

packet box upon the toboggan, lashed it with the tail lines, and stood waiting for the start. As he waited, Margaret ran out to him, where the wind buffeted him and the snow swirled round his aged figure.

"You mustn't stand in the yard, father," she cried, with solicitation. "You'll get cold in this storm."

"Aye, lass," he answered, "but I like tae see the mail go, an' I want to speak a word to Mikel, too."

"Mikel's going with it?"

"Aye, His Majesty's mail is valuable, ye ken. Mikel's goin' to guard it."

"Guard!" exclaimed Margaret. "Is there danger?"

"Whoosh! Whoosh! Who mentioned danger? But the packet maun be guarded just the same. You musna go imaginin' things, lass. Better turn into the hoose yoursel'. Here they are goin' to start!"

SILVER STREAM had taken his position in front of the train. Polleaux Pangué remained in the rear to drive, while Private Rochaine hurried out of the post to trail behind and cover the march.

It had required but a few minutes for the French-Canadian to equip and arm himself for the journey. "Good-bye, Mikel, an' watch it well, ye ken," was the factor's warning.

"Oui," replied Mikel. "In de King's name I tak' her through. Au revoir, Margaret." He extended a big, mittened hand as he passed her.

Margaret clung to the hand a little, for Rochaine was to her the idol of the post.

"Au revoir, Mikel," she whispered. "Come back soon and sing those Ottawa songs for me. And be careful of yourself as well as of the packet!"

"Marche!"

Polleaux Pangué's sharp command to the dogs rang loud, and the train swung along the lake shore, making for the source of the Slave River, where it left Lake Athabasca northwest of Chippewyan. At the mouth of the Slave was a Chippewyan village under Chief Kasba, and the packeteer hoped to make it by night. There they would have more shelter than a bivouac in the open offered. The going was very heavy, and they had to bore through the wind to gain any ground. Silver Stream's supple form bent double in the lead. Running low to the trail, the dogs strained after him. Over the loping huskies Polleaux Pangué continually plied his whip, and Private Rochaine in the rear found it necessary to stretch his snowshoe strides. The bells on the team tinkled but faintly, for the rush of the wind smothered the sound. That tinkle, the pistol-like report of Polleaux's whip, and the grating swish of the snowshoes, were the only sounds to break the great white stillness. Fort Chippewyan was lost

in the smother behind. Ahead was only the blur of the blizzard. Yet the outfit held unerringly to its course. Silver Stream was familiar with the topography of the whole Northland. He had broken trail for trains from Fort McMurray in the south to Fort Macpherson in the north, and from Fort Laird in the west to Fort Churchill in the east. And in this knowledge of the country Polleaux Pangué and Mikel Rochaine were not far behind him. They seemed to journey mechanically, husbanding their words and their powers, and taking no thought of direction. An hour passed, and the short, sub-Arctic afternoon was failing before the silence was broken. Then it was Rochaine who spoke.

"Somebody's been travellin' dis trail," he observed to Pangué. He drew up beside the half-breed and pointed at the snow-impressions which the toboggan was over-riding. Two tracks where men on snowshoes had broken the way showed faintly, all but drifted in. The third track was Silver Stream's.

The half-breed stooped down a second and examined the impressions of the shoes.

"Chippewyans?" Rochaine asked.

"No, white mans," answered Polleaux.

"Dat's fonny t'ing," commented Mikel. "I see no-body leave de Fort."

THEY rushed on in silence. Silver Stream's work was easier, what of the tracks they had struck.

The loose stuff had been packed somewhat by the two men who had travelled before, and with the trick of the skilled northern tripper he felt for the hard pads where they were invisible. Soon they swung by a series of shore bluffs timbered with spruce. Here they had some cover, for the snow failed to lift and drive as on the open lake, although the spruce trees on top of the bluffs shook down avalanches from their branches as the wild wind rocked them. For a quarter of a mile they journeyed thus, with something of ease, and then the dogs began to whine insistently. Rochaine looked about on all sides to find the reason of their strange behaviour. The lowering storm cast a semi-darkness amid the spruce thickets, and although there was an hour or two of daylight left, the heaviness of the atmosphere made it almost as gloomy as if twilight had fallen. There was nothing to be discerned, however, among the green-fringed aisles and black boles on the bluffs. Mikel ordered Polleaux Pangué to push his team a little faster. Still, the speed did not make any difference. The huskies continued their uneasy growling, and the crinkling of the hair on their necks was caused by something other than the breath of the blizzard.

"I'm t'ink dey smell de wolf," Rochaine observed at last to the half-breed.

Polleaux gazed at the neighbouring forest with anxiety.

"I believe you speak the truth," he answered, reverting to the eloquence of the Cree dialect. "But where are the voices of the grey devils? If they are near, why do their howls not ring in our ears?"

"Mebbe dey still-hunt us. Most men say de wolf nevaire goes for still-hunt, but I'm see dem often sneak on de caribou an' not give wan yowl till dey spring."

"Ae," agreed Pangué, "so have I seen it, too, in the Yellow Knife country. These white prophets of the game lands speak of what they know not."

The team swung on faster than ever under the menace of the half-breed's whip. Rochaine kept keen watch for the long-limbed prowlers. He worked the lever of his Winchester to assure himself that the frost had not interfered with the action and fed a fresh cartridge into the chamber. He knew that it would be a bold thing for wolves to attack three strong men en route. Also he knew it was the popular belief in the south that wolves would never do such a thing. But he knew men, voracious Northmen, who had seen the thing done before now. Driven mad by hunger, the wolf loses all its cowardice, and the blizzard of the past week and the heavy storms of the past month had scattered all game out of reach.

SO Mikel was dubious as the packet pushed on. The uneasiness of the dogs was more and more manifest. At times they would huddle back in the traces and almost come to a stop till Polleaux Pangué reached them with his whip and sent them ahead with their snarling lope. Then on the back-trail sounded the throaty wail for which Rochaine listened, the vibrant, echo-ended challenge of timber wolves.

"Go fast!" he ordered Polleaux. "Go tam fast!"

The long whip cracked viciously. The whine of the toboggan on the crust grew to a sharp tune as the huskies broke into a swift gallop. They gained on the Chippewyan trail-breaker and sped at his heels. Silver Stream looked over his shoulder.

"Strong men you, and swift, running with the wings of the wind," he observed, a grin wrinkling his leathery face.

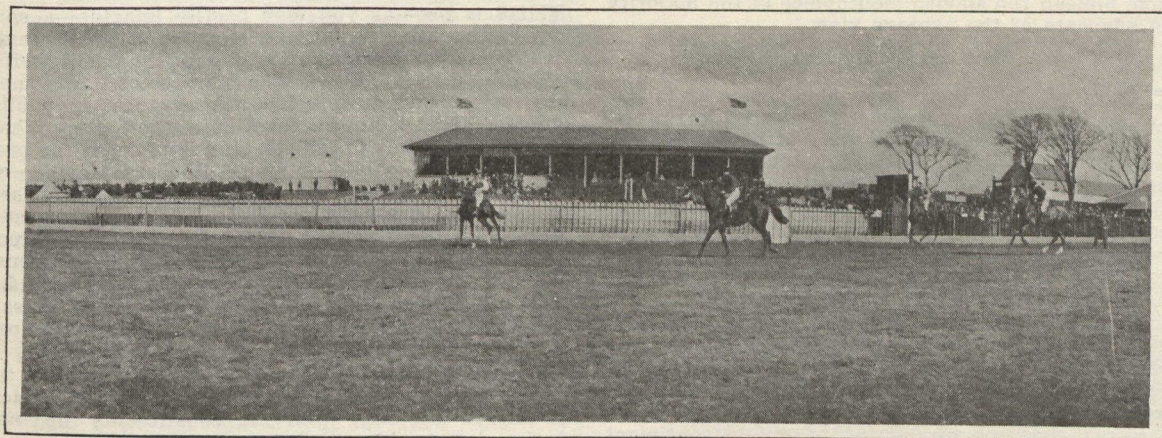
"Need to be dat," growled Rochaine. "De wolf's on de hunt." A wave of his hand indicated the direction of the danger.

Silver Stream's grin died suddenly. He twisted his head sidewise, ear to the wind, and the howling carried up distinctly.

"You hear?" asked Mikel. "Dey're gettin' closer."

A guttural oath was the Chippewyan's response. He bent low on the track, running at full speed, and

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Eglington Park Racecourse, Scotland, the scene of one of Lord Minto's many equestrian triumphs. Here, in 1875, he won the Scottish grand national steeplechase on "Daybreak."

## Mr. Rolly, the Gentleman Jockey

### Racing Reminiscences of the Late Lord Minto, alias Mr. Rolly

By J. R. WATT

LORD MINTO, always known as the only Governor-General we ever had who took more interest in the race meets than even the owners of the horses, became distinguished many years ago in England. He was famous in sporting clubs when a young man as the only man that had ever broken his neck and lived to remember it. That happened when Lord Minto was a plain gentleman jockey. That he was a jockey is probably news to most Canadians, many of whom remember that so far back as 1883 he had a life of oddly adventurous character in this country, that he was always passionately fond of a horse, and that whenever, on King's Plate days, he appeared on a racetrack as Governor-General, every jockey that had the latest inside tip on his own profession knew that one of the world's most expert horsemen was on the grandstand.

Lord Minto had probably a much more varied and adventurous career than any other Governor-General of Canada; as soldier, war correspondent, military

attache, diplomat and state man—and as gentleman jockey, first as Lord Melgund, which title he renewed when he was aide-de-camp to General Middleton on the prairies; afterwards as the mysterious "Mr. Rolly."

As a young subaltern of the Scots Guards, and when "having his fling" as a young man his inclination lay towards horses. He took up the role of gentleman rider. For several years from the end of the sixties till the late seventies he was much in demand at most of the meetings in England and Scotland, where events prescribing the carrying of welter-weights and allowances for amateur riders made up a considerable part of the programme.

It has been said by some of the most noted turf scribes that the seventies were the palmiest days of racing in England, and in many respects they may have been, though no doubt a return to the conditions that then obtained would not be welcomed by modern sportsmen. Apart from Epsom there were few meetings of any consequence near London, and

sport of level quality was seen at meetings in every part of England; whereas nowadays most of the best meetings are within a morning's train journey from the Metropolis, and many of the country meetings that once were famous have languished or become extinct. The number of important meetings was limited, and valuable stakes were rare; quite different to modern times, when a \$5,000 race is almost an everyday occurrence. Hence the huge fields of 30 or 40 first-class horses which contested such races as the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire Handicaps in the seventies would not be attracted nowadays when there are so many plums to be picked. In Mr. "Rolly's" day the Champagne Stakes, by the conditions of which the winner had to donate a dozen of champagne to the Race Committee out of a purse of about \$200 was still a typical event on some programmes, and it must often have been hard for owners to make expenses meet. Discomfort was a marked characteristic of those now almost old-time meetings, and there were no comfortable rooms for jockeys with baths as on a modern race-track. The mud-splashed rider had to take his turn at a bucket of water to perform his ablutions. Mismanagement at the small meetings was rife, and generally the country race meetings, while in many ways genuinely "sporty," were often conducted in a way that would not be tolerated nowadays. Sandown Park, opened in 1875, was the first of the modern gate money meetings, but it was only within the past few years, owing to the orders of the Jockey Club, that the meetings as a whole have been equipped in modern fashion. And it was at Sandown that "Mr. Rolly" had a mount at the opening meeting in the Grand International Steeplechase of \$12,000. Later in the year he rode a winner at the second meeting at the same track.

RIDING first of all as Lord Melgund, and then adopting and registering the assumed name of Mr. Rolly, most of the meetings of importance where races for gentlemen jocks were included in the programme saw the late Lord Minto in his sporting silk. One day riding, at one of the old metropolitan meetings; another day in the same week would find him turning up with his kit-bag and whalebone whip at Kelso or Newcastle in the far north, ready to accept any mounts offered him. In 1871 he was in Paris, during the Commune, and came near being shot as a revolutionary, only escaping by one of those hair-breadth chances which sometimes characterize the career of a real jockey. Returning to England—Hey presto—Lord Melgund disappeared, and, Mr. Rolly, with his kit-bag and