

dressed you may depend upon it that he is fully conscious of his own superiority and importance. This was certainly true in the case of Jimmy Flett, a half-breed fiddler and general beau, whom I must attempt to describe, for "thereby hangs a tale."

He had on an immaculate white shirt, collar and flaming necktie, trousers of the finest blue broadcloth the Hudson's Bay Company imports for the use of its officers, moccasins embroidered with silk and beads in all the colors of the rainbow, a jaunty yellow cap with ribbons streaming from it, and, to crown all, a bright vermilion plush vest. Jimmy wore no coat, because that would have hidden the gorgeous vest. The general effect of this outfit was indescribably

in awe. The offer of a loaf of bread in addition to the candies, however, brought her to her feet, and, seeing that she still hesitated, I threw in, as an additional bribe, a plug of the best Myrtle Navy tobacco. This had the desired effect. With her blanket extended in both hands like an enormous bird, she made a sudden swoop in front of the girl, and commenced a series of the most extraordinary leaping and gyrations imaginable. At the sight of this grotesque figure, Jimmy stopped, paralyzed with astonishment; the fiddler also stopped, but the old woman continued to wave her arms and to bounce up and down as if her body were balanced on steel springs instead of legs. Cries of "Go on! go on!" to the fiddler, started the

jig again: mechanically Jimmy's feet began to move, and amid roars of laughter Sparks rushed in and cut Jimmy out. Then Morrison took a hand, and imitating the antics of the old woman, began to bounce up and down with extended



FORT McMURRAY, ATHABASCA RIVER.

stunning. At the far end of the rooms, squatted on the floor, and enveloped in an immense green blanket, I noticed an old squaw, who went by the name of Mother Cowley,—a well-known character about the fort, who gleaned a scanty livelihood from the meagre charity of the little community. How old Cowley came to be there I do not know, nor did I stop to enquire. The idea of doing her a good turn and at the same time having some fun at the expense of the radiant Jimmy took possession of me. Crossing quietly over to her I offered her a pound of candies if she would get up and "cut out" the girl who was dancing with Jimmy Flett. It was a great temptation—but she was afraid of offending Jimmy, of whom she stood somewhat

in awe. This was the signal for a general uproar of merriment such as I have never heard equalled.

It was generally conceded that this ball eclipsed any social event which had taken place at Chipewyan within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

As soon as the ice on the river was strong enough and the snow sufficiently deep, I took my departure from Fort Chipewyan for Edmonton. We left the fort between three and four o'clock in the dark of the early morning of the 27th of November, travelling by way of Quatre Fourches channel and Lake Mammewa. The ice on the lake was still so thin and frail that we had to proceed with the utmost caution. It was seven o'clock before we had made one mile from the fort on our