

side world. One mail reaches him, as a rule, during the winter, *via* Quebec, but it brings no news later than Christmas, and then for the next he must await the arrival of the Newfoundlanders early in the summer. For nearly two months in the autumn, and the same length of time in the spring, he is kept a prisoner at his headquarters, whilst the ice is either forming or breaking up on the Bays. These four months are generally the most trying ones in the year. An almost overwhelming sense of his complete isolation from the rest of the world comes over him at times. When at work the time slips rapidly away; but the working time brings its trials too, for then begins the cry from the needy for food, and one almost dreads to enter a house, knowing that in many cases the first thing asked for will be *flour* for the half-starved creatures living there!

The missionary's work often takes him among the hungry and the naked, whom it is not in his power to relieve; and while he is talking to them of the future life, he cannot fail to think that they are wondering whether there is anything in the parson's *cometique-box* to keep them alive, or a chance of his giving them a little flour to help them along till summer comes. The possibility of this impressed itself so forcibly upon my mind, that I said last winter, before starting on our missionary journey, 'Put in a bag of oatmeal, to make porridge for any who may be hungry.'

There are dangers to be encountered from snowstorms and bad ice. The latter is the *more-to-be-dreaded danger* of the two! The traveller goes prepared for the former, and, should he be caught, would not hesitate to pitch his camp in the first clump of trees he came to, and there spend the night. When travelling he always provides himself with a seal-skin bag in which to *sleep*, and in this he would find it by no means uncomfortable to have to spend a night in the woods. This sleeping bag is, in fact, his bed at all times, and when he retires for the night he merely places it on the floor and crawls into it. There, after a hard day's work in the bracing air, he sleeps as soundly, and perhaps contentedly, as his more favoured brethren do on their downy pillows; unless, as may be the case, his slumbers are disturbed by a cat falling on to his head from the beams of the house, or a hungry dog gnawing the foot of his sleeping-bag!

The only means of conveyance from place to place in the winter season is by *cometique* and

dogs, but when the snow is deep, one has to put on the snow-shoes and walk. *Cometique* travelling is pleasant when the ice is smooth, or the snow has a hard crust, over which the 'coach' will glide, provided the weather be not too cold. It has its dangers, however, as well as its pleasures; with smooth ice and a hill to descend, it requires all the skill of the driver to steer the *cometique*, and the strength of both driver and passenger to keep it back and prevent its running over and probably killing some of the dogs. These, however, are loosed in dangerous places, and allowed to go down by themselves. Now and then the *cometique* gets beyond control, and away it goes at railway speed, over hummocks and stumps, till one larger than the rest brings it to a standstill, and then away go the occupants head over heels, thinking themselves well off if they land in a favouring snow-bank without broken limbs. A good shake, to clear oneself of snow, and a 'No-bones-broken this time, boy,' from the parson, to reassure the driver, who, having secured the dogs, 'stands by in fear and trembling; and then the *cometique* is made fast to the dogs again and the journey is resumed. Now and then, when descending a steep hill with snow-drifts thereon, the *cometique* shoots into one, and under it goes; then the driver is hopelessly and helplessly buried for a time beneath *cometique* and snow.

The people are all most kind and hospitable, especially to the visitor, and never fail to lay their best before him. At times their best is nothing, and then, with the family, the staple article at a meal for all is the porridge, which the parson, by means of his supply-box, is able to provide for the company. This is not always well made, and on one occasion, when I congratulated our hostess on her seeming knowledge of cookery, a smile crossed my man's face. It was accounted for by-and-by when the porridge was produced in the shape of smoky water, with specks of oatmeal here and there; not till then did I discover that my cup of meal, which was intended only to make porridge for two, had been poured into a gallon or more of water.

On another occasion, after some six hours' heavy walking on snow-shoes, we called on a family, dined off porridge, and then went on to a second house to put up for the night, but to meet with no better entertainment. There we supped and breakfasted on porridge and our last bit of 'pork cake,' the mainstay of all travellers. The owner of this dwelling, a poor widow, could boast of possessing two half-