

two or three. It was a heavy carry, but a fear of a dreadful "scattered death" took possession of us and we made the two miles without a halt. When we got into our canoes on the other side we were not satisfied until we had put several miles between us and the careless half-breeds with their dangerous death-dealing fluid.

The next afternoon we were quietly paddling up to Hay Island, when we noticed a canoe leave it. What could this mean? Had we not a right to imagine that

We were the first
That ever burst
Into that silent sea

for purposes of mining exploration and survey? What was our chagrin on landing to find surveyors' stakes and the island all laid out! A surveyor having landed in Rat Portage the day before, he had been at once hired by parties there to make a survey and cut out Jake Hennessy and his Winnipeg friends. And cut out we were, sure enough. Although thus euchred, you can see that we were the first to *make arrangements* to take up a claim on the Lake of the Woods; but inasmuch as:

The best laid plans of mice and men
Gang aft a'glee,

we were, so to speak, "in the soup." There was nothing, therefore, left for us but to do a little prospecting on our own hook. So, in looking for signs of gold, we came across some quartz leads on what is now known as Sultana Island, and at once commenced to make a survey, but night coming on after we had run a couple of lines, we paddled in seven miles to Rat Portage. After a good night's rest our ardor slackened, and a sharp frost having come in the night, we decided to let gold hunting alone and turn our faces homewards. As the lakes were fast freezing up, we arranged to sell our canoes and walk home, or at least to Cross Lake, 40 miles, which we did in a day and a half, arriving at the lake one night very tired, so much so that when we sat down and our limbs got cool we could with difficulty get up again, so stiff were we. After a day's rest, we took a work train for Winnipeg, 100 miles.

For a year after this nothing was done, until some lumbermen who were working for the Keewatin Lumbering Company found a piece of gold-bearing quartz on Sultana Island. This was shown to Hennessy, and he at once had the location surveyed, numbering it X 42, a friend of his, named Gadbois, taking up an adjoining portion, X 43. When a title was applied for, it was found that the survey was defective, as it could not be located in the Department, there being no tie line to any known point. Here is where I again came handy to my friend Jake. I went to Ottawa, found out how matters stood, and knowing the locality, telegraphed to "tie to Bear Ass Point." This being done, the Department had no difficulty in locating the property. But alas! Jake's hopes were doomed once more to disappointment, for it was found to be on Indian Reserve 38 B.

A little while afterwards I took a trip to Rat Portage, it being by this time easy of access, for the C.P.R. trains had commenced running through from Port Arthur. While discussing the situation with Jake Hennessy, I decided to again take a hand in gold mining, and made arrangements with a Mr. Brown, W. Caldwell, and a surveyor named Snow. The surveyor was to do the work in his line, the others were to assist him, and I was to go to Ottawa and try to get a title. We therefore surveyed the balance of the island, made application to the Dominion Government, but were told that it was an Indian Reserve, and nothing could be done. Other parties were taken into the scheme, and it was divided into eight shares, but some failed to contribute their portion of the expenses, and had to be dropped. The rest of us pegged away until we induced the Government to take steps to buy back the property from the Indians. At an interview I had with Sir John Macdonald in Winnipeg on the subject, I told him I did not want him to make me any "promises;" all I asked of him was that if the facts were as I had explained them, could certain arrangements not be made to deal with the property? He at once said, "Most certainly; in that case the Government could take action." My answer was, "That is all I want, Sir John, for I am satisfied that when you return to Ottawa and see the papers, which you promise to do, you will at once take the necessary steps to have the matter settled." This he faithfully carried out, and in a short time an Act, 41st section of chapter 43 Revised Statutes of Canada, was authorized by an Order-in-Council, dated October 1st, 1887, regulating the disposal of Indian lands containing minerals other than coal.

On February 10th, 1888, word came from Ottawa that the claim of Hennessy to acquire X42 was admitted, and that he and others must take up the property according to regulations of the previous October. Under these regulations only 40 acres could be taken up by one individual, so as there were 400 acres in the island, I selected ten of my friends and started for Rat Portage. Here we got a large canvas tent, blankets and cooking utensils, and taking our surveyor and Jake Hennessy along, we arrived at the island and pitched our tent on February 15th.

EXPERIENCES RATHER ARCTIC.

Will we ever forget that trip? Immortal Boreas! No. Although it averaged 40 degrees below zero, all the twelve days we were surveying the island, there we lived in a thin canvas tent, without a stove, and cooking our victuals at a log fire. The cold was so intense that our bacon would freeze to the bottom of our tin plates before we had time to eat it, although taken direct from the frying pan at a frying heat. There was a romantic sort of a poet in the party who illustrated the temperature by saying that he used to find scattered round in the morning fragments of our conversation over night—that is, the words would be found frozen to shrubs and trees around camp.

Many amusing incidents occurred during these twelve days. At first every man but Jake and myself thought he would certainly freeze to death if he did not sleep with all his clothes on. But I, being an old hand at the business, stripped to the buff every night and got into my blankets, and slept warm, while the others suffered and half froze in their clothes. I remonstrated with them and tried every way to make them do as I did, but they could not believe in my plan. The second night, each man thought he would be warmer if he had all the rest of his clothes on. I finally rebelled when the man who occupied part of my bed came to bed with his snowshoes on. He was like the Frenchman who sailed a small sand scow, and one day in a light breeze, the sun shining hot, the old captain dozed and the scow ran aground. The crew (one boy), who had been asleep, woke up and exclaimed, "Captain, de scow she's hard on!" the old captain waking up, and not knowing what else to do, said, "Vell, trow hout de hank." This anchor consisted of two boards lashed together crosswise, with a stone tied in each corner. The boy finding there was no rope attached, sang out "Capitaine, de hank she's got no string." "Vell," says the captain, "Trow heet hout, mabbe she do some good anyhow." So the fellow with the snowshoes thought they might do some good, as any trifling change in the temperature would be a blessing, no matter how brought about.

The country was very rough and mountainous. We had to labor as best we could through and over deep ravines, great rocky projections, thick scrub and fallen timber. All this tangled country being covered by about four feet of snow, made our work anything but easy. But what will not the average man go through for gold?

By indomitable hard work we at last completed the survey. Amongst our party was an American named Wheeler, from St. Paul. Wheeler did not go out with us the first day, but we had telegraphed to him and he joined us the third day. Here he came, a big, fine handsome fellow of 200 pounds, who had never had any experience in camping, and had only his city clothes with him. I happened to have taken out a snow shoe suit for part of my outfit, and having sprained my ankle by sliding down a steep hill, was laid up on the day Wheeler arrived. Finding that he was an enthusiast and eager for the fray, I dressed him up in my toggery: heavy flannel coat and knee breeches, thick red duffle stockings with blue tassels, and red and white toque. He was a picture, I assure you, and skipped and pranced about like a young buck Indian. Although he had never put on a pair of snowshoes in his life, he insisted that "what man had done man could do, and was he not a man, every inch!" Well, he was soon fitted to a pair of snowshoes and tried to follow the island until he came to the rendezvous where a fire was built about a mile from camp. Off Wheeler started, gay as a schoolboy. Snowshoes are hard to manage by a greeny, and only after numerous contortions and somersaults did he manage to get along fairly well.

Presently Wheeler disappeared around a neighboring point and was lost to view. Jake and I laughed ourselves hoarse and went to work getting supper prepared, so that it would be all ready to cook when the boys came in. About two hours went by, when Mr. Challoner, who had come out with his dog-team and left them at the camp while he gave a hand with the surveyors, came rushing into camp, exclaiming "Wheeler is freezing to death, and in a terrible plight." Challoner got his dogs, harnessed them up, and off like a shot to the rescue. It happened that the water had risen and overflowed the ice under the snow. Wheeler's snowshoes had come untied, and he did not know how to put them on again, so he started through the deep snow, floundering along, breaking through into the water, and finally reaching the rendezvous more dead than alive. Luckily it was lunch time and all the boys were there, so in a short time a procession could be seen coming toward camp with the dog train in the lead, and stretched out on the toboggan was the wretched, half-frozen body of Mortimer Marcus Wheeler. We soon had him all right; and that day he solemnly declared that although he never had liked dogs, he was willing then and there to give his mining location for those four dogs, each one of which he valued at a round thousand dollars.

THE YELLOW GOLD AT LAST.

Having got out patents for 120 acres of land adjoining the Sultana Mine, we were in hopes after the snow went off in 1888, to get to work