

We arrived at Fort Garry, or Winnipeg, as the town is called here, Sunday, July 29th, at 1 p.m., and found not what we expected—a Hudson Bay fort, and a few huts round it—but quite a nice little town, and really a large and fair hotel. We called, armed with our letters of introduction, at Mr. Grahame's house, the H.B. chief commissioner, and found a pleasant quiet gentleman, who kindly and courteously received us, and introduced us to Mrs. Grahame. He was most civil, and promised to do all he could to further our views. We went to a nice church in the evening. Next day, Mr. Grahame introduced us to Mr. McTavish, another H.B. officer, and drove us in his buggy down to a Mr. McKay, an ex-H.B. officer, some six miles out of Winnipeg, to make arrangements for our trip.

Winnipeg is built at the junction of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers. Both are bordered by more or less timber. Outside this stretches the level prairie; now, in many places, under cultivation, growing enormous crops of wheat.

Not finding McKay at home, we returned—Mr. Grahame leaving word for him to come to the hotel, where he duly arrived in the evening, and made arrangements to start me on Saturday next, as the Governor-General Lord Dufferin, is to arrive here on Monday next, and, if he arrives before we start, it will delay us much. We are to have three carts, and three men, and a hunter or guide, and thirteen horses. I expect to have to buy one or two horses besides. We spent, whilst at Winnipeg, two pleasant evenings with Mr. and Mrs. Grahame. He showed us all there was to be seen at the Fort, the large warehouses, where furs, in bales by the thousand, were being despatched to England, having come in from every part of the great north-west country. The Fort itself, the scene of the Red River rebellion, is an oblong stone wall, flanked at the four corners by four towers, loopholed for musketry. Inside the wall is a raised platform, running round, for riflemen, and a strong gateway opens out facing the Assiniboine. Inside are the stores, officers' houses, and a large house and garden belonging to the Chief Commissioner, but now let to the Governor of Manitoba. In the stores you may buy anything, from a lady's white satin shoe to an anchor. Mr. Grahame also kindly gave me a letter to all H.B. Co. officers in charge of forts, directing them to supply me with all I need, to give us and our party all assistance we may need, and to further my plans in every way in their power—in fact, nothing could exceed his and Mr. McTavish's kindness.

Saturday, Aug. 4th, we started, McKay sending us two horses to ride over to his house, where we were to meet the other horses. Two carts came also for our baggage. A half-breed, named Antoine Wallett, who has been employed as scout and guide by the North-west Mounted Police, comes as our guide. We dined with Mr. McKay, and then got away. Our party consists of our two selves, and dog; Antoine Wallett, guide; George, a half-breed, cook; and Villeneuve and Johnny—the first a half-breed, the latter a full-blooded Sioux—their duties are, to attend to the horses, cut wood, &c. We have thirteen horses and three carts.

Our trail lay along the prairie, about four miles from, and parallel to the course of the Assiniboine. It being late, we got out only sixteen miles, and camped near a place called Xavier. Our pocket filters were most useful, as the water hereabout is not good. Next day, we had a thunderstorm in the morning; these storms are frequent and excessively severe on the prairies. Mr. Grahame, before starting, made us change our tent poles, which were iron-tipped, for plain wood ones, as, on the level prairie, a tent pole tipped with iron would be most dangerous in a thunderstorm. In the afternoon, after service, we moved on five miles to White Horse Plains, where we got some milk and eggs from a squatter. The Assiniboine River is settled all along its banks, as far as the Portage; and, further on even than this, there are a few detached farms. The soil is excessively rich, and will grow anything. The cultivation stretches a mile or two in from the river banks, and beyond this lies the unbroken prairie, now covered with wild roses, and many other flowers, whilst, here and there, dotted about like islands, are patches of willow and scrub. Now and then, one comes on water-holes, or a little creek, whose water trickles slowly through the long grass, to join the waters of the Assiniboine, running into the Red River, through the great lake of Winnipeg, finally to find its way into the icy waters of Hudson's Bay. These creeks and water-holes, a little later, all swarm with wild fowl. Next day, passing a herd of horses, Antoine shewed me a good-looking horse—he was a curious, ivory-cream colour—that he said was well known as a wonderfully good buffalo runner, six-year-old. So, after some haggling with the owner, I bought him, and rode him off. He is what the Indians call in very good condition, i.e., very fat; but he will soon get better of that. He stands perfectly still when I fire off his back. We named him "Le Juif," from the owners haggling so much.

We speak to the half-breeds in French, which they all understand and speak well, except the Sioux, who speaks English.

We have named our horses; Ally's are "Sarah," an excellent black-brown mare, with tan muzzle; "Gipsy," a good looking black mare; and "Jimmy," a very fast pony. I ride "Le Juif"—"Red Fox," a nice looking chestnut—and a little bay horse I bought at McKay's, called "The Buck," from his tendencies. Antoine Wallett rides a black horse of his own—a chestnut we named "Longfellow"—and a little black pony, very good, but not fast, named "The Plug."

Johnny drives the first cart, to which the reins of the horse in the second cart are attached. George follows in the third cart, and Villeneuve, mounted, drives the loose horses; the English ensign flies over the second cart.

Ally and I, used usually to ride on ahead of the carts with Antoine Wallett, and I amused myself with shooting prairie chicken (or pinnated grouse), of which, however, there are very few this year; ducks