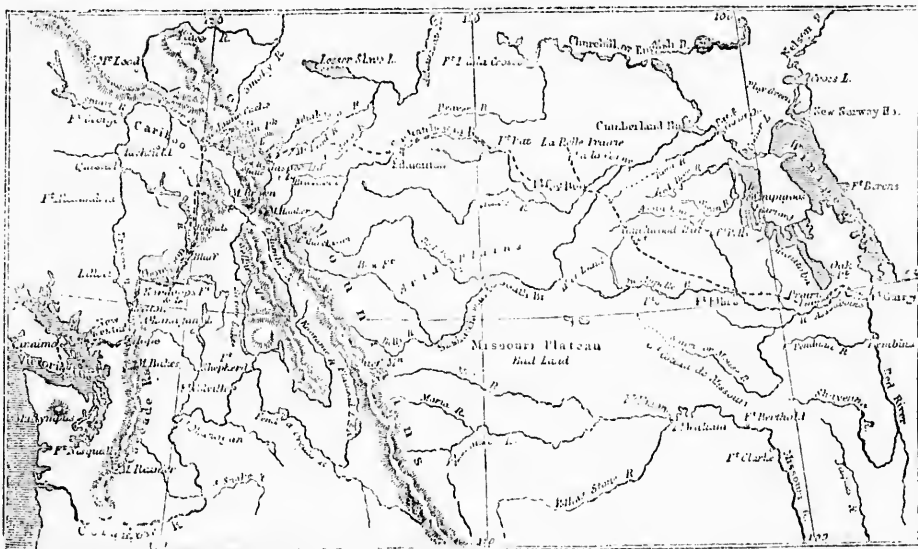


On the 3rd of June we left Edmonton, with a train of twelve horses, six of them packed with our baggage, pemmican, and flour. The only luxuries we took with us were tea, salt, and tobacco. Our party was, perhaps, as curious a collection as ever set out on an expedition as difficult, and even dangerous, as this was likely to prove. In addition to ourselves (two) were five others—viz., Baptiste Supornat, a French half-breed, who professed to know the country as far as Tête Jaune's Cache, whom we had engaged as head man and guide; another half-breed, commonly called "The Assiniboine," a man with only one hand, and a murderer—this last peculiarity we did not, however, know of at the time; his wife and son, the latter a boy of thirteen. We had been very, very unwilling to take the woman and boy, but "The Assiniboine" refused to accompany us on any other condition; and as we

bears; unable to sleep at night for fear the horses should trample on him, or Indians or wild beasts attack the camp. Afraid to touch a horse, and unable to handle an axe, his sole employment consisted in bewailing the hardships of his position and prophesying greater evils for the future, comforting himself by the perusal of Paley's "Evidences of Christianity," which he failed not to study diligently three times every day of the three months our journey lasted. From Lake St. Ann's, fifty miles beyond Edmonton, to Jasper House, at the foot of the mountains, the forest is almost unbroken. The surface of the country is slightly undulating, and vast pine swamps fill up the shallow valleys. A day's journey in this region consists of floundering through bogs and swamps, and constant scrambling and plunging over the fallen timber, which lies strewn, crossed and interlaced,



were exceedingly anxious to secure the services of so accomplished a hunter and *voyageur*, we at length consented. There is little doubt that this eventually proved our salvation, and that "The Assiniboine" would have followed the example of Baptiste, who deserted, and left us to our fate, had he not been hampered with his family, and thus compelled to follow the provisions and our fortunes. And lastly, Mr. O'B—, a gentleman of considerable classical attainment, but of a marvellous timidity and helplessness; throughout the journey unhappy during the day from a continual fear of losing the way, or being devoured by grisly

to reach in six days. But they had miscalculated the distance; the way lay through dense, encumbered forests, and the snows of winter set in before they arrived, almost dead, after twenty-one days' travelling. The Indians were sent out to seek those left behind, but returned unsuccessful, owing to the amount of snow which had fallen. Their remains were discovered in the spring, and there appears little doubt that one of these unfortunate men, maddened by hunger, had killed and eaten his two companions.

across the path and on every side. Having forded the Pembina River, we reached the McLeod on the 16th of June. Here our guide Baptiste deserted, carrying off with him our best horse and our only large axe. We, however, determined to proceed, and although "The Assiniboine" had never before set foot in this region, we trusted to his wonderful sagacity to find the road. Shortly afterwards we had a somewhat narrow escape of losing all our property, if not our lives. We had made a large fire for the benefit of the horses, while resting in the middle of the day, the smoke affording them some protection against the swarms of gad-flies and mosquitoes which tormented them. In struggling to supplant one another in the most favourable positions, they kicked some of the burning brands amongst the thickly-set pines, in the middle of which we were encamped, and in a moment the woods were on fire. By the greatest exertions we succeeded in preventing it from surrounding us.