

XMAS WITH CANADA'S MOUNTED POLICE

Many thousands of the inhabitants of the Canada of to-day, remaining congregated in the large cities, have never seen a member of the Royal North-West Mounted Police Force, but my own knowledge of them commenced more than a generation ago.

Well can I remember, before all the buffalo were yet wiped out from the great plains, the pleasure it would give me to come upon a single member of the scarlet-coated police, in the midst of a band of still savage Indians and squaws, among whom his mere presence was sufficient to preserve order, and to restrain the young braves from attacking the members of some hostile tribe.

Until Death.

Canada is becoming settled up now, but there are still vast wastes where the North-West Mounted Police perform noble deeds, all unrecorded and unrecruited. Their duties are not only to prevent crime rather than to punish it, but to succour those in danger, even should they lose their own lives in the effort. Their terrible discipline is so stringent that none but the very best and most enduring spirits can support it for any length of time, but while he serves, the scarlet-mounted policeman vows ever to tell the truth and to perform his duty until death.

I could relate many instances of their bravery and devotion, but will select a story told me by one of their number in my far away log-house when the world was white with snow around us, while giving it as nearly as possible in the narrator's own words.

"It was Christmas Day," related Constable Vincent, "and I was tennister at the time of the North-West Mounted Police at Battleford. My day's work being finished, and a hard one too, I had put my team up for the night. The horses were quite done up—to use a colloquial phrase, they were 'all in'—and had scarcely a kick left in them.

Out in the Prairies.

"There was a jolly dinner in the mess, the room was brightly illuminated and decorated, while the genial warmth made us quite forget the day's hardships without in the frozen atmosphere of the North-West. Dinner was about half over, when, with a sigh of relief, I remarked to a comrade:

"Well, thank goodness, for once in a way, it seems as if we are likely to have our Christmas evening undisturbed."

"But a member of the N.W.P. never

Smith's Discovery

(By C. T. C.)

Scene I.

It was a dismal winter's night. Rain had been pouring all day; the snow was almost completely washed away and the erstwhile good roads were transformed into canals. Through the darkness a man was seen slowly making his way. At every step his feet sank into the slush, and exclamations of vexation and disgust burst from his lips. He reached his door, inserted a latch-key, and entered his house. He drew off his rubbers, looked at them, and threw off his rubbers, looked at them, and threw them forcibly to the ground. The soles of both were broken—his feet were soaking.

Scene II.

Smith was confined to his bed, with a severe cold. The doctor was summoned. Tonsillitis was the verdict; three weeks in bed the sentence. Smith groaned. It was the Christmas season; work was very plentiful—he had looked forward to having a good supply of money on hand for the festive season. Now his hopes were dispelled. Hard times and many privations faced him for the winter. He groaned again.

Scene III.

It was the last visit of the doctor. Smith, weak, emaciated, was able to sit up.

"Doctor," he said, "a pair of rubbers two weeks old, with broken soles, were the cause of all this trouble. In my opinion, all rubber dealers deserve hanging."

"Don't say all, my boy," said the doctor. "I was out, and had to walk two miles, the same night you got your feet wet. My rubbers were four weeks old then; they are seven now. Look at them."

He pulled off his rubbers; they looked like new. On the shank of each was stamped a Polar Bear.

"Bear Brand for mine in future!" cried Smith.

He kept his word. He is a healthy, happy man to-day.

knows his luck! Scarcely had I spoken when our sergeant-major came to me and, touching me on the arm, said: 'I want to speak to you outside.' He passed on to two of my comrades named Campbell and Hornage, and summoned them likewise.

"Leaving our meal unfinished, we rejoined the sergeant-major in the lobby, when he said: 'You three men will have to go off at once, with Vincent's sleigh and team, and a supply of provisions. A man has come in bringing a vague story with him of a family being somewhere out in the prairies to the south of the Eagle Mountains, in some dwelling which is not recorded in any Crown Office, as the occupants have erected it without pre-emption, or any permission from the Government authorities. This family are said to be on the point of death from starvation, and it will be your duty to find them and relieve them.'"

Leaving Pleasure Behind.

"How far off is it, sir?" I inquired. "That I could not ascertain, nor the locality," replied the sergeant-major. "It may be any distance, but probably something over thirty miles." "If I am to go to the south of the Eagle Mountains, sir, I must have other horses," I replied. "Mine are all in."

"He obtained the use of four horses for me from the commissioner, and when the big sleigh had been filled with hay, buffalo-ropes, and provisions, including an oil stove, we three men well wrapped up in our fur coats, gloves, and caps, were ready to make a start. The sergeant-major, who had come to see us off, noticed that we had not got on the sheep-skin combined apron and breeches which we used in cold weather when riding.

"Where are your 'shaps' men?" he asked. "We shall not want them, sir," we replied, "as we are driving." "You do not know what is before you, men," was his answer. "Be guided by me, and take your 'shaps,' you may be glad of them. It may get colder yet!"

"So after taking the chief's sensible advice, we departed, took all the Christmas merriment behind us, and drove off into the cold, silent night, on an errand of mercy, which seemed no better than a wild-goose chase.

"As one man must be kept warm in case of the others freezing, while I held the lines, with Campbell seated beside me, Hornage was in the hay inside the big bob sleigh. Rapidly we glided over the snow for mile after mile, when suddenly a puff of icy wind sent a shower of frozen particles in our faces.

"It is going to be a blizzard," said Campbell, breaking a long silence. "We are in for it, for sure."

When the Storm Burst.

"I assented briefly, but drove on until at length the terrible snowstorm was on us in full fury, blinding us so that we could no longer see the Eagle Mountains, which were our guide, nor indeed face the icy blast. I stopped the sleigh, we unharnessed the four horses, and covered them with rugs, turned up the sleigh on one side, and endeavoured to get what shelter we could under its lee.

"In this way we passed the long night, which seemed as if it would never come to an end; and with the dawn we started again, driving southwards over the interminable prairie, peering out vainly in every direction for anything bearing the semblance of a house.

"That day the blizzard came on more fiercely than ever, and at length, while driving aimlessly about in the gloom, I felt that my hands were frozen, and that I must give up the reins to my comrade, Campbell. By this time, we all realised that, unless we soon found shelter of some kind, we should be frozen to death. It grew darker, and the snow more blinding than ever, so that, in fact, I could distinguish nothing.

"I was blinded, and had just exclaimed that I was 'all in,' when Hornage called out from the inside of the sleigh that he could see a haystack to the left. If we could indeed find a haystack, we felt that we might be saved, by pulling out the hay, and burying ourselves and the horses in it. Neither Campbell nor I could see a haystack, however, and we thought that the intense cold had muddled our comrade's senses.

Behind that Door.

"If you can see anything, for pity's sake drive straight at it, Campbell," I cried, as the lines fell from my frozen hands. Suddenly, through the gloom we discerned a square, opaque object—a haystack, indeed, but a small shack built of mud, and only about fourteen feet long, by twelve in width. Alighting from the sleigh, I staggered round this humble building as well as my half-frozen limbs

would allow me, until at last I found a door.

"I tried it—it was locked, nor would it yield to my efforts to open it.

"Determined to avoid, if possible, dying out there in the snow, we three men, all together, threw ourselves, with all our weight, against the door. It yielded and burst open, and, although within all was dark, some sense instantly warned us that there were living beings in that hut. No sound came, however, from anywhere, and, oh! the icy chill of that unlighted dwelling was like that of a church vault in some arctic place.

"At length, with our frozen fingers we managed to strike a light. Then, huddled in a heap together on the floor, we perceived a group of human beings. The hand of God had directed us to the very family that we were in search over the trackless snow! Lying on the ground together we now beheld a man, a woman, a boy of eighteen, a young girl of sixteen, and a three months' old baby.

"The oil-stove was brought in and lighted, and some milk placed on it to heat, but before this could be accomplished, we found that the man, the woman, and the boy, were all frost-bitten in their hands or legs, the poor woman being frozen stiff up to her knees, her legs being like marble. The girl, however, was not frozen, and the baby, protected by the warmth of its mother's breast, did not seem frost-bitten either. All were almost dead from starvation, and could speak with difficulty at first.

"As the oil-stove could not heat that awful place, and there was an empty stove in the shack, I now determined to try to prepare food. We had driven in through some low bushes sticking up out of the snow, and, therefore, after first bringing in all of the four horses through the doorway, I attached myself to a rope of which I left the end with my comrades. To go out without being tied would have meant being lost in the blizzard.

All Efforts Unavailing.

"Taking my little hand-axe, I now cut as many sticks as I could, and

then, when perished by the blizzard, I had re-entered the hut, my comrades took it in turns to be tied to the rope and go out for more fuel. Not even the heat of the fire and all of the people and horses within that shack, could make the place at all warm, still, as the cold became less intense, we worked away at the frozen limbs of those miserable creatures, by rubbing them with snow.

"We fed them meanwhile, including the baby, and at length the arms of the man, a Scotsman named Fraser, began to thaw, likewise the hands and feet of the lad. Upon the unfortunate woman—although we worked for nine hours without ceasing—our efforts proved quite unable to make any impression.

"She said that she could feel nothing in her limbs whatever, and even when they at length thawed, and became purple in hue, she had no sensation in them.

Journeying Home.

"As the blizzard continued to rage for two days, we remained in that shack, taking care of the occupants. Then, when the storm ceased, we put them in the sleigh, giving them all of our own coverings that we could spare. Then, indeed, it was that we were glad that we had listened to the sergeant-major, and had brought our 'shaps' with us.

"Upon the way back to Battleford, Hornage, who was tending the rescued family in the sleigh, called me to look at the woman. I saw that she was dead. I took the child from the dead woman's arms, giving it to the father, and telling him to hold it close to him, whatever he did. I did not, however, tell him that his wife was dead, and buried as they were under the hay and buffalo-ropes, the wretched beings could not see one another.

"We were two days on our ghastly homeward journey, and, at length, having crossed the mountains in an icy atmosphere, we contrived to make for Battleford, where we drove straight to the hospital. Upon them taking the poor little baby from the helpless father, I perceived that it was also dead, and frozen stiff and solid like a lump of ice.

Duty's Stern Call.

"After a time the daughter recovered from the effects of shock and starvation, and the father likewise, after being a long time in hospital and very carefully nursed. "The unfortunate lad, however, had to have several fingers amputated in order that his arm might be saved."

HUMOR LIGHTENS WAR'S TRAGEDIES.

It is a relief to extract a little humor out of this tragic war. French and British alike are wondering, and laughing not a little, at the tremendous number of prisoners which the Germans, according to their own reports, are capturing, both east and west. If they had taken as many prisoners as they say they have they would have no enemy to fight. But the explanation is simple enough—fake but one instance.

A Swiss who was at Aix-la-Chapelle at the beginning of this month, and who is now at Bastie, writes:

"The German government is very ingenious in its efforts to keep up the spirits of the population. It reports the annihilation of regiment after regiment daily, and in order to foster the delusion it has to produce formidable convoys of French, British and Belgian prisoners. Aix-la-Chapelle is the spectacular spot chosen. It is the business railway station in the German empire just now. The German general staff sends long trainloads of prisoners through this junction going east every day. You can imagine how industriously the newspaper correspondents record the incident in dispatches to Berlin, not forgetting the downcast demeanor of the captives and the cheers of the German population.

When the narrative had been simply and modestly related to me, I rose from my warm seat by the fire, and came to the door with me and look out into the night.

"The wind was moaning through the pine-trees, the snow was falling heavily, and in the mountains near at hand we could hear the dismal howling of the wolves.

"How would you like to try it again to-night, Vincent?" I inquired.

"If it were my duty, sir, I would go now, this minute," was the manly reply. "As," he added with a laugh, "even if once more I were compelled to lose my Christmas dinner, and perhaps be frozen to death into the bargain."

Such are Canada's mounted police.

"The crowds are unaware that these trains are switched onto a loop line at night, and return in triumph the next day. The other morning a Dutchman was watching one of them go slowly by. He saw a Belgian soldier excitedly gesticulating at an open carriage window. He was shouting: 'This is the twelfth time we have come through this station.'

Fight for Pig Under Fire

"Very little scares us nowadays," writes an artilleryman from the Woerre. "The Germans are in the woods, and are as reluctant as carrion crows to leave. Last night we heard heavy footsteps, an old noise like 'patapoum, patapoum.' Was it a batch of German deserters coming to us, or outposts returning with some war? I peered into the darkness, and within a few feet of my head was—a pig. He was more frightened than I, and decamped. We followed, and in five minutes Mr. Cochon was tied to the wheel of an ammunition cart. He crutled all night long.

"Next morning men from the neighboring battery heard of our interesting capture, and claimed it as theirs. What check! We squabbled, and everybody asserted his right to the prisoner. Suddenly shrapnel began to fall in the midst of the debate. Did Russian shells stop the row over that pig? No, sir! For ten more minutes the two batteries argued, while bullets flew and the pig squealed.

"The chief of a portable kitchen has his little joke. 'How polite the Boches are,' he said. 'They even send us their marmalades (black Marias) in which to cook our puddings.' Then along came the captain. 'In the name of heaven!' he exclaimed, 'get back to your 75's, but the pig in two!' A military Solomon had solved the difficulty, and both battalions had pork for supper that night."

Germans Without Humor

Describing the conditions surrounding the British army, a lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, writing home, says:

"In front of us are the German trenches, only a hundred yards away. A bobbing head, a shaking fist, an oc-

casional spade wave, bespeak the presence of our foe. Yesterday one of our merry men fixed up a target. On white paper he drew a bull's-eye with a charred stick, tied it on a cardboard box, placed it in front of the trench and with flag behind recorded the misses of our friend Fritz. I feel sure that if in those trenches we had a more humorous foe instead of the phlegmatic Teuton, we might pass away many of the weary hours of watching in friendly joke. But we are up against a wary foe. There is no leisure, for barbed wire, artfully contrived hoops and loopholes forever claim the attention of our brave men.

"There are times, though, even under fire, when the humor of our soldiers bursts forth. On one occasion, after a German shell had fired some wood, our men, seeing the fire, seized the opportunity to cook their food. Yesterday I heard an amusing story under trying circumstances told concerning a man in the regiment lying in the thin red line next to us. Shrapnel had burst, killing two men on his left and badly shattering another. He was trying to light a pipe, and having some difficulty he said to his mate, 'Sure 'tis Belgian tobacco, and these French matches will be the death of me.'

German Shot Spoils Milking

"It sometimes help the officers to console the men's letters home. One man says, 'We shall have the shells for breakfast—not egg-shells. I shall be in Berlin in a fortnight, and I'll send you some sausages.' I overheard on the march one 'Pat' say to another, 'I never believe anything I hear, and only half of what I say.'"

Here are two humorous touches from the letter of a Dublin Fusilier: "At one point of the line German and French troops were not more than a hundred yards apart. They could hear each other talk, and sometimes talked to each other. One day a cow grazed between the lines. Both sides wanted milk. They agreed whoever it a horn first would be let milk the cow. The first shot came from the German lines. Bad as usual, it killed the cow."

"When both sides dig in there is continuous rifle sniping, on the German side usually very bad. An officer of ours with a sense of humor put up a target for them to practice on and gave them a marker with a flag to signal the misses. The target was pretty large, with a sketch of the Kaiser's head and shoulders for a bull's-eye. Only one shot was fired at it, and that bullet hit the Kaiser right under the chin. We appreciated the joke."

Death of the Gallant Lancer

And here is one about a gallant Irishman with some pathos in it:

"One afternoon when I was riding from the transport to the battalion I met a lancer going the same road. We were chums at Aldershot a couple of years ago. I met his wife when he brought her to the married quarters, a bonnie bride. He was a squat little Irishman with a pair of lively eyes that spoke the language of all tongues. He had fought at Mons and been right through the campaign, and as we rode together through the town we talked over past and present. As we passed a butcher's shop a pretty girl came to the door and gave him 'Bonjour,' with a charming smile. Against regulations he doffed his cap and made her a sweeping bow. Their eyes met—it was a mere passing salute, but one could see he had passed that way before. He turned to me with a little laugh, 'We are all single at the seaside.'"

"Two days afterwards I made the same journey on foot. Just at that same shop door I met a stretcher—my lancer friend was lying on it—shrapnel through the chest. As I spoke to the stretcher bearers the girl came to the door. Her grief was passionate. I doubt if the wounded man was conscious of her tears. Later in the day I called at the field hospital. He was dead. A woman in Ireland is teaching his little one to pray for his soul. A girl in France is putting flowers on his grave."

FOR SALE—Schooner

"Dorothy B.," 56 tons, 7 years old; juniper plank, well built, well found. Can be inspected in port. Apply to THOMAS SCAMMEL, JR., Change Islands, or Fishermen's Union Trading Co., St. John's.—dec5,w61,d31

For Sale, Schr. Rosaleen,

35 tons, 7 years old; well found, in good condition. No reasonable offer refused. Apply to GEO. HAMPTON, care Ayre & Sons, or Noah Bishop, Burnt Head, near Cupids.—nov28,71

ADVERTISE IN THE

MAIL AND ADVOCATE FOR BEST RESULTS

ESTABLISHED 1860

POPE'S

TELEPHONE 659

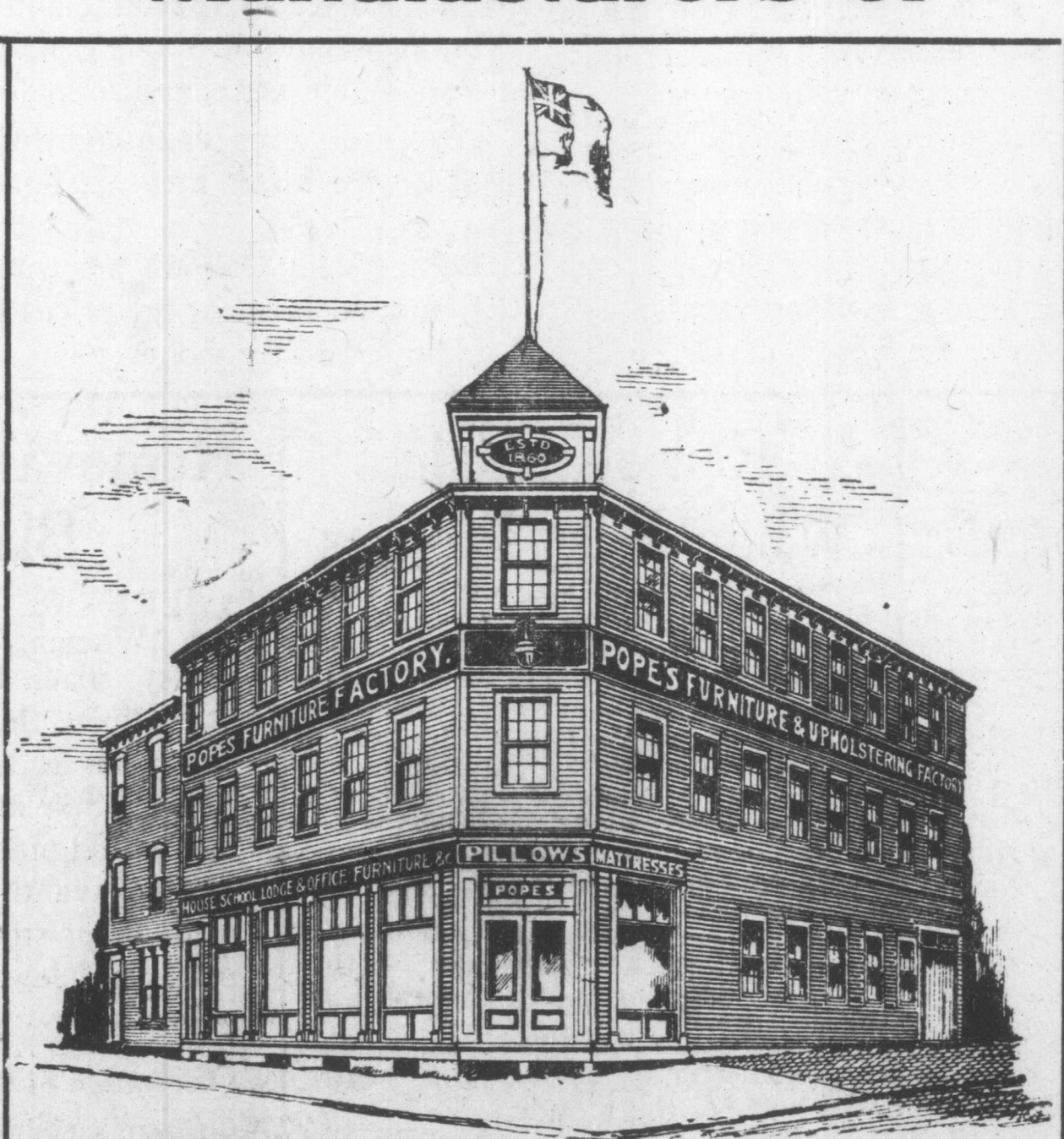
Furniture and Mattress Factory.

WE EXTEND TO OUR FRIENDS AND CUSTOMERS

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR GREETINGS!

Manufacturers of

SIDEBOARDS
DRESS CASES
BEDSTEADS
COUCHES
CHESTER-FIELDS
EASY CHAIRS
WING CHAIRS
EXTENSION TABLES
PARLOR SUITS
ROLL TOP DESKS
SECRETARY'S AND DESKS



STUDENT'S CHAIRS
CHILDREN'S CHAIRS
MORRIS CHAIRS
MUSIC RACKS
WINDOW BLINDS
WINDOW POLES
FLOOR CANVAS
SHOW CASES
CHURCH, LODGE and OFFICE FURNITURE

OUR MOTTO FOR 1915:
Improvement in Manufacture—Careful Attention to All Orders.

Pope's,

The Largest and Best Equipped in Newfoundland.

Manufacturers of the Four Well Known Empire, Terra Nova, Northcliffe and Hygienic Mattresses.