

animal he mentioned was apparently fairly intelligent, but he lacked, to my mind, the thinking powers of a couple I once knew.

"The winter before last I made a pretty tidy stake cutting cordwood near Prince Albert. On getting to town in the spring almost the first man I ran into was Tim O'Gorman, an old pal of mine. After the usual drinks, we got to giving our histories from the time we had parted to date. He told me he had bought something like a couple of hundred acres of land, about fifty miles from Saskatoon, and that he was driving out to his property in a few days' time.

"The winter's hard work had told on my delicate constitution. I felt sure that if I consulted a medical man he'd order me to take a long rest as the only means of preventing a general break up of my health. Naturally, I didn't care to present a doctor with some of my hard-earned dollars just to be told what I knew already.

"When I got a favourable opportunity, therefore, I asked O'Gorman if he'd let me batch it with him during the summer. He said he'd be glad to do so, but he happened to be hard up just then. Finally, it was settled. I was to buy the chuck, and he'd provide the shelter.

"On the day following we took train to Saskatoon. We there bought our supplies and, of course, also endeavoured to satisfy a winter's thirst, and at the same time make up for a summer during which we'd have to exist, for the most part, on nothing better than water, tea and coffee. But this has nothing to do with my story.

"It took us two days to get to O'Gorman's place. For a couple of weeks we were busy putting up a shack for ourselves, and one for the team. I should have said that, besides the horses, O'Gorman brought with him a couple of dogs. What breed they belonged to I can't say. I'd call them mongrels, and ugly ones at that. My pal had bought them, with the team and wagon, from an old Indian.

"The summer went quietly by. I felt my health returning, but, all the same, I dreaded to think of the return

to work in the winter, fearing a relapse. Everything comes to an end, however, sooner or later, and about the middle of October I found myself starting on the return to Saskatoon, accompanied by O'Gorman and his dogs.

"We had driven about ten miles when at the same moment, we both looked back. All across the western horizon stretched a line of fire. The wind was high, and we were at least thirty miles from shelter. There was only one thing to do: burn a fire guard without delay. We hastily jumped from the wagon, and then my pal, after feeling in his pockets, asked me for some of my matches. Now, as you know, I don't smoke. It wasn't to be surprised at, therefore, that I hadn't any on me. Again O'Gorman ransacked his clothes, with a like result. We then looked at each other as men do who are about to face something not particularly delightful.

"Now looking at each other wasn't going to help any. We had to get busy and do something to protect ourselves from that prairie fire, and quick too, for, with the wind blowing good and steady from the west, the head flame would be along in less than no time.

"Well, fellows, we unhitched the horses in double quick time, after turning the wagon due north and south. We then piled blankets, oatsacks, etc., in the space left open beneath the box. This, we hoped, would protect us some, anyway.

"I had hurriedly tied the horses to one of the wagon wheels to keep them from saying 'good-bye' to us, though, to tell you the truth, they had not once shown the usual signs of terror at the approach of the fire. I must have made a pretty poor knot, for, on looking round, after the completion of our barricade, we found both horses loose. Our first surprise was capped by a second. Instead of starting off madly towards the east, they had gone to the west side of the wagon, and some ten yards from it. Their actions dumfounded us. They were munching the grass around as if they'd not had a bite to eat for at least three years and a half. We were both too astonished to even breathe. We stood