

Three men broke down by the revival of old rheumatic affections, one man lost his toes with frost-bite, one became acutely insane, but eventually recovered, one had orchitis secondary to gonorrhea, one accidental fracture of the ulna, one accidental gunshot wound of the thigh, a dozen or more snow blind from the terrible glare on the march across the ice in daylight. A small casualty bill considering the circumstances. The gunshot wound was interesting. A correspondent was showing his self-cocking revolver to an officer when it went off. The ball entered the thigh close to the outer side of the femoral artery, ran upward toward the abdomen for about five inches, when it abruptly turned backward and was lost in the loose tissue at the back of the thigh, where it still lies. I ascribe our successful march partly to the food, which consisted of fat pork, bread, butter and biscuits, enabling the men to withstand the cold. No rum ration was issued. Alcohol means death to men benumbed with cold.

My experience leads me to believe that total abstinence in active service under hardship is a factor for good,—in very hot and very cold climates at any rate. We traveled by train to Qu'Appelle station, 2,150 miles from Toronto, where our march of 250 miles across the prairie began. When the alkali plains were reached the men, who could not be prevented from drinking the water, suffered severely from diarrhea, which was controlled with difficulty.

On April 24th was fought the action at Fish Creek, my first experience of Indian fighting. The half-breeds and Indians were driven off with a loss on our side of eight killed and forty wounded. That night it rained, snowed and froze, so that the outposts and sentries had a hard time of it, though strange to say very few came into hospital as a result. My North-west and South African experiences lead me to believe that Canadians are as hardy as army mules, and that they can kick quite as hard on occasions. The engagement at Batoche took place from May 9th to 12th, at which our loss was eight killed and forty-six wounded. This brings me to a consideration of the wounds inflicted.

The weapons used by the enemy were Winchester, Sniders and smooth bore guns with a few Sharpe rifles. The Winchester produces a small wound of entrance and a huge wound of exit. The Snider, a large entrance and a huge exit. When bone was hit it usually splintered and fractured in all directions; an exception was the case of a man who was shot through the condyles of the femur at short range. A clean hole was bored without apparent involvement of the joint or shaft of the bone. He made a good recovery. Where joints were entered there was extensive destruction of parts necessitating resection or amputation.