

trade might now again be secured by rebuilding the Mountain Fort.

Mr. Hardisty and Messrs. Macauley and MacDonald returned with us to spend the holidays at Victoria, father having promised to go to the Mountain Fort directly after New Year's Day, for the two-fold purpose of meeting the Mountain Stonies, who were expected there then, and also of marrying Mr. Macauley to Miss Brazeau, the daughter of the second officer in charge of the fort.

On our return trip to Victoria, in company with the Hudson's Bay officers, we did not camp, but leaving Edmonton in the evening we journeyed all night, reaching Victoria early next morning. As I had father in my cariole, and the rest of the party were comparatively light, the run of between ninety and a hundred miles was a hard one for my team. But old Draffan and his driver did not come in last by any means.

Readers of "Forest, Lake, and Prairie" will remember that in the autumn of 1862 Gladstone and I began this place. In loneliness sublime our leather lodge stood on the north bank of the big Saskatchewan. Little more than three years have passed, and this is now the rendezvous of several large camps of Indians, Wood and Plain Crees and Wood Stonies have frequented the spot. A colony of some twenty-five families of English half-breeds have settled beside us. The Hudson's Bay Company have established a post alongside the Mission. The Mission party has been augmented by the arrival of father and mother, and part of the family from Norway House, and of my brother and sister from Ontario. I have taken unto me a wife, and we are no more alone at Victoria.

The holidays of 1865-6 were full of pleasurable excitement. Religious services and literary entertainments and concerts occupied the evenings, and outdoor games, such as football, snowshoe and dog-train races and foot races, were provided for the day. Thus the fun and enjoyment were kept up. Then came watch-night with its solemnity and New Year's Day as the culmination of our feasting and innocent frolic.

The second day of January, 1866, found us driving our dog-teams westward for the Mountain House. Again I had father and the cariole as far as Edmonton, and from that point we had the Chief Factor of the Saskatchewan District, William Christie, Esq., as one of our company.

The distance between Edmonton and the Mountain House is 180 miles. We left the fort about four o'clock one dark morning, our train comprising in all nine sleds. I had a load of baggage, a portion of which gave me quite a start. As I jumped on the load while going down a gentle slope, there seemed to be a living, moving object lashed in my load, for it moved under my moccasined feet. Instantly I sprang into the snow, and then it flashed upon me that it was a bag of mashed potatoes which a friend was sending to the Mountain House and which had not yet frozen. I laughed at my scare, but at five o'clock on a dark, stormy morning in a

narrow, winding forest path, a very little will startle one. The cold was intense, a keen cutting wind making us keep a sharp lookout for frost-bites. The road was drifted and very heavy, so that when night came on we were glad enough to make camp, which we pitched in a spruce grove at the eastern base of the Woodpecker Hills.

Pile on the logs as we would, still the cold was bound to assert itself, and our clothing alternately steamed and froze as we turned before that fire. The Chief Factor and father, who had been constrained to sit in one position in their coffin-like carioles since five o'clock in the morning, were now making up for it by indulging in lively anecdote and joke and repartee. Pemmican and hot tea went a long way towards heating the internal man, and the great fire did something for our extremities. But the cold was omnipresent. In great chunks, in morsels, in atoms, it was all about us. You could reach out and grasp it. You could shiver in your clothes and feel it. You could almost smell it and see it, and you could hear it plainly enough as with might and force it strained the very earth and made the forest monarchs crack as if these were so many ends to its lash.

Hours before daybreak we were climbing the hills and crossing the ice-bound creeks and lakes, and those of us who had loads or carioles to drive were "running with patience" (at times) "the race set before us." The bridegroom-elect being the shortest-legged of the party, and I doubt not the shortest-winded also, generally brought up the rear. Even if he started out ahead, or in the middle of the procession, before many miles were passed he fell behind. The law of gravitation was doing its work. From the rear at frequent intervals would come the shout to Pat (his leading dog), "Marse!" uttered with a strong Scotch accent.

Pat was a big, white dog with a short bob-tail. He also had a peculiar twist of the head and a squint of the eye which gave him a wise, knowing appearance. If he had lived in these latter days, and become possessed of eye-glasses, doubtless he would have been given a degree! The shrewd fellow seemed to know that his master was on an important mission, and the dignity of leading a train the owner and driver of which was on his way to be married, was fully apparent to "His Dogness." His demeanor *en route* and around camp was simply taking. Pat and his master gave us endless fun on that trip. When these would come up, which was generally after camp was made, the Chief Factor, the Chairman of the Hudson's Bay Missions, and the rest of our party became all attention, and Pat and his master were the centre of joke and fun. Their account of the morning's or afternoon's run (I say *their*, for Pat would by nod and look confirm his master's recital) was sure to "bring the house down." We were unanimously thankful during the days and nights of that very cold trip for the stimulating presence of Pat and our short-limbed bridegroom-elect.