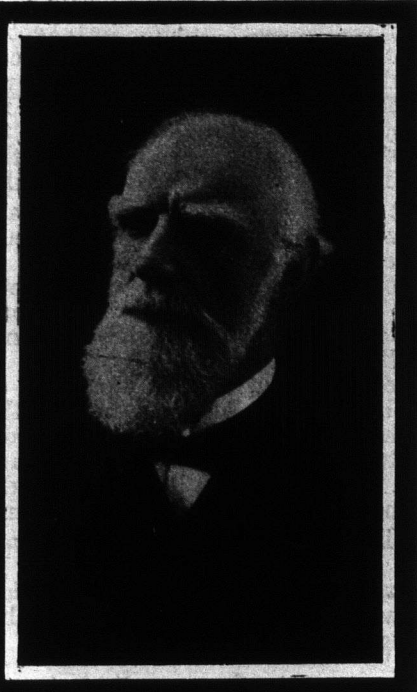


## Death of Lord Strathcona

The Right Honorable Lord Strathcona passed peacefully away in his sleep on the morning of January 21st, at his London residence; at the time the family were grouped around the bed. The career of this distinguished man is so well known throughout Canada, more especially in Western Canada, that it is not necessary to enlarge upon it here, suffice it to say that it has been given to but few men to render such remarkable and eminent services to the Dominion and to the Empire at large. In every activity that has helped Canada to its present prominent position he played a leading part and up to the very last worked with the wonderful energy that characterized his life, to forward the interests of the land he loved so well. Lord Strathcona was born in the ancient town of Forres in Morayshire, Scotland, on August 6th, 1820, and the little house in which he first saw the light of day is still standing. His father was Alexander Smith, a small tradesman of Archieston, who was born in the parish of Knocando; his mother was Barbara Stuart of



The Late Right Hon. Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.

Lainchoil, Abernethy. After leaving school and having had some experience in a law office he decided to enter the service of The Hudson's Bay Company. Shortly after his arrival in Canada he was assigned to the Labrador Coast, where he spent thirteen years in what is commonly called "the bleakest corner of the earth". As in all other undertakings he quickly rose in the service, because, as one authority says, he did all things so well and so systematically. While in Labrador, Donald A. Smith as he then was, met and married Isabella Sophia Hardisty, who was his devoted helpmate for about 65 years. She pre-deceased him in London late in last year. In 1886 he was created a Knight by Queen Victoria. In 1897 at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Her Majesty bestowed a further significant mark of Royal favor on the "Grand Old Man" of Canada by elevating him to the Peerage of the United Kingdom as Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal of Glencoe and Montreal. For several years past the late distinguished nobleman contributed a New Year's article to the January issue of The Western Home Monthly and his last words to Western Canada can be found in last month's number.

## The Black Wolf

Written for the Western Home Monthly by H. Mortimer Batten.

### I. The Long White Trail

"MUSH, curse you! Mush on!" The thin, lanky Indian, holding the tail line of the great sled, cracked his whip loudly over the backs of the cowering malamutes. He spoke mechanically and without spirit. It is doubtful whether he knew he was giving the command; doubtful too whether the weary dogs realized he was addressing them. For three weeks now he had uttered the same cry at least a hundred times daily, and each time his voice had echoed strangely through a silence that could be felt—echoed and died away into distance through the timbered slopes above, to be succeeded by the hiss of the runners over the snow, and the labored panting of the five malamutes.

Breaking trail ahead of the sled was a second woodsman—not an Indian but a white man. He was young and slight of figure. His face too, which peered out from a fur hood, jewelled and caked with ice crystals, was the face of a youth, though today it was grim and haggard. Now and then, as he walked, the lids of his eyes drooped till they were almost

closed, then with an effort he would rouse himself and stumble on with renewed energy.

Inside the sled, so swathed in furs that not even the tip of his nose was visible, lay a third woodsman, who took no part in the grim monotony of the day's routine. "Mush, curse you! Mush on!"

Again the Indian cracked his whip, but as he did so the hiss of the runners ceased. The leading sled dog calmly lay down in its tracks, breathing heavily.

"Supper time, Henry," William stated, "Thought I wouldn't disturb you till you woke. I tell you, you're blame lucky to be able to sleep all day while we mush—the trail's in awful shape."

"Wish I could sleep at right time instead," muttered the sick man. "What was you shooting at, William?"

"A wolf, Henry, it was a black wolf! I saw it distinctly against the snow under the trees there. It was standing watching us till I got the rifle, then it was off like a shot."

"That's kind of strange," muttered Henry, sipping from the spoon William held to his lips. "I heard queer tales about black wolves. They reckon they carry the devil inside them, but all wolves do, for that matter."

For a moment William was silent, then he said, "I only ever heard of one black wolf—that was the one as killed old Colbert Lessing two years ago. It ran up behind his sled when he was mushing out with caribou meat for the Mission Station and pulled him down."

"When was that?"

"Two years ago. On this very trail."

"Same wolf?"

"Dunno. Hardly think so. One of its whelps, likely. Here, drink up before it freezes."

Henry swallowed down the remainder of the soup, and all his duties performed William crept into the sleeping bag beside the Indian, but not to sleep. The incidents of the day hung in his tired mind as an unwholesome scent might hang in the nostrils.

"Henry," he said at length.

"Yes, William."

"I was thinking, Henry, them wolves have been following us two or three days now. I've noticed the dogs bristling and looking round every now and then, as though they winded something."

"Game must be scarce," Henry suggested, "or they wouldn't follow us."

"Game is scarce," stated William.

"It's scarce because they're too blamed abundant. I believe there are more wolves up and down this creek than anywhere in Alaska. Say, when they found old Lessing he had his knife in his hand and they reckoned he must have slashed the wolf some round the neck. There was hair about, and a bit of an ear. That's how they knew it must have been

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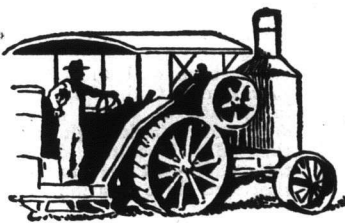
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