

THE FIRST CONTACT

WHEN my people made the long trek from Grey County, Ontario, to Manitoba, in 1880, they went to that section of the country which is now known as the Wawanesa country, about thirty miles south-east of Brandon, making the last lap of the journey—the one hundred and eighty miles from Winnipeg—by ox team and pony cart. We slept in a tent and in the covered wagon; made bannocks in the mouth of the flour sack, cooked them on a camp-fire; arrived in September and lived the first winter in a thatch-roofed log house plastered with mud.

That first winter the problems of life were centred around the difficulty of keeping warm. There were six of us besides my father and mother, and I was the youngest. The crisis came when my eldest sister



Winter Church Service, Roe Lake, Cariboo.

took cold, developed pneumonia, and seemed likely to die. There was no doctor nearer than Portage La Prairie, eighty miles away.

Elsewhere* I have described that scene. My mother gave up in despair. The Manitoba blizzard roared past the little house, and death was in the blast. Suddenly a knock sounded on the door and a man on snowshoes entered. It was the Reverend Thomas Hall, a missionary of the Methodist Church, who had come to Millford, five miles away. He had heard that there was a sick girl some place south-west of Millford and, braving the storm, set out to find us.

How he managed to make his way across the billows of snow God only knows! But he did. He knew something about medicine, and he stayed with us until my sister was out of danger. I remember yet how he prayed—how we all prayed—and how real God was.

**Clearing in the West.* Thomas Allen, Toronto; Fleming H. Revell, New York.