, and reached the north bank of the river

Friday afternoon. The appearance of the country at this point and in its vicinity pleased father so much that he suggested to Mr. Woolsey the desirability of moving to this place and founding a mission and settlement right here on the banks of the river, all of which Mr. Woolsey readily acquiesced in.

The two missionaries, moreover, decided that the name of the new mission should be Victoria.

The next move was to cross this wide and swiftly flowing river. No ferryman appeared to answer our hail. No raft or canoe or boat was to be seen, no matter where you might look. Evidently something must be improvised, and, as it turned out, Peter was equal to the occasion.

Father and Mr. Woolsey had gone to further explore the site of the new mission, William was guarding the horses, and Peter was left with myself to bridge the difficulty, which, to me, seemed a great one. If we had even a small dug-out or log canoe, I would have been at home. "But what is Peter going to do?" was the question I kept asking myself. Presently I said, "How are we going to cross?" "Never you mind," said he; "do as I tell you." "All right,"

said I; and soon I received my instructions, which were to go and cut two straight, long green willows about one and a half inches in diameter. I did so, and Peter took these and with them made a hoop. While he was making this he told me to bring the oilcloth we were carrying with us and to spread it on the beach. Then he placed the hoop in the centre of the oilcloth, and we folded it in on to the hoop from every side. Then we carried our saddles, and blankets, and tent, and kettle, and axe—in short, everything we had, and put them in this hoop. Then William came and helped us carry this strange thing into the water. When we lifted by the hoop or rim our stuff sagged down in the centre, and when we placed the affair in the water, to my great astonishment it floated nicely, and I was told to hold it in the current; and Peter, calling to the missionaries, said, "Take off your shoes, gentlemen, and wade out and step into the boat." I could hardly credit this; but the gentlemen did as bidden, and very soon were sitting in the hoop, and still, to my great wonder, it floated.

Peter, in the meantime, took a "chawed line."

This is made of buffalo hide, and is literally

A NEW KIND OF BOAT—(*See page 162*).

what its name signifies, having been made by cutting some green hide into a strand, about an inch or more wide, and stretching this, and as it dried, scraping the hair and flesh from it. When thoroughly dry the manufacturer began at one end and chewed it through to the other end, and then back again, and continued this until the line was soft and pliable and thoroughly tanned for the purpose. Great care was taken while chewing not to let the saliva touch the line. These lines were in great demand for lassos, and packing horses, and lashing dog-sleighs and as bridles.

Peter tied one end of this securely to the rim of the hoop, and then brought a horse close and tied the other end of the line to the horse's tail; then fastening a leather hobble to the under jaw of the horse, he vaulted on to its back and rode out into the stream, saying to me, "Let go, John, when the line comes tight;" and gently and majestically, like a huge nest, with the two missionaries sitting as eaglets in it, this strange craft floated restfully on the current.

For a moment I stood in amazement; then the fact that William and myself were still on this

side made me shout to Peter, "How are we to cross?" By this time he was swimming beside his horse, and back over the water came the one word, "Swim!" then later, "Drive in the horses and take hold of the tail of one and he will bring you across." I could swim, but when it came to stemming the current of the Saskatchewan, that was another matter.

However, William and I did as our guide ordered, and soon we were drying ourselves on the south bank, horses and men and kit safely landed. The willow pole and our oilcloth had borne our missionaries and guns and ammunition, and the whole of our travelling paraphernalia, without wet or loss in any way.

As soon as the backs of our horses were dry, we saddled and packed, and climbing the high bank of the river, proceeded on our journey.

Peter cautioned us by saying, "We must keep together as much as possible; there must be no shooting or shouting towards evening; we are now where we may strike a war party at any time."

All this made the whole situation very interesting to me. I had read of these things; now I was among them.

We stopped early for supper, and then went on late, and camped without fire, another precaution against being discovered by the enemy.

Next morning we were away early, and were now reaching open country. Farms and homesteads ready made were by the hundred on every hand of us.

Our step was the "all-day jog-trot."

Presently father, looking around, missed Mr. Woolsey, and sent me back to look for him and bring him up. I went on the jump, thankful for the change, and finding Mr. Woolsey, I said, "What is the matter? They are anxious about you at the front." He replied by saying, "My horse is lazy." "Old Besho is terribly slow. Let me drive him for you," said I; and suiting the action to the word, I rode alongside and gave "Mr. Besho" a sharp cut with my "quirt." This Besho resented by kicking with both legs. The first kick came close to my leg, the second to my shoulder, the third to my head. This was a revelation to me of high-kicking power. Thinks I, Besho would shine on the stage; but in the meantime Mr. Woolsey was thrown forward, for the higher Besho's

hind-quarters came, the lower went his front, and Mr. Woolsey was soon on his neck, and I saw I must change tactics. So I rode to a clump of trees, and securing a long, dry poplar, I came at Besho lance-like ; but the cunning old fellow did not wait for me, but set off at a gallop on the trail of our party. Ah ! thought I, we will soon come up, and I waved my poplar lance, and on we speeded ; but soon Mr. Woolsey lost his stirrups and well-nigh his balance, and begged me to stop, and I saw the trouble was with my friend rather than his steed.

However, we came up at last, and were careful after that to keep Mr. Woolsey in the party.

This was Saturday, and we stopped for noon on the south side of Vermilion Creek, our whole larder consisting of two small ducks. These were soon cleaned and in the kettle and served, and five hearty men sat around them, and father asked Mr. Woolsey what part of the duck he should help him to. Mr. Woolsey answered, " Oh, give me a leg, and a wing, and a piece of the breast," and I quietly suggested to father to pass him a whole one.

As we picked the duck bones, and I drank

the broth, for I never cared for tea, we held a council, and finally, at father's suggestion, it was decided that Peter and John (that is, myself) should ride on ahead of the party and hunt, and if successful, we would stay over Sunday in camp; if not, we would travel.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Bear hunt—Big grizzlies—Surfeit of fat meat.

In accord with the plan mentioned in last chapter, Peter and I saddled up sooner than the rest, and rode on. I will never forget that afternoon. I was in perfect health. My diet for the last few weeks forbade anything like dyspepsia—the horseback travel, the constant change, the newness of my surroundings, this beautiful and wonderful country. Oh, how sweet life was to me! Then the day was superb—bright sunshine, fleecy clouds, and intensely exhilarating atmosphere; everywhere, above and around us, and before and beneath us, a rich and lovely country—quietly sloping plains, nicely rounded knolls, big hills on whose terraced heights woodland and prairie seemed to have scrambled for space, and someone, with wonderful artistic taste, had decided for them, and placed them as they were; lakelets at dif-

ferent altitudes glistening with sun rays, and that quiet afternoon sleeping as they shone; the early autumn tinting the now full-grown grass and foliage with colors the painter might well covet. As I rode in silence behind my guide, my eyes feasted on these panoramic views, and yet I was sharply and keenly looking for some game that might serve the purpose of our quest.

When suddenly I saw a dark object in the distance, seeming to come out of a bluff of poplars on to the plain, I checked my horse and watched intently for a little and saw it move. I whistled to Peter, and he said, "What is it?" and I pointed out to him what I saw. Said he, "It is a buffalo." Ah! how my hunting instincts moved at those words. A buffalo on his native heath! Even the sight of him was something to be proud of. The plain this animal was crossing was on the farther side of a lake, and at the foot of a range of hills, the highest of which was called "Sickness Hill."

It may have been about four or five miles from us to the spot where I had seen the dark object moving.

After riding some distance, we came upon a

ridge which enabled Peter to make up his mind that what he now saw was a bear and not a buffalo. This was to both of us somewhat of a disappointment, as it was food more than sport we wanted.

I said to Peter, "Will the bear not be good to eat?" "Of course he will, and we will try and kill him," was Peter's reply; and carefully scanning the ground he laid his plan for doing this. The bear was lazily coming to the shore of the lake, and Peter said, "I think he is coming to bathe, and in all probability will swim across to this side of the lake."

There was a gully running down through the hills to the lake, and Peter told me to follow that to the shore, and said he would ride around and thus give us a double chance.

Accordingly we separated, and I made my way down the gully, and coming near the lake dismounted and crawled up the little hill which alone was my cover from that portion of the lake where I expected to see our game.

Parting the grass at the summit of the hill, what I saw almost made my heart jump into my mouth, for here was Bruin swimming straight for me.

How excited I was! I very much doubted my ability to shoot straight, even when I got the chance.

Crawling back under cover I endeavored to quiet my nerves, and waited for my opportunity. Then, looking through the grass again, I saw the bear swimming, as hard as he could, back to the shore he had come from, and though he was far out I concluded to try a shot at him, and doing so, saw my ball strike the water just to the left of his head.

Mine was but a single-barrelled shot-gun at best, and here I was with an empty gun and a restive horse, and looking for the reason of the bear's sudden change of front, I saw Peter galloping around the end of the lake to intercept the bear, if possible.

Jumping on my horse, I followed as fast as I could, and began to load my gun as I rode.

This was an entirely new experience for me, and took me some time to accomplish. I spilled the powder, and got some of it in my eyes. In putting the stopper of my powder-horn, which I held in my teeth, back into the horn, I caught some of the hairs of my young moustache, and

felt smart pain as these were pulled out as the horn dropped.

But, in the meantime, my horse was making good time, and at last I was loaded, and now nerved and calm and ready for anything.

During all this I kept my eyes alternately between Peter and the bear; saw the bear reach the shore; saw Peter come close to him; saw Peter's horse plunge, and jump, and kick, and try to run away; saw Peter chance a shot while his horse was thus acting; saw that he tickled the bear's heel; saw the bear grab up its heel and, giving a cry of pain, settle down to run for the nearest woods; heard Peter shout to me, "Hurry, John; head him off;" and I was coming as fast as my horse could bring me, and thinking, far in advance of my pace, "What shall I do if I catch the bear before he reaches that thicket? My horse may act like Peter's has, and I will miss the bear, as sure as fate."

Just then I saw a lone tree standing on the plain right in the course the bear was taking, and it flashed upon me what to do. I will ride up between the bear and the tree, jump off, let the bear come close, and then if I miss him

I KILL MY FIRST BEAR—(*See page 173*).

I will drop my gun and make for that tree. I felt I coud leave the bear in a fair run for that distance. We required the food, and I wanted to kill that bear. With all my heart I wished to do this, and now I was opposite, and my horse began to shy and jump ; so I uncoiled my lariat and let it drag, to make it easier to catch my horse, and, jumping from his back, I let him go ; and now the bear, seeing me between him and the brush, showed the white of his teeth, put back his ears, and came at me straight.

I looked at the tree, measured the distance, cocked my gun, and let him come until he almost touched the muzzle, and then fired.

Fortunately my bullet went into his brain, and down he dropped at my feet, and I was for the time the proudest man in Canada.

Mark my astonishment when Peter came at me vehemently in this wise : " You young rascal ! what made you jump off your horse ? That bear might have killed you. It was all an accident, your killing him. Your father put you in my care. If anything had happened to you, what could I say to him ? "

I stood there in my folly, yet proud of it ;

but I saw I must change the subject, so I looked innocently up at Peter, and said, "Do you think he is fat?" Then a smile lit up Peter's face, and he said, "Fat! Why, yes; he is shaking with fat;" and jumping from his horse, he grasped his knife and laid open the brisket of the bear to verify his words, and sure enough the fat was there.

And now, as the food supply was fixed for a day or two, the next question was to bring our party together.

For this purpose Peter said to me, "Gallop away to the top of yonder hill and look out for our people, and when you see them, ride your horse to and fro until they see you, and when they see you and turn toward you, you can come back to me."

So I galloped away to the distant hill, and presently saw our party coming over another; and riding my horse to and fro in short space, soon attracted their attention, and they diverged towards me; and when I was sure of the direction, I rode back to Peter, who had the bear skinned and cut up by this time, and when our folks came to us, we concluded to camp right there for Sunday.

We could not have had a lovelier spot to dwell in for a time.

Very soon we had bear ribs roasting by the fire, and bear steak frying in the pan.

After supper we saw three large "grizzlies" not far from us. They entered a small thicket, which we surrounded, but after waiting for the huge brutes to make a move, and taking into consideration that our guns were but shot, and muzzle-loading, that our camp was well supplied with bear meat, and that it is written, "Prudence is the better part of valor," we retired to our camp and left the bears alone.

The fact of the matter was, as General Middleton would have described it, we "funked."

Two nights and one whole day and parts of two other days on fat bear meat straight was quite enough for our party.

We did not carry much with us as we left that camp next Monday morning bright and early. Our appetites for this special kind of food had changed since last Saturday evening. Then we ate a hearty supper, but less for breakfast Sunday morning, and this went on in a decreasing ratio at each subsequent meal. Even Mr.

Woolsey, a hardened veteran and ordinarily fond of fat, weakened on this diet. How often did we think and even say, "If we only had some bread or some potatoes, or anything to eat with this;" but there was none, and gladly we left that camp and pushed on our way, hoping to reach the Indians or buffalo before long.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The first buffalo—Father excited—Mr. Woolsey lost—Strike trail of big camp—Indians dash at us—Meet Maskepetoon.

I HAVE noticed that while man's stomach seems to need a lot of stimulating, yet there are circumstances when this organ, in turn, becomes a great stimulator; and the slowest in our party seemed to me to feel this that day, and we rode steadily and fast.

South-east was our course into the big bend of the Battle River.

In the afternoon we did sight a buffalo. There he stood in his hugeness and ugliness, on a plain, without any cover.

The only way was to run him; so father and Peter made ready for the race.

Father was tremendously excited, and rushed around like a boy, pulled off his big riding-boots and left them on the prairie, then threw down

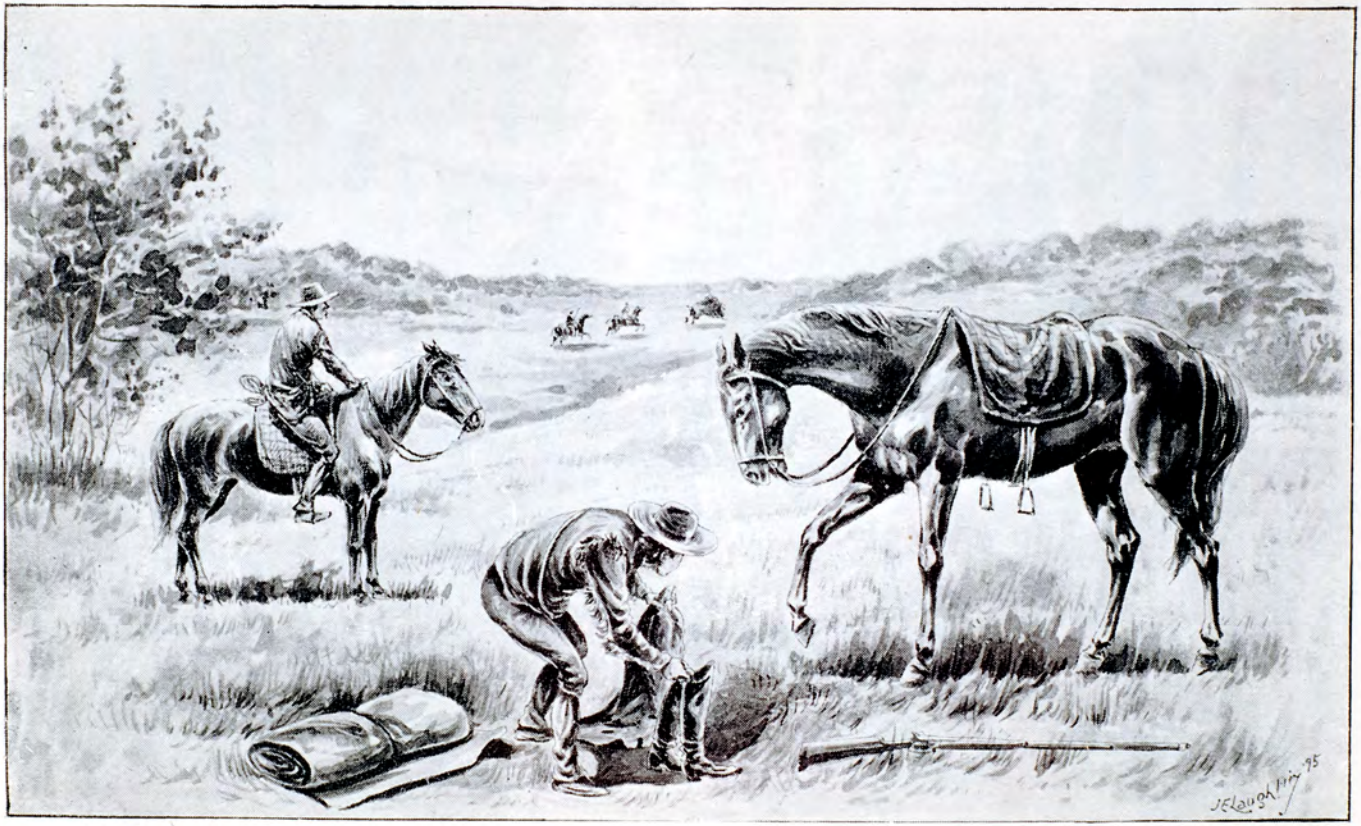
his coat, untied his waterproof from his saddle and flung that down also, and putting on a pair of moccasins, he vaulted into the saddle with all the spring and vigor of youth, and rode off with Peter towards the bull, who presently noticed them, and lifting up his big, shaggy head, snuffed the air, and pawed the ground, and then started.

His legs seemed to have no bend in them, and his gait at first was slow, but as the horses came near on the dead run his gait increased in speed. As he ran he turned his head from side to side to catch a glimpse of his pursuers.

At first I thought I could catch him on foot; then he spurted, and the hunters drove their horses to their best. Still the brute was too far ahead for them to shoot, and thus buffalo and hunters disappeared in the hills from our view, and, after them, William; only our pack-horses, and Mr. Woolsey and myself, were left.

I gathered up what remained, boots, coats, etc., tied them to my saddle, and we followed slowly at Mr. Woolsey's pace.

"We are lost, John. We may never find our friends again." These were the comforting



BUFFALO AND HUNTERS DISAPPEARED IN THE HILLS FROM OUR VIEW—(*See page 180*).

sentences Mr. Woolsey addressed to me, but I thought otherwise, and said so, and comforted my venerable companion, all the while keeping my eye on the spot where I had last seen our friends disappearing.

On into the rolling hills we rode, and I did wish Mr. Woolsey would come faster. Repeatedly he broke out about our big loss. Then I heard voices, and we came up to our hunters and found them skinning the buffalo. Taking some of the meat, we pushed on.

And now the whole country gave signs that recently large herds had been roaming and feeding here, and our guide said we might strike the Indians very soon.

But it was not until Tuesday afternoon we came to a large trail; indeed, to many large trails, for these paralleled each other. Thus the large camp kept in a compact mass, which was wise, as the enemy was always on the look-out for stragglers, and as our party was small, we were constantly on the watch against surprise.

But in the early afternoon, notwithstanding all our watchfulness, we were surprised by a troop of Indian cavalry dashing at us from out

WE WERE SURPRISED BY A TROOP OF INDIAN CAVALRY—

(*See page 183*).

of the bluff on one side, and another from the other side.

With whoops and yells and fine horsemanship they bore down upon us, and I did not know what to think for a while. But Peter did not seem to mind them; he only sat his horse straighter than before, and soon I knew these were friends sent out to escort us into camp.

Then, as we kept on the trail, presently we saw a flag, and coming up over the hill a small body of riders, and in the centre a "kingly-looking man."

"That is Maskepetoon," said Mr. Woolsey. We alighted as we met, and the chief, addressing the Deity, expressed his thankfulness because of father's coming, and invoked a blessing on our meeting. They all shook hands, and in company with the chief and escort, we continued on our way to the camp.

I was taking stock of the Indians around us, as also of their horses. The men were fine specimens generally, a large percentage very good-looking; their costumes were varied and unique, and ranged from a breech-cloth and looking-glass on to perforated leather shirts and

leggings. Also fancy-colored calico was common for little shirts, which were not more than waists, and the sleeves of which came a little past the elbow. Most of the young men had their hair "banged," and I believe that fashion, now so common everywhere, originally came from the plains. Most of them had brass pendants hanging from the hair and ears, also brass collars and armlets. Some had sea-shells on their necks. All were armed with either bow and quiver or flint-lock guns; nearly all were painted, red, yellow and blue being the chief colors, red predominating.

The saddles were home-made—some with a bone and wood frame, covered with rawhide; others a pad of dressed leather, stuffed with moose or deer hair. Stirrups were wood, covered with rawhide; stirrup leathers and girths were softened rawhide. Saddle-cloths were home-made, consisting of the skins of bear, wolf, dog, buffalo, etc., and trimmed with strips of red and blue Hudson's Bay strouds (a strong kind of cloth made for this trade).

Horses were of all colors and sizes, some very smart and frisky, and many of them exceed-

ingly handsome. The whole scene was harmonious and picturesque, and highly interesting to me. All my previous life had been spent among Indians, but they were canoe men, and wood hunters, and fishermen, and for some generations at peace. Here were plain hunters, and buffalo Indians, and warriors. Some of these rode horses recently taken from the enemy. Some of them wore scalp-locks dangling from arm or leg, which not many moons since were the pride of the original owners, and on whose heads they had grown. But as I took in these new surroundings, we were approaching the camp, and the crowd around us had increased.

Many more men had ridden out to meet us, and crowds of boys, two and three on one pony, were joining our *cortège* all the while.

So far as I could see, the ponies were as full of fun as the boys.

Many of the latter were naked, except for the paint and brass ornaments and beads with which they were bedecked.

CHAPTER XXX.

Large camp—Meet Mr. Steinhauer—Witness process of making provisions—Strange life.

ASCENDING a ridge, the large camp was before us—rings within rings of white tents, varying in size but all of one shape, and all made from the buffalo's hide ; many of them covered with hieroglyphics and paintings indicative either of supernatural power or of martial achievement; their projecting ventilators tasselled with buffalo hair and gently flapping in the breeze.

In and out among their tents, and beyond them for a mile all around, hundreds of horses were feeding, while on almost every knoll groups of guards could be seen, whose duty it was to watch over these herds of horses, and, in so doing, the camp also.

Everywhere among the tents were stagings made of peeled poles, on which was spread the meat of recent hunts in various stages of curing ;

MASKEPETOON'S CAMP—(*See page 188*).

for here meat was cured without either sugar or salt, with only the sun and wind and the chemicals which may be in the atmosphere ; and this meat, either as dried meat, or pemmican, or pounded meat and grease, will keep for many years in a perfect state of preservation.

Women were dressing skins, scraping hides, rendering tallow, pounding meat, making pemmican, slicing up the fresh meat and hanging it on the stages ; some were cooking ; some were sewing, with awl for needle and sinew for thread. Scores of naked children were playing and eating and crying in every direction.

Hundreds of dogs, half wolf, were fighting and stealing and barking as we rode through the circle of lodges on into the centre, where a small cluster of large tents stood.

Here we alighted, and again the chief welcomed the strangers to his country and camp, and once more invoked Heaven's blessings upon the meeting, and then invited us to enter a large tent, which was to be our home while in the camp.

Here we found Mr. Steinhauer and his people, who had reached the rendezvous ahead of us.

This was the first time in the history of the country that three Protestant missionaries had met on the plains. This was the first time in the history of the Methodist Church that a Chairman of a District had visited the Saskatchewan country. The lone and often very isolated missionary's heart was cheered, the Christian native was delighted, and the pagan people were profoundly interested at such an event.

Conjurers and medicine-men looked askance, and may have felt premonitions that their craft was in danger; yet all were apparently friendly and courteous to us.

Soon a steaming repast was served, consisting of buffalo tongues and "boss"; the latter is the third set or back ribs, in the possession of which the buffalo is alone among animals on this continent.

To us this nice, fresh, delicious meat was a feast indeed. We had fed on comparatively nothing, then surfeited on fat bear meat, and made our jaws weary with tough bull meat; but this—no epicure could ask for more or better in the way of meat food. Our table was the ground, our mats buffalo robes, our dishes tin.

Had we not brought a little salt and tea there would have been none, for you might have searched the whole camp in vain for these, to many, "indispensables"—the western Indian had not as yet acquired the taste for either. But the kindly manner and princely hospitality, and the delicious quality and large quantity of the meat our hosts served us with, more than made up for anything we might have thought necessary or lacking.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Great meeting—Conjurers and medicine-men look on under protest—Father prophesies—Peter waxes eloquent as interpreter—I find a friend.

In due time, after our meal was over, the chief asked father when he would be ready to address his people; and father said as soon as the camp could be gathered he was ready. Then the chief summoned two men, and said to them, "Ride forth on either side and shout to my people, and say, Our friends, the praying men, have arrived. One of them is from afar. He is now about to speak to us words of truth and wisdom. All who can be spared from care of camp and guard of horses, come and listen." And the criers went forth and shouted as they rode, and presently from the whole circumference of the big camp, throngs of men and women and children gathered to where we were with the chief. The Christians were intensely interested, but the pagans were intensely curious.

What a gathering of strange people, strange costumes, tattooed and painted faces, painted robes, grotesque and also picturesque head-dresses!

What diverse thought! Old pagans, and conjurers, and medicine-men, strongly conservative, and inclined to look upon these praying men and this meeting as altogether "unnecessary" and "unrequired." The religion of their fathers was good enough for their people. Let the white man keep his faith, and let them alone in theirs.

These wondered that men of the type of Maskepetoon should bother themselves in any way with these new-fangled notions, and while they counselled kindness and courtesy, at the same time they said, "Listen only with your ears, and let your minds be unaffected by what these strangers may say." But notwithstanding this, the larger number were eager for something better and stronger and more certain than they had in the faith of their fathers, and these were ready to give close attention to the message of the missionary. All were reverent and respectful, for all were religious in their way.

Our little company, with the native Christian following, sang some hymns while the crowd gathered.

Then the Rev. Mr. Steinhauer prayed, after which father began his address. He told of the coming of Jesus, how He found the world in darkness, and men worshipping idols, etc.; of the commission given to man to preach the Gospel to every creature; what this Gospel had done for the nations who had accepted it. He showed that true civilization originated in and was caused by Christianity. He said that it was because of the command of Jesus, eastern Christians were constrained to send missionaries to the Saskatchewan; that the purpose was for the best good of the people, both present and eternal.

He congratulated them on their country.

He foretold the extinction of the buffalo, and the suppression of tribal war, and the necessity of this people's preparing for a great change in their mode and manner of life; that it was the business of himself and brethren to teach and prepare them for the change which was bound to come.

He prophesied the ultimate settling of this country.

He assured them that the Government would do the fair and just thing by them; that this had been the history of the British Government in her dealings with the Indians, always to do justly and rightly by them.

He congratulated them on having a chief like Maskepetoon, who, while brave and strong, was a lover of peace, and earnestly desirous of helping his people in every way.

He urged them to listen to him and obey him.

He told them that, if God spared his life, his purpose was to come and dwell with them, and become one with them in this great country God had given them.

He assured them of the profound interest all Christian people had in them, and urged them to have faith in the Great Spirit and in His Son Jesus.

Peter waxed warm and eloquent in his interpreting.

What signified it to him that Mr. Steinhauer and William and even myself were closely watching his rendering of this address to the people.

He caught the thought and entered into the

spirit and purpose of the speaker, and proved himself to be an earnest friend of this people and a prince of interpreters.

And that congregation, assembled on the highlands of the continent, under the canopy of heaven, amid such strange, and, to me, new and crude surroundings, how they listened! With what reverence and decorum they gave attention! No getting up and going away, no restless movements. On the other hand, the instinctive courtesy of the natural man was clearly apparent.

Civilization does a great deal for man, but it does not always make a gentleman of him.

When the service was over, the chief arose, and with quiet dignity spoke to the crowd as follows: "My people, I told you that my friend from the east would speak to you words of wisdom and truth. You have listened to him, and I want you to think of what you have heard. Let this sink into your hearts, for all my friend has said will come to pass. The Great Spirit has sent these praying men to teach us His will. To-morrow we will show our friends our manner of obtaining a livelihood. My runners have brought word that the

buffalo are in large numbers near by, and we will go on a grand hunt to-morrow. Only the necessary guards will remain with the camp. Now let the guards be set for to-night, and let there be no recurrence of what took place last night. Someone slept at his post, and the enemy came within the circle of tents, and if he had not been detected, would have stolen, and perhaps killed. Shame on the young man who would allow that to happen! Go now to your tents, put the camp in order, and remember our friends are tired; they have ridden far. Let there be no unnecessary noise, no drumming or gambling to-night. Let the camp be quiet; let our friends rest in peace."

When I heard of the grand hunt planned for to-morrow, and of the great numbers of buffalo near by, my whole being was excited with the prospect of witnessing this, and perhaps participating in it. Ah, thought I, if I only had a fresh horse! And while I was wondering how to secure one, a young Indian, as if he divined my thought, said to me, "Will you go to-morrow? will you hunt with us?" I said I would like to, and he at once kindly offered me

his horse. "Come and see him," said my new friend; and I went with him to his tent, where he showed me a beautiful little black, who was standing near the tent door, eating at a bundle of hay his owner had cut and carried in for him.

The lariat around the horse's neck was passed into the door of the tent, and fastened near where my friend slept. He evidently was taking extra precaution for the safety of his beloved horse. I thanked him for his kindness in thus providing me a mount, and as I sauntered back to our tent I took in the scene.

Horses were being driven in from all sides. Picket pins were being re-driven and made secure. Favorite steeds were being led up to tent doors. Women were busy putting away meat and hides. Others were cooking the evening meal over the flickering camp-fires. Old men were walking through the camp, urging to great caution about horses, and some of them enforcing the advice of the afternoon.

Soon came darkness and quiet, but though tired I could not sleep. My thought was busy with all these new experiences, and then the

hunt promised for to-morrow kept me awake. When I did sleep I dreamt of painted savages and buffalo.

Soon it was morning, and with daylight the camp was astir again. Horses were turned loose under guard, breakfast was cooked and eaten and another service held, and then at the command of the chief, all who could go got ready for the hunt.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The big hunt—Buffalo by the thousand—I kill my first buffalo—Wonderful scene.

My friend led up the little black, who in the morning light looked more beautiful than ever. I speedily saddled him, and awaited in nervous expectancy the start.

At last the chief mounted, and in company with father and Messrs. Woolsey and Steinhauer, led the way; and from all parts of the camp riders came forth, many of them leading their runners, so as to have them as fresh as possible for the coming race.

I found myself in the centre of a group of young men, and in a little while, without any formal introduction, we were quite acquainted and friendly.

They plied me with questions about my previous life, the kind of country I had lived in, and how many people there were in "Mo-ne

yang," which to them signified Older Canada. They were astonished when I said there were no buffalo there. "What did the people live on?" They were even more astonished when I explained that it was quite possible to live without buffalo. What about war? Did the people where I came from fight?

Thus we rode through prairie and woods about evenly mixed; around us multiplying evidences of the recent presence of thousands of buffalo, the country in some places smelling like a barnyard.

Then, after riding some five or six miles, we came upon a ridge which enabled us to look down and across a plain or open country, some ten by twenty miles in size, and which seemed to be literally full of buffalo.

As I looked, I asked myself, "Am I dreaming? Is this so?" I never could have realized it had I not seen it.

The whole country was a black, moving mass. The earth trembled to their tread and roar. Sometimes the clouds of dust from the dustpans as the bulls pawed the earth, rose in the air like smoke from a prairie-fire. It seemed impossible,

and yet here was the fact, or rather thousands of them; for every bull and cow and calf was a reality, and so was this long line of strangely equipped Indians on either side of me, and so was I, for my horse became excited with the sight and smell of the great herds, and I found myself a living fact on a very lively steed. As our line moved down the slope, the outer fringe of buffalo fell back on the larger herds, until there seemed to be one living wall before us.

Presently the captain of the hunt gave the command, "Alight! see to your girths and arms, and make ready!"

I watched my companions, and as they did so did I. They tightened their girths, and then they began to look to their arms. Most of them had bow and quiver, and I turned to one with a gun and watched him. He rubbed his steel and pointed his flint, then took from his ball-pouch some balls, selected some of them, and put these in his mouth. I took several balls from my pouch, selected six, and put them in my mouth. These balls were heavy (twenty-eight to the pound), "but when you are in Rome you must do as Romans do."

In a very short time our captain called, "Mount!" and we formed in one long line; and if it had been ten miles long the buffalo would have extended away beyond. If these huge animals had only known their power and estimated their numbers, our line would have been overwhelmed and trampled under foot in a very short time. Instead of this, they moved away as we advanced, increasing their speed as they went, and, following our captain, we increased ours. The horses were all excitement; the men were pale, nervous and quiet. Under foot was rough ground, and there were any number of badger holes. The possibilities were, being shot, or thrown, or gored.

Now we were at half speed, line as yet unbroken, every eye on the captain. Suddenly he held his gun in the air and shouted, "Ah-ah-*how*," putting strong emphasis on the last syllable, and away we went, every man for himself. Whips flew; horses tried to. Men were sitting well forward, and seemed to go ahead of their steeds. We were in the dust-cloud, eyes and ears and nose filled with it; then we were through, and here were the buffalo speeding before us. Already

the fast horses were into the herd. The *swish* of an arrow, the blast of an old flint-lock, and the wounded animals jumped aside, streams of blood gushing from their nostrils and mouths, showing that they were mortally hit; others fell dead as soon as shot; others had either a fore or hind leg broken, and stood around at bay challenging another shot—and thus the carnage went on, thicker and faster as the slow-mounted hunters came up.

As for myself, I soon found that six bullets in my mouth were at any rate five too many, and I slipped the five back into my shot-pouch. Then my horse would spring over several badger holes, and my hair would lift; I fancied he would come down in another. When I neared the buffalo, I cocked my gun, and in the intensity of my excitement, and because of an extra jump of my horse, I touched the trigger and off it went, fortunately into the air, and thus I lost my shot. I felt very much mortified at this, but hoped no one would notice what I had done; in fact, all had enough to do in looking after themselves and the game before them.

To load under these conditions is no small

THE BUFFALO HUNT—(*See page 205*).

matter—horse at full speed, greatly excited, and because of the nature of the ground, now making a plunge, now a short jump, and again a long one; and then a dead buffalo right in the way and your horse jumping over him, another struggling and rising and falling in the throes of death straight ahead of you, some winded bulls coming athwart your course, heads down and tails up, which you have been told are sure signs of a fight; and to put on the climax of difficulties, you a "tenderfoot," or, as in the Hudson's Bay country dialect, a "greenhorn."

However, after spilling a lot of powder and getting some of it in my eyes, I was loaded at last, and now I saw that the buffalo were driven from me; but just then an Indian chased a cow at an angle towards me, and I also saw that his horse was winded, and I closed in. Yet I did not like to intrude, but the friendly fellow said, "Chase her, my brother," and then I went in gladly. Again he shouted, "That is a good horse you are on. Drive him!" I touched the black with my whip and he speeded. "Drive him!" shouted my friend, "go close!" and again I struck the black, and like the wind he carried

me up, and I did go close, and shot the cow. Down she dropped, and I jumped to the ground beside her, a very proud boy. Ah, thought I, just give me a chance; I will make a hunter as good as the best.

My friend came up and said, "You did well, my brother." I thought so too, and though I have killed many hundreds of buffalo since then, and often under far more difficult and trying circumstances, yet that first race and dead-shot can never be forgotten.

My new brother would fain have me take part of the meat. I told him the animal was his, but if he would give me the tongue I would be thankful. This he did, and fastening it to my saddle, I rode on to look over the field of slaughter, as also to find father and party if I could.

Ascending a hill, I could see men and women at work skinning and cutting up. In little groups they dotted the plain. The pack-horses were waiting for their loads, and the runners were feeding quietly beside them, their work for the day finished. I think I am within bounds when I say there must have been between eight hundred and a thousand buffalo slain in that run.

Many of the hunters killed four, some of them six and seven.

Hunting to kill was considered a small matter, but to kill real good animals was where the skill of the hunter came in. To select a fat one out of scores and hundreds, all on the dead run and mixing as they ran, and to keep your eye on that particular one, watch your horse, load your gun, and look out for wounded and enraged animals in your way, required both skill and nerve, and even among the Indians and mixed bloods born on the plains, there were but few who excelled.

It was late in the afternoon when I found the chief and our party, and I was heartily glad to partake of some dried meat the chief had thoughtfully brought along for the strangers' benefit.

Towards evening we were all converging in the direction of the camp and thousands of pounds of meat and many hides were being packed home by hundreds of horses.

Much of this meat would be eaten fresh, but the greater portion would be cured for future use, or for sale to the Hudson's Bay Company and traders.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Another big meeting—Move camp—Sunday service all day.

ANOTHER even larger gathering took place in the evening, when father again addressed the motley crowd through Peter, and the interest deepened. The days were spent by the missionaries in a succession of services and councils.

On Saturday the whole camp moved some twelve or fifteen miles farther east into a still more picturesque and beautiful country, rich in its changing variety of landscape and scenery.

No wonder these aboriginal men are proud of their birthright, for it is indeed a goodly heritage.

To witness this large camp moving was to me an object of great interest—the taking down of tents, the saddling and packing of horses and packing of dogs. Both horses and dogs pulled a sort of vehicle made of poles, termed in this

country "travois," and thus they both packed and pulled. To these "travois" the lodge-poles were fastened by the small end and drawn along the ground. Many of the children and the aged and the sick were carried on the "travois." Indeed, the carrying and pulling capacity of an Indian pony seemed to be unlimited. Two or three children and a lot of lodge-poles on the "travois," and the mother and a couple more children on the horse's back, and the staunch little fellow ambled along at a quick step, without any trouble or fuss.

When the camp moved, parallel columns were formed and all kept together, the riders and hunters keeping on either side and in front and in the rear.

In an incredibly short time the whole camp was in motion, and after we came to the spot selected for our new camp-ground, in a very little while tents were up, and stages standing, and meat drying, and work going on as at the other camp. In fact, were it not for the lay of the country one could imagine that the whole village had been lifted from yonder to here without disturbing anything.

WHEN THE CAMP MOVED, PARALLEL COLUMNS WERE FORMED—(*See page 211*).

Long practice and generations of nomadic life had trained the people to constant moving.

They were "itinerants" even more than the Methodist ministry.

Sunday was a special day. The chief's influence and the presence of the missionaries caused the day to be respected by all, irrespective of creed; and prayer meetings, and preaching, and song services were continued all day, and manifest interest was shown by the people.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Great horse-race—"Blackfoot," "Moose Hair," and others — No gambling — How "Blackfoot" was captured.

WHILE we were in the camp a great race was run between some famous horses. This was a trial of endurance and wind as well as speed. The race was from camp straight out and around an island of timber, and back home. The whole distance must have been between five and six miles, and although many of these Indians were inveterate gamblers, yet because of the presence of the missionaries this was omitted from the programme.

A bay horse called "Blackfoot" came in ahead, and the horse which Mrs. Hawke had loaned father from Saddle Lake to White-fish Lake, called "Moose Hair," came in second. Our missionary, Mr. Steinhauer, told me some of the history of "Blackfoot."

THE HORSE RACE—(*See page 214*).

Mr. Steinhauer was in the Cree camp when this was attacked by a large force of Blackfeet and their allies, and the fighting went on most of the day, the Crees, though driven in at times, still keeping the enemy away from their camp, and eventually repulsing them; and when the last successful rally was made by the Crees, one of our people gave chase to a Blackfoot, whose horse, after a long run, showed signs of distress. The "Chief Child," for that was the Cree's name, spurred on, and at last the Blackfoot abandoned his horse. "Chief Child" captured the animal, and very soon found he had a treasure, for the trouble with the horse was that his feet were worn down smooth, and he could not run. This horse, when he recuperated and his feet grew out, became famous, and was called "Blackfoot." Eventually he came into my hands, and later on I traded him to father, who kept him until "Old Blackfoot" died, and our whole family mourned for him. He was not only speedy, but the longest-winded horse I ever owned.

Many a time when I had left the other hunters, even on the start, and when their horses

were winded, "Old Blackfoot" seemed to be only getting down to his wind. I gave a splendid horse, a pair of blankets and £8 sterling for him, and he was worth it.

Father prized him highly, and had him with him when, in 1867, he travelled with his own rigs from the Saskatchewan to St. Paul's, in Minnesota, and when he came back, in the autumn of 1868, he brought "Blackfoot" with him.

At that race which we witnessed, "Blackfoot" came in an easy winner, and because of his reputation, the "Hawke" was quite satisfied to have his horse, "Moose Hair," come in second.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Formed friendships—Make a start—Fat wolves—Run one—Reach the Saskatchewan at Edmonton.

WE had now spent several days with this people, and had become acquainted with many of them. I had formed friendships with a number, which, grown stronger with the years, have helped me in my life-work ever so much. Now we must continue our journey. Father told them they might look for him next year about the same time, and as a pledge of this he was going to leave me with Mr. Woolsey in the meantime.

Quite a large number escorted us for several miles on our way, and seemed reluctant to have us go. They had provisioned us with the choicest dried meat and pemmican, and our horses were rested and ready to go on.

Our course was now westward up the Battle River, and then northward for Edmonton, or as the Indians term it, the "Beaver Hill House."

As we journeyed we came near the scene of our hunt a few days since. A number of big prairie wolves were to be seen. They were glutting themselves on the offal and carcases left on the field. They were fat and could not run fast, and one could kill them with a club from his horse's back. I drove one up to our party, and Peter and William and I amused ourselves by making him trot between us for quite a distance; then we let him go, for wolf-skins in those days were not worth packing any distance.

We went in by the "Bony Knoll" and what is now known as the "Hay Lake Trail," camped twice, and reached the Saskatchewan opposite the fort in the evening of the third day.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Swim horses—Cross in small boat—Dine at officers' table on pounded meat without anything else—Sup on ducks—No carving.

SWIMMING our horses, and crossing in a small boat, we resaddled and repacked and rode into the fort, where we were received kindly by the Hudson's Bay Company's officers and invited to partake of their fare, which was just then pounded meat straight—no bread, no vegetables, nothing else. Pounded meat with marrow-fat is very good fare, but alone it becomes monotonous, even before you get through the first meal.

At this time Edmonton was without provisions, and only now was sending a party out to the plains to trade with the Indians for some.

The next meal we dined on duck straight. No carving by the gentleman who served; he put a duck on each plate, and we picked the bones clean—at least, I did those of mine.

Edmonton then consisted of the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, and this was all in the vicinity. Out north, about nine miles distant, was a newly commenced Roman Catholic mission; but here the four walls of the fort enclosed everything. Stores and dwelling-houses were packed in a small space, and when the trip-men and voyageurs were home for the winter the post would be crowded.

I had now seen three Hudson's Bay Company's forts in the Saskatchewan—Carlton, Pitt, and Edmonton—all situate in one of the richest agricultural districts in Canada, but each and all striking evidence that the Hudson's Bay Company was nothing more than a fur-trading organization; they were not settlers nor farmers. Pelts and not bread, furs and not homes, were what they aimed at.

Though only a boy, I could readily see that before many years this would be changed, for no power under heaven could keep settlement out of this country I had already been privileged with seeing a portion of.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Start for new home—Miss seeing father—Am very lonely —Join Mr. Woolsey.

FATHER was now at his objective point in the west, and as the season was advanced he must make haste to return to Norway House.

His plan was to go down the river in a skiff. I was to remain with Mr. Woolsey as a sort of assistant and interpreter.

Our present plan was for Mr. Woolsey to accompany father in the skiff to where we had crossed the river on our southward journey some weeks since, and Peter and I were to take the horses down on the north side to meet them at this point.

William had gone on to Smoking Lake and would meet us there.

We were to leave Edmonton the same day, and hoped to reach our rendezvous about the same time; but Peter and I had quite a bunch

of horses to drive, and most of the road was dense forest, with the path narrow and almost overgrown with timber. Our horses, too, would run off into the thicket, so that when we came to an open space beyond, and counted up, we would generally find some were missing. While I guarded those we had, Peter would go back and patiently track up the rest. Thus, instead of reaching the spot where we were to meet father and party the second evening, it was long after dark on the third evening when we came there.

I had not seen father to say "Good-bye," at Edmonton, and I had many things to say to him before we parted for the year, and now I expected to meet him camped on the banks of the river, but as we rode down the hill into the valley all was darkness. There could be no mistake; this was the spot, but no camp and no sign of father. We wondered what was up; presently I saw something white, and, riding to it, found a note stuck in the end of a small pole, and we lit a match and I read:

"My Dear Boy,—

"We came here early to-day and waited some hours, but the season urges me on. Am sorry to miss meeting you. Play the man. Do your best to help Mr. Woolsey.

"God bless you, my son. Good-bye.

"Your loving father,

"G. McDougall."

If I had been alone I could have cried heartily in my great disappointment. Oh! what a fit of lonesomeness and homesickness came upon me, but there was no time for long lamentation.

We found that Mr. Woolsey and William had gone on towards Smoking Lake, and we followed and came up with them late at night, and I began my service with Mr. Woolsey; but it took days of constant change to lift from my mind the shadow of my disappointment in missing father.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

William goes to the plains—I begin work at Victoria—Make hay—Plough—Hunt—Storm.

FATHER had suggested two plans for immediate action : One was to send William out to the plains to trade some provisions ; the other was to send me to the site of the new mission, and have me make some hay and plough some land ready for next spring, and thus take up the ground.

Mr. Woolsey decided to act on both. The former was very necessary, for we were living on duck, rabbits, etc., and the supply was precarious.

William took an Indian as his companion, and I a white man, by the name of Gladstone, as mine.

We travelled together as far as the river. This time we took a skiff Mr. Woolsey had on Smoking Lake.

We took this as far as we could by water and then loaded it on to a cart, and when we reached the river we took William's carts apart and crossed them over, and he and his companion started out to look for provisions, while Gladstone and myself to put up hay and plough land.

For the former we had two scythes, and for the latter a coulterless plough; but we had a tremendously big yoke of oxen.

We pitched our lodge down on the bank of the river and went to work; but as we had to hunt our food as well as work, we did not rush things as I wanted to.

My companion had been a long time in the Hudson's Bay Company's service, but was a boat-builder by trade, and knew little about either haymaking or ploughing or hunting; but he was a first-rate fellow, willing always to do his best. He told me that though he had been in the country for a long time, he had seldom fired a gun and had never set a net.

We had between us a single-barrelled shot-gun, percussion-lock, and a double-barrelled flint-lock.

The first thing we did was to make some floats,

and put strings on some stones, and I tied up a net we had and we crossed the river, and set it in an eddy; then we fixed up our scythes and started in to cut hay on the ground where we intended to plough.

We had several horses with us, and these and the oxen gave us a lot of trouble. Many an hour we lost in hunting them, but we kept at it.

At first our food supply was good. I caught several fine trout in my net, and shot some ducks and chickens. We succeeded in making two good-sized stacks of hay.

Then we went to ploughing, but our oxen had never pulled together before—good in the cart, but hard to manage in double harness. It was not until the second day, after a great deal of hard work, that we finally got them to pull together.

Then our plough, without a coulter, bothered us tremendously; but we staked out a plot of ground, and were determined, if possible, to tear it up.

Once our oxen got away, and we lost them for three days. "Glad," as I called him, knew very little about tracking, and I very little at that

time, but the third day, late in the evening, I came across the huge fellows, wallowing in pea-vine almost up to their backs, and away they went, with their tails up, and I had to run my horse to head them off for our tent.

One morning, very early, I was across looking at my net, and caught a couple of fine large trout. Happening to look down the river, I saw some men in single file coming along our side, keeping well under the bank. My heart leaped into my mouth as I thought of a war-party; but as I looked, presently the prow of a boat came swinging into view around the point, and I knew these men I saw were tracking her up.

What a relief, and how thankful I was to think I might hear some news of home and father and the outside world, for though it was now more than four months since I left home, I had not heard a word. I hurried up and fixed my net, and pulled across and told Glad the news about the boat, and he was as excited as myself.

Isolation is all very fine, but most of us soon get very tired of it. I for one never could comprehend the fellow who sighed, "Oh, for a

lodge in some vast wilderness!" Very soon the boat came to us, and we found that it contained the chief factor, William Christie, Esq., and his family, and was on its way to Edmonton. Mr. Christie told me about father passing Carlton in good time some weeks since, and assured me that he would now be safe at home at Norway House. He said that there was no late packet and he had no news from the east.

He went up and looked at our ploughing, and laughed at our lack of coulter. "Just like Mr. Woolsey, to bring a plough without a coulter," said he; but the same gentleman bought a lot of barley of us some three years after this.

They had hams of buffalo meat hanging over the prow and stern of their boat. I offered them my fish, hoping they would offer me some buffalo meat. They took my fish gladly, but did not offer us any meat. This was undoubtedly because they did not think of it, or they would have done so, but both Glad and I confessed to each other afterwards our sore disappointment.

However, we ploughed on.

One morning I had come ashore from the net

with some fish in my boat, and, going up to the tent, Glad went down to the river to clean them. In a little while I looked over the bank, and, sitting within a few feet of Glad (who was engaged with the fish, just at the edge of the water), was a grey goose, looking earnestly at this object beside him; but as Glad made no sudden movement, the goose seemed to wonder whether this was alive or not. I slipped back for my gun and shot the goose, and Glad who thought somebody was shooting at him, jumped for his life, but I pointed to the dead goose and he was comforted.

Philanthropists make a great mistake when they begin to comfort others through their heads. Let them begin at their stomachs, which makes straighter and quicker work.

We were still three or four days away from our self-set task, when, as if by mutual agreement, the fish would not be caught, the ducks and geese took flight south, and the chickens left our vicinity. To use a western phrase, "The luck was agin' us." We had started with two salt buffalo tongues as our outfit, when we left Mr. Woolsey. We had still one of these left.

"GUN-SHOCK."—"GOOSE-COMFORT."—(*See page 230*).

We boiled it, and ate half the first day of our hard luck. We worked harder and later at our ploughing the second day. We finished the tongue and ploughed on. The third day we finished our task about two o'clock, and then I took my gun and hunted until dark, while Glad gathered and hobbled the horses close to camp. Not a rabbit or duck or chicken did I see.

If I had been a pagan Indian, I would have said, "Mine enemy hath done this. Somebody is working bad medicine about me." But I had long before this found out that the larder of a hunter or fisherman is apt to be empty at times.

Glad and I sat beside our camp-fire that night, and were solemn and quiet. There was a something lacking in our surroundings, and we felt it keenly. For a week we had been on very short "commons," and since yesterday had not tasted any food, and worked hard. In the meantime, there is no denying it, we were terribly hungry.

Early next morning we took down our tent and packed our stuff. We had neither pack nor riding-saddles, as we had come this far with William, and we had hoped that he would have

returned before we were through our work; but going on the plains was going into a large country.

You might strike the camp soon, or you might be weeks looking for them, and when you found the Indians, they might be in a worse condition as to provisions than you were. This all depended on the buffalo in their migrations —sometimes here, and again hundreds of miles away. William may turn up any time, and it may be a month or six weeks before we hear from him. As it is, Glad and I do the best we can without saddles, and start for home.

Having the oxen, we went slow.

After travelling about ten miles, I saw someone coming towards us, and presently made out that it was a white man, and I galloped on to meet him, and found that it was Neils, the Norwegian, who was with Mr. Woolsey. He was on foot, but I saw he had a small pack on his back, and my first question was, "Have you anything to eat?" and he said he had a few boiled tongues on his back. Then I told him that Glad and I were very hungry, and would very soon lighten his pack. He told me

Mr. Woolsey had become anxious about us, and at last sent him to see if we were still alive. When Glad came up, we soon showed Neils that our appetites were fully alive, for we each took a whole tongue and ate it; then we split another in two and devoured that. And now, in company with Neils, we continued our journey, reaching Mr. Woolsey's the same evening, but making great attempts to lower the lakes and creeks by the way, for our thirst after the salt tongues was intense.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Establish a fishery—Build a boat—Neils becomes morbid —I watch him.

THE next thing was to establish a fishery.

The buffalo might fail us, and so might the fish, but we must try both; and as I happened to be the only one in our party who knew anything about nets and fishing, this work came to me. So I began to overhaul what nets Mr. Woolsey had, and went to work mending and fixing them up.

About twenty-five miles north of us was a lake, in which a species of white-fish were said to abound, and our plan was to make a road out to that and give it a fair trial.

In the meantime, because of an extra soaking I got in a rain storm, I had a severe attack of inflammation, and, to use another western phrase, had a "close call." But Mr. Woolsey proved to be a capital nurse and doctor com-

bined. He physicked, and blistered, and poulticed for day and night, and I soon got better, but was still weak and sore when we started for the lake.

I took both Glad and Neils with me, our plan being to saw lumber and make a boat, and then send Glad back, and Neils and I go on with the fishing.

Behold us then started, the invalid of the party on horseback, and Glad and Neils each with an axe in hand, and leading an ox on whose back our whole outfit was packed—buffalo lodge tents, bedding, ammunition, kettles, cups, whip-saw, nails, tools, everything we must have for our enterprise.

These oxen had never been packed before, and were a little frisky about it, and several times made a scattering of things before they settled down to steady work.

We had to clear out a great deal of the way, and to find this way without any guide or previous knowledge of the place; but our frontier instinct did us good service, and early the third day we came out upon the lake, a beautiful sheet of water surrounded by high forest-clad hills.

THE START TO THE FISHERY—(*See page 236*).

We had with us ten large sleigh dogs, and they were hungry, and for their sakes as well as our own, we hardly got the packs and saddles off our animals when we set to work to make a raft, manufacturing floats and tie-stones, and preparing all for going into the water. Very soon we had the net set; then we put up our lodge, and at once erected a saw-pit, and the men went to work to cut lumber for the boat we had to build.

Before long, in looking out to where we had set the net, I saw that all the floats had disappeared under the water. This indicated that fish were caught, and I got on the raft and poled out to the net. My purpose was to merely overhaul it, and take the fish out, leaving the net set; but I very soon saw that this was impossible. I must take up the net as it was, or else lose the fish, for they would flop off my raft as fast as I took them out of the net; so I went back to the end of the net and untied it from the stake, and took in the whole thing.

Fortunately the net was short and the lake calm, for presently I was up to my knees in water, and fish, a living, struggling, slimy mass,

A BIG HAUL—(*See page 238*).

all around me, so that my raft sank below the surface quite a bit. Fortunately, the fish were pulling in all possible contrary directions, for if they had swam in concert, they could have swum away with my raft and myself. As it was, I poled slowly to the shore, and shouted to my men to come to the rescue, and we soon had landed between two and three hundred fish —not exactly, but very nearly white-fish. As to quality, not first-class by any means; still, they would serve as dog food, and be a guarantee from starvation to man.

We had found the lake. We had found the fish, and now knew them to be plentiful; so far, so good. After the dogs were fed and the fish hung up, and the net drying, I began to think that I was running the risk of a relapse. So I took my gun and started out along the lake to explore, and make myself warm with quick walking. I went to the top of a high hill, saw that the lake was several miles long, shot a couple of fall ducks, and came back to the camp in a glow; then changed my wet clothes, and was apparently all right.

While the men were sawing lumber, and

chopping trees, and building the boat, I was busy putting up a stage to hang fish on, and making floats and tying stones, and getting everything ready to go to work in earnest when the boat was finished.

This was accomplished the fourth day after reaching the lake, and Glad took the oxen and horse and went back to Mr. Woolsey.

Neils and I set our net and settled down to fishing in good style.

We soon found that the lake abounded in worms, or small insects, and these would cling to the net, and if the net was left long in the water, would destroy it, so we had to take it up very often; and this with the drying and mending and setting of nets, and making of sticks and hanging of fish, kept us very busy. So far north as we were, and down in the valley, with hills all around us, and at the short-day season, our days were very short, and we had to work a lot by camp-fire, which also entailed considerable wood-cutting.

Our isolation was perfect. We were twenty-five miles from Mr. Woolsey; he and Glad were sixty from White-fish Lake and 120 from

Edmonton, and both of these places were out of the world of mail and telegraph connection, so our isolation can be readily imagined.

Many a time I have been away from a mission or fort for months at a time, and as I neared one or other of these, I felt a hungering for intelligence from the outside or civilized world; but to my great disgust, when I did reach the place, I found the people as much in the dark as myself.

But this isolation does not agree with some constitutions, for my Norwegian Neils began to become morbid and silent, and long after I rolled myself in my blanket he would sit over the fire brooding, and I would waken up and find him still sitting as if disconsolate. At last I asked him what was the matter, when he told me it was not right for us to be there alone. "You take your gun and go off. If a bear was to kill you?" (We had tracked some very big ones.) "You will go out in the boat when the lake is rough; if you were to drown, everybody would say, 'Neils did that—he killed him.'" On the surface I laughed at him, but in my heart was shocked at the fellow, and said, "If anything

was to happen to you, would not people think the same of me? We are in the same boat, Neils, but we will hope for the best, and do our duty. So long as a man is doing his duty, no matter what happens, he will be all right. You and I have been sent here to put up fish; we are trying our best to do so; let us not borrow trouble."

For a while Neils brightened up, but I watched him.

CHAPTER XL.

Lake freezes—I go for rope—Have a narrow escape from wolf and drowning—We finish our fishing—Make sleds—Go home—Camp of starving Indians *en route*.

ALL of a sudden the lake froze over, and our nets were under, and we had no rope to pass under the ice. So, leaving my gun with Neils, for he had none, and whistling the dogs to me, I set out on a run for home; and as it was only twenty-five miles, my purpose was to be back in camp the same night, for I could conveniently make a fifty-mile run in those days. Down the valley and over the hills, through the dense forest we went—the ten dogs and myself. Presently, as we were coasting along the shore of a lake, we met a huge, gaunt timber wolf. Ah, thought I, if I only had my gun! I set the dogs on him, but he very soon drove them back, and came at me. I remembered seeing some lodge-poles a little way back

on the trail, and I retreated to them, and securing one, came on to the attack again. Between the dogs and myself, we drove the wolf on to a little point jutting out into the lake, and he took to the ice. I foolishly followed him out, hoping to get a whack at him with my pole, but suddenly I awoke to the fact that the ice was giving way with me and the water was deep. Down I dropped, and stretched out, and leaned with the most of my weight on the pole, which, covering a good space of ice, fortunately held me up; so crawling and pushing, and anxiously looking through the transparent ice for the bottom, I made for the shore. How thankful I was when I did see the bottom, and presently was ashore once more!

As I ran off on the trail, I seemed to take a fresh lease of life, for it seemed as if I had nearly lost my grip of it a few minutes since.

I reached Mr. Woolsey's just as he was sitting down to lunch, and he was so glad to see me that he would not hear of my going back that afternoon.

A few Indians had come and gone, and from these Mr. Woolsey had secured some dried meat,

A CLOSE CALL—(*See page 215*).

which to me was a great treat after so much fish.

We were becoming fast friends, this old bachelor missionary and myself, for while he was anything but a pioneer, and altogether out of place in this wild country, yet he was thoroughly good, and as full of the milk of "human kindness" as men are ever made.

Early the next morning I was away with the rope, and by night Neils and I had overhauled several of our nets and put some fresh ones in their place.

And now winter set in, with no snow, but extreme cold, which soon thickened the ice, and Neils and I gave our spare time to making a couple of toboggans, for we purposed when we did go home, to take loads of fish with us.

As the ice made, the fish went away, and soon our fishing was over for that time. We had put up about three thousand, and lived almost entirely on fish; the livers of some dog-fish we occasionally caught being our only change, except a very few fish-ducks, which were hardly a change. We had also fattened the ten dogs ready for winter work. This was no small item.

Now we made a strong "log cache," and stored our fish in it, putting tent and nets and everything with the fish ; and having finished our dog-sleighs, or toboggans, we contemplated starting in the morning for home, though there was as yet no snow. As it was moonlight, I proposed to Neils that we start at once.

So we loaded up, hitched our dogs and set out. What a time we had—bare ground, fallen timber, stumps and hills ; and, to make matters worse, while we were making a fire about midnight to cook our last duck, which we had saved for days for this very purpose, the dogs stole it, and our disappointment was bitter. We had cleaned that duck, and had it all ready to cook, and looked forward to picking its bones ourselves. We craved the change in diet, even if it was only from fish to a fishy duck ; but just as we had the prize, the contemptible dogs stole it, and though it is now thirty-two years since this happened, I can still very strongly sympathize with Neils and myself.

We thawed and roasted a fish, and started on, and about two o'clock in the morning came

upon a solitary lodge right on the road. This proved to be a wood Stoney, Peter Pe-kah-ches. He and his family were starving. There was no snow, and everything being crisp with frost, he could not approach game. Peter was a renowned hunter, but the season was against him, and thus he was starving. We gave him part of our fish, and received the heart-felt blessings of the whole family, who hardly waited to thaw some of the fish until they ate them.

This lightened our hearts and our loads also, and we went on and reached home before daylight.

CHAPTER XLI.

Mr. O. B.—The murderer—The liquor keg.

In the meantime an old wandering-Jew kind of man, one of those human beings who seem to be trying to hide away from themselves, had turned up, and was domiciled with Mr. Woolsey. He had come across the plains from Fort Garry with a party of white men, who grew tired of him and dumped him at Fort Carlton, where I saw him when I landed from the boats in the summer. He had come on to Edmonton with the Hudson's Bay Company's carts, and there was thrown out by a rule made by the Hudson's Bay Company's Governor, Dallas, that no Hudson's Bay officer should allow any stragglers to stay around the post. The penalty for doing this was a fine upon the officer in charge of ten shillings sterling per day. Someone suggested Mr. Woolsey, and Mr. O. B. (for that was his name) came by first opportunity to Mr. Woolsey.

An Indian was returning to Fort Pitt, and

he was persuaded to bring Mr. O. B. to Mr. Woolsey; and when the two were starting, total strangers to each other, and not understanding each other's language, some heartless fellow whispered to Mr. O. B., "Watch that fellow, for he is a murderer." And so he was said to be, having been bribed (so the story went) to kill another man because the briber wanted the other's wife. Whether this was exactly true or not, poor Mr. O. B. had an awful time of watching his companion and guide, and was a very grateful man when he came to our home safe. He was an educated man, and should have been a gentleman in every sense. He also was a victim of the liquor curse. His was another life blasted with this demon from the bottomless pit. In rummaging around our quarters, he found a keg which some time or another had held liquor. I saw him smell this, and then fill it with water and put it in the cellar; then every little while he would go down and shake this keg. One day I heard him say, "It is getting good," so I thought I would make it better, and I took the keg and emptied it, and and filled it with fresh water. Mr. O. B. took great satisfaction in drinking this, though the taste must have become very faint indeed.

CHAPTER XLII.

William comes back—Another refuge seeker comes to us —Haul our fish home—Hard work.

WILLIAM had come back from the plains, bringing some provisions—not very much, but sufficient to make us all feel thankful. Mr. Woolsey had sent him to Edmonton to bring some horses he had left there, and when he returned he had another "refuge seeker," this time a young man, the son of one of our ministers in Ontario, Williston by name. He had started to cross the mountains with some others, but reaching the Kootanie Pass, their provisions and pluck both dwindled away. They wandered back along the mountains and came to Edmonton in a famished condition, and Williston, being "dead-broke," heard of Mr. Woolsey, and came down with William. Of course Mr. Woolsey, because of his being the son of a brother minister, took him in.

And now snow came, and Williston and I, each with a dog-train, made several trips to the lake for fish.

These trips were hard work ; the man, besides walking and running all the time over the home stretch, had to push and pull and strain, and hold back to get his load up and down the many hills and over the logs, which were legion, and which would have taken more time than we had to clear out of the way.

About this time we made a trip to White-fish Lake for some stuff Mr. Woolsey had in store there. We found Mr. Steinhauer and family well, and hard at work among their people, for things were now getting into shape at this mission, and the Indians were gathering in and looking upon it as a home. Mr. Steinhauer was an ideal missionary—capable and practical and earnest, a guide and leader in all matters to his people. Heart and soul, he was in his work.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Flying trip to Edmonton—No snow—Bare ice—Hard travel—A Blackfoot's prayer.

It was now near Christmas, and Mr. Woolsey planned to spend the holidays at Edmonton.

This was really his station. For years the minutes of yonder eastern Conference read: "Thomas Woolsey, Edmonton House, Rocky Mountains." Though these places were over two hundred miles apart then, the Hudson's Bay Company's officers and men came to Edmonton generally for the New Year, and this was the missionary's opportunity of reaching these outposts through these men.

Our party now was made up of Mr. Woolsey, Mr. O. B., and Williston, William, Neils and myself. Gladstone had left some time since.

Leaving Mr. O. B. to keep the house warm, and William and Neils to saw lumber, the rest of us started for Edmonton, Williston driving

the baggage train, and myself the cariole in which Mr. Woolsey rode.

We left long before daylight the Monday morning before Christmas, which came on Thursday that year. We had about four inches of snow to make the road through. This was hardly enough for good sleighing, but where there was prairie or ice, our dogs had good footing and made good time.

Down the slope of country to Smoking Lake, and then along the full length of the lake we went; then straight across country, over logs and round the windings of the dim bridle-path for the Wah-suh-uh-de-now, or "Bay in the Hills" (which would bring us to the Saskatchewan River), to which place we came about daylight, having already made a good thirty-five miles of our journey. Mr. Woolsey had slept and snored most of the way. What cared he for precipitous banks, or tortuous trails, or the long hours of night! With sublime faith in his guide, he lay like a log.

> "Little he recked if we let him sleep on
> In the sleigh where his driver had wound him."

After coming down the big hill into the valley at a break-neck pace, we came to the almost perpendicular bank of the stream, still seventy-five or eighty feet high, and here I roused Mr. Woolsey, and asked him to climb down, while Williston and I took the dogs off and let the cariole and sled down as easily as we could.

Once down, we got Mr. Woolsey in again, and away we went up the river at a good smart run, my leader taking the way from point to point, and around the rapids and open water at the word. For another five miles we kept on, and stopped for breakfast before sunrise opposite Sucker Creek.

To jerk these dogs out of their collars is the first thing. This gives them a chance to roll and run about, and supple up after the long pull of the morning. Then we make a big fire and cut some brush to put down in front of it; then help Mr. Woolsey out of his cariole, and next boil the kettle, and roast our dried meat and eat. Then after a short prayer, and while the "Amen" is still on our lips, we hitch up the dogs, tie the sleigh, help Mr. Woolsey

into the cariole, tuck and wrap him in, and "Marse!" Away jump my dogs once more, and their bells ring out in the clear morning frost, and are echoed up and down the valley as we ascend, for even over the ice the ascension is very perceptible.

On we went, steadily making those long stretches of river which are between Sucker Creek and the Vermilion. As we proceeded, we left the snow, and the ice became glare and very difficult to run on, especially when one had to constantly steady the cariole to keep it from upsetting in the drift ice, or from swinging into the open channel, where the current was too strong for ice to make.

I slipped once badly, and gave myself a wrench, the effects of which I felt at times for many a long year.

After stopping for lunch on an island, we pushed on, and, climbing the hill at the mouth of Sturgeon River, found the country bare of snow, and after going two or three miles in this way, I concluded to camp, and strike back for the river in the morning.

If we could have gone on, we would have reached Edmonton the next day before noon.

Mr. Woolsey was astonished at our progress. We had come full eighty miles, although the latter part of our road was very difficult to travel, the glare but uneven river ice being very hard on both dogs and men.

We camped on a dry bluff. What a revelation this country is to me! This is now the 22nd of December, and the weather, while crisp and cold, beautifully fine—no snow—and we having to use exceedingly great caution in order not to set the prairie on fire.

That night Mr. Woolsey, while rubbing some pain-killer into my sprained leg, told me about his life at Edmonton; how one day a Blackfoot came into his room, and was very friendly, and told him that he (the Blackfoot) was a very religious man; also that he loved to talk to the Great Spirit himself, would do so right then, thus giving Mr. Woolsey the benefit of his prayer. Mr. Woolsey sent for an interpreter, and the Blackfoot went on very much like the Pharisee of old. He was not as other men—the Cree, or Stoney, or even ordinary white men—he was a good man; his heart was good; he was thankful to meet this "good white man."

He hoped their meeting would be blessed of the Great Spirit, and now that he had seen and spoken to this "good white man," he trusted that the Good Spirit would help him against his enemies, and aid him in his war expeditions, and thus he would bring home many horses and scalps. Above all things, the last was his strong desire.

Mr. Woolsey also told me of a slight misunderstanding he had with a priest. Mr. Woolsey did not understand French, and the priest did not understand English. The cause of their trouble was about asking a blessing and returning thanks at the Hudson's Bay Company's mess table. The priest was a thorough monopolist. The officer in charge would say, "Mr. Woolsey, please ask a blessing," or "Mr. Woolsey, please return thanks;" but the priest would immediately begin a Latin grace or thanksgiving, and thus Mr. Woolsey was cut off before he could begin. At last his English blood could not stand it any longer, and one day he stopped the priest after the others had gone out of the room, and said to him in broken Cree: "You no good; you speak one, that good;

you speak two, that no good." This, though spoken in the soft Cree, was emphasized in a strong English manner, and the little priest, becoming alarmed, ran for the gentleman in charge, who explained matters, and also sided with Mr. Woolsey, and this monopoly was broken up.

No; from my two years' intimate acquaintance with Mr. Woolsey, he was not the man to stand any mere pretensions of superiority.

The next morning we struck straight across country for the river, and kept the ice thence on to Edmonton, which, because of the windings of the stream, we did not reach until evening. We found the fort full, trappers and traders having returned from their long summer's journeyings; but we also found provisions scant, and Mr. Christie, the gentleman in charge, anxious as to the future. The buffalo were far out; the fisheries were not very successful.

Here we met with clerks and post-masters from the inland and distant posts, and we and they but added to the responsibilities of the head officer, having so many more mouths to feed. Then there were all the dogs, and these

were simply legion, as most of the winter transport and travel of those days was done with dogs, and their food supply was a serious question.

I have often wondered since then why it was in a country with so much natural hay, where oats grew often at the rate of one hundred bushels to the acre, and where horses were cheap, that this dog business lasted as long as it did; but I suppose everything has its day, and even the dog had his.

I fully believe that if there was one dog in the small compass of the fort at Edmonton, there were 150. When the bell rang for the men to go to work or come for their rations, the dogs would howl, and one would imagine bedlam let loose. Then the fights, which were taking place at all hours, day or night, became monotonous.

The sole topic of conversation would be dogs. The speed and strength and endurance of a dog-train occupied the thoughts of most men, either sleeping or waking.

Next to the dogs came the dog-runners. These were famous because of their ability to

manage a train of dogs, and the wind and endurance and pluck they manifested in travel.

Races were common—five miles, twenty miles, sixty miles, 150 miles, etc., and many of the feats performed by these dogs and dog-drivers would be thought impossible to-day.

We were received very kindly by all parties, and I very soon felt at home with such men as R. Hardisty and Mr. MacDonald, and in the family of Mr. Flett, where I received great hospitality, and from being a total stranger was soon made to feel thoroughly intimate.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Midnight mass—Little Mary—Foot-races—Dog-races, etc. —Reach my twentieth birthday—End of this book.

I FOUND that the Roman Catholics had a church built in the fort, and Mr. MacDonald and I went to the celebration of midnight mass on Christmas eve. Our conduct was respectful and reverent. Indeed, graceless as I may have been, I always from early boyhood have respected the religious services of others. Often in the conjurer's camp, and at thirst and sun dances, I have preserved most perfect decorum and attention, and that night at Edmonton my friend and self behaved; but because someone saw MacDonald pass me a peppermint, it was noised abroad that we were mocking the passing of the wafer. Quite a *furore* was caused by this, and the Catholics came to the Chief Factor to demand our expulsion from the fort, but he very justly refused to interfere, and the storm

passed away without hurting us. But I was amused and delighted with my friend, Mr. Woolsey. Said he to me, while drawing himself up and squaring off, "I never yet struck a man, but if I did, it would be a mighty blow."

Mr. Woolsey held service on Christmas morning, which was largely attended.

In the afternoon, Mr. Hardisty and myself went for a drive on the river with our dog-trains. Mr. Hardisty took the little daughter of the Chief Factor with him, and we drove up the river, but when turning to come home, his dogs took a sweep out into the river and left him, and the course the dogs took was dangerous. There was a long stretch of open current. There sat the child perfectly unconscious of her danger. Hardisty was winded, and he shouted to me to catch his dogs. I saw that if I drove mine after his it would make matters worse, for his dogs would run the faster; so I left mine and ran after his, and here the constant training of the season did me good service. I had both wind and speed, but the time seemed dreadful. The dogs were nearing the current, and if the cariole should swing or upset, the

STRAIGHT OUT FROM THE DANGER THE STRONG TRAIN DREW US—(*See page 266*).

child was doomed. If ever I ran, it was then; if ever I was thankful to be able to run, it was then. Little Mary was a favorite of mine, and her peril filled me with keen anguish; but I have always been thankful that my whole being responded as it did. Steadily I came up, and presently, before the dogs knew it, I was on the back of the sleigh; then, gripping the ground lashing, I let myself drag as a brake, and with a mighty "Chuh!" which made the leader jump quickly to the left, then a loud stern "Marse!" straight out from the danger the strong train drew us.

After we came home, I felt weak and exhausted because of the nervous strain; but the reward of having been instrumental in saving the little darling's life was sweet to me.

The next day we had dog-races, and foot-races and football, and the fun was fast and furious. This social and pleasant intercourse with my fellowmen was especially agreeable to me after the isolation of the last few months. Then my new-found friends were exceedingly kind, and I was heartily glad Mr. Woolsey had brought me with him to Edmonton. The second

day after Christmas was my birthday. I was then twenty years of age, and thus have reached the limit given to this book.

As the reader will have noticed, I began life on the frontier, and here, after twenty years, am to be found on the still farther frontier. Then it was lake-shore and forest, now it is highland and prairie.

Trusting the reader will have been interested sufficiently in this simple narrative to follow the author on into the more stirring recital of experiences on the plains during the "sixties,"

I remain,

Yours truly,

JOHN MCDOUGALL.