

the feet of Wayne and Andrews and the packers behind, and with one accord they moved on along the path that led to the closed gate of the post.

Eighteen feet in the air Thompson's quizzical Welsh face peered down at them over the top of the palisades.

"By St. John, Carlisle!" he greeted. "Art here, then? Had word of 'ee. Hast come in peace or in war?"

"In peace, Davvy, old friend," laughed Carlisle. "There's no need to trouble you. Open the gate."

"Ha! Is good news," grinned Davvy. "Wouldst not want tuh slaying of all with my own hands. Am all alone here."

Joan, Carlisle, and the rest burst into hearty laughter as Thompson's head disappeared from the palisades to reappear a moment later in the open entrance.

"That was a bold front you put on for a solitary man, Davvy," chaffed Carlisle, shaking his hand prodigiously. "I wondered why Port Charlotte and the Portage were deserted."

"Word of thy doings came down tuh waterways," Thompson explained, "and not a man wouldst stay. The Eastern partners wouldst not come past tuh Kaministiquia, and tuh Indians and tuh Montreal paddlers here took to tuh bush."

"They don't need to be alarmed," Carlisle assured him. "All we want is a peaceful passage. You see, Davvy, the Hudson's Bay