

WINTER IN MANITOBA.

The following extract from Harper's *Bazar* will show any lover of extremely cold weather where he should make his home. We give the article not so much to show where good sleighing can be had for half the year, as to allow our readers to compare the climate of British Columbia with that of other countries. On the sea coast, last winter, our lowest reading was about fourteen degrees below freezing, and that for only a very few days, whilst in the interior (in the Lower Kootenay Valley), the lowest reading and that for one day only, was twelve below zero, whilst a vast body of the water, Kootenay Lake, never freezes over. Then our summers are entirely free from the sultriness of those of the Atlantic side, the summers of the entire Pacific slope, tending to invigorate rather than debilitate, making one sigh at their departure and long for their return.

Perhaps a few homely details may best serve to illustrate what winter in Manitoba means. The snow outside our house was from six to ten feet deep from November to April. Travelling on wheels is, of course, out of the question, and we always used a sleigh. The snow gets caked and frozen hard and smooth along the trails, and even if, as sometimes happens, the horse sinks, and you upset, still a clean snowdrift is better than mud to fall on. I tried to wear boots last November and one of my feet froze. Moccasins, made by Indians, of moose skin, are used instead of shoes to cover the feet, which are first cased in several pairs of stockings. For travelling on foot, snow-shoes are best. These too, are of Indian make. They are generally flat frames of thin wood—from two to six feet long—pointed in front and rear, and filled up with interlaced deer sinew. The moccasin foot of the wearer is tied on in the middle of the snow-shoe, and after a little practice it is easy, so equipped, to walk five miles an hour across the snow. There is a snow-shoeing club in Winnipeg, where the art is taught and practised. Mittens supersede gloves during the winter, as, if the fingers are separated, they generally freeze.

We were forced to melt snow for all the water we used last winter. The cold was so intense that when melted snow-water was poured from the boiler into a pail, and taken at once across to the stable, the ice on it frequently had to be broken with a stick before the cattle could drink; it froze so hard whilst being carried a distance of some sixty yards in the open air. My husband would sometimes come in from a short visit to the stock-yard with his nose frozen; indeed it is rather a common sight to see people partly frozen. The part affected turns as white as marble, and loses all feeling. Unless you see yourself in a glass, or are told of it, you are not conscious of being frozen. In this plight it is best not to go near a fire, as sudden thawing is very painful. People generally try friction, rubbing themselves with snow, or better still, with paraffine oil. Occasionally, when one is frozen and far from help, the part frozen, if an extremity, will snap off. Last year a man living about thirty miles from us was told that his ear was frozen, he put up his hand to feel, and the ear dropped off in his hand. Limbs sometimes have to be ampu-

tated from severe frost-bites. My kitten's ears froze and broke off last winter, and a neighbor's pony lost its ears in the same way.

I was surprised when I first found the mustard freeze in my mustard pot, which stood a foot from the kitchen stove-pipe, and two feet above the stove, where there was a blazing fire all day and every day through the winter. Yet the mustard froze between every meal. Bread froze if left for half an hour in a room without a fire. I once left a pitcher full of milk in the kitchen all night, and next morning on trying to move it the pitcher fell to pieces, and left the milk standing solid in its place.

We could buy frozen milk by the pound, frozen so intensely that when I put a lump of it in a tin into the oven, or on top of the stove, the first part that melted would burn to the tin before the rest of it had thawed. I managed to melt it by first chopping the ice-milk into very small pieces. Clothes which had been washed froze before I could hang them on the line to dry. I used to leave them out two or three nights for the snow and frost to bleach, and they always needed thawing and drying again when they were brought in-doors. Even after being damped and folded they would freeze together, and when I have been ironing the top of a pocket-handkerchief, the lower part would freeze to the table, which was close by a roaring wood fire. Ironing under these conditions is rather slow work.

Such stories must sound almost incredible, except to those who, like myself, have witnessed the facts, though, of course, only in the most severe weather. A bearded Englishman who staid with us last winter was often forced, when he came in-doors, to thaw the icicles from his mustache, which froze to his beard and hindered him from talking to us. A pail of water left in the kitchen all night would freeze solid to the bottom before morning. This happened every time one was left, for two months. It is disappointing to lovers of skating that the out-door ice is completely spoiled by snow, which begins to fall as soon as the hard frost sets in. Though I lived within easy reach of Lake Manitoba, which is 130 miles long and was frozen hard for six months last season, I never once had my skates on. There are several covered rinks in Winnipeg, which are flooded, and so renewed every night.

In such a climate every one who can afford it is dressed in fur. Seal, beaver, and otter skins are most fashionable. Ordinary people are contented with bear, raccoon, or buffalo. The Winnipeg policemen all dress in buffalo coats down to their heels in winter, and almost every house contains at least one buffalo robe or rug. These cost from two to five pounds each, and are used for camp bedding and driving wraps. The keenest wind can not pierce them.

Winter is, of course, not equally severe throughout. Part of my description applies only to its colder half. But to a woman the most trying part of the winter in Manitoba is not its severity—for you live in a warm house—but its length. Snow lay on the ground last season six months and a half, and the great lakes were frozen for the same period. This sounds almost unbearably tedious to English ears; and one's eyes grow very weary of the bare, blank whiteness, and long for something green to look at; yet the