

better it burns—that is our experience. But by no means can you make a fire of it burn more than half an hour without replenishing. In consequence of this, no attempt was made to keep fires burning at night. An hour after we were in bed the temperature inside the tent was the same as that outside. At no time was the temperature inside the tent raised high enough to thaw out the ground, which would only have given rise to wet feet without adding to our comfort.

A regular record of temperature was kept during the winter. Our thermometer was a standard spirit one graduated to -62° F., and had been tested at the Toronto Observatory. The record is on file in the Dominion Crown Lands Office. From the 1st of November the temperature fell in a series of remarkably regular jumps—that is, there would be three days of cold, then a few days of slightly higher temperature, then another three days of cold, and so on, each drop being colder than the last. This went on with unbroken regularity until the third week in January, when it began to rise again in the same way and with equal steadiness.

On Christmas day the weather was beautiful, still and cloudless, and the thermometer stood just at zero. I spent the day in making a pair of snowshoe frames, out of white birch, which was plentiful round the camp, my tools being an axe and an Indian crooked knife, which is nothing but a one-handed draw knife, shaped much like a farrier's knife. I worked all day with the door of the tent wide open, in my shirt sleeves, and bare-handed; and from 9 A. M. to 3 P. M. there was no fire in the stove. I slipped on my coat at noon when I was eating my dinner, but took it off again immediately after. The men spent most of the day lounging about the camp in their shirt sleeves, smoking and skylarking.

The second week in January we received word that Mrs. Abrey was in Battleford waiting to join us in camp. She had come from Toronto and had traveled across the open country in the mail sleigh from Qu'appelle to Battleford *via* Duck Lake and Carleton. Mr. Abrey immediately left with two horses and carioles (i. e., toboggans with raised sides of rawhide), and one half-breed. He carried no tent. The distance to Battleford from our camp was over a hundred miles, through an open country, with here and there clumps of small poplar and birch.

I went on with the line, and the third day after Mr. Abrey left us reached the shore of Frog Lake, a few years later the scene of a horrible massacre. The next morning the cook came bustling in with the breakfast, his shirt sleeves as usual rolled up above his elbows.

"The bottom's dropped out of the thermometer," he said with a laugh.