

Four Men and the Huskies

Concerning Fitzgerald and His Men Who Ate Dog and Died on the Peel River

(By Augustus Bridle in the Canadian Courier)

Inspector Fitzgerald was a native of Halifax. Kinney came from the United States, but joined the force at Innisfail; Taylor was an Australian; Carter had seen 21 years service on the force, and married an Eskimo at Herschell, the ceremony being performed by Bishop Stringer.

Five thousand miles from Halifax, where Inspector Fitzgerald of the R.N. W.M.P. was born, this little human document of the past tense was written—in the hard snowdrifts along the Peel River. Somewhere under the snow, two weeks ago, the relief force from Dawson dug out some charred sticks, fur-lined coats, and deer-skin moccasins, frozen stiff, fur and misshapen, for a freezing man has no use for mitts; bones and hides of husky dogs—all the men couldn't eat before they started to cash in.

Some such was the rare but splendid picture of heroism which the relief force found in mid-winter when the southland rivers were beginning to move. But the Peel was still solid. The trail was snowed under. Not even an Eskimo or a Locheux Indian had gone that way in two months.

Inspector Fitzgerald and his three constables—Kinney, from the United States; Taylor, from Australia; and Carter, who had married the Eskimo woman—had quit the trail. A few weeks more and these four men would have been lined up at the coronation of George the Fifth. But the trail from Fort Macpherson to Dawson—got them.

Fitzgerald at Herschell. This is the first wholesale tragedy in the history of the greatest police force the world ever saw. Organized in 1874, after the first Riel rebellion: down to 1910 the story of these "riders of the plains" is the most extraordinary and police force in the world.

But the quartette that ate dogs on the Peel River last January and then quit the trail were no longer riders of the plains. Inspector Fitzgerald had been a plainsman for many years. He was one of the oldest officers in the force that extends from old Fort Macleod, down near Montana, to Herschell Island, in the Arctic Sea, by river and trail two thousand miles north of Edmonton, and nearly three thousand miles north of Macleod, where the trail was a few years ago. It had been mainly off his horse, driving dogs and padding kayaks. He was the sergeant who established the first police post at Fort Macpherson, at the mouth of the Peel; and afterwards shoved his kayaks on down to Herschell where, when the trail was a constant and the river, he set up the furthest north police post in the world on the island of the whaling men.

It was on patrol from Fort Macpherson to Dawson that Fitzgerald and his three men lost their lives. Dawson is the headquarters for the Yukon, the Yukon touches southward down the Mackenzie, the new division, N, at Lesser Slave, and the Hudson's Bay division. All this northerly territory, from Athabasca Landing to Herschell Island, is the new jurisdiction of the Royal North West Mounted Police, consisting of about three hundred officers and men, 126 horses and 96 dogs, with canoes and kayaks and umiaks, toboggans and sleds; everything but the horses different from the outfit of the five or six hundred plainsmen, whose headquarters are at Regina, Calgary, Macleod, Lethbridge, Fort Saskatchewan, Prince Albert, and Battleford.

The route from Dawson to Macpherson is one of the most remarkable in the North. It was made famous by the overland route of the Klondikers, who went up from Dawson in 1898; and it was the despair of most of those. The police had known it before the Klondikers. It was in 1896 that the first police went up to the Yukon. That was on the first discovery of gold, two years before the Klondike. An expedition in 1896 to the Yukon, led by the writer, had brought out the first news of gold in that country. However, they were at Skagway and Port Constantine in 1896.

That was the first attempt the police made to control the widest part of Canada. These men were outposts when the rich plains had become somewhat civilized. They took in hand the whole machinery of civilization, with Dawson as the centre—at first from Port Constantine, named after the then superintendent—then moved to the barracks as headquarters, and started in to enforce and even to make laws, to carry mails, to arbitrate in mining disputes, to record claims, to give information and advice to prospectors; and they did the Lord's work for a dollar and a quarter a day right across the continent, up to the Yukon, and raising the devil and among common laborers that got as much in an hour as a constable got in a day.

But Inspector Fitzgerald knew the Yukon, almost every creek of it, every husky dog and Indian from the Chilcotin Pass to Herschell, every Eskimo and most of the whalers. He had made his life work to police the West and the North as thoroughly as ever did Ool. Skoole or Herchmer or the present Commissioner Perry. He was known in every camp. Where Fitz went, there was law and order. When he went a trail he had the dogs and the grubstake and the knowledge necessary to carry him through.

What diaries he and his men kept after they began to eat the dogs is not yet known. But the tragedy happened within a day's "mush-on" of the fort; and just how it happened is yet to be known. It was dead of winter and the edge of the long night. But it was considerably south of Herschell, where Fitzgerald had established this post in 1903.

Winter on the Peel River was known to many a Klondiker in 1899. The few that straggled through by the Mackenzie, the Peel, and the Porcupine, know what the trail was like that got those mailmen.

Seven years and a few months before this trail got him; and he had spent years on most of the trails between

Macleod and Herschell Island, Fitzgerald, then sergeant, wrote this report concerning Herschell, where he and his two men stuck up the post and the flag in the name of the king:

"It is very barren, no trees or scrub on it; all fuel has to be brought from the mainland during the winter by dogs, and during the summer by the mission steamboat. There are six large buildings on the island, four owned by the Pacific Steam Whaling Company. One of these is loaned to the mission and used as a dwelling house, three are storehouses of the company; the other two are storehouses owned by the mission and Captain McKenna, whaler. Besides these there are fifteen huts made of any old boards or packing cases, and very heavily covered with sods; they are very warm. These are owned by the P. S. W. Company, and are used in the winter by the officers of the whalers."

The sergeant spent two or three years at Herschell studying the natives, concerning whom he got information never before published. He and his men lived in huts made of driftwood and staves, roofed with sod and lined with seal. They drank water melted from ice got from a small lake in October. They ate whatever they could get in from headquarters at Dawson—with whatever they were able to shoot on the island. They kept the whalers in awe. They carried the mails. They were the sublimely simple and solitary embodiment of the arm of the law that reached clear down to Regina and beyond; in a place where they were seldom visited by an inspector. Fitzgerald learned to navigate in an Eskimo kayak; he had already become an expert "musho over" with husky dogs. He knew how to navigate the rivers with canoes. But he had no horses. In 1905 Inspector Howard, commanding the Macpherson district, made a visit to Herschell. His note about the conditions of travel is interesting: "There is no shelter in this distance"—meaning from Macpherson to Herschell—"and those going must sleep in the snow every night. It is fairly sheltered in the mouth of the river to the island along the Arctic coast is a very cold and bleak one."

Such was the trail to which Fitzgerald was used before he hit that old familiar one from Macpherson back to Dawson and civilization in the winter of this year. In summer he had made it in the kayak, which is a light skin and wood craft fifteen feet long, carrying a man and a racing shell, capable of holding one man with a double paddle, the most precarious and the first seagoing craft in the world. But the kayak in summer was easier than the dog trail in winter.

Breaking the trail and enforcing the law in the remote North is the last act in the short, splendid drama of the mounted police. In 1874 the first post was established at Fort Walsh, in what is now southern Alberta, to deal with whisky smugglers and horse thieves and bad Indians. Between 1880 and 1885 the second act came in when the police had to keep order among striking navies, restless foreigners and rampaging Redskins, along the construction lines of the C. P. R. This was the construction camp era. The third act was the Rebellion of 1885, when the police were the first on the ground, dealing with the half-breeds and the Indians, and the troops could be got to the Saskatchewan valley from the East. Thirty of these men were camped at Fort Pitt, remote from all troops, and held in by the ice. The fourth act was the incoming of settlers after the war, when the police had to deal with the Indians, the horse thieves, and the omnipresent whisky smuggler. The fifth act was ushered in by the rush to the Yukon, when the force was divided into two, a third of the men being sent to the gold camps of the Yukon. In 1898 the Yukon police had 6,012 dogs and 1,012 carrying the mails. From this came directly the subdivision of the unpoliced area between Athabasca Landing and Herschell Island, with one divisional point at Dawson, controlling the trails east and north through the gold fields, and to Port Macpherson, to Herschell Island; one at White Horse; one at Lesser Slave Lake, with the interior as far west as the Rockies under control; a third along Hudson's Bay, where, under Inspector Moodie, tragedies like this on the Peel have been narrowly averted.

The history of the North West Mounted Police is the history of settlement in the great West, and of the movements into the North. In the thirty-nine years since the first band of the "riders of the plains" went across country to the site of Fort Walsh, to the day that Inspector Fitzgerald and his three men rode the trail from Dawson to Macpherson to the day that the great population movements in the West have been traced. Tragedies like that on the Peel have been remarkably rare. The efficiency of the greatest police force in the world in the face of such desperate odds of population, distance, and climate has always been a marvel. The tragedy of the Peel will bring home to the minds of comfortable Canadians, both in the East and the West, the immense debt which is due to the civilization in Canada owes to the men who went on patrol, broncho or police van, dogteam or kayak, raft or on foot to keep the law, to be magistrates and detectives, mail carriers and road-breakers in the name of the king.

And if Inspector Fitzgerald with his three men, Constables Kinney, Taylor and Carter, had not starved after the dog meat gave out on the Peel River they would have been outposts representatives of the R. N. W. M. P. at the coronation of King George in the seat of Empire.

HONEY IN CHOCOLATE

French manufacturers have been trying the experiment of incorporating a small quantity of honey in chocolate to improve its flavor and its digestive qualities. As this was labeled "honey chocolate," the pure food authorities immediately prosecuted the maker for not using pure honey and suppressing

the sugar altogether. He pleaded that he had not asserted the absence of sugar, and that, in fact, it was impossible to prepare chocolate without its use. There being no data, the court ordered experiments to be made and some new and interesting facts were brought out, which are described in La Nature (Paris, February 18), where we read:

"An official test was made at the factory. The necessary quantity of cacao was placed in two grinders. To the mass of ground cacao was then added sugar in the usual proportions. The whole was intimately mixed, until finally the compound had a pasty consistency and a very homogeneous appearance."

A preliminary addition of about a pound of honey was then made. Almost at once the mass of chocolate changed its aspect; it grew hard, solidified, and required grinding again to bring it to its original consistency. New additions of honey were made, and the hardening of the paste took place with each, but with increased intensity. Every time it was necessary to keep on longer with the regrinding to obtain the necessary fluidity. At the same time the operation became more and more difficult, so that the mill was some times completely choked, showing how hard and compact were the agglomerated masses of chocolate.

In short, when the proportion of honey added to the chocolate reaches 8 per cent., the work of the mill becomes completely impossible, and the chocolate made in this way did not look at all like the commercial variety and was not of an appetizing appearance; it was lumpy, soft, and could neither be made into tablets nor given any definite form. Besides, the taste of the honey was too marked for the chocolate, and the chocolate must be flavored this should be done with discretion, so that its own taste may not be concealed.

These official tests, which were made in the presence of chemical experts, are very interesting, and there was no way of forecasting the impossibility of incorporating honey with chocolate beyond a certain proportion. There were absolutely no data on the subject, which explains the surprise of the pure food officials. The authorities will hereafter consider honey added to chocolate as a flavor and not as a substitute for sugar."

OLD WOOD STRONGER THAN NEW

Almost any one would say, at first thought, that new wood is always stronger than old. It has been so, however, in the case of a certain kind of wood.

P. Buchanan and reported by him in Engineering News, published in New York that sound timber a quarter of a century old is materially stronger than new stock. This applies only to white pine, since that was the wood which Mr. Buchanan was experimenting with. In commenting on the results, says that there is no reason to suppose that oak, hard pine, or any other wood commonly used in building would behave differently. It is fairly to conclude, he goes on to say, that all wood made by the strength of decay weakens it or fire and mechanical abrasion destroy it. We read:

"It may be said that engineers are already using wood for permanent service where it is kept under such conditions that it is not liable to decay. It is literally a foundation fact in engineering. For use in superstructures, however, engineers are prone to look upon wood as a perishable and temporary material."

"Admittedly wood above water is subject to decay by fire and decay, but if these two enemies are kept away it is difficult to set a limit to the useful life of wood. Mr. Buchanan's tests were of wood only twenty-five years old, but there are plenty of wood truss bridges all through the East whose structures have been protected from the weather, and which have been carrying traffic for 50 to 100 years. The bridge over the Hudson at Waterford, N.Y., which burned down last year, was recalled; that structure was in service about 105 years. Many European travelers will recall the great wooden bridges and other wooden structures abroad of much greater age. In fact, were it not for the increasing cost and scarcity of good timber, there is reason to believe that many country highway bridges of moderate span and light loads would be actually better permanent structures, having longer life and involving smaller cost for maintenance during their life, if built of wood than if built of steel."

"Although wood is the oldest his torically of our constructive materials, yet the question of change of strength with age has never before been studied."

ISLAM IN LONDON

One is driven to a sudden recollection of the importance of the Mahometan population of the Empire by the proposal to spend \$500,000 upon a mosque for London.

The Mahometan population in London is fluctuating, amounting probably at any one time to from 1,500 to 2,000 persons. The large majority of these are Indian or Egyptian students attending the London University or reading for the Bar. The Mahometan merchants also form a fairly large class—Indian, Turkish, Persian, and Moors from Tangiers. These merchants, a respected and well-to-do class, are nearly all engaged in the Levantine trade. There are also some British Indians from the Transvaal. The students stay in London for two or three years only, and it is for them that a mosque would be especially useful.

The site has not been chosen, but it will be near the centre of London life. As in the case of Westminster Cathedral, the building will follow modern models, just as the Catholic authorities followed Italian tradition. That is to say, it will be adapted to our climate, but will not conform to Western ideas. The movement has aroused great interest among the Mahometans in all parts of the world. Promises of help have come from India, Egypt, Persia, Turkey, Cyprus, Ceylon and elsewhere. The Sultan has spontaneously sent a donation. It is felt that London should not fall behind St. Petersburg, where a large mosque was opened two years ago by the Tsar himself. And there

Wise mothers who know the virtues of Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator always have it at hand, because it proves its value.

are only 15,000,000 Mahometans in Russia, against 100,000,000 in the British Empire. The necessity of holding even the chief yearly festivals in hotels is a proceeding which tends to make the Moslems look ridiculous in the eyes of the public. The new mosque will provide a place of worship and devotion for all the sects of Islam, in the same way that the mosque at Mecca belongs to the whole of the Mahometan world. But there is no intention of promoting what is commonly called Pan-Islamism. The object is to draw closer the bonds of sympathy and the ties which bind the Mahometans of India to the British Empire, not to work in antagonism to British feeling.

The British attitude in the matter is twofold. Each Islamite is a potential convert to Christianity. On the other hand, every free Mahometan citizen is a friend, whose amity will help to maintain the mutual respect and understanding upon which the Empire is based. This unity of conception is apparent from the names of those forming the committee: Ameer Ali, the Turkish Minister, the Sheikh al-Islam, Moham median representatives, Lords Amphill, Curzon and Lamington. Nor will the building fund be devoted solely to a place of worship, but there will be a reading-room and a library of devotion al literature. This is but another sign of reciprocity in ideas, politically emphasized of late in the reforms of the young Turkish party. It emphasizes, too, the vitality of national feeling.

STATESMEN'S AMAZING MIS-TAKES

Cabinet Ministers Who Could Not Pass the Sixth Standard

Classes in elementary subjects for Cabinet Ministers? This was one of the pet ideas of that humorous giant of the law, Sir Frank Lockwood, and the cartoons with which he illustrated it doubled up many a grave legislator with laughter. One of the most amusing of them was a picture of Lord Randolph Churchill in Eton jacket and with knitted brows adding two and two was a state and making the total five, while Mr. Arthur Balfour in cap and gown stood over him with a threatening cane.

Never in the history of Parliaments was a Finance Minister so hopelessly ignorant of figures as Randolph Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer. As he once frankly admitted, "I couldn't do a rule of three sum to save my life," adding, with a twinkle in his eyes, "I suppose it is because I lack the sense of proportion." When his secretary once placed before him a formidable array of statistics, material for the Budget, he scanned the phalanx of figures with the air of an approving general and said, "Yes, that is all right; but"—putting a finger on a few of the decimal points—"just tell me, what do these infernal dots mean."

But if Randolph Churchill was weak in decimals and vulgar fractions, he was at least stronger in Scriptural knowledge than some of his fellow legislators. In a debate a few years ago Mr. George Wyndham referred to David and the fifty fighting men he had in a bag. "No David—Daniel," interjected Sir Edward Grey. "I am much obliged to my right honorable friend," continued Mr. Wyndham; "of course, I meant Daniel." As the house roared with laughter and shouts of "Obadiah."

Little later the same evening Sir Edward again aired his Biblical knowledge by speaking of the feeding of the prophets on bread and water, when Sir William Evans Gordon convulsed everybody by suggesting that the prophetic menu consisted of locusts and wild honey.

Certainly a few lessons on the Bible would have been useful to a good many of our statesmen, and it is a pity that Gladstone once committed the atrocity of putting Daniel in the fiery furnace, and made the Psalmist responsible for the words, "God tempts the wind to the storm lamb." John Bright added St. Paul with the well-known aphorism, "Clothing the naked." The whole House of Commons, not all the Bench of Bishops, not even Leviticus himself, could prevent some men from marrying their deceased wife's sister.

When Sir Richard Cross was once talking impressively of lack of rupees, a curious member interrupted him with the question, "How much is a lac of rupees?" Sir Richard hummed and ha'ed, grew red in the face, and ultimately confessed that "he really hadn't the slightest idea." And when Lord Curzon was once asked, during a race on the Indian finances, what "anna" was, all the reply he could vouchsafe was, "The anna, sir, is—an Indian coin of smaller value than a rupee."

But it is in geography that the statesman is most commonly at fault. It is said that Lord Curzon, when Secretary for India, once convulsed the House by referring to "the whole of our great Indian dependency from the Himalayas to Cape Comorant." An other prominent statesman coolly annexed Manitoba to the United States; and, in spite of the laughter and protests of the House, refused to change its geographical position.

On another occasion when Mr. Goschen referred in the course of a speech to the Lucayan Islands and was asked where the Lucayan Islands were, he had to admit that he didn't know. "Perhaps," he added, looking round the House, "some honorable member can enlighten me!" A dead silence fell on the House; members looked hopelessly at one another or at the roof; and it was only when one of them stole away to the library and consulted an atlas that the hall of ignorance was raised and the Lucayan Islands were identified with the better known Bahamas.

Mr. Disraeli once started and amused the House when he was on the eve of the Indian Mutiny—by saying that, to the best of his knowledge, Delhi was on the bank of the Indus, when he was really the 5th Duke of Newcastle, who, when War Secretary, declared that "to be

sure Annapolis must be defended, troops must be sent to Annapolis," and immediately added, "By the way, where is Annapolis?" It was an earlier Duke of Newcastle who once exclaimed to a friend, "Cape Breton an island. Wonderful! Show it me on the map. So it is, sure enough! My dear sir, you always bring me good news. I must go and tell the King that Cape Breton is an island."

Some years ago Sir Edward Grey was sorely puzzled to say how far Tabah is from Suez. "I do not say that it is not 130 miles," he said, in answer to Mr. Lupton; but when the latter, having told him so far, asked, "Is it more than two?" Sir Edward declined to answer; he was frankly out of his ground. Nor was he the first foreign minister to be caught napping. A ticklish question had been reached in the affair which was eventually to lead to the Abyssinian War, when Palmerston marked a despatch to be "returned to M. Plowden, Consul at Massowah, to be written over again in blacker ink." And he innocently added a private minute: "Where exactly is Massowah?"

It was not Palmerston, however, but his under-secretary, who once addressed a letter to "Ottawa, Ontario, United States of America!"

SUFFRAGETTES FIGHTING THE CENSUS

If a woman cannot vote, she should refuse to be counted as one of the population, was the logic of the British suffragettes at the recent enumeration of Britain's inhabitants. So several hundred of them spent the night in a skating rink, listening to speeches from their sisters encouraging them in the great work of throwing off the yoke. It would be easy for the census authorities to enumerate the number thus gathered and add them to the census figures, if desired, but the women upheld their principle. This principle was expressed in their organ, Votes for Women (London), in the issue just before the census, which printed on its front page a facsimile of the census blank, with this written across the face of it, in place of the usual information:

NO VOTE, NO CENSUS. If I am intelligent enough to fill in this census form, I can surely make a x on a ballot paper.

JANE SMITH. Their theory appears to be that the census is a list of citizens and citizens have electoral rights. Queen Victoria was once included in the French census when she was staying in the south of France, but she never claimed the right to vote there, and King Edward was similarly enumerated when stopping in Paris, but remained content with his home privileges.

Mr. G. R. Chesterton, writing in The Illustrated London News, tells the suffragettes that it would be more patriotic to increase the census than to decrease it, and goes on to say: "Somehow, I think the suffragettes are unlucky in their particular shape which they protest assume. It always seemed to me that, quite apart from morals and manners, the punching of policemen was bad tactics from a military point of view. The tactics were bad because they were not forceful, and they used the natural weapons of a woman putting up her fists at a man and only posture in which she does not frighten him. Every other attitude or gesture, every turn of head or hand, is capable at times of shaking him like a dynamite explosion. He is afraid of a woman's tongue, and still more of her silence. He is afraid of her endurance, and still more of her collapse. He is afraid of her sanity and her insanity, of her laughter and her tears. The only part of her he is not afraid of is her detestable muscle."

Of the coincidence specifically referred to, this epigrammatic writer remarks: "There seems to be the same ineptness about the selection of the census as a weapon of protest. It is the sort of thing that annoys men, but does not annoy them through. The man in the street is not so tenderly attached to statistics, not so fiercely enthusiastic in the cause of scientific truth that he very much minds a few ladies being left out of the list of the population, and mild annoyance is a very dangerous condition for innuendo to induce. He merely thinks it a silly sort of thing to do, and wonders why they do it. I, for one, cannot conceive what positive effect it can have, beyond, perhaps, providing the lowest music-halls and comic clubs with some silly and vulgar joke about ladies concealing their age."

The ladies have mistaken the census for a voting list, he says, whereas it is merely a record of the increase or decrease of the number of human beings. "The census is not a roll of glory on which the rulers of England are not anxious to be recorded. The man in the street is not so tenderly attached to statistics, not so fiercely enthusiastic in the cause of scientific truth that he very much minds a few ladies being left out of the list of the population, and mild annoyance is a very dangerous condition for innuendo to induce. He merely thinks it a silly sort of thing to do, and wonders why they do it. I, for one, cannot conceive what positive effect it can have, beyond, perhaps, providing the lowest music-halls and comic clubs with some silly and vulgar joke about ladies concealing their age."

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had," I replied, and she murmured: "He was a good man." Who can tell how Alexis Saberevski could have foreseen this meeting of the ways between Zara and me? What was it that directed his prophetic vision across the mystery of many months, to discover us two, standing side by side, when we pursued his letter? What was it that told him that we would love and wed?

Many years have passed since that night on the steamship's deck, and we have never seen or heard from Saberevski since.

He was a mystery to me when I knew him, and he remains a mystery still. But the greatest mystery of all is love.

(THE END)

Shiloh's Cure

THEY INTEREST AND AMUSE THE WHOLE FAMILY

The Mystic Fortune Teller

The Mystic Dream Book

"Toasts and Ballads"

The Maple Leaf Reciter

Robinson's Book of Modern Conundrums

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