

BOYS AND GIRLS

The Purple Thistle.

Robed in the garb of kings,
She makes her stand
Close by the dusty road,
Haughty and grand.

Proud in her misery,
Misunderstood,
She hugs her sorrow close—
Would we all could!

Sharp is her thorny stem,
'Tis her defence;
Bids those who wish her harm,
'Go, get thee hence!'

Yet in her heart of hearts
Gentle is she;
Stores of sweet honey lie
There for the bee.

Longing for sympathy,
Longing for love,
She turns her eyes from earth,
Turns them above.

Slowly her colors fade;
Ragged and gray
Stands the bright thistle now
Still by the way.

Softly her blossoms loose,
Winds waft away
All that remains of her
Vesture so gay.

Shreds of her garments lie
Low on the grass;
Little she cares for them—
She lets them pass.

Spotless and pure she stands,
Robed as a bride;
Naught now remains to her
Of her old pride.

Up through the balmy sky
She floats away;
Up towards the golden sun—
None says her nay.

—'Churchman.'

With Komatik in Labrador.

[In a letter written to the 'Toilers of the Deep,' from Roddickton Mill, during a winter season, Dr. Grenfell gives some most interesting glimpses of travel with Komatik or dog sled.]

(Concluded.)

A few more miles and we ran over the bay ice again, and soon were traversing a cut path to two tiny tilts in the woods, where some fur trappers and their families were passing the winter. While some of us got dry and warm, others went after rabbits, and our dogs were able to enjoy a very hearty repast of lynx or mountain cat, seasoned with fresh rabbit and whale meat.

Dividing our forces, we shared the floor room for the night in the two tilts. I was always fond of problems and puzzles, and we had quite an important one to solve forthwith—for my companion is six feet long, and I am supposed to be more or less broad, and the space to lie down in was strictly limited. It was like those old word puzzles, where one has generally to take it on credit, that there is a place for each piece, and the 'thing can really be done.' Any how, we did it—and well, too. For though my head was thrust into a hen coop, past experience had taught me to so wrap it up that the 'rooster' inside should be misled in the morning by the Egyptian darkness

within not to crow too early. The furrier with whom we camped was sadly handicapped by rheumatic sciatica, which, though a young man, he had contracted from his rough life. The pain which incapacitated him, often enough, from going to his traps, we were able to relieve, and when at daylight we left for the long pull over to Canada Bay, we felt even in that little halt we had been able to give a cup of cold water. Two mail carriers had also come to the other tilt late that evening, and it was a pleasant little company that gathered for evening prayer round the log fire, in spite of the backwoods. The intense cold has kept the deep snow very dry all winter, so that it does not bind at all, and in the many miles in the green woods we had all we could do to plough along ahead of the dogs on our racquets. These paths were cut for Dr. Simpson last winter.

One great pleasure of these long drives is watching and helping one's dogs. Our little 'leader' is a milk-white slut, with a quaint, foxy face and tiny blinking eyes. As sharp as a needle on her feet, and as clever as can be in turning when called on—though she does not like to be 'shouted at,' and will turn far quicker for an ordinary toned call. Behind her, about two fathoms, runs an immensely powerful, jet black, long-haired dog, from Labrador, who appears to wait all day for a chance to catch the leader. Of course he never would do so, but the long trace she hauls, even eleven fathoms, at times gets hitched round an ice block, or a stump, and she is gradually hauled back to his reach. He usually goes ahead, and nothing will induce him to let her pass again, unless the team is stopped, or we are on open ice, when she makes a long and rapid detour. As soon as ever she is one foot ahead of the end of his trace, she turns her foxy eyes and barks in his face, and dances about.

This friendly excitement is excellent for the team, and I do not always regret when I hear a rabbit-like shriek, announcing the fact that she has been 'tripped up' again. When we start, she is always harnessed last, and when all is ready carried out on the driver's shoulder to the end of her trace; then the stern lashing of the komatik is slipped, and away you fly at full speed, till their 'first wind' is exhausted. We have to be careful at this time of year that in hurrying the dogs along, we do not let them frostburn their toes, and we have already waistcoats and shoes (of soft skin or blanketing) on some of them. One thing never ceases to be a source of wonder to me, and that is the extraordinary manner in which even one's least intelligent dogs will remember the way over miles of snow, through trees, amidst houses, or over bays. We had to turn out in his harness one of our dogs the other day who seemed exhausted. He followed us about a mile, and then we suddenly lost him. Two days later he turned up at Roddickton millhouse, which he had only once visited, and which was some eight miles back, over a country deep in snow and thick with trees. Yet to teach that dog to turn as a leader does, only a yard to right or left, would be the work of months. We saw the sun rise an hour after we had got under way, and saw it set before we reached the river that falls into Canada Bay. A humble logger's tilt half an hour later gave us a 'hot drink' of tea, and supper time saw us in Mr. Tilley's cheery home at the Roddickton Mill. The little schoolhouse here served us as a place of worship on Sunday, and for two days we were fully busy with sick folk. Here a man whose eye was badly injured by a splinter—the pain we could at once relieve, but the sight will, I fear, be poor in

it, till he can get a cataract operation performed. Here again, was a man with a large family laid up with an abscess in his head and intense pain, who could at once be relieved, and put on the road to recovery, though with the loss of hearing in one ear, through which the opening had to be made. He was able in a few days to go logging again.

One of the lessons I have constantly to teach is that open air and cold are not dangerous, and that hot and ill-ventilated houses are the great source of all evil. The problem the manager is struggling with at the mill is how to make our stock of provisions last the loggers till we get a steamer from St. John's. More have arrived with dependent families than we anticipated, and a cold winter calls for more fuel. Fortunately, the deer have been plentiful, and he is still able to victual his garrison. From Roddickton to Conche is a tough journey in the weather we have had for it. But the kindness of the people, and comfortable preparation they make for visitors, repaid the effort, as did one or two opportunities afforded for being useful. Our home was the same as of old, though now made partly desolate by the terrible death our beloved friend John Ryan met with last summer. His good wife insists on our still trespassing on her hospitality. The problem of how to feed our dogs was solved here by the forethought of friends, who had kept seal carcasses for us, and so we had no trouble on that score. Among many patients were one or two who had been long expecting us.

One of Dr. Simpson's patients, on whom he had done a double cataract operation for total blindness last fall, walked into the room bearing a tray full of dishes, plates and cups of boiling tea; while last time I was here she could not find the barn to feed the chickens, and was found feeling around the church, to which she had wandered by mistake on her way back to the house. A small operation permitted another man to get on his legs again and visit the woods for firing for the family. A woman with diseased bone in the leg was left comfortable till she came to St. Anthony for operation, a man whose broken leg had been set at Battle hospital last fall was given fresh splints enabling him to walk, his extreme age having left the union very weak—so that altogether no time was lost till once again we were off on our travels. Two Conche men volunteered to go ahead all the way to Roddickton, and carry a gift of two seals' carcasses for our dogs—a neighborly act which one wants to be out here to appreciate. The hills on this journey are exceedingly steep, and one has to tail a good time behind one's komatik to check its flight now and again by a turn round a tree, while occasionally one could come down a steep decline with the said line tied round one's body, and oneself getting down in the snow, and being hauled behind through the deep dry snow. How many parables from nature these drives also afford. As one crosses these trackless snows one sees the marks one makes behind, defiling, as it were, the beauty of the surface. Yet one can never efface them. It must be fresh snow from heaven alone able to hide those marks, and excellently does it illustrate the pity of him on high, who alone also can hide our devious foot marks on the sands of time. The other day some men were trying a long journey, guided only by the blazing of the trees, for they had never trod that road before. Safely they went three-quarters of the way, when they suddenly struck the tracks of a man's snow-shoes. So thinking they must lead to their now near destination, and finding them easier to follow than the scanty blazings, partly hidden by age and partly by the