

## A Tragedy of the

## Far North.

About 200 miles to the north of the Mackenzie River, is Fort McPherson, an old post of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, now known as the Royal Canadian. It stands on the Peel River, a tributary of the Mackenzie. At the fort is a small garrison, maintaining order on their sub-Arctic "beat," and snowing in winter by hunters and Indians, and by means of which communication is maintained with the far northern outpost. It is known as the Dawson Trail, and each winter a police patrol is sent over it from Fort McPherson to Dawson.

Nearly eleven years ago there occurred on the Dawson Trail a tragedy that belongs to the darker chapters of the history of the police, brightened, however, by deeds of heroic self-sacrifice well in keeping with the glorious record of the guardians of our West and North.

## The Patrol Set Out.

Shortly after winter had set in towards the close of the year 1910, the Dawson patrol set out from Fort McPherson. It comprised Inspector Fitzgerald, Constable Taylor, Constable Kinney, and Special Constable Carter, with three dog teams of five dogs each. The patrol was under orders to follow the trail through to Dawson City, about two hundred miles distant.

Along that trail there did not exist a single permanent habitation of white man or Indian. The trail ran through a wild, broken country, in the relentless grip of an Arctic winter.

It was known at Dawson that the patrol had set out from Fort McPherson, and when more than a month had passed without it arriving, the police officers at Dawson became anxious. Indians had come in from the Peel River district, and from them it was learned that the patrol had been at Mountain Creek on January 1. Mountain Creek is only twenty days' march distant from Dawson. It was then the end of February and the patrol had not come in. A relief patrol was, therefore, organized at Dawson and sent out to locate the whereabouts of Inspector Fitzgerald and his men.

Corporal Dempster was placed in charge of the relief patrol, and with him were Constable Fyfe and ex-Constable Turner, and an Indian called Mewat. The party having three dog teams of five dogs each. The party set out from Dawson on February 28, and on March 20 they had arrived at a point within sixty miles of Fort McPherson. Here they came upon a rude and somewhat dilapidated cabin, and in this cabin they found the first trace of the lost patrol—Inspector Fitzgerald's despatch bag and the bag of mail carried by the dog train. Corporal Dempster did not think that his discovery meant the worst. "I thought," writes Dempster in his report, "that Fitzgerald had been somewhat hard pressed and had put off everything possible to make the party's load light."

## The Fatal Spot.

The relief patrol pushed on with all possible speed, and soon it came upon the scene of the tragedy, only ten miles beyond the cabin where the despatch bag and the mail bag were found. The fatal spot was reached on the morning following the discovery of the despatch bag. As the relief patrol marched on eastward towards Fort McPherson, it came first upon a tent and stove standing beside the trail, and ten miles farther on were found a toboggan and two sets of dog-harness with the rawhide lashing all cut out.

And now let Corporal Dempster tell in his own words what he found. "That black, sub-Arctic trail that wound over the barren hills of the Peel River district.

"Tied to a willow on the bank," writes Corporal Dempster, "was a blue handkerchief, the trail leading towards it. I went over and climbed the bank, and back through a fringe of willows into the timber, and here I found a small open camp, and I found two men, one of whom I recognized as that of Constable Kinney, and I believed the other to be that of Constable Taylor, which belief was afterwards confirmed.

Constable Taylor had evidently committed suicide by blowing off the top of his head with a 30-30 rifle which he still grasped in his left hand. Both men lay in bed side by side. A fire had been at their feet; each lay on his back; they had three Alaska sleeping bags, one under and two over them; there was a frying pan, camp kettle, a small tin with a few matches in it, an axe with a broken handle, axe being very blunt. The camp kettle was half full of moose skin which had been cut up in small pieces and appeared to have boiled. Beneath the robe on which they lay was a gunny sack containing Inspector Fitzgerald's diary, some old socks, duffles and moccasins, also a note book belonging to Constable Kinney. There was also a pocket barometer which had been borrowed from Mr. Campbell at Red River. This was found out afterwards.

One Constable Kinney's person was

found a cheap watch and chain; on Constable Taylor's person was found a small beadwork sash containing \$32. Constable Kinney's right foot was bare and the toes had been badly frozen and one toe appeared to have been cut.

We cut some brush and covered the bodies and proceeded on towards the Fort and I now concluded that Inspector Fitzgerald and Special Constable Carter had left these two men in a desperate effort to reach the Fort, and would be found somewhere between this point and McPherson.

## The Other Two Victims.

On the following morning about ten miles further down the river a trail appeared to lead towards the bank and while feeling for the trail we kicked up a pair of snowshoes. We then climbed up the bank and a little way back in the woods we found the bodies of Inspector Fitzgerald and Special Constable Carter. This was Wednesday the 22nd March. Carter had evidently died first, as he was lying on his back with his hands crossed over his breast, and a handkerchief over his face. He appeared to have been drawn from ten to fifteen feet from the fire. Inspector Fitzgerald was lying on his back on the place where the fire had been burning.

ing, his left hand on his breast and right lying parallel with the body but slightly extended outwards. Two half-blankets were wrapped around him. A kettle and cup and a blunt axe with a broken handle were near him. There had been a little "tramping" around caused, I suppose, by guinea firewood. No effort of any kind had been made in arranging any kind of a camp.

On the body of Inspector Fitzgerald I discovered a gold watch in a little sack, suspended around his neck. On Carter's body I found a Department of Fisheries and Marine cheques for \$50 and \$7 in cash. His toes appeared to have been frozen and his fingers were bandaged. The bodies of all four were in a terribly emaciated condition, the stomach of each was flattened almost to the back bone, the lower ribs and hip bones showing very prominently. After the clothing had been cut off, I do not think either of them weighed a hundred pounds.

Constable Kinney's feet were swollen to almost twice their natural size; Inspector Fitzgerald's feet were also very much swollen.

## wandering of the Dawson Patrol.

## A Will in Charcoal.

In one of Inspector Fitzgerald's pockets was found a bit of paper whose few words tell more forcibly than elaborate description could possibly do the pathetic story of the lost patrol. The bit of paper was Fitzgerald's will. It was written with a bit of charred wood and read: "All money in despatch bag, and bank, clothes, etc., I leave to my dearly beloved mother, Mrs. John Fitzgerald, Halifax, God bless her."

Dying of starvation and cold, and, as he well knew, beyond the reach of earthly help, the poor man's thoughts turned to his mother in her home in far-away Halifax; and with painful effort his benumbed fingers traced with the bit of coal from the smouldering camp-fire the few words that secured for the mother the last provision the son could ever make. Not even the whole range of fiction contains a more pathetic story.

For part of the journey Fitzgerald had an Indian guide and for the remainder of the journey he depended upon Constable Carter.

When the Indian left the party he thought the men had food enough to last, until they reached Dawson. The

Indian in a statement made several months after the occurrence, also said that "Carter told me when I was leaving them that he knew the trail, but I do not think he did. My reason for thinking this is that he came over the Dawson Trail some years ago, and the country looks different going the opposite way." The Indian meant that Carter several years before had gone over the trail travelling from Dawson to Fort McPherson. On this fatal trip he was going from McPherson to Dawson, and as the Indian said, "the country looks different going the opposite way."

The Indian was right. Carter had forgotten the trail, as Fitzgerald's diary clearly showed. On January 17, almost one month after the patrol had set out, Fitzgerald wrote in his diary: "Carter is now completely lost and does not know one river from another. We have now only ten pounds of flour and eight pounds of bacon and some dried fish. My last hope is gone, and the only thing I can do is to return, and kill some of the dogs to feed the others and ourselves, unless we can meet some Indians. We have been a week looking for a river to take us over the divide, but there are dozens of rivers and I am at a loss."

## Buried at Fort McPherson.

Commissioner Perry, who carefully reviewed the whole case, is of the opinion that on the following day the party began their return to Fort McPherson then 264 miles distant. Including their wanderings while searching for a trail over the divide they had travelled over 340 miles.

The last entry in Inspector Fitzgerald's diary is dated February 5, and it reads: "Just after noon I broke through the ice and had to make fire; found one foot slightly frozen. Killed another dog to-night; have only five dogs now, and can only go a few miles a day. Everybody breaking out on the body and skin peeling off."

That was the last record of the tragedy left behind by the victims. The pen drops from the hand of the ill-fated Inspector, and it remained for others to ascertain and relate how death came to the men lost on the Dawson Trail.

How would a pair of Ebony Military Brushes in a nice leather case appeal to him? DULEY'S are showing the very best in this line and at most attractive prices. Strictly DULEY Quality—dec15.21

The whole case was thoroughly investigated, and the conclusions arrived at were gathered up in these lines by Commissioner Perry of the Police. He writes: "It seems to me that Inspector Fitzgerald had concluded that Constable Kinney and Constable Taylor were too

weak to travel through and left them all the camp equipment they had, and with Carter, pushed on towards Fort McPherson, with the hope of getting relief to send back. This he was not fated to accomplish. About ten miles further on he and ex-Constable Carter yielded up their lives. Carter succumbed first and was laid out by Inspector Fitzgerald, who probably died shortly afterwards."

The bodies of the four victims of the tragedy were carried back to Fort McPherson, from which the patrol had set out in the preceding December. They were laid away in one wide grave and there, at that outpost of the Far North, repose the remains of the men whose lives went out amid a scene of famine and sub-Arctic desolation on the Dawson Trail.

## Insure with the

## QUEEN

The Company having the largest number of Policy Holders in Newfoundland.

Every satisfaction given in settling losses.

Office: 167 Water Street. Adrain Bldg. P. O. Box 753. Telephone 658. QUEEN INS. CO.

GEORGE H. HALLEY, Agent.

Eat MRS. STEWART'S Home Made Bread—oct15.6mo

If you don't wish to ice a cake, make each layer with brown sugar before baking. Add a little cinnamon and a few currants. Eat MRS. STEWART'S Home Made Bread—oct15.6mo

Duckworth St.  
Central,  
West End.

Shoe Stores

**G. KNOWLING,**

Ltd. Shoe Stores

Central,  
West End,  
Duckworth St.

## Practical Xmas Gifts and Holiday Suggestions.

<b>Ladies' Grey Felt Slippers.</b> Leather soles and heels, 1.90	<b>Ladies' Grey and Khaki Felt Slippers.</b> Felt and leather soles, 2.30	<b>Ladies' Grey Felt Slippers.</b> Leather soles and heels, 2.40	<b>Ladies' Restwell Slippers.</b> Purple and Grey, 2.50	<b>Ladies' Felt Slippers.</b> Grey and Old Rose, ribbon trimmed, 2.70	<b>Ladies' Felt Slippers.</b> Purple, ribbon trimmed, silk pom-pom, 3.00	<b>Ladies' Felt Slippers.</b> Lavender and Fawn, chrome soles, 3.20	<b>Ladies' Kozy Slippers.</b> Baby Blue, chrome soles, 3.40
<b>Ladies' Felt Juliets.</b> Grey, Black, Wine and Brown, fur trimmed, 2.90	<b>Ladies' Felt Juliets.</b> Baby Blue and Old Rose, 4.50	<b>Ladies' Red Felt Juliets.</b> Fur trimmed, 3.00	<b>Ladies' Kid one-strap House Slippers.</b> Rubber heels, 3.20	<b>Ladies' Black and Tan Boudoir Slippers.</b> 3.60	<b>Ladies' Kid House Slippers.</b> Elastic Gore, 5.50	<b>Ladies' Kid House Slippers.</b> Rubber heels, 3.00 and 3.20	<b>Nurses' Comfort Shoes.</b> Rubber heels, cushion soles, 6.20 and 7.50
<b>Ladies' Box Calf Hockey Boots.</b> 5.30	<b>Ladies' Brogue Oxfords.</b> Brown and Black, 5.80	<b>Ladies' Brogue Boots.</b> Black and Brown; a good Skating Boot, 6.75	<b>Ladies' Felt Spats.</b> 10, 12 and 14 button; Fawn and Taupe, 2.00	<b>Ladies' 12 inch Boots.</b> Black Calf . . . . 6.50 Tan Calf . . . . 9.50	<b>Ladies' Indian Slippers.</b> Beaded, fur trimmed; Brown and Grey, 4.00 and 5.50	<b>Collis Ankle Supports.</b> Sizes 6 to 10 . . . 1.00 Sizes 11 to 2 . . . 1.90 Sizes 3 to 5 . . . 2.20 Sizes 6 to 8 . . . 2.20	<b>Ladies' Kid Juliets.</b> Rubber heels, 3.50 and 4.50
<b>Men's Grey Felt Slippers.</b> 2.90	<b>Men's Grey Felt Romeos.</b> 3.00	<b>Men's Black Kid Romeos.</b> 3.90, 4.50, 5.70	<b>Men's Black Kid Slippers.</b> 3.90 and 4.30	<b>Men's Tan Kid Romeos.</b> 3.70, 4.50, 5.70	<b>Men's Brown Indian Slippers.</b> Fur trimmed, 4.50	<b>Men's Hockey Boots.</b> Black and Brown, 6.50	<b>Men's Fawn and Grey Spats.</b> 2.00 and 3.50
<b>Men's Tan Kid Slippers.</b> 3.90	<b>Boys' Tan Romeos.</b> 2.90	<b>Boys' Tan Kid Slippers.</b> 3.10	<b>Boys' Black Kid Romeos.</b> 4.00	<b>Boys' Black Kid Slippers.</b> 3.00	<b>Boys' Hockey Boots.</b> Black and Tan, 4.60 and 5.50	<b>Boys' High Cut Tan Boots.</b> Straps and buckle at top, 5.00 and 6.20	<b>Boys' Rubber Boots.</b> Sizes 9 to 13, 3.35 Sizes 1 to 5, 4.40
<b>Children's Blue Felt Slippers.</b> Sizes 5 to 11 . . . 1.95 Sizes 11½ to 2 . . . 2.20	<b>Children's Electric Blue Velvet Slippers.</b> Sizes 4 to 6 . . . 1.20 Sizes 7 to 10 . . . 1.30 Sizes 11 to 2 . . . 1.40	<b>Children's Baby Blue Felt Slippers.</b> Sizes 5 to 8 . . . 2.20 Sizes 8½ to 11 . . . 2.30 Sizes 11½ to 2 . . . 2.50	<b>Girls' Patent Mary Jane Slippers.</b> Sizes 11 to 2, 2.70	<b>Girls' Black Kid Mary Jane Slippers.</b> Sizes 6 to 10 . . . 2.60 Sizes 11 to 2 . . . 3.10 Sizes 3 to 5 . . . 3.90	<b>Child's Patent Ankle Strap Cucco Slippers.</b> Sizes 3 to 8, 2.20	<b>Child's Tan Ankle Tie Slippers.</b> Sizes 3 to 8, 3.20	<b>Girl's 9 inch Tan Calf Skating Boots.</b> Sizes 6 to 10 . . . 5.20 Sizes 11 to 2½ . . . 5.80
<b>Girls' 9 inch Black Calf Skating Boots.</b> Sizes 6 to 10 . . . 3.80 Sizes 11 to 2½ . . . 4.60	<b>Girls' 9 inch Button Boots.</b> All sizes. Regular 5.70. Special 3.90	<b>Girls' Long Rubbers.</b> First quality. 6 to 10 . . . . 2.75 11 to 2 . . . . 3.30	<b>Women's Long Rubbers.</b> First quality, 3.70	<b>Girls' Santa Claus Thigh Rubber Boots.</b> \$3.60 and 4.30	<b>Girls' Black Jersey Leggings.</b> 5 to 10 . . . . 1.40 11 to 2 . . . . 1.50	<b>Women's Black Jersey Leggings.</b> 1.60	<b>Men's Rubber Boots.</b> 5.50, 6.20, 7.35, 8.50
<b>Ladies' Rubbers.</b> 1.15, 1.20, 1.25	<b>Ladies' Rubbers.</b> White . . . . 1.50 Brown . . . . 1.75	<b>Girls' Rubbers.</b> 85c and 1.00	<b>Girls' Rubbers.</b> Brown and White, 1.50 and 1.65	<b>Men's Rubbers.</b> 1.60, 1.70, 1.85, 2.00	<b>Boys' Rubbers.</b> 1.25 and 1.50	<b>Boys' Rubbers.</b> Red soles and heels, 1.40 and 1.65	<b>Men's Stormking Rubber Boots.</b> 7.80

## G. KNOWLING, Limited, SHOE STORES, For Your Xmas Footwear

Give  
Long  
For

Give  
Long  
For

16

Ch

Back flap  
event. B  
Christma  
world's b  
stinct th  
faction o  
to make

Every m  
they find  
you war  
received  
socks to

"For  
Ever

An excellent gift  
trap-book of camera  
sales. Write a short  
back picture.