

Company, even to the extent of defending their property with my life.

I sailed to Montreal, and presenting my credentials there, was soon informed that my services would be required at a post in the far north, in charge of one John McIvor. There was also entrusted to my care a pair of fowls, Plymouth Rocks, with the request that I would deliver them safely into the hands of Mr. McIvor. I mention this fact, seeing that these fowls played an important part in the events which I am about to relate.

On my arrival at my destination, after sleeping about forty nights under canvas, I was glad of the comfort which reigned at Fort Trial, due chiefly to the domestic energy of Mrs. McIvor, a bright, pleasant little woman, who seemed out of place in the heart of this "great lone land."

Mr. McIvor was Scotch, as his name would imply, a rough and ready man, with a heart of steel, but which on occasion could be as soft as a woman's. After reading the dispatches which I handed him, he said :

"Weel, young mon, I dinna see what the likes o' you can do in a country like this. Had na ye better gae back before it is too late?"

"I won't go back, sir, unless you send me back," I answered.

"Ah, weel, boy, stay where you are. It's no always the coarsest twine that stands the biggest strain."

So I entered into my duties without another discouraging word from Mr. McIvor, who, though a perfect martinet in the matter of duty, was kindness itself in the privacy of his own house. There were two other clerks beside myself, who stayed there only during the summer ; but who in the fall took charge of small trading establishments, outposts as they are called, returning to Fort Trial after the winter's hunt was over.

Like most young Englishmen, I had formed my ideas of Indians on a Fenimore Cooper basis, but the noble red man fell far short of my ideal. Mr. McIvor had the most supreme contempt for them, a contempt which he never tried to hide. He used to say :

"They are cowards, arrant cowards, and are afraid o' you, e'en like a dog."

It was not long after my arrival that I had a sort of adventure which gave great sport to the other clerks, and even Mr. McIvor himself would occasionally make joking allusions to it.

There was a river running about one hundred yards from the store ; it was deep and fairly swift. One day as I was working in the store, I heard a scream which appeared to come from the river. I ran out and down to the bank, from where I saw an old woman struggling in the water ; she had been fishing and her canoe had upset. There were about a dozen Indians looking on, but they only laughed and made not the slightest movement towards helping her. Indians, as a rule, are cruel to the old. They look upon them as incumbrances, from which they are