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THE camp was astir by dawn, long ere sunrise, for here in the heart of the rockies, it was ten of a winter morn or the sun glinted o'er the ice pinacles and flooded the cedar slopes with its gladsome rays. And this was a holiday too. Were it a Sunday there had been shoeing of horses and washing of shirts and darning of hose, but this was Christmas and those who had perchance courted the drowsy god, were discussing ways and means of celebrating the world-wide festival.

Twenty miles away was the Gordon, as the half-way house to the nearest village was called and there could be the nearest approach to the conviviality of the festive season, but how to get there? "O, Duncie Ban'll take us, he's a light team," said big Alec. MacRae, leader of the wild Glengarry men in all their many scraps. And Dunc said he didn't mind taking a dozen at 50 cents a piece.

It was only when he drove up before the long log building, that held the men's bunks, that any question of precedence arose. It was in vain that big Alec. argued with this man and that—not Beau Brummel himself had proved equal to the delicate questions of precedence that now arose. And now by a certain tightening of the underlip in their leader, the men of the eastern townships felt sure a different line of argument would shortly be adopted. And sure enough Billy Saults whose sole claim to precedence lay in a thirst hitherto unquenchable, was of a sudden alive to the cogency of Alec's reasoning along the lines of force majeure. Then indeed the race was to the swift and the battle to the strong.

When at last the sleigh drove off with some fifteen hanging on as best they might, Big Alec's gang were much in evidence, but there were some notable exceptions. They had hardly expected the "Duke" to win a place among them, nor had the casual observer expected much of the pink and white complexion, the diffident stammer and the unmistakable nationality of the latest arrival in the lumber camp, but not for nothing had his forebears led forlorn hopes on many a hard contested battle-field. To the men of the Ottawa settlements it was scarce credible that one who gave so much thought to his sartorial habiliments, who might be seen of a Sunday in immaculate white waistcoat, playing the voluntary on the mission station "organ," should quietly convince big husky Baptiste Lelachens that not for nothing had he gained his sobriquet.

A somewhat different type of Englishman, a typical Englishman in the eyes of the Canadians, was also of the party. His vagaries, during a brief sojourn in Saskatchewan were a never failing motif to conversation. His sanguine disposition brushed aside the obstacles, that would fain o'erwhelm the many enterprises on which he embarked.

But now they had entered the narrow bush trail and the mild weather of the past week had made the snow just soft enough for the sleighs to slip easily along, despite the heavy load, when a well known voice asserted itself: "Is there any room a top lads a'm fair smooored wi' this dagout snow and the sandy locks of Peter McGraw peeped over the poles laid across the bobs. Peter had taken time by the forelock, well knowing "thae Glengarry skullums were neither tae haud nor tae bind."

The sleigh happened to have a high bunk, so while Dunc was hitching up, Peter esconced himself snugly on a plank laid across the runners, hidden from view by the hay hanging down from the poles that served as a box. Peter, it was rumored, had been a 'stickit' minister at home. Now he superintended the pork and beans, in the intervals of reading Carlyle.

At long last the Gordon was reached—one solitary log shanty, mid the far stretching cedar groves. Dunc's team was well cared for that day. Every man assisted at the

Christmas on the Great Divide

BY IAIN BEAG

unhitching and stabling of the horses and every man insisted on bringing them a forkful of hay. And now they could approach the sibyl officiating at this shrine of Bacchus. The sibyl greets them kindly and points to the stumps that serve as chairs, where they possess their souls in patience till another gang arrives, whereat the sibyl beckons the first gang aside and "What will youse hev boys," she enquires. "A'll e'en hae a drap Scotch" opines Peter while the "Duke" "g—g—guesses he'll have a sch—sch—schooner of beer." And each in turn expressed his preference. "And what will you hev" to Dunc., who unwilling to lose his seat, had remained behind. "O some of the same," rejoined Dunc. "Mixed," queried the sibyl. "Yeh, all the stronger, all in one glass." The gang knew that Dunc didn't drink, but the newcomers regarded him curiously.

The sibyl despatched her worse half to the cellar, in quest of the streams of libation. Blank was every face when the latter returned to report two barrels of cider. Dunc's party elected to await the whisky already on its way thither, while the newcomers solaced themselves as best they might with the cider, but as the hours sped even the Glengarry men were fain to slacken their drouth with that insipid beverage. As the afternoon wore away, first one and then another grew uneasy at the thought of striking for camp by six o'clock, with nothing more exhilarating than cider for their day's outing. But Dunc turned a deaf ear to their entreaties, till the offer of ten cents a head for every hour after six "they sit loosing at the nappy," finally won the day.

At long last the whisky arrived and the only plaint was of those thirsty souls, whose already deep potations forbade a thorough enjoyment of a more generous liquid. And here in this band of illiterate and broken men, the spirit that calls for cosmos in chaos and must needs have everything done decently and in order, asserted itself and Peter was with acclamation voted to the chair, the most commodious stump being secured to that end. With a far away look in his wistful eyes, Peter sang "The days of lang lang syne," but when he came to the words:

"Where are a' these kind herts noo,

That were aince sae leal and true?"

there was a quaver in the old man's voice and he hurriedly called upon the "Duke" to propose a toast.

But fortunately there was one clear head in that gathering and as eight approached Dunc gathered together his gang and stowed them away as best he might, much ineffectual murmuring notwithstanding. There were some weary men in camp that night and Dunc pointed out the revellers to the foreman, with the injunction to dock them each 70 cents. When pay day arrived and eighteen men were docked 70 cents, there was one kicker. "What's this 70 cents docked for?" "O you know well enough, you was out with Dunc on Christmas and you've got to pay for it." "First time I've paid for Christmas and slept all day"