

building very much warmer. The interstices between the logs were filled up with mud, mixed with chopped grass, to give it tenacity. . . . The parchment windows of our little hut were so small and opaque that we could hardly see even to eat by their light alone, and were generally obliged to have the door open ; and thus, although the room was very small, and the fire-place very large, a crust of ice formed over the tea in our tin cups, as we sat within a yard of the roaring fire. One effect of the cold was to give a most ravenous appetite for fat. Many a time have we eaten great lumps of hard grease—rancid tallow, used for making candles, without bread, or anything to modify it."

The journey (about 800 miles was still to be accomplished) was recommenced in April, but the final preparations for crossing the mountains were not made till June, at Fort Edmonton. There several pack horses were obtained, and the services of a half-breed hunter, rejoicing in the name of Assiniboine, were secured, the only drawback to the efficiencies of the latter being that he was one-handed, and insisted on taking his wife and son with him. An unexpected addition was also made to the party in the person of an ex-schoolmaster and graduate of Cambridge, who, on the breaking out of the American war, had fled from the Southern States, to escape the anticipated honour of being elected a "Captain of the Home Guard," and who pleaded hard to be allowed the advantage of an escort to British Columbia. We do not wonder that the reviewers of the North-West Passage have been unanimous in regarding Mr O. B. as a mythic personage ; and whilst, therefore, accepting the statement of the authors, in their preface to a late edition, that he is *not* a fictitious character, but a real actor in the story, portrayed as faithfully and truly as it lay in their power to depict him, we can only express a regret that some enterprising publisher has not secured the individual, for the sake of making known his history, which, if put forth, say under the title of the "Gentleman in Black," would most effectually and for ever eclipse its only possible rival in the way of biography, "The Woman in White."

From Fort Edmonton the only available track was that of a party of Canadian emigrants, who had gone on the same route the preceding year, but of whom nothing had since been heard. The following extract will give some idea of the nature of the travelling from this point :—

"The huge trunks which barred the path rendered our progress very laborious. The pack horses wearied us by breaking away into the forest, rather than leap over the obstructions in the way, and from morning to night we were incessantly running after them to drive them back. Then they rushed about in every direction but the right one, crashing and tumbling amongst the timber, and often involving themselves in some serious embarrassment. Jamming their packs between adjacent trees, trying to pass under an inclining trunk, too low to admit the saddle, or jumping into collections of timber, where their legs became hopelessly entangled. . . . The trail had been made by the Canadians when the river was low, and was now frequently lost in deep water. At these points we were obliged to cut a new line for ourselves along steep, timber-strewn hill-sides. The forest was as dense as ever, and the trees of the largest 'Muskegs' occupied the hollows