

ON TRAIL AND RAPID  
BY DOG-SLED & CANOE



THE LIFE OF BISHOP BOMPAS







A HAZARDOUS VOYAGE.

The river was full of floating ice, the water turbulent, and the craft a crazy collection of logs and boards. For days the undaunted Bishop and his one companion, an Indian, plied the poles, clibbed to the logs; but never giving up, until at length an icy barrier formed across the river, and they were compelled to abandon the raft.



# ON TRAIL AND RAPID BY DOG-SLED & CANOE

THE STORY OF  
BISHOP BOMPAS'S LIFE AMONGST  
THE RED INDIANS AND ESKIMO

TOLD FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY THE  
REV. H. A. CODY, M.A.  
AUTHOR OF "AN APOSTLE OF THE NORTH"

WITH TWENTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

I HAVE been asked to write this narrative of the life of Bishop Bompas for boys and girls. The scenes among which his strenuous course was run—the lands of the Red Indians and Eskimo—have always appealed to the imagination of the young; and the endurance which he showed in his amazing journeys, and the dauntless courage with which he faced innumerable perils for his Master's sake, give to his labours a character of heroism which they will be sure to recognize.

I have been able to add some new matter to that which appeared in "An Apostle of the North." Part of the chapter on "How the Bishop got his Mail" has been taken from an article of mine which appeared in the *Pacific Monthly Magazine* in 1908, and which the publishers have kindly given permission to use.

I am indebted to Miss Agnes C. Laut for extracts from her most interesting book, "Pathfinders of the West."

This work was begun at Whitehorse when the thermometer stood at 60° below zero. It was continued a few weeks later among the roses and orange groves of sunny California, and

## PREFACE

is now completed in far Eastern Canada, at St. John, the grey old loyalist city by the sea.

I hope and trust that it may kindle in the hearts of some of those who read it a longing to follow in the footsteps of Bishop Bompas, and to volunteer, like him, for service in these distant outposts of Christ's Church militant here in earth.

H. A. C.

*Easter, 1910.*

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## AN APOSTLE OF THE NORTH

*(Written by the author of this book, when he first saw Bishop Bompas arrive at Whitehorse, in June, 1904.)*

WE saw him come—there was no loud acclaim :  
 He stood among the crowd, so frail and spare ;  
 His humble garb marked his still humbler mien,  
 Whilst gently waved his scanty, silvery hair.  
 He stood alone, as stands some ancient pine  
 Amidst a stirring land and busy mart,  
 And strove to grasp the new and unknown ways,  
 Which were so strange to his intrepid heart.

But as I gazed upon that trembling form,  
 And marked the lisping words which slowly fell,  
 A vision rose before me, grand and clear,  
 Which thrilled my soul like some sweet vesper bell.  
 I saw a lonely region, cold and drear,  
 I saw the sad wild natives of the North  
 Pass slow before me, Christless, base, forlorn.  
 And as I thus beheld there passed straightforth  
 A lonely man—ay, more than common man—  
 'Twas one of God's great heroes, brave and strong,  
 Who gave up home and friends and comforts all,  
 And for Christ's sake passed forth to conquer wrong ;  
 In lonely wilds, in wigwams foul and drear,  
 Midst sickness, famine, plague, and sore distress,  
 He pressed straight on, true soldier of the Cross,  
 His only aim to comfort and to bless.

## AN APOSTLE OF THE NORTH

And so he stands as stood his Master, Christ ;  
Brave leader he, no matter what the cost ;  
True teacher he, whose every word was love ;  
Good Shepherd of God's children strayed and lost.  
And this we know, when broken lies the bowl,  
The after-glow of his devoted life  
Will lead men on to do and dare for Christ,  
And win for Him through darkness, pain, and strife.

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# ON TRAIL AND RAPID BY DOG-SLED AND CANOE

## CHAPTER I

### ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

THE progress of civilization and Christianity in the Canadian North-West, as in many other parts of the world, is due in a large measure to great fur-trading companies. With a wonderful devotion to the cause in hand, they pushed beyond the bounds of civilization and entered regions never before trodden by white man. They built forts, gained the respect of savage tribes, and ruled them with a firm hand. By their boats missionaries travelled over the noble streams into the wilderness, ministered to the natives who gathered round the forts, and received supplies from the companies' stores.

As friction between bodies produces heat, fire, and light, so, by the rivalry of fur-trading companies, the northland of Canada was opened up, and a new era ushered in. Eager to outstrip one another, they were ever pushing farther and farther into the country, and, as has been well said, "the great explorers of the period (1763-1812) were all connected with the fur trade."

Away to the north stretched a region, a land of wonder and strange stories. Indians told of a "great river" in the far North-West, and showed specimens of copper found along its banks. The Hudson's Bay Company, acting upon these reports, decided to make a thorough investigation, with the

## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

object of solving the problem of the North-West Passage by land, to ascertain what mines were near the mouth of the Great River, "to smoke the calumet of peace with the Indians, and to take accurate astronomical observations."

The man chosen for this work, Samuel Hearne, the "Mungo Park of Canada," was a trustworthy servant of the Company, who, on November 6, 1769, started on his voyage of exploration from Prince of Wales Fort, on the shore of Hudson's Bay. Owing to the desertion of over half his men, the attempt proved a failure, and he was forced to turn back.

Two months later he started again, and followed a north-westerly course over streams, lakes, and then inland across the "Barren Grounds." Food was very scarce, and they were reduced to great straits. "For a whole week cranberries, scraps of leather, and burnt bones were their only food." To add to their troubles, when 500 miles had been made, their only quadrant was blown over and broken. So again Hearne was forced to retrace his weary steps to the Bay.

Nothing daunted by these failures, this noble-hearted explorer once more started on his northward quest. This time he was more successful. With a strong band of Indians who were waging war against the Eskimo, he floated downstream, and ere long gained the sea, the first white man to reach the Arctic Ocean from the interior.

"The most unpleasant part of Mr. Hearne's story," wrote Bishop Bompas in his book on the "Diocese of Mackenzie River," "is that the party of Indians with whom he travelled, entirely without his sanction, made an unprovoked attack on a number of Eskimo encamped on the Coppermine River, and in the night barbarously massacred the whole body of men, women, and children, and spoiled their tents. The site of the massacre became known afterwards as the 'Bloody Falls.'"

Miss Agnes C. Laut, in her most interesting book, "Pathfinders of the West," speaking about this incident, says:

## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

"The conduct of Hearne's rascally companions could no longer be misunderstood. Hunters came in with game; but when the hungry slaves would have lighted a moss fire to cook the meat, the forbidding hand of a chief went up. No fires were to be lighted. The Indians advanced with whispers, dodging from stone to stone like raiders in ambush. Spies went forward on tiptoe. Then far down-stream below the cataracts Hearne descried the domed tent-tops of an Eskimo band sound asleep; for it was midnight, though the sun was at high noon. When Hearne looked back to his companions, he found himself deserted. The Indians were already wading the river for the west bank, where the Eskimo had camped. Hearne overtook his guides stripping themselves of everything that might impede flight or give hand-hold to an enemy, and daubing their skin with war-paint. Hearne begged Matonabee to restrain the murderous warriors. The great chief smiled with silent contempt. He was too true a disciple of a doctrine which Indians practised hundreds of years before white men had avowed it—the survival of the fit, the extermination of the weak—for any qualms of pity towards a victim whose death would contribute profit. Wearing only moccasins and bucklers of hardened hide, armed with muskets, lances, and tomahawks, the Indians jostled Hearne out of their way, stole forward from stone to stone to within a gun-length of the Eskimo, then, with a wild war-shout, flung themselves on the unsuspecting sleepers.

"The Eskimo were taken unprepared. They staggered from their tents, still dazed in sleep, to be mowed down by a crashing of firearms which they had never before heard. The poor creatures fled in frantic terror, to be met only by lance-point and gun-butt. A young girl fell coiling at Hearne's feet like a wounded snake. A well-aimed lance had pinioned the living form to earth. She caught Hearne round the knees, imploring him with dumb entreaty; but the white

## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

man was pushed back with jeers. Sobbing with horror, Hearne begged the Indians to put their victim out of pain. The rocks rang with the mockery of the torturers. She was speared to death before Hearne's eyes. On that scene of indescribable horror the white man could no longer bear to look. He turned toward the river, and there was a spectacle like a nightmare. Some of the Eskimo were escaping by leaping to their hide boats, and with lightning strokes of the double-bladed paddles dashing down the current to the far bank of the river; but sitting motionless as stone was an old, old woman—probably a witch of the tribe—red-eyed as if she were blind, deaf to all the noise about her, unconscious of all her danger, fishing for salmon below the falls. There was a shout from the raiders; the old woman did not even look up to face her fate; and she, too, fell a victim to that thirst for blood which is as insatiable in the redskin as in the wolf-pack."

"It is remarkable," says Bishop Bompas, "that there is a bird in those parts which the Indians there call the 'alarm bird,' or 'bird of warning'—a sort of owl which hovers over the heads of strangers and precedes them in the direction they go. If these birds see other moving objects, they flit alternately from one party to the other with screaming noise, so that the Indians place great confidence in the alarm bird to apprise them of the approach of strangers, or to conduct them to herds of deer or musk oxen.

"Mr. Hearne remarks that all the time the Indians lay in ambush, preparatory to the above-mentioned horrid massacre, a large flock of these birds were continually flying about and hovering alternately over the Indian and Eskimo tents, making a noise to awake any man out of the soundest sleep. The Eskimo, unhappily, have a great objection to being disturbed from sleep, and will not be awakened—an obstinacy which seems to have cost that band their lives."

Hearne, like Columbus, was not to have the honour of

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## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

giving his name to the great river he discovered. This was reserved for another intrepid explorer, Alexander Mackenzie, of the North-West Company. In 1789 he started from Fort Chipewyan, on Lake Athabasca, in search of the "Western Sea." He, too, was confronted with great difficulties. Wild Indians told "of demon-haunted caves and impassable falls." Terrified by these tales, his Indians refused to go farther. With infinite patience Mackenzie induced them to continue seven days longer, and if in that time they did not discover the sea, he promised to turn back. Before the end of the week the mouth of the river was reached, and the explorer knew it was the Arctic Ocean he had gained instead of the Western Sea.

"It is hard," says Bishop Bompas, "to overpraise the intrepid courage, cool prudence, and inquiring intelligence of that noble traveller. . . . Sir Alexander Mackenzie took the greatest pains to conciliate all Indians whom he met by presents and promises of peaceful trade, and he energetically restrained all attempts at murder or rapine made by the Indians who accompanied him. He did not meet with Eskimo, and it is little wonder that these and the Mackenzie River Indians were shy of him, as it was then customary for the Athabasca Indians to make annual war expeditions down the Mackenzie for purposes of plunder, massacre, and rapine, as well as for the kidnapping of women and slaves."

In after-years many eminent explorers, such as Franklin, Richardson, Simpson, and Rae, entered the country, the accounts of whose journeys and thrilling adventures may be read elsewhere.

Several years after the discovery of the Mackenzie River trading-posts were established at various places along this stream and its tributaries. To these the Indians brought their furs, and a thriving business was carried on. For a time there was a keen rivalry between the Hudson's Bay

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Company and the North-West Company, but at length a union was effected under the name of the former.

Not satisfied with the great advance which had thus been made, these "lords of the forest and lakes" turned their attention in another direction. Ever before their vision rose the majestic peaks of the Rocky Mountains; beyond these barriers were unknown regions. What possibilities lay in that *terra incognita* they could only conjecture. News reached them of a great river flowing to the west, the estuary of which had been explored by the Russians several years before, and named by them the "Quickpak." This stream they knew must drain a large territory, which might prove valuable for fur-trading purposes.

There was a man in the Company's service especially fitted for the task of pathfinder into the new region. This was Robert Campbell, a Scotchman by birth, over six feet of upstanding flesh, bone, muscle, and iron nerve, as dauntless a pioneer as ever shot a swirling rapid or faced a howling blizzard. To him, therefore, the task was consigned in the spring of 1840 by Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Company.

At once he began the undertaking, and after a hard and dangerous voyage up the Liard River, over lakes and portages, a stream was reached, which Campbell named the Pelly, in honour of Sir H. Pelly. A raft was hurriedly made, on which they floated several miles down the river to view the country. Considering they had gone far enough from their base of supplies, they abandoned the raft, but not before Campbell had cast into the stream a sealed tin can with notice of his discovery, the date, and other information.

The discovery of the Pelly River only served to increase the interest of the Company, and it was resolved to push forward the investigation. In 1842 birch-bark in sufficient quantity for the building of a canoe was sent up to the Pelly

## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

River, and the same year the construction of a fur-trading post was begun, and named Fort Pelly Banks. Early in June, 1843, Mr. Campbell started down the stream in the canoe which had been built, accompanied by two French Canadians and an Indian interpreter.

Concerning this exciting journey Mr. Campbell has given us a vivid description which should be of great interest to all.

"As we advanced," he says, "the river increased in size, and the scenery formed a succession of picturesque landscapes. About twenty-five miles from Pelly Banks we encountered a bad rapid—'Hooles'—where we were forced to disembark everything, but elsewhere we had a nice flowing current. Ranges of mountains flanked us on both sides. On the right hand the mountains were generally covered with wood; the left range was more open, with patches of poplar running up the valleys and *barnsides*, reminding one of the green braeface of the Highland glens. We frequently saw moose-deer and bears as we passed along; and at points where the precipice rose abrupt from the water's edge, the wild sheep—'big-horn'—were often seen on the shelving rocks. They were very keen-sighted, and when once alarmed they fled swiftly and gracefully over the mountains. When we chanced to get one we found it splendid eating, delicate enough for an epicure.

"In this manner we travelled on for several days. We saw only one family of Indians—'Knife' Indians—till we reached the junction of the Pelly with a tributary, which I named the 'Lewes.' Here we found a large camp of Indians—the 'Wood' Indians. We took them by no ordinary surprise, as they had never seen a white man before, and they looked upon us with some awe as well as curiosity. Two of their chiefs, father and son, were very tall, stout, handsome men. We smoked the pipe of peace together, and I distributed some presents. They spoke in loud tones, as do all the

## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

Indians in their natural state, but they seemed kind and peaceable. When we explained to them as best we could that we were going down-stream, they all raised their voices against it. Among other dangers, they indicated that inhabiting the lower river were many tribes of 'bad' Indians—'numerous as the sand'—who would not only kill us, but eat us; we should never get back alive, and friends coming to look after us would unjustly blame them for our death. All this frightened our men to such a degree that I had reluctantly to consent to our return, which, under the circumstances, was the only alternative. I learned afterwards that it would have been madness in us to have made any further advance, unprepared as we were for such an enterprise.

"Much depressed, we that afternoon retraced our course up-stream; but before doing so I launched on the river a sealed can containing memoranda of our trip, etc. I was so dejected at the unexpected turn of affairs that I was perfectly heedless of what was passing; but on the third day of our upward progress I noticed, on both sides of the river, fires burning on the hill-tops far and near. This awoke me to a sense of our situation. I conjectured that, as in Scotland in the olden time, these were *signal fires*, and that they summoned the Indians to surround and intercept us. Thus aroused, we made the best use of paddles and 'tracking-line' to get up-stream and ahead of the Indian signals. On the fourth morning we came to a party of Indians on the further bank of the river. They made signs to us to cross over, which we did. They were very hostile, watching us with bows bent and arrows in hand, and would not come down from the top of the high bank to the water's edge to meet us. I sent up a man with some tobacco, the emblem of peace, to reassure them, but at first they would hardly remove their hands from their bows to receive it. We ascended the bank to them, and had a most friendly interview, carried on by words and signs. It required, however, some finesse and adroitness to get away

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#### CANOE-TRAVELLING IN NORTH-WEST CANADA

The canoes are made of birch-bark over a light framework, and are consequently very frail. They are, however, light and portable, a great advantage when navigating rivers with falls or rapids. Those places where the canoe must be carried from one navigable piece of water to another are known as portages.

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## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

from them. Once in the canoe, we quickly pushed out and struck obliquely for the opposite bank, so as to be out of range of their arrows, and I faced about, gun in hand, to observe their actions. The river was there too broad either for ball or arrow. We worked hard during the rest of the day, and until late; the men were tired out, and I made them all sleep in my tent while I kept watch. At that season the night is so clear that one can read or write throughout. Our camp lay on the bank of the river, at the base of a steep declivity, which had large trees here and there up its grassy slope. In the branches of one of these trees I passed the greater part of the anxious night, reading Hervey's 'Meditations' and keeping a vigilant lookout. Occasionally I descended and walked to the river-bank, but all was still. Two years afterwards, when friendly relations had been established with the Indians in the district, I learned, to my no small astonishment, that the hostile tribe encountered down the river had dogged us all day, and, when we halted for the night, had encamped behind the crest of the hill, and from this retreat had watched my every movement. With the exactitude of detail characteristic of Indians, they described me sitting in the tree, holding 'something white' (the book) in my hand, and often raising my eyes to make a survey of the neighbourhood; then descending to the river-bank, taking my horn cup from my belt, and, even while I drank, glancing up and down the river and towards the hill. They confessed that, had I knelt down to drink, they would have rushed upon me and drowned me in the swift current, and, after thus despatching me, would have massacred the sleeping inmates of my tent. How often, without knowing it, are we protected from danger by the merciful hand of Providence! Next morning we were early in motion, and were glad to observe that we had outwitted the Indians and outstripped their signal fires."

In the spring of 1848 Campbell once more returned, and

## ROMANCE OF EXPLORATION

erected a post for trading purposes at the confluence of the Lewes and Pelly Rivers. This place was called Fort Selkirk, and occupied a dangerous position, owing to the animosity of a tribe of Indians, known as the Chilcats, along the Pacific Coast. From time immemorial they had kept the natives of the interior in abject submission, having defeated them in a great battle. They refused to allow them to cross the mountains to trade with the white men on the coast, as they themselves did a thriving business as "middlemen." When they beheld the hated white race establishing a post in what they considered their rightful domain, and drawing away the principal part of the trade, their anger knew no bounds. Crossing the mountains, they floated down the river, and, without a word of warning, attacked the fort and razed it to the ground. Campbell was not present at the destruction of his trading-post, as, two years after its erection, he had started down the river to see, at any cost, what lay beyond.

In the meantime another entry had been made into the Yukon region away to the north. In 1842, Mr. J. Bell, in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and descended the Porcupine River for three days' journey. In 1846 he returned, and moved down the river to its mouth till he reached a great stream, which the Indians told him was the Yukon. Believing this to be in British territory, Mr. A. H. Murray established a trading-post at this spot the following year, and called it Fort Yukon. It was here that the first missionary work was carried on by the Church Missionary Society, the scene of Archdeacon McDonald's wonderful labours for the Master.

In this brief outline of the discovery of the Mackenzie and the Yukon Rivers we have seen the brave efforts of these noble pioneers. We shall see now how they were followed by the great King's messengers with the glorious Gospel of salvation.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY DAYS

WE all like to read about heroes, whether on sea or land. How real they become to us as we picture them in our minds, and eagerly follow their adventures! We wonder what they did when boys, and if they performed wonderful things then. Nothing is too small to be of importance when once we have a real, noble hero.

William Carpenter Bompas was a hero in the true sense of the word—not one who gained his laurels by fighting on the sea, or rushing forward, even to the bayonet's point, in some great charge. His glory was gained in a far different manner, when he enlisted in the service of the great King of kings, and carried the banner of the Cross over great Arctic regions and grim, snow-capped mountains, to rescue wandering Indians and Eskimo, and lead them to the Master's feet.

There was very little in his early life to show that he contained the stuff of which heroes are made. He was a shy boy, fond of retirement and study. But there was good blood in his veins, and blood will tell. The family, on his mother's side, was partly Royalist and partly Puritan. One member is known to have been private secretary to Henrietta Maria, and was hung by the Parliamentarians for aiding Charles I.; while another at one time was secretary to Hampden. We shall see how the characteristics of these two great parties were in later years remarkably united in William Bompas.

The Bompas family is of French extraction, and there is an interesting tradition which tells how the name was first given.

## EARLY DAYS

It was on the field of Crecy that an ancestor performed a deed of great valour in the fight, and was knighted by Edward the Black Prince. A bystander remarked: "C'est un bon pas." And the Knight replied that he would take that for his motto.

How often young William Bompas must have listened with intense eagerness to that story of his valiant ancestor, and longed to do some great deed himself! Little did he then think that he would be called upon to do more than all before him, and the step that he was destined to take would be the best of all.

His father, Charles Carpenter Bompas, was a Serjeant-at-law, and one of the most eminent advocates of his day. It is said that the famous Charles Dickens had him in his mind when he wrote about Serjeant Buzfuz in the "Pickwick Papers." When William was only ten years old, his father died very suddenly, leaving a widow and eight children—five sons and three daughters.

William, in early youth, showed most plainly those characteristics which marked his whole life. He was a quiet boy, owing partly, no doubt, to private tuition at home, which deprived him to a large extent of the society of other boys. Cricket, football, and such games, he did not play, his chief pleasure being walking, and sketching churches and other buildings that he encountered in his rambles. Gardening he was fond of, and the knowledge thus gained stood him in good stead years later when planning for the mission-farms in his northern diocese.

The influence of a religious home made a deep and lasting impression upon him. His parents were earnest Christians, belonging to the Baptist denomination. Sunday was strictly observed, the father making it a firm rule never to read briefs or hold consultations on the Day of Rest. Bible-reading, too, was carefully observed. Serjeant Bompas was a man of

## EARLY DAYS

liberal views, allowing his children to indulge in harmless amusements, and occasionally permitting them to attend the theatre and to play cards, if not for money.

William from childhood was of a deeply religious turn of mind, and at the age of sixteen was baptized by immersion, on a profession of his faith, by the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel. This step caused his mother great joy, and after her death the following was found among her many papers :

“*July 7, 1850.*—This day I would record the mercy which has rendered it one of peculiar blessing and happiness. The favour and presence of God has been manifested to us again during the past week, and I have enjoyed the best earthly happiness in seeing my dear and dutiful son W. devote himself unreservedly to the service of his Saviour. Having conscientiously decided on baptism by immersion, he was publicly baptized on the 5th by Mr. Baptist Noel, at his chapel in John Street, and was at the same time admitted as member of Mr. Stratten's church, and to-day I have had the privilege of partaking with him of that ordinance which I trust will be most profitable to us both.”

At this time William was attending a small day-school, and the master, Mr. Elliott, wrote of him :

“I never had a pupil who made such acquisitions of knowledge in so short a time ; his attainments in mathematics and classics are far beyond the majority of youths at his age, and would warrant anyone conversant with the state of education in the Universities in predicting a brilliant career for him, should he ever have that path open to him. I think, however, that the development of his mind is still more remarkable than the amount of his knowledge.”

But a University career was not practicable, and William was therefore articled in 1852 to the same firm of solicitors with whom his brother George was working. At the expiration of his five years of service he transferred himself to

## EARLY DAYS

another city firm, Messrs. Ashurst, Morris and Company, with whom he remained about two years. While here a catastrophe occurred in the failure of a great company, involving ruin to unnumbered families. The harrowing spectacle of the poorer shareholders who brought their claims into court, having lost their all without remedy, was a terrible strain upon the young man's nervous system, which had been weakened by a severe illness but a short time before. This, together with strenuous labour, brought on a second breakdown, and early in 1858 he was forced to give up work altogether. He declared that it took him three months to learn to do nothing. During his year of inaction the Greek Testament was his constant companion. Change of scene became necessary, and he spent some time at his mother's home, Broughton, Hants, and later with his sister visited the Normandy coast.

"The summer after his illness," writes his brother, Judge Bompas, "we went on a walking tour to Scotland; and one evening it got dark before we had reached our destination, and we had to sleep out in the mountains with no shelter, and amidst frequent showers of rain. William, though in his weak health, was perfectly fearless and in great spirits, repeating part of Macaulay's 'Lays' and other poems for much of the night."

As his strength returned, his mind turned more and more to his early desire of entering the ministry. Leaving the communion of his early associations, he decided to seek ordination in the Church of England, and in 1858 was confirmed by the Bishop of London at St. Mary's, Bryanston Square. His remarkable linguistic ability enabled him soon to add by private study a good knowledge of Hebrew to that of Latin and Greek, which he already possessed.

In 1859 he was accepted by Dr. Jackson, the Bishop of Lincoln, as a literate candidate for Holy Orders, and was

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ordained deacon by him at the Advent ordination the same year, and appointed curate to the Rev. H. Owen, Rector of Trusthorpe and Sutton-in-the-Marsh.

The first charge was a trying experience. The parish of Sutton was a wild district, with a rough and primitive population, and most of the men had been smugglers in former times. No school was established, and there had been no resident clergyman since the time of the Reformation. Mr. Bompas at once began a great work among the children, gathering them into his own house, and teaching them, at first by himself, and later with the help of his sister and a girl from a neighbouring village. By his care for the children, and by the unflinching sympathy shown in his visits to his parishioners, he succeeded in winning their gratitude and confidence. His plan for the erection of a school was at first strongly opposed by some of the farmers, who were unwilling to give land for the purpose. But Mr. Bompas, with that tact and gentleness which marked all his dealings, at length overcame opposition, and when he left at the end of two years the building was completed and opened.

"I can well remember," writes one, in reference to the young curate's work at Sutton, "as quite a little child, how he won my heart by carrying my poor pet-cat, that had been hurt by a heavy piece of wood falling on it, into a place of safety, and doing all he could to ease its pain. Also, about the same time, in a heavy gale of wind, he was going out to dinner at Mablethorpe, and, passing through Trusthorpe, found a little girl blown into the thick black mud at the side of a big drain, and unable to free herself. He not only went to the rescue, but carried her to her home at the far end of Sutton, regardless of dinner! The *once*," continues the same writer, "that he revisited Sutton and preached there, the people lined the path from church to gate, and stood waiting for him to leave the church, that they might

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get a word as he passed—a very unusual demonstration from our true but undemonstrative Lincolnshire folk of those days.”

While at Sutton, in the second year of his clerical life, a great sorrow came to Mr. Bompas in the death of his mother, to whose bedside he was summoned in January, 1861. He was devotedly attached to her, and was able to take part, with the rest of his family, in ministering comfort to her during her last days.

In the midst of early discouragements, Mr. Bompas found a valuable friend and helper in Mrs. Loft, of Trusthorpe Hall. He was always sure of a hearty welcome at her house, and in after-years she followed his course with the warmest interest, and corresponded with him to the end of her life.

In 1862 he accepted the curacy of New Radford, Nottingham, a poor and crowded parish, populated largely by lace-workers. The number of souls, about 10,000, within the small triangle of New Radford was about the same as the population of the vast diocese of 900,000 square miles of which he was later to have episcopal supervision. To this circumstance he referred when preaching in the parish on his return to England for consecration in 1874.

From Nottingham, Mr. Bompas went for a short time as curate to Holy Trinity, South Lincolnshire, returning in 1864 to his former neighbourhood as curate to the Rev. H. Oldrid at Alford, Lincolnshire. As the earnest curate passed from house to house in his daily work, his parishioners little thought what a bright fire of enthusiasm was burning in his heart. He had been much stirred by the stories told by missionaries of heathen dying without the knowledge of Christ in far-away lands, and he longed to go abroad and bear the message of salvation. His mind turned to China and India, with their seething millions; but as he was a little over thirty years of age at that time, the Church Missionary Society thought him rather old to grapple with the difficulties of the

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Eastern languages. But when one door closes, another opens, and at the right moment Bishop Anderson arrived from Rupert's Land, and made his great appeal for a volunteer to relieve the Rev. Robert McDonald at Fort Yukon.

It was on May 1, 1865, that this missionary Bishop was touching the hearts of a large crowd at St. Bride's, London, England. He had travelled a long way to attend the anniversary of the Church Missionary Society, and was preaching the sermon which was destined to bear so much fruit. Bishop Anderson was the bearer of a great message to the Church in England. He had much to tell of the vastness of Canada, and the great regions where the children of the wild lived and died without the knowledge of Christ. He told of a lonely mission-station on the mighty Yukon River, where a soldier of the cross, the Rev. Robert McDonald, with health fast failing, was standing bravely at his post of duty till someone should relieve him. What thoughts must have surged through his mind as he looked on the many upturned faces before him! Who was there among those listeners willing to consecrate his life to the Master's work? Lifting up his voice, the Bishop uttered these words, which have become so memorable:

"Shall no one come forward to take up the standard of the Lord as it falls from his hands, and to occupy the ground?"

The service ended, the clergy retired, and the congregation began to disperse. But there was one whose heart had been deeply touched by the speaker's words, and, walking at once into the vestry, William Bompas, the Lincolnshire curate, offered to go to Canada to relieve the missionary at Fort Yukon.

He was at once accepted by the Church Missionary Society, and ordained to the priesthood by Bishop, afterwards Archbishop, Machray, who had just been consecrated as successor to Bishop Anderson.

How little did those who attended that ordination service

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realize the important part those two men would take in Christ's great work, or that among the heroes of the Church in Canada in years to come no names would be held in greater reverence than those of Machray and Bompas!

Only three weeks did Mr. Bompas have in which to prepare for his long journey; but they were sufficient, as he was anxious to be on his way. So complete was his consecration to the work before him that "he decided," so his brother tells us, "to take nothing with him that might lead back his thoughts to home, and he gave away all his books and other tokens of remembrance, even the paragraph Bible which he had always used."

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## CHAPTER III

### FORWARD TO THE FRONT

SHORTLY after Mr. Bompas was accepted by the Church Missionary Society, he went to Salisbury Square and inquired how far it was to his mission-field, and the length of time required for the journey. When told it was about 8,000 miles, and that he was hardly likely to reach it that year, a smile passed over his face as he replied, "I see I must start with a small bag."

After he learned more about the country, a longing entered into his heart to start as soon as possible, and reach Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, by Christmas Day. Was such a thing possible? No one before had ever done it in winter, and was it likely that the young, ardent missionary would be the first to accomplish the task? With this determination, Mr. Bompas was not long in making preparations for his journey, and on June 30, 1865, he left London for Liverpool, where he boarded the steamer *Persia*, bound for New York.

Mr. Bompas was surprised that this steamer burnt 100 tons of coal daily; but now the Cunard liner *Mauretania* burns 1,000 tons each day in 192 furnaces.

He travelled in company with the Rev. J. P. and Mrs. Gardiner and family and Miss M. M. Smith, who were going to the Red River. There were many passengers, mostly Americans, and for these an effort was made to hold service the first Sunday, but the captain refused to give his permission. On the following Sunday, however, they were more successful,

## FORWARD TO THE FRONT

and service was held in the saloon, attended by crew and passengers. Tracts were also distributed among the sailors, "accompanied by religious conversation."

Reaching New York on July 12, two days were spent at the Astor House Hotel, where they had the exciting experience of viewing a disastrous fire right across the street, when a large block of buildings, including Barnum's Museum, was destroyed. From New York they proceeded to Niagara by the Hudson River and New York Central Railway. On the way Mr. Bompas spent one night at Rochester to see Captain Palmer, of the American Telegraph Company.

"He informed me," wrote Mr. Bompas, "that a party of explorers were already on their way to Fort Yukon from Sidkar,\* on the Pacific coast, with the view of carrying out the Company's contract entered into with the Russian Government for laying a telegraph-line through Siberia and across Behring's Strait, to join existing lines in America. Should the Atlantic cable prove successful, the Yukon line would, I suppose, complete the circuit of the globe."

Mr. Bompas considered the American railways rather noisy and jostling, and the large saloon carriages, holding about sixty people, less pleasant than the English style. At the same time, he thought the general arrangements were "good and expeditious," and admired the system of communication throughout the train and the "booking through luggage by duplicate 'cheques' or metal badges."

Leaving Niagara, they reached Chicago by way of Detroit. Here were seen "many soldiers returning from the war, some of them wounded, and most looking pale and sickly, reminding one too plainly of the many who never returned." From Chicago they went by rail to La Crosse, and thence by steamer to St. Paul. Here Dr. Schultz, a Red River merchant, and afterwards Sir John Schultz, Lieutenant-Governor of Mani-

\* Sitka, until recently the capital of Alaska.

## FORWARD TO THE FRONT

toba, was met, who conveyed their heavy luggage across the plains in his ox-train, and proved in many ways of great assistance.

At St. Cloud the first difficulty presented itself. Since the fearful Sioux massacre of 1862, people were in great dread all over the country, and they found it impossible to get anyone to convey them on towards Red River. After much trouble and delay, they were forced to procure a conveyance for themselves. Before leaving St. Cloud, they were told time and time again to beware of the Indians, who were always prowling around. "But," said one informant, "they will respect the English flag, and I advise you to take one along." Such a thing the party did not possess. But Mr. Bompas was equal to the occasion; so, procuring some red and white cotton, he soon formed quite a respectable banner, which was fastened to a small flagstaff erected on the cart.

Dr. Schultz had been overtaken some distance out on the prairie, and when they had gone some way farther mounted Indians appeared in sight, and, like the wind, one warrior swept down to view the small cavalcade. Beholding the flag of the clustered crosses, he gazed for a time upon the little band, and, moving away, he left them unmolested.

"On the whole, however," said Mr. Bompas, "we travelled without special discomfort, Dr. Schultz acting as guide. The charge of the horses, making fires, cooking, encamping, driving, etc., of course threw much work upon us, being without a servant."

Reaching the Red River in safety, Mr. Bompas was much pleased with the whole general appearance of the place.

"The houses," he wrote, "are cleanly and cheerful, and new ones are being built. The settlement extends altogether about twenty-five miles down the banks of the river. In this distance there are five churches. The three which I saw are well built and spacious. The schoolrooms, also, and parson-

## FORWARD TO THE FRONT

ages are of good size. Mr. Cowley was just removing into a new house of a very substantial character."

Here Mr. Bompas had not long to wait, for the boats of the great Hudson's Bay Company were ready to start on their long northern journey, and he was to go with them. There were four boats, called a "brigade," each rowed by seven or eight men, "mostly Salteaux Indians, heathen, and unable to speak English—a tribe much averse to Christianity."

Then northward fled that fleet of boats, across great inland lakes, over hard portages where the freight had to be carried, past the company's posts, mission stations, and Indian encampments, where services were held when possible.

But winter was rapidly closing in upon them and threatening the daring voyagers. Sixty-three days had they been out from the Red River Settlement when Portage la Roche was reached on October 12, and there they found they were too late to meet any boat going farther north. Here was a difficult situation, but Mr. Bompas was not to be defeated. Engaging a canoe and two French half-breeds, he pushed bravely forward. The journey was a hard one. In some places they had to battle with drifting ice, and the water froze to their canoe and paddles. Still they pressed on, all day long contending with running ice, and the bleak, cold wind whistling around them and freezing the water upon their clothes. At night there was the lonely shore, the camp-fire, the scanty meal, and the cold ground covered with brush for a bed. The next day up and on again—the same weary work, the same hard fight. Such was the struggle for eight long days, till Fort Chipewyan, on Lake Athabasca, was reached.

Here Mr. Christie, the officer in charge of the post, gave him a hearty welcome; here the warm stove sent out its cheerful glow, and here, too, were to be found many comforts for the winter months, if he would only stay and rest. But

## FORWARD TO THE FRONT

no ; it was ever up and on. Never before had such a man stood within the fort. Who could conquer that northern stream at such a season? But the missionary only smiled, and asked for canoe and men. He was given a large craft and three Indian lads.

And once more that dauntless herald of the Cross sped northward. For several days the trim canoe cut the water, driven by determined arms. Then winter swept down in all its fury ; the river became full of floating ice, jamming, tearing, and impeding their canoe. Axes were brought to bear ; they would cleave a passage. The missionary must not be stopped. How they did work ! The ice-chips flew ; the spray dashed and drenched them, and then encased their bodies with an icy armour. Colder and colder it grew, and the river became a solid mass from bank to bank. The canoe was dragged ashore, and placed *en cache* on the bank with their baggage. All around was the pitiless wild. It was a dreary sight to this intrepid traveller, with winter upon him, the bleak wilderness surrounding him, and very little food. The enthusiasm of a less ardent spirit would have been completely damped ; but Mr. Bompas was made of sterner stuff, and without delay he and his companions pushed forward through the forest. On and on they travelled by a circuitous route, through brushwood and thickets, with clothes torn, hands and faces scratched and bleeding, and uncertain where they were. Night shut down and wrapped them in its gloomy mantle. All the next day they struggled forward, without food, and again night overtook them. Still they staggered on, and just when they were wearied to the point of exhaustion the lights of Fort Resolution, on Great Slave Lake, gleamed their welcome through the darkness.

It was necessary for the traveller to remain here until the ice in the lake became firm enough to cross with dogs and snow-shoes. Mr. Lockhart, the Company's officer, offered his

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hospitality, and during the delay Mr. Bompas continued busy "in the preparation," as he tells us, "of letters for the winter express, which is despatched hence to the south in December, and also in practising walking with snow-shoes, in preparation for my journey forward."

After he had remained at Fort Resolution about a month, "Mr. Lockhart kindly despatched him across the lake on snow-shoes, with two men and a sledge of dogs." Ice was found drifting in the open lake, and they were obliged to lengthen their course by following the shore very closely. "However, by God's help," wrote Mr. Bompas, "we arrived safely at the next post (Big Island) in five days, when I was again hospitably entertained by the officer in charge, Mr. Bird."

Here again he waited anxiously for the men from Fort Simpson with the winter packet of mail. They arrived on December 13, and four days later they started for Fort Simpson, and the missionary with them. Could they make the fort by Christmas Day? that was the question. Only a short time remained in which to do it. Day after day they sped forward. Saturday came, and still they were on the trail, and the next would be Christmas Day. One hundred and seventy-seven days had passed since leaving London, and was he to lose after all, and so very near his destination? But still the dogs raced forward, nearer and nearer, till, oh joy! on Christmas morning the fort hove into sight. There was the flag floating from its tall staff; there were the men crowding around to give their welcome, and among them stood that dauntless pioneer, the Rev. W. W. Kirkby, with great surprise on his face, as Mr. Bompas rushed forward and seized him by the hand.

Great was Mr. Bompas's delight in having accomplished the journey, and reached the fort on that blessed day in time for the morning service, and thankfully he wrote:

## FORWARD TO THE FRONT

“As I had especially wished to arrive by Christmas, I could not but acknowledge a remarkable token that our lives are indeed in God’s hand. It is hardly needful to say how warm a welcome I received from Mr. Kirkby. When I heard what a trying time he had passed through last fall in consequence of the epidemic sickness among the Indians, I felt very glad to have persevered in my efforts to reach him this winter.”

No less enthusiastically did Mr. Kirkby write to the Church Missionary Society on June 3, 1886 :

“You will imagine, better than I can tell, what a delight and surprise the unexpected arrival of Mr. Bompas was to us. He reached us in health and safety on Christmas morning, making the day too doubly happy by his presence and glad tidings that he brought. He was a Christmas-box indeed, and one for which we thank God with a full heart. The entire unexpectedness of his coming caused us to see in it more of the loving-kindness of our God. Such a thing as an arrival here in winter is never thought of, nor had it ever before occurred. After the boats leave here in the fall we have no visitors from without the district until now, when the waters are open again. Our dear brother deserves the greatest credit for the way in which he persevered in getting to us, and the accomplishment of his journey speaks much for his energy and determination. A more auspicious day, too, he could not have had for his arrival. He was just in time for morning service, so that we had at once the happiness of partaking of the Holy Communion together. Then followed the Indian service, in which he expressed much delight ; and in the evening, like good Samuel Marsden of old, he began his work by preaching from St. Luke xi. 10. He remained with us until Easter, and then went on with the packet-men to Great Bear Lake, where I trust God is doubly blessing him.

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“Fancy, it is not yet a year since he left England, and in that short time he has travelled so far, entered upon his work, and acquired enough of the language to be able to tell to the Indians in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. I admire that way of doing things exceedingly, and would accord all honour to him who thus performs his Master's work.”

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## CHAPTER IV

### IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

PEOPLE get very much excited over the North Pole explorations. They praise, too, the few men of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, who in these days patrol the Arctic coast at the mouth of the Mackenzie River. But how few know about the missionary heroes who have advanced into those desolate regions, facing hardships and even death to bear the Gospel message to the Eskimo living in those places. It was Mr. Bompas who first went as a missionary to the Arctic coast at the mouth of the Mackenzie River, and the story of his experiences and narrow escape from death is one of the most thrilling in missionary annals.

On a journey to Fort Yukon he had met a number of Eskimo at Fort McPherson, who requested him to go with them down to the coast. He could not get these poor creatures out of his mind, so in the spring he went back over the mountains for the purpose of visiting them. These natives, with their strange, uncouth manners, strongly appealed to his noble nature, and he expressed his feelings for such in the following beautiful words:

“At the funeral of the great Duke of Wellington, it was considered to be a mark of solemn respect that the obsequies should be attended by one soldier from every part and regiment of the British army; and it is a part of the Saviour’s glory that one jewel be gathered to His crown from every tribe of the lost human race. It is an honour to seek to

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

secure for our Lord one such jewel from even the remotest tribe."

Leaving Fort McPherson on April 18, 1870, Mr. Bompas started down the river in company with two Eskimo, hauling a small sled with blankets and provisions. On the way he received a message from the Chief of the Eskimo telling him to go back, as the natives "were starving and quarrelling, and one had just been stabbed and killed in a dispute about some tobacco." But this message had no effect upon the missionary; he was busy in his Master's service, and he knew that same Master would take care of His servant, and undaunted, he pressed bravely forward.

For three days they continued to travel without any difficulty, camping at night on the river-bank, and making a small fire of broken boughs. But the glare of the spring sun was very severe, and Mr. Bompas was stricken with snow-blindness. This affliction is one common in the North, and only those who have themselves suffered on the trail can fully realize what it means.

"As the sun rises higher," wrote Mr. Bompas, "and has more power in the months of March and April, to walk long over the snow in the sunlight becomes distressing to the eyes from the dazzling brightness. This is especially the case in traversing a wide lake or in descending a broad river, where there are no near forests of dark pines to relieve the gaze, but an unbroken expanse of snow.

"The effect of this is to produce, after a time, acute inflammation of the eyes. These, in the end, may be so entirely closed as to involve a temporary blindness, accompanied by much smarting pain. . . . The voyager feels very helpless during the acute stage of snow-blindness, and, like Elymas the sorcerer, or St. Paul himself, he 'seeks some one to lead him by the hand.'"

For three days in awful darkness he was led by the hand

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of the native boy, making about twenty-five miles a day, till the first Eskimo camp was reached. It was only a snow-house, and to enter it with closed eyes, stumbling at every step, was a most disagreeable introduction.

A description of what a snow-house is like is given by the Rev. Mr. Whittaker, who years afterwards lived among the Eskimo at Herschel Island.

"I remained," he says, "at the village [Kitligagzooit] just two weeks, and a most uncomfortable time it was, principally on account of the cold. They are all in snow-houses now, and the temperature required to preserve a snow-house will not conduce to a white man's comfort. I suffered constantly and almost unremittingly with cold hands and feet, and no amount of clothing would keep them warm. My blood appeared to stagnate and afford me no heat. The intense cold made me ravenously hungry, and although deer meat was plentiful, I craved fat, and at length was tempted to try some of the white whale that had lain in the ground since summer. It was strong, even burning my throat, but after a little I ate it with relish. It is eaten about half-frozen—raw, of course.

"In the house where I stayed were two Huskie families, seven of them and myself all in one room about the size of an ordinary bedroom. There we ate, drank, slept, and lived the daily round. The houses are just such as you may see in any pictures of Arctic scenes. There is no fire in them except the big seal-oil lamp, over which they do much of their cooking."

And yet such sufferings were little considered by Mr. Bompas. "They are delights," he once said. "The first footprint on earth made by our risen Saviour was the nail-mark of suffering, and for the spread of the Gospel I, too, am prepared to suffer."

After one day of rest in the snow-house, he recovered his

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

sight, and then, moving forward, reached another camp. His appearance at each place, so he tells us, "excited a great deal of observation and curiosity, as they had never had a European among them in the same way before."

In this camp he was disturbed "by yelling and dancing" on the very spot where he was lying. This was caused by an old woman "making medicine—that is, conjuring in order to cure a man who was, or was thought to be, sick." Mr. Bompas, unable to stand the terrible confusion, tried to stop them by saying that medicine-making was all a wicked lie, whereupon the old woman threw herself upon the missionary, and in no gentle manner vented upon him her wrath. After this he left the place and betook himself to another camp, where he lay down and "enjoyed a good night's rest." Next morning, seeing the man who was the cause of all the trouble, Mr. Bompas found he was suffering from a sore head, for which he gave him a "small piece of soap and a few grains of alum to rub it with." When he saw the man some time later, he was told that his conjuring was very strong.

What a forlorn hope lay before this missionary in trying to uplift and save such wild, uncouth creatures, who were ever around him! Yet there were many things which appealed to him. He looked deeper than the mere surface, and, studying them very carefully, saw there was much cause for encouragement. He noticed how ingenious the Eskimo was in the formation of implements "out of any old iron which he is able to obtain, such as files, saws, etc., from which he will forge variously shaped knives, gimlets, and other tools, with which he constructs his boats and canoes, as well as arrows, bows, spears, fishing-hooks, nets and tackle, sledges, and all other implements for the chase, as well as furniture for his tent."

Then he watched his skill in building the snow-house, which he could "compare to nothing but the skill of the bee

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in making its honeycomb. . . . The snowy material is so beautiful that the work proceeds as if by magic. The blocks of frozen snow are cut out of the mass with large knives, and built into solid masonry, which freezes together as the work proceeds, without the aid of mortar. Being arched over, a dome-shaped house is formed, with a piece of clear ice for a window, and a hole, through which you creep on all-fours, for a door or entrance. One-half of the interior is raised about two feet, and strewn with deer-skins as beds and sofas, on which the long nights are passed in sleep, for which an Eskimo seems to have an insatiable capability and relish." People who were so clever and artistic, he well knew, must have a love for the beautiful, and were capable of higher things.

He studied their religious instincts, and found they were very low. They were addicted to lying, stealing, and even stabbing. "They practised heathen dances, songs, and conjuring, and placed much dependence upon spells and charms." And yet, sifting all this, he found they believed in two spirits: one "an evil, named Atti, which seems to symbolize cold and death, and which they seek to exorcise or appease by their charms and spells; the other, a dim idea of a good spirit connected with the sun, as the source of warmth and life." Their faint idea of heaven was that of a "perpetual spring, and the name they give to ministers who bring them tidings of the world above is 'Children of the Sun.'" He also learned that they possessed a tradition of the Creation, and of the descent of mankind from a single pair.

Though he found them at times very treacherous, yet there was a spirit of true hospitality still existing, which he felt could be fanned into a flame, and which would work a great change. His own difficulty was the language, and he maintained that the best hope would be to bring a Christian Eskimo from Labrador, as the Moravian missionaries there

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and in Greenland had mastered the language in the course of many years' labour.

Though the language was a great obstacle, still Mr. Bompas determined to do the best he could. He collected many Eskimo words, and, with his remarkable linguistic ability, made fair progress in a short time. He found they expressed great willingness to be taught, and he says :

"They have received the little instruction I have been able to give them with great thankfulness. At the same time, their ignorance and carelessness are so great that they seem quite unable at present to apprehend the solemnities of religion. The chief idea they have in seeing my books is to wish that they could be metamorphosed into tobacco, and, indeed, at present smoking seems to be the sole object of their lives."

He accompanied them on their various hunting and fishing journeys, and lost no opportunity of studying them and winning their affection. He stood by their side as they fished for hours through holes in the ice, and, observing their great patience, he himself became strengthened in the greater task of fishing for souls, and expresses the thought in the following words :

"We may admire the patience of an Eskimo fishing for hours over the blow-hole for a seal ; and such should be the perseverance of a watcher for souls. ' Lord, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing ; nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net.' "

During the cold weather Mr. Bompas slept with the Eskimo in their small, crowded houses, and the inconvenience he suffered must have been great, as the following words will show :

"The Eskimo sleep in their tents between their deer-skins, all together in a row extending the whole breadth of the tent ; and if there are more than enough for one row, they

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

commence a second at the foot of the bed, with the head turned the other way. For myself, I always took care to commence the second row, keeping to the extremity of the tent, and thus generally rested without inconvenience, except, perhaps, a foot thrust occasionally into my side. At the same time, it must be confessed that the Eskimo are rather noisy, often talking and singing a great part of the night, especially the boys; and if any extra visitors arrive, so that the tent is overfull, it is not exactly agreeable."

When the warmer weather arrived, Mr. Bompas began to camp by himself outside, and found it much better. The days became so long that he found it difficult to tell what time of the day or night it was, as he "thought it most prudent" not to carry his watch with him. Seldom did the missionary speak of his hardships; but, reading between the lines of the few words he utters, one can see they were of no ordinary nature.

In a letter to Mrs. Loft, in England, Mr. Bompas gave a vivid description of these Eskimo.

"It would be easy for you to realize," he wrote, "and even experience, the whole thing if so minded. First go and sleep a night in the first gipsy camp you can find along some roadside, and that is precisely like life with the Indians. From thence go to the nearest well-to-do farmer and spend a night in his pig-sty (with the pigs, of course), and this is exactly life with the Eskimo. As this comprises the whole thing in a nutshell, I think I need give you no further description. The difficulty you would have in crawling or wriggling into the sty through a hole only large enough for a pig was exactly my case with the Eskimo houses. As to the habits of your companions, the advantage would be probably on the side of the pigs, and the safety of the position decidedly so. As you will not believe in the truth of this little simile, how much less would you believe if I gave you all particulars!

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

So I prefer silence to exposing myself to your incredulity ; but if I had to visit them again, I should liken it rather to taking lodgings in the den of a polar bear. The first time, in God's good providence, he did not show his claws.

“Harness yourself to a wheelbarrow or a garden-roller, and then, having blindfolded yourself, you will be able to fancy me arriving, snow-blind and hauling my sledge, at the Eskimo camp, which is a white beehive about six feet across, with the way a little larger than that for the bees. . . . As to one's costume, you cannot manage that, except that a blanket is always a good cloak for us ; but take a large butcher's knife in your hand, and that of itself will make you an Eskimo without further additions.

“If you will swallow a chimneyful of smoke, or take a few whiffs of the fumes of charcoal, you will know something of the Eskimo's mode of intoxicating themselves with tobacco, and a tanyard will give you some idea of the sweetness of their camps. Fat, raw bacon, you will find, tastes much like whale blubber, and lamp oil, sweetened somewhat, might pass for seal fat. Rats you will doubtless find equally good to eat at home as here, though without the musk flavour ; but you must get some raw fish, a little rotten, to enjoy a good Eskimo dinner.

“Fold a large black horse's tail on the top of your head, and another on each side of your face, and you will adopt exactly the Arctic lady's head-gear ; then thrust a knife through the centre of each cheek, and leave the end of the knife-handle permanently in the hole, and you will experience the agreeable comfort of the Arctic cheek ornament. After this, get a dozen railway trucks tackled together, and load them with large and small tow-boats, scaffold-poles, a marquee, three or four dead oxen, the contents of a fishmonger's stall and of a small rag-shop, and then harness all your family, and draw the trucks on the rails from Alford to

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

Boston, with a few dogs to help, and thus you will have a very close resemblance to an Eskimo family travelling in winter with their effects over the frozen ice. As I have formed one of the haulers on such an expedition, I speak from personal experience."

Writing to his brother George, he says :

"Do you know that the Eskimo took me for a son of Cain, probably Mahujael, for they said on my visit that in the first family in the world two brothers quarrelled, and the one killed the other, and the murderer had to wander away, and they concluded that the white men who now came to meet them were probably sons of the murderer."

Several years later, referring to these Eskimo, he wrote :

"Both the Rev. Mr. Canham and myself often showed the Eskimo the *Illustrated London News*, when, on meeting with an elephant, they would recognize it, apparently by its trunk, exclaiming 'Kaleh!' as an exclamation of surprise. The interpreter, an Eskimo, who speaks English well, told me that they knew the animal, because, though not now alive in their country, they thought it was not long since it was so from finding its body or skeleton. As elephant bodies are known to have been found on the Siberian coasts, it is still less strange that they should be found near the Mackenzie, for the current sets eastward from Behring's Strait. The bodies might, however, lie embedded in the ice for thousands of years without decomposition, and may have been floated hither at the time of the flood."

Mr. Bompas gives an amusing account of the food he ate, but from the description, how disagreeable it must have been ! Bishop Reeve made a visit in 1892 to a tribe of Eskimo, known as Huskies, eastward along the shore of the Mackenzie River.

"The men were all out hunting whales," he wrote, "but the women and children soon came around and gazed at the strange white man. In the evening the men came in. They

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

had had a successful day's hunt, and hauled home many whales. The whales they catch here are white whales, averaging from eight to fifteen feet in length, and very stout. These they cut up into about six pieces. Then they skin these pieces, and put the fat or blubber into bags, and hang up the meat to dry, first cutting it into slices. This is the work of the women. The fins and tails seem to be considered delicacies, and are eaten raw. Some of the fat and meat is stowed away in caches for winter use. These caches are small holes in the ground, about five feet deep, sometimes lined with logs, but generally without any lining except the frost. The whale meat becomes very strong after being in these a while in the summer, and then it is ready to eat. One day, sitting in one of the tents, while the Huskies were having one of their many meals, I was given a delicious piece of fin—at least, by the way the natives were devouring it, I thought it must be delicious. I cut off a very small piece and put it into my mouth. The Huskies were watching to see how I would like it. I slipped the rest into my pocket, and after a while slyly got that piece out of my mouth. I suppose they thought I had eaten some, but I had not, and I nearly lost my dinner in the bargain. The thought of that delicious whale-fin haunted me for days; but then it was raw, and had not been pickled in a cache for several days."

For a time things went very well with Mr. Bompas, and he was allowed to move from place to place and teach the simple truths of the Gospel as far as he was able. But the cruel conjurers, or medicine-men, were watching him with suspicious eyes. They did not like the man to be in their midst with the new teaching, and they therefore determined to get rid of him. Now the Eskimo have a great dread of evil spirits. So one day the conjurers made the startling announcement that evil spirits were in the camp, and that the white man was the cause of them. They determined,

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

therefore, to drive them out, and also to drive out the missionary from their midst. Mr. Bompas was trying to sleep in one of the houses when the medicine-men began to dance and conjure about him. Finding it impossible to get any rest, Mr. Bompas went outside, and there rolled himself up in his blanket. The conjurers followed him, and continued their diabolical noise. "Only those," says Bishop Stringer, "who have seen the Eskimo conjuring dance can realize how wild and savage it is, and how desolate a feeling it brings to one not accustomed to it."

For a while they continued the noise, and several times they jumped upon the missionary in order to enforce their meaning, but the Heavenly Father was watching, and delivered His faithful servant. After a while the medicine-men said they had accomplished their purpose, and would let the white man live.

But Mr. Bompas did not put much dependence on these words, and knew that at any time they might turn upon him and tear him to pieces. This they attempted to do not long after. It happened, when the ice had gone out of the Mackenzie River, the Eskimo began to move up-stream to trade with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort McPherson, taking the missionary with them. It was a voyage of 250 miles, and much ice was encountered. For days they made slow progress, and laboured hard. Then they became angry with one another, and, stirred by the jealous medicine-men, also cast threatening glances upon the white man in their midst. They imagined that in some way he was the cause of all their trouble, and angry glances were followed by threatening gestures, and Mr. Bompas realized the situation was most critical. One night, after a day of unusually hard work—when little progress had been made—the natives became so hostile that Mr. Bompas feared they would take his life ere morning. But, notwithstanding the impending

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

danger, the faithful servant committed himself to the Father's keeping, and, wearied out, soon fell asleep.

His great friend among the Eskimo was the old chief, Shipataitook by name, who had at the first invited him to visit them, offered the missionary the use of his camp, and entertained and fed him with the greatest kindness and cordiality. He had taken such a fancy to the brave young white man that he could not see him murdered without making an effort to save him. He had heard the threatening words, and when the plotters were about to fall upon their victim, he told them to wait, as he had something to tell them before they proceeded farther. Then he began a strange story which, falling upon the ears of the naturally superstitious natives, had a great effect. He told them he had a remarkable dream the night before. They had moved up the river, and were almost at Fort McPherson; and as they approached they saw the banks lined with the Hudson's Bay Company's men and Indians, all armed ready to shoot them down in the boats if they did not have the white man with them. When this story was told, all plotting ceased; and in the morning, when Mr. Bompas awoke, he found no longer angry glances cast upon him, but the natives were attentive in their care.

On June 14 the ice left them, and the river became clear, and without more detention they continued on their way, "and arrived safely, by God's help," says Mr. Bompas, "at Peel's River Fort on June 18, about midnight."

Here a most hearty welcome was given him by Mr. Andrew Flett, the officer in charge of the Fur Company's post, and of him Mr. Bompas wrote in the following words:

"His influence over the Eskimo, as well as the Indians, has been very beneficial, for the whole time of his residence among them—now nearly ten years—and by consistent and honourable conduct, as well as by his attention to the duties

## IN DANGER AMONG THE ESKIMO

of religion, he has done much to assist the work of the missionary. Of his personal kindness to myself I have had much experience during the past twelve months."

In this beautiful heart-felt testimony to the work and kindness of one man we see how the missionary was cheered in his great labour by earnest words of sympathy and an ever-open door of hospitality, where he could rest from his great journeys. To Mrs. Flett also Mr. Bompas was greatly indebted, for in the study of the Louchieux language she gave him much material aid. Upon the lay members of the Church of Christ devolves a noble work in cheering the hearts and upholding the hands of their leaders in their strenuous battle against the powers of darkness.

Never again was Mr. Bompas able to visit that band of Eskimo along the Mackenzie River, but he ever held them in mind, and often his heart went out to them, and he declared that "there was nothing warmer than the grasp of a Husky's hand."

His visit had not been in vain. He had lived among them, shared their humble camps, and, though they could not understand him, nor fully comprehend his message, yet they could understand his love for them, and long years after they spoke of him in the highest terms.

## CHAPTER V

### ESKIMO LIFE

"SQUATTED on a polar-bear skin, with a deer-skin for a desk," was the way in which Mr. Bompas wrote the following interesting description of the Eskimo he visited. It was written by the camp-fire, under the open sky, with the Eskimo all sitting around, working at their canoes, nets, fishing-lines, bows and arrows. Often they would thrust their inquisitive faces over his paper, asking over and over again what he was writing about.

"This race of Eskimo inhabit the coast of the Arctic Sea at the north of the great River Mackenzie. In spring and fall they ascend the river in their skin boats for about 200 miles, and trade fox and bear skins for tobacco and iron kettles, etc., at the nearest post of the Hudson's Bay Company on Peel's River.

"In person and stature the race is a fine one. The men are, many of them, tall and powerful, some more than six feet, the average stature exceeding, I should say, that in England. The women are smaller, probably of about the same average stature as English women. The complexion and features are not unlike the English. Several of the Eskimo, both men and women, had I met them at home in European costume, I should hardly have taken for foreigners. Others, again, have a more distinguishing cast of countenance. The men's hair is cut short across the forehead. The face is square, forehead prominent, eyebrows horizontal, nose straight, mouth large. Some have a short beard, but most are without it. They

## ESKIMO LIFE

have a circular tonsure on the top of the head, similar to that of Romish priests, and the men wear bones through their cheeks, intended for ornament. A hole is bored through each cheek near the lower lip as soon as a youth approaches manhood, and through this is thrust a large button of ivory (walrus tusk), and the ambition of an Eskimo is to have fixed to this white button half a blue bead of the size of a man's finger-end. To possess one of these glass beads, which I suppose could be had in England for a penny, they are willing to give two black fox-skins, each of which might sell in England for £50. To drive this advantageous bargain, however, they are obliged to convey their furs many hundred miles along the coast westward towards Behring's Straits, where other tribes of Eskimo are visited by American trading-vessels from the Pacific. This cheek ornament (called *totuk*) is, of course, a great disfigurement. It enlarges the mouth, and causes inconvenience to the wearer both in speaking and eating. Such, however, are the demands of Eskimo fashion.

"The women have also a peculiar custom of wearing large bundles of hair on the top and sides of their head. It perhaps can hardly be properly called false hair, as it probably once had connection with the head which carries it. But the present want of continuity is manifest, as the large bundles are often laid aside for a time at night. I presume that all the hair which ever grew on the head is carefully preserved and added to the stock, as it seems to increase with the age of the wearer. This is also an inconvenient and disfiguring custom, but probably the Eskimo women would consider some of our home fashions more absurd.

"The dress of the Eskimo is handsome. It consists of shirt, coat, and trousers, usually of deer-skin, and fringed with the long hair of the wolf and wolverine. Their favourite head-dress is the skin of a wolverine's head, surrounded with blue beads, over which is worn the hood of the coat, with a

## ESKIMO LIFE

wide fringe of wolf or wolverine hair. Their boots are of otter and seal skin. The sheep and musk-rat also occasionally contribute their skins towards the clothing of an Eskimo. The clothes are, of course, made by the women, and not without considerable taste, ornamented with blue beads, of which they are very fond, and strips of the white hair of the deer being sewn into the brown by way of braiding. The coat is shaped like a shirt. Sometimes the hair is turned inside towards the skin of the wearer, and this affords greater warmth. The animal's skin which is thus turned outside is then dressed so as to be quite white, and, when well beaded, makes a showy appearance.

“The dress of the women is very similar to that of the men, the coat and trousers of the same material, the chief difference being in the shape of the hood, which, in the case of the women, is made larger, to enclose their extra store of hair, and thus better protect their face. The women also wear no boots, but the trousers and shoes are all in one.

“The Eskimo is seldom seen without a large butcher's knife in his hand, which, in case of a quarrel, he unhappily uses too often to stab his neighbour. His weapon for hunting on land is the bow, as guns have not yet come into much use among them. On the water fish-spears of various construction are his constant companions.

“The Eskimo bow is very strong, and its elasticity is increased by being backed with lines of twisted sinew. The arrows are well made and feathered, headed with bone or iron according to the game intended to be shot. The fish-hooks are generally of bone, and sometimes baited as at home. But for some fish no bait at all is used. The shank of the hook of white bone is carved into the shape of a small fish, and is thus mistaken for a bait. It is armed with a small iron barb which secures the prey. The fish-spears are pointed with iron, and lie on the outside of their canoes. One spear with three

## ESKIMO LIFE

prongs, like a hay-fork or trident, is used for hunting muskrats in the river, and is thrown from the canoe out of a wooden handle or rest. The fishing-lines, and even nets, are made often of whalebone, as also are partridge-snares, etc. In fact, whalebone is used chiefly for tying and fastening the canoe frames, spear-heads, etc.; the only other kind of line they have, made of twisted sinew, being not well fitted for use in the water. Whalebone seems a strange material to form into fishing-nets, but it is split thin and cleverly netted to the length of several yards, and about one yard in width. The other lines, made of sinew, are very neatly plaited to the length of 100 yards or more, forming a very strong fine cord, used for fishing-nets, bow-springs, and various purposes.

“The construction of boats or canoes is part of an Eskimo’s employment in spring. The boat or canoe frame is first made out of a log of drift-wood, split up by means of bone wedges into the required lengths. Each is carefully shaped, smoothed, and finished by what are called in this country crooked knives—that is, a knife with a blade slightly bent, and used for shaving wood instead of a smoothing-plane. The canoe is then covered with otter-skin and the boat with seal-skin. The shape of an Eskimo canoe is well known. It is about twelve feet long, and is entirely covered with otter-skin, except the small hole in the centre in which the Eskimo sits with his double and single paddles, and spears laid carefully in ivory fittings on the outside of the canoe.

“The boat is from twenty to thirty feet long, and covered with seal-skin, which is very strong, and forms a most serviceable vessel. The wooden framework on which the skin is stretched appears slight, but is securely fastened. This is an open boat propelled by two oars, and, when the wind is favourable, by a sail. As the men travel generally in their canoes for the sake of hunting, it is chiefly the women and children who remain in the boat, which conveys the tents,

## ESKIMO LIFE

furniture, utensils, etc. As the women row but very leisurely, the progress made is rather slow ; but the men are employed in hunting, and time is not often of much importance to an Eskimo.

“The dwellings of the Eskimo consist in winter of snow-houses built on the ice, in summer of deer-skin tents, and in the autumn, or fall, of wooden huts, partly underground, and covered with earth. The chief home of the Eskimo is on the ice. Here he passes at least half the year, and it is to this that his habits are chiefly adapted. In building his snow-house he shows a wonderful readiness, which I can compare to nothing but the skill of a bee in making its honeycomb. In the Eskimo country the fallen snow on the wide river-mouths, after being driven by the wind, becomes caked or frozen so as to have considerable tenacity, and at the same time to be readily cut with the knife. The Eskimo then, with his large butcher's knife, cuts out square blocks of this frozen snow as it lies on the face of the river, of the size of ordinary blocks of stone masonry, and with these he builds the house perfectly circular, of the shape of a beehive. With no tool but the knife, which is used as a trowel, he works with surprising rapidity, and the whole is arched over without any support from beneath, except perhaps a single pole during the construction. Any architect or mason at home would, I suppose, be astonished to witness the work, and might fail in imitating it, for without line or plummet and square, or measurement, the circular span and arch are exactly preserved, and the whole is finished in the space of a single hour. The work proceeds as if by magic, the snow forming stone and mortar both in one, for each block, when laid to its neighbour, adheres and freezes to it so as to form one solid mass, while the least touch of the knife shapes it and removes any superfluous juttings. The weight of a single building block is just such as a man can readily lift. In building the

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#### A SNOW-HOUSE MADE ON THE MARCH

These horses, have the advantage of costing nothing, but time and labour to make. The "bricks" are large slabs of frozen snow cut in such a shape that they converge until they form a perfect dome. A hole large enough for a man to crawl in on his stomach is left as a doorway. The diggs are the draught animals of the frozen North; they are hard and untiring workers, but of very irritable temper. Their usual fare is fish.

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## ESKIMO LIFE

walls of the house the work is simple, but in arching over the roof it would seem impossible to proceed without support or framework below. In fact, however, a single staff only is placed under a block added to the roof just until the next block is placed in juxtaposition. The adherence of the two blocks is then sufficient to prevent any danger of falling, the staff is removed, and the same thing repeated with the ensuing block, until the whole is completed by working the tiers of snow spirally.

“An Eskimo in winter travelling builds a small snow-house every night for his lodging, but when encamped for any length of time he makes one of considerable dimensions. One in which I lodged was about twelve or fourteen feet in diameter, and about nine feet high in the centre from the level of the ice. Half of the interior is occupied by the bed, which is raised about three feet from the ice on snow covered with boards, on which are laid ample deer-skin rugs for bedding; over these are again deer-skin blankets for covering.

“Opposite the bed is the small, low entrance, shaped like that into a dog-kennel, through which you have to creep on all-fours. This at night is covered up with a block of snow. On each side of the entrance (inside) is a shelf of snow, of the same height as the bed, on which is placed a large black wooden dish or trough forming the lamp. A little moss along the side of this dish forms the lamp-wick, fed by grease, which is constantly replenished from small lumps of fat hung over the flame, and which drop grease into the dish.

“It seems a strange anomaly, that the coldest inhabited country should be that in which fires are considered superfluous. The heat given out by the lamps is certainly considerable, but still, the camps are cold. The temperature must of course be constantly below freezing-point, or the snow would melt. The Eskimo, however, do not feel the cold as we do. Their hands and faces are of a more plump and fleshy form than ours, and

## ESKIMO LIFE

the circulation of their blood is warmer, for their hands felt quite hot to the touch while sitting without exercise in their freezing camps. An Eskimo's chief resource against the cold is the amount of fuel he consumes internally in the form of whale and seal fat used as food; and the provision of these large animals in the polar sea for the use of these few scattered savages is a remarkable proof of God's providential care over the meanest of His creatures.

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“The Eskimo generally cooks meat or fish twice a day—once about noon, and again the last thing before sleeping at night. If hungry at other times, he will eat a fish or piece of meat raw—that is, frozen; and this is not so disgusting as you might suppose, for the effect of freezing meat or fish is something the same as cooking it—that is, to harden the fibre and dry up the superfluous moisture. Even Europeans in this country sometimes eat a piece of frozen fish uncooked, and find it good and wholesome.

“When an Eskimo visits a neighbour's house, before he has been sitting long food is always offered him—generally a frozen fish, which he evidently eats with much relish. Sometimes it is a small piece of frozen deer's meat, or, as a great delicacy, a lump of whale or seal fat. If he happens to come in at the time of cooking, a portion of what is cooked is set before him. This seems to be the rule of Eskimo hospitality.

“As soon as the spring thaw sets in, about the middle of May, the Eskimo exchanges his snow-house for a deer-skin tent or lodge, with which he soon after removes to the river-bank, where he lives by fishing or hunting deer before proceeding to the sea for the seal and whale fishery. In the autumn, or fall of the year, the cold sets in early, and the deer-skin tent becomes uncomfortable before the ice and snow are thick and hard enough for building snow-houses. At this time the Eskimo build, or rather excavate, huts in the river-bank,

## ESKIMO LIFE

which they ceil and cover with logs and earth. They close up at night the small entrance with skins, and rely for light and warmth chiefly on their lamps. A small window of thin skin or parchment is made in the roof; but as the short days of December approach the sun hardly shows itself, and daylight is but scanty. In the snow-house a block of clear ice inserted in the front forms a beautiful window, and as spring approaches, and the daylight is perpetual, a cheerful contrast is presented to the constant gloom and darkness of an Arctic winter.

"This is a country of contrast. In winter the gloom is such that daylight seems a passing stranger. In spring the glare is so great that the eye is sore and inflamed, if not blinded by it. In winter the thermometer will stand about 100 degrees below freezing-point, and in summer, in the sun, at least about 100 degrees above it.

"An Eskimo travelling with his family and effects in winter affords quite an exciting display. About a dozen sledges or trucks are harnessed together, and on these are laid a very miscellaneous assortment of property and provision. Boat-frame, canoes, tents, tent-poles, and boards, deer-skin bedding and blankets, several whole deers' carcasses, some hundreds of frozen fish pressed into a solid mass, tent furniture, utensils, clothes, fishing-nets and implements, with many other seemingly needless stores, are all laden promiscuously on the train, which is propelled by men, women, and dogs, all hauling by lines along the sides of the sledges, and assisted, when the wind is favourable, by a sail.

"The arrival of a large number of such sledge-trains at camp one after another is like so many railway-trains coming in, for the runnels of the sledges are covered first with bone, and this is again carefully coated with ice, so that the sledges run on the frozen snows like trucks on a railway. The sledge-train which I assisted in drawing myself consisted, I believe, of fourteen trucks, hauled by four men and boys, three women,

## ESKIMO LIFE

and five dogs. More than a dozen such trains reached the camp at which I was staying. In spring the sledges are all stowed away on the river-bank, and the boat forms the means of conveying the Eskimo's effects during the summer months.

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“Considering the smallness of the number of the Eskimo band we have been describing, and that no others are to be found within about 100 miles, a wonderful provision has indeed been made by God's good providence for their sustenance. This bounty seems intended on purpose to banish the thought that these distant wanderers, condemned to such severity of climate, are outcasts from the Divine care.

“In fact, both the power and goodness of God are in some respect shown in this country more especially than in others; for while sometimes we are constrained to say, in seeing the vast expanse of snow and the thickness of the ice, ‘Who can stand before His cold?’ yet the greater is the marvel when ‘He sendeth forth His word and melteth them; He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow.’ The Eskimo know not to thank their Heavenly Father who gives them their daily supply of food, and though they have heard with gladness and thankfulness the short story of Gospel truth which alone I have been able as yet to communicate to them, yet it requires the same mighty Power which melts their Arctic snows and thaws their frozen ocean to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

“With respect to the character and habits of the Eskimo, it is best to speak reservedly. They are certainly kind and hospitable, civil and obliging, skilful and clever in handicraft. I fear it must be added that they are liable to fits of passion and sulkiness, that they are lazy and sleepy, and addicted to lying, stealing, and even stabbing. Over their other shortcomings it is best to draw a veil.

“They practise heathen dances, songs, and conjuring, and

## ESKIMO LIFE

this seems to be the greater part of their religion. Their dance, however, is a mere shuffling of the feet, their song is but a monotonous yell, and their conjuring consists only in yelling and beating the tambourine, and throwing the body into various distortions and attitudes. They possess also, most of them, in a bag, a collection of small, miscellaneous articles, which are intended, I suppose, beneficially to influence their hunting by way of spells and charms. Beyond this I cannot find that they have much religion remaining among them. They know of an evil spirit, named Atti, which seems to symbolize cold and death, and which they seek to exorcise or appease by their charms and spells.

"Their only idea of a good spirit is connected with the sun, as the source of warmth and life; and, considering the severity of their climate, it is not wonderful that their natural religion should symbolize the powers of good and evil by warmth and cold. If they have any idea of heaven, it is that of a perpetual spring, and the name they give to the ministers who bring them tidings of the world above is 'Children of the Sun.' I have not found that they have knowledge of a future life. They say the old Eskimo used to know these things, but the young ones have forgotten them. They possess, however, a tradition of the Creation, and of the descent of mankind from a single pair."

## CHAPTER VI

### OUT OF THE NORTH

ONE day when Mr. Bompas was walking along the Yukon River, he returned to Fort Yukon, and found there a letter awaiting him. It was from England from the Church Missionary Society, asking him to go all the way to London to be made Bishop of the vast northern Diocese of Athabasca, which was to be formed. Mr. Bompas did not want to be a Bishop. He preferred to live the life of a humble missionary among the Indians whom he so dearly loved.

In July, 1873, he set his face homewards with the express purpose of turning the Church Missionary Society from the idea. It was a long journey that lay ahead of him, fraught with many dangers and difficulties. The clerk at Fort Yukon, in charge of the American Fur Company's post, kindly supplied him with provisions and with two Indian lads, who had volunteered for the trip. Soon all was ready, and then the start was made up the Porcupine River; and after two weeks of hard and persevering labour, he reached the Rocky Mountains. Here the Indians left him to return to Fort Yukon, and alone and on foot the missionary began his journey across the mountains. Three days was he in accomplishing the task, and in a furious snowstorm, "which rendered the mountains almost as white as in winter," reached Fort McPherson, Peel River, on August 6.

What it means to cross these mountains may be learned from the terrible experience of Bishop Stringer during the

## OUT OF THE NORTH

fall of 1909. It is best given in the words of Rev. C. E. Whittaker, stationed at Fort McPherson :

“ After the Bishop’s return from his Eskimo visitation, he outfitted for crossing the mountains by the well-known Rat River and McDougall’s Pass route with Mr. Johnson, who is on his way to Chicago, after eleven years’ service in the north. They had a sufficient crew, leaving here September 1, and a good Peterborough canoe ; but on the fifth day one of their Indian men was taken dangerously ill, and he had to be sent home and more help procured. By this nearly a week was lost, and the weather becoming colder, the water got very low in the mountain streams. However, on September 20 they crossed the Divide. The two men attacked an unknown proposition alone. The battle with ice began the first day, but, hoping to find more and clearer water in Bell River, they kept on. The upper reaches of the Bell were easily navigated, but once through the mountains, the current became very slack, and the ice again hindered them. They cut heavy birch clubs to smash the ice, hoping to reach the Porcupine about forty-five miles from the summit. They were stalled, and had to cache their canoe and baggage. What was to be done now ? La Pierre’s house was close by, but abandoned. There was not a known Indian camp within 100 miles. Old Crow or Rampart House might be reached in time if they had supplies, but with only three days’ rations it was unthinkable. Their starting-point, Fort McPherson, lay beyond the mountains, and the snow was already deep, and neither of them knew the trail. This last only seemed not impossible, and they decided to undertake it. Continuing down the Bell on foot, through the rough willows and deep snow, they struck the mouth of the La Chute River and followed it upstream for several days, killing here and there a few ducks and spruce grouse to eke out their scanty fare. At Fool’s River, coming in from the north, they missed the trail, and

## OUT OF THE NORTH

spent a whole week wallowing through deep snow and deeper fog in this river and on the mountains near it. Returning to the mouth, they spent three days making snow-shoes and cutting up moccasins for webbing. Again ascending the La Chute, they climbed the Height of Land, and, working by compass, they crossed three distinct Divides before reaching an east-flowing stream. They saw one sheep, and once some caribou, but at too great a distance, and going fast. They were now living on one meal a day, and that meal was less than one quarter of an average meal. For instance, at one time four red squirrels and a spoonful each of flour and rice fed them three days; another day they had a leg of ptarmigan each. They tried eating moccasin leather, and ended on *messinke* boots or *muckalucks*, which are made of raw seal-skin. These are found very nourishing. Food being so scarce, their strength failed and their progress was slow. At times the fog was so dense that they could scarcely see a step ahead, and more than once they trod on the verge of a precipice. Then they had to make long detours, and so they continued day after day, some nights sleeping on the mountains without fire, but generally in some creek-bed with a few willows, sleeping from very weariness and exhaustion. Once the Bishop said to Mr. Johnson: 'It is curious, but there is ever rising up in my mind the words, "Go, labour on, 'tis not for naught."' And Mr. Johnson replied: 'It is curious indeed, for in my mind there constantly repeats itself that other hymn, "To the work, to the work! ye are servants of God."' And so, though famished, and worn, and fog-bound, and never knowing how far they had yet to go to safety, they were ever buoyed up with a strong hope of ultimate escape. When they finally descended an eastern slope, and knew that they were at least past the maze of fog, a thrill of assurance gave them renewed energy, and they followed the bed of a small river until they came into the Peel,

## OUT OF THE NORTH

twenty miles above this post. Here they saw snow-shoe tracks, the first signs of any human habitation, an Indian having lately passed by that way trapping. Early next morning they reached an encampment, and they afterwards declared it was worth coming back to see the kindness and hospitality with which they were received."

Starting again by canoe, Mr. Bompas, with two other Indian lads, reached Fort Simpson, a distance of 800 miles, on September 2, "after three weeks of fatiguing towing." Pushing on his way, after a difficult journey, contending with the cold and swift stream, he reached Portage la Loche on October 8, having travelled 2,600 miles since July, "and all, except about 300 to 400 miles, against a strong current."

Owing to the cold weather he was forced to remain at the Portage for ten days, and when the swamps were sufficiently frozen, he "started on foot through the woods to Buffalo Lake in company with two servants of the Hudson's Bay Company." Reaching the lake, he travelled with some difficulty on the fresh ice around the margin, and at the farther end found a camp of Indians, who guided him to Isle à la Crosse. Here a detention of ten days was made, and then he left with dogs and sledge for Green Lake, with three employés of the Hudson's Bay Company. The weather becoming milder, they were forced "to cross one of the intervening rivers on a raft."

From Green Lake they entered "on the plain country of Saskatchewan," and after a walk of five days reached Fort Carlton. While here Mr. Bompas visited the Prince Albert Settlement on the banks of the North Saskatchewan, and says: "This settlement is the first that has been formed by the immigrants in that neighbourhood, and it bears every sign of increasing prosperity and success."

From Carlton House, Touchwood Hills was reached with

## OUT OF THE NORTH

a horse and sledge. Here, through the kindness of the post-master, he was furnished with a carriage and dogs, and, after a journey of 400 or 500 miles, reached the Red River Settlement.

"I enjoyed the kind hospitality of the Bishop of Rupert's Land and Archdeacon Cowley," wrote Mr. Bompas, "and was much interested in seeing the progress of the mission work in the colony. I reached, by God's good providence, the first houses of the settlement on the last evening of the old year, and after nearly six months' travel in the wilds, I awoke on New Year's morning to a new life of civilization and society."

It is said that when Mr. Bompas reached the episcopal residence and inquired for Bishop Machray, the servant mistook him for a tramp (in his rough travelling clothes), and told him his master was very busy, and could not be disturbed. So insistent was the stranger that the servant went to the Bishop's study and told him a tramp was at the door determined to see him.

"He is hungry, no doubt," replied the Bishop; "take him into the kitchen and give him something to eat."

Accordingly Mr. Bompas was ushered in, and was soon calmly enjoying a plateful of soup, at the same time urging that he might see the master of the house. Hearing the talking, and wondering who the insistent stranger could be, the Bishop appeared in the doorway, and great was his astonishment to see before him the veteran missionary.

"Bompas!" he cried, as he rushed forward, "is it you?"

We can well realize how Mr. Bompas must have enjoyed this little scene, and the surprise of the good and noble Bishop of Rupert's Land.

We will let Mr. Bompas describe the rest of the journey:

"From Manitoba the dog-train was exchanged for the stage-coach for Moorhead, the terminus of the American

## OUT OF THE NORTH

railway towards the north-west. In this the cold was piercing and freezing, even though the travellers were wrapped in buffalo-skins. The poor horses were utterly exhausted in drawing the vehicle about fifteen miles through the snow, and though they were changed thus often, yet at last the journey had to be suspended during a storm, and in the end the horses, though changed every stage, occupied a week in performing the same distance as that travelled by the dogs in four days, more easily and pleasantly—that is, 160 miles.

“The journey was next continued by railway, but from the fires not being lighted in the cars the cold was intense, and the train was shortly brought to a standstill in a snow-drift. Though two locomotives were tugging at it, no progress could be made till the guards with shovels disengaged the carriage-wheels from the snow which entangled them.

“In Canada the journey by stage-coach was resumed. This was shortly after overturned into a ditch by the wayside while scaling a snow-drift. The outside passengers were deposited in an adjoining field, where, to be sure, the snow provided them with a sufficiently soft bed to fall on. The inside passengers had a more uncomfortable shaking.

“The journey was next proceeded with by train to Montreal, before approaching which the cars left the rails, causing some apprehension and delay, which might have been increased had not the guard been provided with a powerful winch for the purpose of replacing the carriages on the track.

“From Montreal, following the Grand Trunk Railway to Portland, I embarked in the steamship *Scandinavian*, of the Allan line. At starting, the masts, yards, and deck of the steamer presented a woeful appearance, from being thickly coated and hung with ice, yet 200 miles were made the first day. By the constantly increasing head-wind, however, the daily speed was decreased down to 100 miles per day, at which rate the captain thought it prudent to shut off half

## OUT OF THE NORTH

the steam, and diminish the speed to a minimum, for fear that something should give way in the plunging vessel. After thirteen days, under the careful seamanship of Captain Smith, Liverpool was reached on February 13, in the safe-keeping of a protecting Providence."

This account is given to show some of the difficulties the traveller experienced in the early days in his trips to and from England. Mr. Bompas, after this journey, decided in favour of the dog-team.

"On the whole," he said, "the dogs may be counted to hold their own in competing with horse-flesh or steam, whether on land or water."

At last the soldier was home from the front, the hero among his friends, and after the years of hardships he might have enjoyed a well-earned rest. But his thoughts were far away across the ocean in his vast field of labour, and the voice of the children of the wild was ever urging him to make haste. The restraints, conventionalities, and luxuries of civilized life worried him; the narrowness of the streets was unbearable, and he longed for the smell of the camp-fire, the free, fresh air of the North, the great untamed streams, the snow-capped mountains, and his dusky flock.

During his stay in England, Mr. Bompas had many commissions to fulfil, which occupied much of his time. There were purchases to make for people in North-West Canada, including six gold watches for as many female residents, and a pair of corsets for another. Obtaining the latter caused much worry to the missionary. But he was never known to back down, and finally the purchase was made. Is it any wonder that he preferred the life among the Indians, who worried so little concerning the wherewithal they should be clothed?

Mr. Bompas was unsuccessful in dissuading the Church Missionary Society from carrying out their plan, and on May 3 he and John McLean were elevated to the Episcopate. The

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WINTER TRAVELLING. A MISSIONARY'S INDIAN HELPER

This picture shows a sled loaded up, with the dogs harnessed, and the Indian driver standing by them.

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## OUT OF THE NORTH

consecration took place in the parish church of St. Mary's, Lambeth, Dr. Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury, being assisted by Bishop Jackson of London, Bishop Hughes of St. Asaph, and Bishop Anderson, late of Rupert's Land. The sermon was preached by the last-named prelate, who referred to the two new dioceses of Saskatchewan and Athabasca :

“To-day the noble plan will be consummated by the consecration of two more Bishops. One will preside over the Church in the western portion of the land, labouring among the Indians of the plains, and along the valley of that river whose source is in the Rocky Mountains, the River Saskatchewan. The other will have the northern diocese as his own, along yet mightier lakes, and with rivers which roll down an immense volume and discharge themselves into the Arctic Ocean.”

After some words addressed to Bishop McLean, the charge which was given to Bishop Bompas concluded thus :

“You have been there for more than eight years, in labours abundant, and your love has not lessened nor your zeal slackened. You have brought home, as the fruit of your labour, portions of Scripture, prayers and hymns, in seven different dialects or tongues. You are ready to take the precious treasure out with you—the translations printed and prepared by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. You have also one complete Gospel, that of St. Mark, which the British and Foreign Bible Society has enabled you to carry through the press.

“But you left good treasure behind, in souls warmed with the love of Christ and softened by the spirit of grace. You have the hearts of the Indians and the Eskimo.”

## CHAPTER VII

### BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

BISHOP BOMPAS was not to return alone to his great work, for a few days after his consecration, May 7, he was united in marriage to Miss Charlotte Selina Cox by Bishop Anderson, assisted by the Rev. John Robins, Vicar of St. Peter's, Notting Hill, and the Rev. Henry Gordon, Rector of Harting.

Mrs. Bompas was a woman of much refinement and devotion to the mission cause. Her father, Joseph Cox, M.D., of Montague Square, London, was ordered to Naples for his health. During this trip, in which he was accompanied by his family, his daughter, afterwards Mrs. Bompas, acquired that love for the Italian language which ever after continued to be a great source of pleasure to her. No matter where she went in the northern wilds of Canada, she carried her Dante with her, which she studied, with much delight, in the original.

During her stay at Naples she attended her first ball, given by the British Ambassador, and met the King of Naples (the notorious King "Bomba"), and always afterwards remembered his remark in Italian, "What have you done to amuse yourself at the carnival?"

When quite young, Mrs. Bompas had little interest in missions, and says: "My brother, who was Vicar of Bishop's Tawton, Devonshire, used to hold missionary meetings at the Vicarage, and I remember thinking them the dullest affairs, and the clergymen who addressed us, and whom my brother, perhaps, would introduce as the distinguished missionary from

## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

Japan or Honolulu, I looked upon as the most dismal old slow coaches it was anyone's unhappy fate to attend to."

Her interest at length became aroused, and later, when the martyrdom of Bishop Patteson startled the Christian world, she became much excited, and reached, as she tells us, "the enthusiastic stage when we resolve to become missionaries ourselves, and are all impatient to be off anywhere—to China, Japan, or to the Indians of the Mackenzie River."

It was at this period she cast in her lot with the Bishop of Athabasca, and became "consecrated to mission work."

The Bishop and Mrs. Bompas, on May 12, 1874, set their faces towards their great field of labour. Friends and loved ones came to bid them farewell, among whom was Bishop Anderson, late of Rupert's Land, who presented the Bishop with a beautiful paten for his cathedral in the new Diocese of Athabasca. The good steamship *China*, of the Cunard Line, received them, and soon she was cutting her way through the water bound for New York. Consecrated, married, and sailed all in one week! Such was the record of the Bishop, who declared it was the hardest week he ever experienced. Never again was he to look upon the shores of his native land, or visit the scenes of childhood; the northern wilds of Canada needed him, and there he remained till the last.

Ahead of them lay the long journey of two months by open boat to Fort Simpson. At Winnipeg they missed the boats of the Hudson's Bay Company, and after some difficulty another was obtained, in the hope of overtaking the former. It was a "brilliant, cloudless" June morning when they crossed the prairie towards St. John's Cathedral, and sighted the "river, looking still and silvery in the morning light," and found the boat, their home for weeks to come, "moored just below St. John's College." Farewells were said, the boat pushed off, and they moved on their way, leaving the Bishop

## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

of Rupert's Land waving his hand from the bank of the stream.

It was a tedious journey, as day after day they glided forward. Not only was the heat intense, but the swarms of mosquitoes proved a great annoyance.

"I had come prepared for intense cold," wrote Mrs. Bompas, "and we were destined to endure tropical heat. All up the Saskatchewan, Stanley, and English Rivers the banks slope down like a funnel, and the July and August sun scorches with vertical rays the heads of the travellers. We were seated in open boats, each with a crew of ten or twelve men, who spread our sails when the wind was fair, and took them in when the wind failed us. Eighty-six was, some of those days, our average temperature, and I had come provided with the thickest of serge dresses, as none of my friends had realized the possibility of anything but frost and cold in these northern regions. Besides this, we had to encounter swarms of mosquitoes, crowding thick around us, penetrating our boots and stockings, and invading our Robabou soup and pemmican, etc. I remember the bliss it was in those days in camping-time to escape from the rest of the party, and, getting rid of boots and stockings, to sit with my feet and legs in the cool water of the river, to soothe the intolerable irritation of the mosquito-bites."

But in the midst of all this there were times of refreshing, and at various places hearty were the greetings that awaited them. One morning they reached St. Andrews, on Red River, and there before them appeared a pretty stone church, with wide, square tower, and a comfortable-looking parsonage-house, with a nice veranda, and a few scattered cottages around. It was a pleasant home scene, and there they found the Vicar, the Rev. John Grisdale (afterwards Bishop of Qu'Appelle), and about sixty others, who had been waiting all the morning to receive them. After luncheon had been

## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

served a little service was held on the veranda, and as they left, the bell of the church rang out a peal of farewell, and all on shore gave a hearty cheer.

All along the way Indians were encountered camped on the bank, and at times a halt was made while the Bishop spoke a few words to them. One night they stopped near a number of natives, and service was held. Among the party was a poor woman totally blind. The Bishop knelt by her side and told her of the blind man in the Gospel story, and repeated to her several passages of Scripture, to which the woman listened with much eagerness, and seemed greatly pleased.

The many long, hard portages formed a great impediment to their progress, and through the scorching heat, fighting myriads of mosquitoes, the provisions had to be carried overland and the boat dragged up the rapids. The Bishop willingly took his share of the labour, and though of great strength, overtaxed himself in lifting a heavy box, and sprained his back, or, rather, re-sprained it, as he had been injured some weeks before in hauling at the boat. He suffered much agony from the sprain, which troubled him somewhat during the rest of his life.

An incident happened on this trip which serves to show the Bishop's forgetfulness of self when others were to be considered. A young Indian lost his hat overboard, and, being unable to obtain it, suffered much from the heat as he toiled at the oar. The Bishop, seeing his discomfort, at once placed his own hat upon the Indian's head, and insisted that he should wear it. The sight of the native with the flat, broad-brimmed episcopal headgear caused great amusement to the entire company.

There were times of excitement, too, as they moved on their way. We shall let Mrs. Bompas tell of one in her own graphic style :

"It was about 6 o'clock p.m., the sun still high, but a

## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

fresh breeze had set in, and was filling the sail of our boat, and giving us comfort and refreshment after a sultry day. We were beginning to discuss our landing, wondering where our steersman intended us to encamp that night, as all the details are left to his control and management.

“Suddenly, as we were quietly sailing on, an exclamation was made by one of our sailors, and as suddenly all eyes were directed towards a line of thick wood which encircled a bay on our right. It would be impossible to give any idea of the intense eagerness which marked the gaze of our ten men. You must know something of the Indian’s intensity of character, and his love of sport, to be able to understand and appreciate it.

“Our fore-oar man, ‘Charley,’ especially attracted my attention. Such a strange, tawny, heavy face as his was when passive, with long black hair hanging on each side his face, and a disordered attempt at whiskers and moustache; one hand clutching nervously at his oar, and the other shading his eyes; every sinew, almost every nerve, in a state of tension. We longed to ask what object they saw, but scarcely ventured to do so, for silence had overspread our crew, and though apparently much was being discussed, and important matters decided upon, yet it was all done by signs, or in low-whispered accents. At last some conclusion was evidently arrived at. The sail was lowered, and our course altered in the direction of the wood in question. At the same time the Bishop ascertained from one of the men, and whispered to me, the cause of all this excitement—namely, ‘a black bear’!

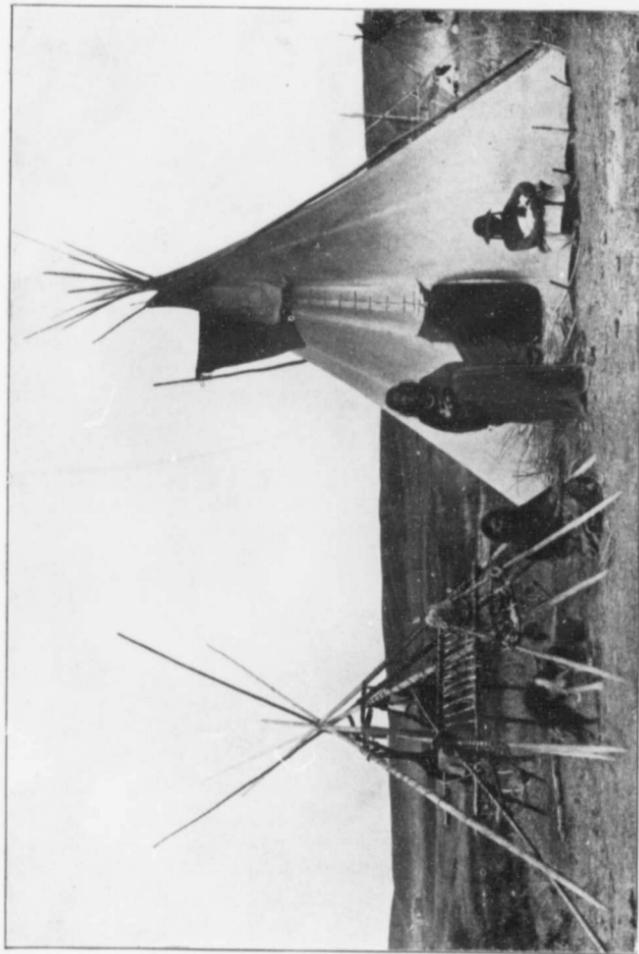
“It needed the quick eye and ear of a Red Indian to detect the bear, if such it was, at the distance we then found ourselves from the wood, and amid the countless shadows of those great Norway pines, or the grotesque forms of aged stumps and stones which edged the wood. For some moments I felt convinced that it was all a mistake, and that our bear would

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*From a photograph by Mr. J. M. Lemmon, Calgary*

#### AN INDIAN ENCAMPMENT

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## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

turn out no more than a 'bare idea'! However, the men had full faith in their hero, though I had none, and so, still in dead silence, we moved steadily on, making for the wood at the exact point where the dark object had at first been visible.

"It was really very striking, the way in which we drew up to shore, and lowered our sail, all with no more sound than would have awakened a sleeping infant. And now two of the men slipped ashore, having first possessed themselves of loaded guns. Others followed, with soft, stealthy footsteps, and all soon disappeared in the mazes of the thick forest.

"One thing I could observe for myself, which laid to rest my doubts as to the fact of the bear having actually been seen—great, spreading paw-prints on the sand. Yes, he had an existence then, poor old Bruin! and had been quietly disporting himself upon the sand that evening, perhaps in pursuit of a little fish for his supper, little thinking, poor beast, of the sumptuous repast for ten hungry men which he was destined to form that very night.

"The part left for us to play at this time was certainly less exciting and less interesting than that of our men. Close to the shore at that time of the evening mosquitoes invariably abound. This evening they positively swarmed, and in addition to them were a number of sand-flies, so small that no veil could keep them out, and almost as vicious as their great-aunts, the mosquitoes. So there we sat, poor, helpless beings! tapping our foreheads and hands to get quit of our buzzing enemies, and thinking longingly of our tents and supper.

"Suddenly there was the sound of a gun fired, which roused our interest, and made us feel as if the game were in earnest. First one, then another report was heard, and after a few moments' interval there arose shouts of triumph, and cries or screams, such as only those Indians can give.

"Our party in the meantime, being weary of the mosquitoes, and naturally by this time somewhat excited by the

## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

matter in hand, had left the boat and gone ashore. Sticks and faggots were collected, and in a few moments a splendid fire was kindled. Around it we closely gathered, thankful for the temporary relief from the buzzing enemies, for no mosquitoes dare invade the region of smoke or fire.

“Soon was heard the sound of approaching footsteps. Tramp, tramp, tramp, as of men marching under some heavy burden, accompanied by the sound of many voices, and soon the party appeared in sight. The two foremost carried a stout pole, to which, with his legs tied together, hung the body of poor Bruin! The men brought up their trophy and laid him down among the ferns, and bluebells, and pretty golden tansy for us to examine. A splendid bear he was, about two years old, very fat, and with hair as sleek and glossy as if—forgive me, Bruin!—he had been accustomed to the use of ‘bear’s grease.’

“Our young French-Canadian, who had shot him, said he had tracked the beast for some distance, and then stood still. In a few moments he heard the rustle of leaves and breaking twigs, and the slow tread of the four paws. Soon he came in sight, when one shot made him fall, and a second bullet despatched him wholly.

“That night—that very night, over our camp-fire, a huge cauldron was suspended, and joints of bear were cooked, eaten, and I presume enjoyed, by our men. We ourselves were, I was thankful to feel, excused from sharing in the repast that evening. But a dish of delicate bear steaks was presented to us next morning for breakfast; and having with difficulty conquered a certain feeling of great repugnance in tasting them, we could not but pronounce them excellent.

“I do not think it is at all fair to name a person who is uncouth and ill-mannered ‘bearish.’ My experience of Bruin shows that he is remarkable for a sedate yet good-tempered expression, and his tastes are certainly not ungentlemanly, as

## BACK TO THE WILDERNESS

he seems to live entirely on fish and the wild berries of these noble Canadian forests. I understand that a bear once was heard to tell his cub, who ate voraciously, and showed temper to his brothers and sisters, that he was most 'mannish' in his behaviour. I thought the epithet not wholly inappropriate."

Fort Simpson was reached on September 24, and much excitement took place. The red flag of welcome was soon hoisted, and Mr. Hardisty, the chief officer, and the whole settlement came to the shore to meet them. So hearty was the reception that they did not perceive the shadow—the grim shadow of starvation—that was hanging over the fort and land. There was only one week's provisions in the Company's store, and game was very scarce. At this point the new party arrived, bringing six extra mouths to be fed, besides the boat's crew, and yet the Company's officers received them with the utmost courtesy and good temper, and did their best to look and speak cheerfully. Most of the men around the fort had to be sent away, and there was difficulty in collecting dried scraps of meat for the wives and children. At length there came a time when there was not another meal left. The poor dogs hung around the houses, "day by day growing thinner and thinner, their poor bones almost through their skins; their sad, wistful look when anyone appeared. Even a dry biscuit could not be thrown to them." But just when matters reached the worst, two Indians arrived, bringing fresh meat, and the great tension slackened.

"From that moment," says Mrs. Bompas, "the supplies have never failed. As surely as the provisions got low, so surely, too, would two or three sledges appear unexpectedly, bringing fresh supplies."

## CHAPTER VIII

### A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

THE Bishop had to be ever on the move to cover even a small portion of his huge diocese. He had no comfortable railway cars in which to travel, and no horses to draw him speedily along; only dogs, faithful little animals, to carry his food and camping outfit, while he and his companions walked.

Fort Simpson was chosen by the Bishop as his abode at first. It is situated at the confluence of the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers, and formed the most central and convenient point for managing the vast diocese. This position had been occupied years before by the Hudson's Bay Company, and here, in 1859, Mr. Kirkby built the church and mission-house.

All around stretched the huge diocese of one million square miles—and such a diocese! It has been well described by the Bishop himself in the following words:

“ No shepherd there his flock to fold,  
No harvest waves its tresses gold;  
No city with its thronging crowd,  
No market with its clamour loud;  
No magistrates dispense the laws,  
No advocate to plead the cause;  
No sounding bugle calls to arms,  
No bandits rouse to dread alarms;  
No courser scours the grassy plain,  
No lion shakes his tawny mane;  
No carriages for weary feet,  
No waggons jostle in the street;  
No well-tilled farms, no fenced field,  
No orchard with its welcome yield;  
No luscious fruit to engage the taste,  
No dainties to prolong the feast;

## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

No steaming car its weighty load  
Drags with swift wheel o'er iron road ;  
No distant messages of fire  
Flash, lightning-like, through endless wire ;  
No church with tower or tapering spire,  
No organ note, no chanting choir."

Writing of the extent of his diocese, the Bishop says :

"To represent the length and tediousness of travel in this diocese, it may be compared to a voyage in a row-boat from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Fort William, on Lake Superior, or a European may compare it to a voyage in a canal barge from England to Turkey. Both the length and breadth of this diocese equal the distance from London to Constantinople.

"If all the populations between London and Constantinople were to disappear, except a few bands of Indians or gipsies, and all the cities and towns were obliterated, except a few log-huts on the sites of the capital cities—such is the solitary desolation of this land. Again, if all the diversity of landscape and variety of harvest-field and meadow were exchanged for an unbroken line of willow and pine trees—such is this country."

In this region the Bishop and his devoted wife began their great work together. At once an Indian school was started, carried on at first principally by the Bishop himself. Mrs. Bompas says :

"My ears often grew weary of the perpetual 'ba, be, bo, bu ; cha, che, cho, chu.' These, with a few hymns translated into their own language, and a little counting, were the first studies mastered by our Simpson scholars."

Three hundred miles from Fort Simpson was another post of the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Rae. Here was a band of Indians who needed the message of the Gospel, and the Bishop decided to go to them. Together with several men from Fort Rae he set out, having with his sled Allen Hardisty, an Indian who was being trained as a catechist.

## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

"It was a clear, beautiful morning," says Mrs. Bompas, "November 27, 1874. The great frozen river glittered in the sunshine. Not a smooth, glassy surface, but all covered with huge boulders of ice, and these again all thickly strewn with snow. . . . Here are our 'trippers,' as they are called, and all ready to start, and my Bishop in his fur cap and warm wraps which I have made for him. His large mittens, formed of deer-skin and fur, are suspended from the neck, as is the custom here. Allen, the catechist, packed the sledges last evening with their bags of clothing and provisions for the way—blankets, cooking implements, etc. There are three sledges, and the dogs ready harnessed. I am rather proud of my 'tapis,' which, amid sundry difficulties, I contrived to get finished, with some help, in time. Now comes the word, 'Off! all ready!' Our farewells are said, the drivers smack their whips, the dogs cry out and start in full scamper, the trippers running by the side of their sledges at such a pace that they are soon out of sight."

It is certainly an interesting thing to watch a dog-team start on a long journey. The harness is decorated in gay trappings with ribbons, beads, coloured cloth, and many jingling bells. The dogs enter into the spirit of the undertaking, and lift up their voices in wild yelps and barks.

A good dog-team in the North costs from \$100 to \$200, averaging about \$25 a dog. Some of the best in the country are bred by the natives, nearly every grown-up Indian having his own dog-team and sledge or toboggan. The Indians make their own sledges and harness, the former being made of birch-wood, and the latter of moose-skin.

Though the Bishop and his companions started off bravely and in high spirits, they little realized what difficulties were ahead. The snow was deep and the cold intense. The dogs suffered much. The sharp crust and ice cut their feet and blood-marked every foot of the trail. This is by no means

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#### DOG-SLED IN NORTH-WEST CANADA

A couple married at Whitehorse by Bishop Stringer started in November with this team of dogs, and, after a journey of 1,200 miles, arrived at Fairbanks in the spring.

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## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

uncommon in Northern travel. The snow gathers in lumps between the dogs' toes, and often the poor brutes will stop and tear savagely at the pieces with their teeth. Often the driver does this work of mercy, and the dog will lie on his side or back, looking up piteously into his master's face. Sometimes little moose-skin moccasins are made, in shape like a miner's gold-poke, with a drawing-string at the top. These, fastened securely upon the dogs' feet, give them much relief, though it is hard for them to draw heavy loads, as the moccasins prevent their toes from gripping the trail. The lash, too, adds to the dogs' suffering. To a person who has never been on the trail, or in common parlance "mushed dogs," it may seem an unnecessary cruelty; but the truth is, they will not work at all unless the whip is used to a certain extent. There is a great difference, of course, between urging on the animals now and then with a sharp cut of the whip and ill-treating them as some drivers do. It is no uncommon thing for a brutal master to pound his dogs with a heavy stick, beating them until they are almost insensible. The curses of some men are terrible to listen to, and many contend that dogs will not travel without a string of oaths being hurled at them.

A missionary some years ago in the Yukon held a service, at which only miners and prospectors were present. His subject was swearing, and he spoke about dog-driving. He appealed to them, and asked if it were not possible to drive dogs without cursing at them. At this a hardy, husky miner rose to his feet, and looking calmly at the missionary, replied: "Your Reverence, it can't be done." Now this is all nonsense. It can be done, and dogs which are properly trained will travel just as well to the words, "Mush on," and "Hike on, there," as to all the choicest oaths in the English language.

The Bishop would never allow the dogs to be ill-treated in

## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

his presence; neither would he permit his men to swear at them. It was his usual custom to go ahead, on his long, springing snow-shoes, which sometimes are called "Northern slippers," and break down the trail. He was a man of great endurance, and day after day he kept the lead, sometimes till long after dark. "The ground is generally rough, and to walk in some places may be compared to what it would be to walk over the heads and shoulders of a crowd."

"Snow-shoe walking," says the Bishop, "requires care to avoid trouble. If the snow-shoe lashings, or any other bands, are too tight on the limbs, or if the feet are held too stiffly, a very painful affliction of the muscles supervenes, known as the snow-shoe sickness. This sickness sometimes causes the legs to swell like those of an elephant, and renders them so powerless that the feet may have to be lifted with the hand by lines attached to the front of the snow-shoes."

Day by day the dark forms moved on. All around was the pitiless waste. The terrible cold chilled to the bone. No sound broke the silence but the crunch, crunch of the snow-shoes, or the shouts of the drivers, the cracks of the whips, and the yelps of the dogs. At times they had to contend with driving storms, and only those who have been on the Northern trails can fully realize what they mean. Bishop Stringer, who spent many hard years within the Arctic Circle, vividly describes such an experience. He was travelling over a desolate region, away to the east, where the foot of white men had never before trod.

"It may appear," he says, "quite novel to travel over lands where no white man has ever been. The novelty wears off quickly, though, when one has to face the storms and isolation of those desolate wilds. I had as a guide a boy (the only one I could obtain from one of the villages) who was both deaf and stupid, and somewhat lazy. We had, of course, to carry our wood from the sea-coast, or do without

## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

any. We had a cotton tent that had seen many winters' rough usage, and a small stove made out of an old stove-pipe. By means of this we were able to keep warm while the wood lasted. When on the return trip our wood gave out, and we had to travel in the face of a blinding snowstorm, or freeze in the tent, and for part of the night we were hopelessly lost, and without any means of camping or getting ourselves warm, except by running. The boy gave out early, and while he sat on the sled, I had to run before the dogs, in the face of the storm, without track or guide of any kind. By keeping right into the wind I judged we were not far astray. I was quite glad, when the daybreak came, to find ourselves not far from the village."

It was always a great joy when Bishop Bompas and the men dragged their weary bodies into camp. Sometimes they had to travel over a barren stretch of country, and how eagerly they would watch ahead for a clump of trees in which to spend the night! But when camping-time arrived, there was no warm house or steaming supper awaiting them—nothing but the silent trees, grim and desolate, surrounding them.

Having chosen a suitable spot with plenty of dry wood near, the snow was scraped away with a snow-shoe for a shovel. This place was then thickly covered with fir, spruce, or pine branches, and a fire started from the shavings of dry wood or a piece of birch bark.

"If there are no pine," wrote the Bishop, "a fire can be made with dry willows. If these are lacking, evergreen willows are supposed to burn, when once ignited. Should there be none of these, there may probably be no fire, unless, as a last resort, a sledge can be chopped up for the purpose. There may be inconvenience also in the lack of materials for starting a fire. In the absence of sulphur matches, fire is commonly made with flint and steel and a piece of country touch-wood, which consists of a fungoid growth or excrescence

## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

on the bark of the birch or poplar. A small particle of this touch-wood is kindled to a spark with flint and steel, the touchwood is then placed on a handful of shavings cut from dry wood, and the whole is waved together in the air until it bursts into a flame. When a steel is missing, a knife may be at hand, or fire may be obtained by snapping a gun. An Indian chief has told of his life being saved at a last emergency by obtaining fire from a piece of greenstone, carried for a whetstone, and an iron buckle from his dog-harness."

After the fire was started, snow was melted in the kettles, for it is almost impossible to obtain water in any other way on the trail. The dogs are not fed until the end of the day. This may seem cruel; but if fed before, they are lazy, and will do very little work.

Once I was travelling in the Yukon, and in the morning, seeing the dogs looking wistfully at us as we ate our breakfast, I urged my Indian guide to feed them. He did so under strong protest. Then I found my mistake. We made very little progress that day, and were forced to camp unusually early. The dogs would go a short distance, stop, squat down upon the trail, and look back at us. The whip had little or no effect. The food in the morning had spoiled them, and they were not anxious to reach the camp at night.

After supper was over, and the dogs fed, the moccasins and socks were hung up to dry, for they are always wet after a day's travel. Then the Bishop, sitting there, would bring out his little Bible, read a word of comfort, and offer up a few prayers to the great Father; then, rolling themselves up in their blankets on the yielding boughs, close to the fire, they would take their well-earned rest. Sometimes they would awake to find the fire out and themselves covered with a soft white mantle of snow. Shortly after midnight they would arise, and prepare for another long day's march. Such was

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#### FEEDING THE DOGS

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## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

their daily experience, and all the time the trail was getting more difficult.

The worst was yet to come. Much snow had fallen, and their progress was slower, and food running low. They were still a long distance from Fort Rae, and had therefore to place themselves on short allowance. Steadily their small supply of provisions diminished, until only a little was left; then a mouthful apiece for hungry men and ravenous dogs. The latter did some hunting on their own account when the day's work was over, and fortunate were they to find a timid rabbit lurking near. Their keenness of scent is marvellous, especially when starving. I remember once, when our dog-food was all gone, that Yukon, my noble leader, dug through the snow on the shore of Lake Laberge and found a sack containing several dried fish, which had been left there the previous fall by some lone fisherman.

At length the food was all gone, and the tired, starving men looked at one another. What were they to do? The Bishop straightened himself up, drew the girdle tighter about his waist, and pointed forward. He even smiled, for he could ever do that, even when his face was drawn and haggard. It was not the smile of scorn, but of trust. He well knew that, as the Lord stood with the great veteran St. Paul, he would stand by him there in the great northland. He must have experienced a certain joy that he was suffering for the Master's sake. Ah! he was being trained in a stern school for the great work which still lay before him. It was but one of the thousands of sufferings he endured, of which he would seldom speak. It was the Venerable Archdeacon Canham who once found the Bishop in a lonely place with nothing to eat but a few tallow candles. Upon these he subsisted until he obtained proper food.

There was now nothing to do but drag on their weary steps. It was necessary, too, to assist the dogs, for the poor creatures

## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

were so weak that they could do but little. So on they pressed, and crunch, swish, sounded the snow-shoes. What a pitiful little procession wound its way through that white, cruel desolation! The keen frost whitened their beards and eyebrows, singeing their faces, and chilling their hearts. And then the desolate camp at night, with nothing to eat!

But there was hope, and what will not men endure when they have even a spark of hope in their hearts? They were drawing near to Fort Rae. At last the buildings hove into sight, and slowly and painfully they struggled in, faint and weary to the point of collapse. The dogs must have scented the settlement long before the men saw the place. They would smell the smoke in the air and take courage.

I was travelling to Dalton Post during the spring of 1905 with three dogs and an Indian. One day we had a terrible march, and were forced to abandon tent and supplies owing to a flooded stream. From three o'clock in the morning until eight at night we plodded on, in some places wading to our knees in water, and again facing a furious snowstorm on a large lake. On the little Klukshu Lake the dogs stopped. They were tired out, and refused to advance. The shore was desolate, and we had very little to camp with. What were we to do? Suddenly Yukon, the leader, pricked up his ears and started on a run, and it was all we could do to keep pace with him. Not for an instant did he stop until we swung into an Indian lodge about a mile away. He had scented the camp the whole of that distance. When I related this incident afterwards to one well accustomed to Indians and their ways of living, astonishment was expressed that the dog had not scented the camp long before. And it certainly was a wonder, for the place was most foul. But how welcome for all that to weary travellers!

Great was the Bishop's pleasure at reaching Fort Rae. It was joy after the battle. He had suffered, but what did it

## A TERRIBLE JOURNEY IN WINTER

matter? Sitting around the camp-fire, all difficulties of the way were forgotten, as he explained to the Indians the message he had come to bring of the loving Saviour.

Meanwhile, at the Fort, Mrs. Bompas was anxiously awaiting the Bishop's return. Mr. Reeve took charge of the settlement, while Mr. Hodgson conducted the Indian school. It was a weary time—a time of darkness, for grease had given out, and there were few candles, as the deer were very thin. Never before had there been such a scarcity. Every particle was saved with jealous care, and doled out with the greatest caution.

But, notwithstanding the darkness, a cheerful time was spent at Christmas, when Mrs. Bompas brought in twelve old Indian wives and gave them a Christmas dinner. They tried their best to use the knives and forks, but at last gave up in despair, and had to "take to Nature's implements."

Then a Christmas-tree—a grand affair—was given for the Indian and the white children of the officers of the fort. The presents were made by hand, and Mrs. Bompas wrote:

"Years ago, in my childhood, when my busy fingers accomplished things of this kind, my dear mother used to tell me I should one day be the head of a toy-shop. How little did she then dream in what way her words would be fulfilled! I actually made a lamb—'Mackenzie River breed'—all horned and woolly, with sparkling black eyes."

Many were the wonderful things made for that tree, and great was the delight of those little dark-skinned Indians as they looked upon their first Christmas-tree.

After the excitement had subsided dreary days of waiting followed, when, one Sunday morning, bells were heard, and a dog-team swung into the fort, and there, to the astonishment of all, appeared the Bishop "with white, snowy beard fringed with icicles, in a deer-skin coat and beaver hat and mittens—a present from Fort Rae." What rejoicing there was! and more rejoicing still when he poured into Mrs. Bompas's lap

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the long-looked-for home letters, which had been eight months reaching her. "Dear, precious letters," says the faithful recorder of these early days, "for which I had so longed and prayed and wept for eight months past! The long silence was broken, the electric chain laid down between England, Darmstadt, and Fort Simpson."

The Bishop's experience on this trip by no means prevented him from taking others. Shortly after his return from Fort Rae an incident happened which almost deprived the Church of its heroic missionary. He wished to visit Fort Norman, some 200 miles north of Fort Simpson, and made ready to travel in the dead of winter with several of the Hudson's Bay Company's men, who were going that way. On the morning of the departure, Mrs. Bompas went to the Indian camp and asked the natives, who were to accompany the travellers, to look after the Bishop. "Are we not men?" said one of them, Natsatt by name. "Is he not our Bishop? Koka" (*i.e.*, That's enough.)

And so they started. But on this occasion the Bishop did not go ahead, as was his custom. He lagged behind the sled, travelling slower and slower all the time. Natsatt kept looking back, and when at length the Bishop disappeared from sight, he became alarmed. "Me no feel easy," he presently remarked; "me not comfortable." Leaving the rest of the party, who swung on their way, he went back to look for the Bishop. Soon he found him, helpless, in the middle of the trail, bent double, with hands on his knees, trying to walk. He had been seized with fearful cramps, which were rendering him powerless. Natsatt made a fire as quickly as possible, and rubbed the Bishop thoroughly, and after the suffering man was well warmed, with a great effort succeeded in getting him back to the fort. The day was extremely cold—40 degrees below zero. A few minutes more, and the Bishop would have perished on the trail.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE LITTLE ONES OF THE FLOCK

THE Bishop loved the little ones of his dusky flock, and never was he so happy as when they were gathered around him. For long years he was their patient teacher, and gladly did he give up some of his time each day for their sake. Indian children are full of fun and mischief, and many were the pranks they would play upon their venerable teacher. Shrewd, too, were they to watch the effect of their capers. They knew they could go so far and no farther. When they saw the Bishop running his fingers through his hair they knew a storm was brewing, and silence would ensue.

As he looked upon their little faces a deep love would come into his heart, for he knew the life-history of each. That bright-faced little lad had been rescued from a cruel father, or that little girl had been saved from a life of degradation. During his long years in the North, over such a vast sweep of country, he had relieved and saved many a little waif. He could not bear to see them suffer, and sometimes his eyes were blinded to their imperfections. Once, hearing the sobs of a child who was being chastised, he marched to the schoolroom door and sought admittance. This not being complied with immediately, with a mighty push he drove open the door, seized the child from the teacher's grasp, and, placing it upon his knee, soothed it with parental affection.

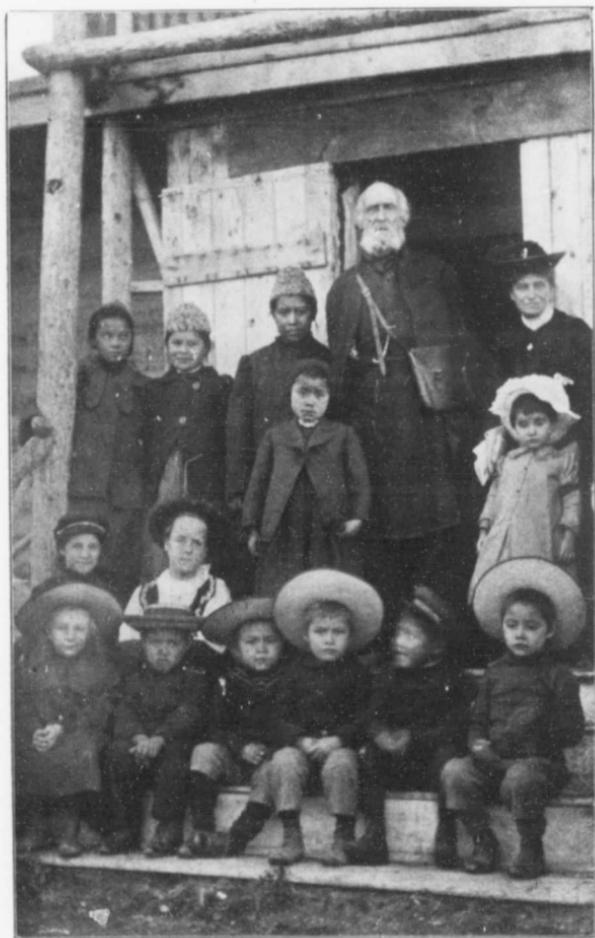
The story of poor old Martha is a touching one. Her daughter's child, little Tommy, a miserable, misshapen

## THE LITTLE ONES OF THE FLOCK

creature, was very sick. They sent for the Bishop, who did all in his power, but in vain. The child soon passed away. Through his tender care he won their hearts, and not long after the child's death Martha came to him one cold, dark night, and begged the Bishop "to give her some medicine to do her heart good; she had pain there ever since Tommy died." And there, in the quietness of the mission-house, the noble teacher talked with her, telling her of the great Physician of souls, and sending her away comforted.

The story of Jennie de Nord is one of much beauty and pathos, in which we see the Bishop risking his own life to save a little child. Old De Nord was a chief among the Fort Simpson Indians. He was a noted hunter and trapper, strong and stalwart, and a loving father to his four motherless children. Jennie was the only girl of the family, a regular little vixen, with sparkling black eyes and a merry, roguish laugh. She was utterly fearless, and her power of will and body were often the cause of wonder even to her own people. She would face the wild, husky dogs of her tribe, or launch a small canoe and paddle herself to visit her father's fish-nets. She admired her father's gun very much, but it was too big for her to handle. One day a white man came to the camp, and as he showed his fine pistol, Jennie became much excited. She watched him closely, and stood in breathless wonder when he fired it off for the entertainment of the Indians. The next morning, when the white man awoke, his pistol was gone. Somebody had stolen it! All became alert to find the thief. Then Jennie, with her face all flushed, came forward with the weapon. She had taken it from beneath the white man's blanket while he slept, and hugged it fondly throughout the night.

For the first few years of her life Jennie was tended by an aunt, who lavished much affection upon the child. Jennie was then given to the care of another aunt, Takatse-mo



THE MISSION SCHOOL AT CARCROSS

At the Bishop's left stands Miss Mary Ellis, who for years worked among the Indians in the Yukon, and who was really the first teacher at Carcross.

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## THE LITTLE ONES OF THE FLOCK

by name, who was rather a stern woman, and had several children of her own to care for. She did not act kindly towards her new charge, and made her do very hard work, such as hauling water from the river, chopping wood for the camp-fire, and many other chores about the place. Besides this, Jennie was poorly fed. The little round cheeks grew thin, and a forlorn look appeared upon her usually merry face. While her relatives and neighbours were talking about this, and wondering what to do, Jennie took the matter into her own hands, and one day suddenly disappeared from the camp. Her aunt did not worry herself at all about the girl's departure. She said she would come back when she felt hungry; but Jennie did not come back. She had taken no food with her except a piece of hard, dried deer's meat; neither did she have any outer covering beyond her small blanket, which had served her in early years, and was rather threadbare. The day after Jennie's flight the neighbours, and even the aunt, became much alarmed about her. The snow was deep around Fort Simpson, and starving wolves prowled about the woods. Their howls were often heard at night, and were responded to by the camp dogs. At last it was resolved to consult the Bishop. "We must go after the child at once," was the reply, as soon as he heard the story; and he immediately prepared to head the expedition. Snowshoes and cloth leggings were made ready; stout moccasins, and blankets, socks, fur cap, and other things necessary for the journey. Just a little more than half an hour after the news of Jennie's departure reached the mission-house, the Bishop and two Indians started off after the strayed waif. They found it difficult to trace her, as the previous night had been windy, and Jennie's tiny footprints were covered up. They imagined she had gone in search of her father, who was camped some distance away. Travelling in this direction, they had much difficulty in making their way through

## THE LITTLE ONES OF THE FLOCK

the tangled brushwood, and often they had to follow the river in order to make any progress at all. Here they met the piercing north-east wind, which cut their faces, and formed icicles on beard and eyelashes. For ten miles they continued on their way without discovering any sign of Jennie. The Bishop felt much discouraged, and was thinking of returning to the Fort to try some other route. Suddenly one of the Indians uttered an exclamation, and pointed upwards to a faint column of smoke slowly rising among the dark fir-trees. New hope filled their hearts, and quickly climbing the banks of the stream, they made straight for the fire. Presently they caught sight of the clustered poles, which had been a wigwam, and there they found a little huddled form lying in one corner, clutching closely about her body the one poor frayed blanket. Opening her eyes, and seeing the Bishop bending over her, she uttered the pitiful word, "Ti-tin-tie" (I am hungry). Jennie had walked more than ten miles, and reaching at last De Nord's halting-place, her strength had given out. Here she found her father's gun, which had been left in a cache loaded. This the girl had eagerly seized, and by firing it off obtained a spark which started the fire. By this she had crouched, trying to keep life in her body, when found by the rescuers. At once a roaring fire was blazing up. Water was brought, a cup of tea made for Jennie, and after a few hours' rest the party set out on their return trip to Fort Simpson. Jennie had to be carried most of the way, for she was not only much exhausted, but her shoes were almost worn out. In his strong arms the Bishop carried her part of the way, and how his heart must have rejoiced at finding the lost lamb! But the trip cost him much. His clothes were wet, for in places he had been forced to wade through overflowing water. He could hardly reach Fort Simpson, so great were the cramps which seized him, and for days he endured great suffering. But what did it

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matter? Jennie was safe, and none the worse for her experience.

Four years later the Bishop was called upon to lay poor Jennie to rest. Her father made her work harder than she was able to do. One day she started with the dogs and sleds for the woods to bring in a deer her father had killed. The journey was a long one, and when she returned to the camp tired out, she complained of not feeling well, and lying down on her bed of brushwood, died the next day.

Such a scene as this wrung the Bishop's heart, and he did all in his power to bring the little ones into the mission-schools, where they could receive proper care. An interesting sight it was to see this shepherd returning from some long trip, bringing with him several wild, dirty little natives for his school.

Not only did the Bishop bring the children into the mission-school, but time and time again he and Mrs. Bompas received some poor little waif as their own. A few years after his consecration, little Jennie, a mere babe, was thus taken to their hearts. She came to them, so Mrs. Bompas tells us,

“ At holy Christmas-tide,  
When winter o'er our Northern home  
Its lusty arms spread wide ;  
When snow-drifts gathered thick and deep,  
Winds moaned in sad unrest,  
My little Indian baby sought  
A shelter at my breast.”

Upon this child they bestowed their affection; but alas! notwithstanding the greatest care, it gradually wasted away, and passed to the great Father above.

Some time later another was received into their home and hearts. This was Owindia (The Weeping One), who was baptized Lucy May. A terrible tragedy had been enacted at one of the Indian camps, from which the babe had been marvellously rescued. Her mother had been cruelly murdered

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by an angry husband, and as there was no one to care for her, the Bishop and Mrs. Bompas took the motherless child. Great was the joy they received from the little one, and with much pride she was taken to England several years later, where, after some time, she died. Mrs. Bompas beautifully tells the story of this waif in her little book, "Owindia."

The Indian boys are great little hunters and trappers. The forest is their home, and they read the world of Nature like an open book. They have their numerous sports, too, paddling along the shore of some lake in the summer-time, or coasting down a steep hill in the winter. The bank in front of the Indian village, just across the river from Whitehorse, at times is worn smooth from numerous little moccasined feet. Approaching the place, one has to be careful not to be suddenly upset by a crouching figure, sweeping down the hill, balancing himself with much skill upon one foot. This little fellow in the picture was caught one bright day enjoying his favourite sport.

Dogs are their constant companions, and they love them dearly. It is interesting to watch Indian boys playing with these faithful animals. Though savage and vicious to strangers, they obey the slightest command of their little dusky masters. In the winter-time it is no uncommon thing to see a lad speeding along the trail drawn by two or three lank huskies. In the summer-time a rude waggon is often made, and seated upon a soap-box, the boy will drive his patient dog with much pride.

These are the bright, active lads who are brought into the mission-school, taught to read and write, and to receive the knowledge of the loving Saviour. To see the little fellows in the wild, rude state in the forest, and then behold them several months after they have entered the school, you would hardly know they were the same children. They are not naturally quick at learning from the printed

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AN INDIAN BOY SLIDING DOWNHILL AT WHITEHORSE



THE DOGS RESTING AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK

Brush of fir-trees is laid upon the snow, and upon this the dogs huddle through the long cold nights.

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## THE LITTLE ONES OF THE FLOCK

page, and the Bishop at times became much discouraged at their slowness, and said it was "like writing in the sand instead of graving in the rock."

Several years ago I had a class of bright-eyed, dusky children at Whitehorse. Day after day they were instructed in the mysteries of A, B, and C. Then a list of simple words was carefully studied, such as "cat," "dog," "pig," "cow" and "boy." At last, thinking they all knew the words well, I asked the brightest boy in the room to repeat them once more for the benefit of the whole class. Bravely and proudly he started, "C—a—t, cat; d—o—g, dog." Thus far he had no trouble. The next word was puzzling. Slowly and carefully he spelled it out, "p—i—g." He tried hard to remember its meaning, and a breathless silence ensued. Suddenly his face cleared, and proudly he spelt it again, "p—i—g, boy." There was a roar of laughter from his companions, and I do not think the young speller knows to this day what they laughed at.

Indian children are fond of music, and they have very sweet voices. At the Carcross Mission it is an interesting sight to see several rows of well-dressed boys and girls, with books in their hands, singing lustily some favourite hymn. Two of these little lads were recently brought to the Whitehorse Hospital for a painful treatment. Visiting them the next day, I saw a hymn-book lying by Johnny Black's side. "Have you been reading in this?" I inquired. "We have been singing, sir," was the reply. "And will you sing some to me?" I asked. Immediately the book was opened, and in a quavering voice the little fellow sang the hymn beginning with the following verse:

"Great God, and wilt Thou condescend  
To be my Father and my Friend;  
I a poor child, and Thou so high,  
The Lord of earth, and air, and sky!"

Occasionally Tony, in the adjoining bed, would join in; but he was rather weak, so he could not sing much. Listening

## THE LITTLE ONES OF THE FLOCK

to these two little lads, I thought what a good work was being done—a work started in this diocese by Bishop Bompas—in bringing such as these to the Saviour's feet in love and faith. These were the two little boys who at the Carcross Church took up the collection regularly every Sunday.

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## CHAPTER X

### A RACE WITH WINTER

If you wish to cross the Rocky Mountains to-day westward to the Pacific coast, there are the cars of the Canadian-Pacific Railway, in which you can travel in luxurious comfort and ease. As the train winds its way up to the summit, and crosses the Great Divide, and then creeps down, down the western slope, wonders without number are presented to view. Majestic snow-capped mountains surround you on every side; streams rush, leaping and foaming, like white threads far below, as the train hangs from some dizzy height, crawling around a jagged precipice. As you look down, and then shrink back, at the wild scene below, you marvel at the skill of the engineers who could build a railroad in such a place. Then your mind turns to the men who first penetrated these wilds, and who were forced to cross the mountains before the railroad was built. What hardships they endured, what perils, and how many lives were lost in the undertaking! Hundreds of miles farther north Bishop Bompas performed this task years before the railroad was built, and at a season of the year when travelling over the mountains was very difficult.

While Bishop Bompas was carrying on his steady work along the great inland streams, a storm was brewing in an active mission centre on the Pacific coast. Mr. Duncan, who had been sent out by the Church Missionary Society, was working among the Indians at Metlakahtla with good results.

## A RACE WITH WINTER

Bishop Hills, of Columbia Diocese, several times visited the settlement and baptized a large number of converts. But Mr. Duncan objected to the Indian Christians being prepared for Confirmation, thinking they would make a fetish of it. Time and time again the Church Missionary Society sent out ordained men to Metlakahtla, but Mr. Duncan would not listen to them, and remained most headstrong in his views. Matters thus reached a climax. Bishop Hills well knew if he visited Metlakahtla it would only add fuel to the flames, as Mr. Duncan, for certain reasons, had taken a dislike to him. He therefore acted a wise part, and wrote to Bishop Bompas asking him to go to Metlakahtla as arbitrator.

It was late in the season ere the letter reached the Bishop, but without delay he prepared for the trip. At any season it was a great undertaking, but at that time of the year the difficulty was very much increased. In a direct line the journey was a long one, but to reach the coast the distance was lengthened by a circuitous route over rivers, lakes, portages, and mountain summits.

Then winter was upon them.

"All the latter part of September," wrote the Bishop, "the frost and snow had been more severe than I had ever known it before at the same season, so the winter had decidedly the first start in our race."

It was a cold, frosty day, that 8th of October, 1877, when the Bishop left Dunvegan in a stout canoe, with several Indians, on his long race to the coast against stern Winter. For five days they moved up the river, contending with drifting ice, which met them coming out of "tributary streams," and on the 13th Fort St. John's was reached, where they "were kindly entertained for the Sunday by the officer in charge" of the Hudson's Bay post. From this point they left winter "behind for a fortnight, and were fairly ahead in the race." But every day they expected to be overtaken by their

## A RACE WITH WINTER

competitor, and arose from their "couches anxiously every morning, foreboding signs of ice or snow."

Rocky Mountain House was reached on the 17th, where a large band of Indians was found assembled. The Bishop lost no opportunity of speaking a word to the natives wherever he met them, and the seed thus sown bore much fruit in after years. For the first time he found no sickness in the camps, which fact he attributed "to their unusually liberal use of soap and water, as compared with the tribes farther north."

Ahead of them was the Peace River Canyon, and, after making a land portage of twelve miles to overcome this dangerous spot, they again proceeded by canoe. But the work was becoming harder all the time. The current was very swift, and the canoe had to be poled all the way. In trying to ascend the Parle Pas Rapids, the current was so "strong that their canoe turned on them, and was swept down the stream, but, being a large one, descended safely."

"Most of the time that we were passing through the gorge of the Rocky Mountains the weather was foggy, but when the mist cleared we saw the bold crags and hilly heights closely overhanging the river in snowy grandeur. The mountain terraces and picturesque scenery on this route have been described by Canadian explorers."

"On the very morning that we left Parsnip River," wrote the Bishop, "the ice began again to drift thickly to meet us, and had we been only a few hours later, we might have been inconvenienced by it, showing us that stern Winter was still on our track."

For eleven days the Bishop and his men poled their craft against the stream, and, with many dangers passed, reached McLeod's Lake Fort on October 29. Here they were hospitably received by Mr. McKenzie, the officer in charge, and an opportunity was given to see the Indians who were at the fort.

## A RACE WITH WINTER

A rest of two days was made here, and then they started across the lake. This was a difficult task, as the ice was beginning to stretch from shore to shore, and they had to force their way as best they could around the corner of the solid mass.

From Lake McLeod a long portage of eighty miles was made over frozen ground to the beautiful sheet of water known as Stuart Lake, on the shore of which the officer at Fort St. James gave them a hearty welcome. Here the Bishop was on historic ground. Seventy-one years before those famous explorers, Simon Fraser and John Stuart, discovered the lake which took the name of the latter. Fort St. James, which was erected on its banks "long before Victoria and New Westminster had been called into existence," was the regular capital of British Columbia, "where a representative of our own race ruled over reds and whites."

A stay of four days was made at this place, during which time heavy snowstorms raged over the land, and ice began to form in the lake, which threatened to bar further progress. This body of water, which is about fifty miles in length, had to be traversed, and the Indians refused to make the long journey at that season and in such weather. During the delay the Bishop was invited to hold Divine service at the fort on Sunday. Never before had the place "been visited by a Protestant missionary, the Roman Catholics only having laboured in the region, and Mr. Hamilton, the Hudson's Bay Company's chief officer there, brought up a family of ten children without having, for more than twenty years, any opportunity of seeing a Protestant minister."

After much difficulty the Indians were persuaded to go forward, and, leaving Fort St. James on November 7, started out upon their perilous journey. Safely crossing Lake Stuart, they made a portage of seven miles and a half to Lake Babine. This is a body of water eighty-seven miles long and from one-

## A RACE WITH WINTER

half to five or six miles wide. The canoes here were poor affairs, owing to the lack of large cedar-trees, from which such crafts are made on the Pacific coast. They were common dug-outs, formed from the cotton-wood trees—small, narrow, slab-sided, and as a rule much warped and out of shape.

This was all the Bishop could obtain to make the voyage, but he was used to anything, even a raft, so, launching the frail craft, they again started forward. When they had gone part of the way a furious snowstorm swept down upon them, blotting out the landscape, while the white-capped waves threatened every instant to engulf them. Creeping along the lee-side of the lake, they pressed steadily on, for the Bishop must reach the coast before the winter locked everything tight. After days of hard paddling and battling with wind and waves, their hearts were gladdened by the sight of Fort Babine. The Indians here, who, by the way, were Roman Catholics, were naturally suspicious of a Church of England missionary. "However," remarked the Bishop, "they treated us well."

These Indians were called "Babines" from the custom they had of wearing a wooden lip-piece on the lower lip. In 1812, when Harmon, the explorer, first pushed his way into this region, they were wild and war-like, brandishing their weapons in a threatening manner as the explorer drew near. Then they numbered about 2,000. Now they have dwindled to 250 since the arrival of the whites—a sad comment upon the influence of so-called civilized people. Their principal business was salmon-fishing in the fine lake which stretched away to the south-east.

From Fort Babine they started on the land-trail over the mountains to Skeena Forks. This was a difficult undertaking, and winter overtook them once again. Beginning the portage, the snow was several inches deep, and as they ascended the mountain it deepened continually, till they were forced to dig out their camps, "to sleep in a foot and a half of snow, and

## A RACE WITH WINTER

without snow-shoes the walking was heavy. We were invading Winter's own domain," continued the Bishop, "and it was little wonder if he was severe with us."

As they descended the western slope the next morning, the snow diminished rapidly, and they "camped at night in the grass without a vestige of snow remaining, and only saw stern Winter frowning down from the heights behind."

On reaching the Skeena Forks they were given a hearty welcome by Mr. Hankin, a trader who lived here, who informed the Bishop that, till the previous year, the Skeena River had never been known to continue open so late, being generally frozen the first week in November, and now it was the 17th. The next day the descent of the Skeena was begun by canoe in fear and trembling, lest the ice might "drift down from behind." And the race began in earnest, for a heavy snowstorm swept over the land, and Winter once more made a last effort to block them. But through the tempest sped the determined missionary, through rapids and canyons, over bars, whirling eddies, and dangers without number. At last, to his joy, he found that, on nearing the coast, the mild breezes of the Pacific were too much for grim Winter, and he steadily retreated, leaving the little party unscathed.

At Port Essington, the little town at the mouth of the Skeena, Mr. Morrison, the missionary in charge, one day, November 23, saw a stranger approaching in a canoe. His clothes were torn and ragged, his face bronzed from wind and sun, while his long, uncombed beard swept his breast. So travel-worn was the man that Mr. Morrison mistook him for a miner as he disembarked. "Well," said he, "what success have you had?" The Bishop replied that he had been fairly successful, evidently relishing the joke. Just then Mr. Morrison saw the remains of the episcopal apron, and, remembering that he had heard that a Bishop was expected at Metlakahla from inland, exclaimed: "Perhaps you are

## A RACE WITH WINTER

the Bishop who I heard was expected?" "Yes," was the reply, "I am all that is left of him."

After spending one night with Mr. Morrison, the Bishop proceeded twenty-five miles by canoe along the coast northward to Metlakahtla, which he reached on the 24th, "this being the tenth canoe," he remarks, "that we sat in since leaving Dunvegan."

The venerable Archdeacon Collison, of the Diocese of Caledonia, wrote from Kincolith Naas Mission of the visit of Bishop Bompas to the Pacific coast :

"He remained at Metlakahtla that winter, where he succeeded in confirming a large number of candidates. By the first steamer in spring he came over to me on Queen Charlotte's Island, at Massett. I had a little bedroom specially prepared for him in the new mission-house, but he preferred lying down on the floor, as he said he was not accustomed to sleeping in rooms. He was about to lie down just across the doorway, when I begged him to take another position, as he might be disturbed by someone entering late or early.

"I returned with him to the mainland on the steamer. We went together to the Naas River by canoe—a voyage of some fifty miles—to Kincolith. The owner of the canoe, who was a chief, was steering, and I was seated near him towards the stern, whilst the Bishop was seated forward. As the Bishop raised his arms in paddling, in which we were all engaged, it revealed a long tear in the side of his shirt. Suddenly the chief asked me in a low tone, in Tsimshian : 'Why is the chief's shirt so torn?' I replied : 'He has been a long time travelling through the forest.' He was dressed very roughly, and wore a pair of moccasins. When we reached Kincolith, he purchased a coarse pair of brogans in the little Indian store there. He was in the habit of sitting, after the others had finished their meal, eating a small piece of dry yeast-powder bread, baked by Mrs. Tomlinson or one

## A RACE WITH WINTER

of her Indian girl boarders, and he would exclaim: 'How sweet this bread is to my taste after roughing it so long on the trails!' He informed us of the privations both missionaries and Indians had endured owing to scarcity of food during certain seasons, on more than one occasion having had to boil and eat the skins of the animals that had been caught in the hunt for their furs. I ventured to suggest to him that this might be avoided if they could only grow potatoes and pit them securely. We had taught our Indians to do this. The Bishop feared they would not mature in his diocese, but promised to remember it. Afterwards I was informed he had introduced the potato with success.

"The Rev. R. Tomlinson and I accompanied the Bishop when he started to return to the head of canoe navigation on the Naas River, and some distance on the trail. We had a prayer-meeting at the point where we separated in the forest, in which we joined in prayer for needful blessings—the Bishop for us and God's work in our hands, and we for him in his journey and labours for the Lord. He gave away his great-coat and a pot to the Indians, and started on the second stage of his return journey accompanied by one young Indian."

While on the coast it was but natural that the Bishop's thoughts should wander to his native land.

"From the Pacific coast," he wrote, "a few weeks would have taken me to England or any part of the civilized world; but I preferred to return north without even visiting the haunts of civilization (except so far as the Indians are cultivated at our missions), on the ground that such a visit renders the mind unsettled or disinclined for a life in the wilds."

Brave soldier of the Cross, how willing he was to sacrifice anything for the Master's cause! Leaving the coast, he started in the spring up the Skeena River, and once again plunged into the wilderness among his dusky flock.

## CHAPTER XI

### TIMES OF FAMINE

LIFE in the northland is hard and lonely enough at the best ; but when food gives out, and starvation stares people in the face, it is too horrible even to imagine. And yet it is a common thing during the long winters, when game is scarce, when no fish are to be caught, and even the little rabbits die, for famine to stalk through the land, bringing misery and death to hundreds of men, women, and children.

“ In India and elsewhere,” says Mrs. Bompas, “ as soon as such a calamity is made known, subscriptions are raised, and supplies are sent off as soon as possible. But it must be months and months before the tidings of the misery here could even reach our friends in England, and in the meantime to what terrible straits might we not be reduced. One shudders to think of what men are driven to by the pangs of hunger.”

Both whites and Indians suffer at such times. How hard it must be for parents to see their little children crying out for food, and to be unable to give them any ! In 1878, the Bishop returned from his visit to the Pacific coast. When he reached his diocese, sad stories were told him of the fearful famine which had ravaged his flock the previous winter. Food was scarce, owing to the extreme mildness of the season, interfering with the chase, and the mission supplies having failed to reach them in the fall. He gives a graphic picture of the sufferings endured in the diocese :

## TIMES OF FAMINE

“Horses were killed for food, and furs eaten at several of the posts. The Indians had to eat a good many of their beaver-skins. Imagine an English lady taking her supper off her muff! The gentleman now here with me supported his family for a while on bear-skins—those you see at home mostly in the form of Grenadier caps. Can you fancy giving a little girl, a year or two old, a piece of Grenadier’s cap, carefully singed, boiled and toasted, to eat? Mr. McAulay’s little girl has not yet recovered from the almost fatal sickness that resulted. The scarcity brings out the strange contrast between this country and others. Elsewhere money “answereth all things,” and among India’s millions half a million sterling will relieve a famine; but send it here, and though a great sum among our scattered individuals, who can be counted by tens, yet it would do us no good, as for digestion we must find it ‘hard cash’ indeed!”

It was not only at one place or one season that the famine came. It was a common occurrence. Once, in 1886, the Bishop held his Synod at Fort Simpson. There was a scarcity of food, the beginning of the great famine which ensued, and all were placed on short allowance. One day the dinner consisted of barley and a few potatoes, but it is said that the Bishop was equal to the occasion, commending the scanty fare by repeating Prov. xv. 17: “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.”

The winter that followed the meeting of the clergy was a terrible one. The famine increased. Game was scarce, few moose were to be obtained, the rabbits all died, and the fish nearly all left the river. The Indians asserted that the scarcity of the finny prey was caused by the propeller of the new steamer *Wrigley*, which first churned the head-waters of the great river the preceding fall, but was unable to reach the northern posts owing to the ice; hence the lack of supplies. But any excuse would serve the Indians, as, on a previous

## TIMES OF FAMINE

occasion when fish were scarce (so Mrs. Bompas tells us), the natives said it was due to the white women bathing in the river. Such a radical change as cleanliness was evidently as much disliked by the fish as by the Indians.

Through the weary days of famine sad reports reached the Bishop of Indians dying for lack of food.

"Forty starving Indians," so he wrote, "are said to have been eating each other on Peace River, and 200 dead there of measles, and a like number at Isle à la Crosse."

"We have been living for some days," says Mrs. Bompas, "on barley soup and potatoes twice a day. We are four in family, and William gives us all the giant's share, and takes so little himself. One hopes and prays for help. One hears terrible accounts of the Indians, all about, all starving; no rabbits or anything for them to fall back upon. Here many of them hunt for rotten potatoes thrown away last fall. Oh, it is truly heart-rending!"

Well has Longfellow in his "Hiawatha" described the desolation of such a scene as is only too common in the North:

"O the long and dreary winter!  
O the cold and cruel winter!  
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker  
Froze the ice on lake and river.  
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper  
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape;  
Fell the covering snow and drifted  
Through the forest round the village.

\* \* \* \*

"O the wasting of the famine!  
O the wailing of the children!  
O the anguish of the women!  
All the earth was sick and famished;  
Hungry was the air around them;  
Hungry was the sky above them;  
And the hungry stars above them  
Like the eyes of wolves glared at them."

The mission party were placed on half rations, and earnest prayers were offered up to the great Father above for deliver-

## TIMES OF FAMINE

ance. Starving wolves were seen prowling around, ready to snatch up anything, carrying off little children if they ventured near. "We are just hanging on by our eyelashes," quaintly wrote Mrs. Bompas.

The Bishop starved himself to feed his household, and daily he became thinner and more haggard. At last the provisions were so reduced that the Bishop, to lessen the number at the Fort, left for another place. He seldom thought of himself, but only of those dependent upon him. He could live anywhere, even in a snow-bank, with a few scraps for food. Truly his wants were few.

"An iron cup, plate, or knife," writes Mr. Spendlove, "with one or two kettles, form his culinary equipment. A hole in the snow, a corner of a boat, wigwam, or log-hut, provided space, six feet by two feet, for sleeping accommodation. Imagine him seated on a box in a twelve-foot room, without furniture, and there cooking, teaching, studying, early and late, always at work, never at ease, never known to take a holiday."

Mrs. Bompas tells us that the Bishop was a very self-contained man. During the years when he was itinerating among the Indians and Eskimo he had lived so much alone in tent or cabin that he had learnt to be wholly independent of external aid. Moreover, he had trained himself to endure hardness as a good soldier of the Cross. His diet was at all times abstemious, almost severely so. To the last he never allowed himself milk or cream in tea or coffee. He was a fairly good cook and bread-maker, and loved to produce a good and savoury dish for his friends, although eschewing all such dainties himself.

One day, when they knew not where to-morrow's food would come from, Mr. Spendlove and several Indians came, bringing moose-meat. They told a terrible story of suffering below. All at Fort Wrigley were starving, absolutely no

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TROUT-SPEARERS BRINGING SUPPLIES FOR A MISSION STATION

From a photograph taken during a heavy fall of snow.

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## TIMES OF FAMINE .

food was to be obtained, and a number of Indians died. Mr. Spendlove and his fellow-travellers were pitifully thin. Several of the poor dogs had died off, and those which survived were too weak to draw the sled, and had to be hauled themselves. By a special mercy they came upon two moose, which had just been killed by wolves. This meat helped them out, and probably saved their lives.

“All the Indians were just on the verge of starvation,” wrote Mr. Garten of Fort Rae. “All kinds of shifts were made to preserve life; they were obliged to eat some of the parchment of the fur which they caught; and even old leather dresses which had been worn by the Indian women were eaten up. The children fared very badly, not being able to eat the leather. Of course, there were the usual miseries accompanying such a state of things: such as men falling down from exhaustion, stealing what little they could from each other, etc., but happily no crimes were committed, as far as I know; only two Indians died from starvation. Things would not have been so bad had there been rabbits and partridges, but unhappily these also were wanting.”

At such times terrible stories were related of what happened away from the Fort. Husbands driven mad from the pangs of hunger were said to have eaten their wives and little ones.

“There is an old Indian,” says Mrs. Bompas, “even now pointed out here, who is said to have eaten his wife and children.”

“Such a dreadful thing occurred on Friday,” she wrote at another time, “which has saddened us all. The poor Indian Cachie was seen crossing the river, wading through the water and over the ice at the peril of his life. He got to the shore at last in a most distressing state. His wife and three children all died from starvation. There are rumours more ugly still concerning him, though we hope they are but

## TIMES OF FAMINE

rumours. Even at the best it is a sad, ghastly story. The poor man has been living on berries and squirrels."

Not only did the wives and little children suffer most at such seasons, but the aged, especially the old women. Bishop Stringer, much farther north, several years later, gives an instance of what it means to these people in times of want:

"In March a man came staggering in, and it required only a glance to tell that he was starving—he looked more like a skeleton than a man of flesh and blood. We gave him some food, little by little at first, and then he told his story. He and his aged mother spent the winter about fifty miles to the westward. Game became scarce, and their supply of food became exhausted. Being camped beside an old decayed whale carcass, they lived on this for a time; but they soon became so weak, and the snow so deep, that they were not able to procure it any longer. The man caught some foxes, and they ate them; then even foxes failed. Their only two dogs were sacrificed to appease their appetites. When almost on the point of starvation, they started for here without blanket or tent. The mother was nearly blind, and when about thirty miles from this place the son had to leave her in a snow-house. He himself was so weak that it took three days to come a distance that is considered one day's fair travelling. He told us he thought his mother would be dead, and all the other natives seemed to think the same, and so they did not think it important to start out at once to bury her. After some little trouble, I got one native to go with me, and, taking my dog-team, reached there early the next day. My companion expected to find her a corpse, but when we reached her snow-house she called from within: 'Inooaloon kaivet?' (My son, have you come back?). We found her crouched in the middle of a snow-house about three feet high, the door of which was partly open, with snow drifting in. Here she had been for three days without blanket

## TIMES OF FAMINE

or any covering but her clothing, and without fire, drink, or food. She was very thirsty, and we soon made a fire, melted snow, and gave her some water. I asked her if she were hungry, and she said only a little, but someone had come to her each night and had given her some fresh deer-meat. (This, no doubt, was a dream or a vision; but it had the effect of keeping her courage up, which is a great deal with an Eskimo.) I asked her if she had slept, and she said she had slept every night. She was not the least bit frozen, although the temperature was down below zero. She said also that she had asked the Good Spirit to help her, and that He had heard her, and she had not been afraid. Poor body! she had very little knowledge of higher things, but her faith seemed to be great. We put her on the sled, and came back to Herschel Island without camping—a continuous trip of about fifty or sixty miles. My dogs were good, or we could not have done it. The old woman's eyesight was after a time restored, and of course they were both very thankful for the help they received. The man was in our house to-day, and he says that his mother is quite hearty and strong."

Though many of these people, in the midst of such trouble, sank lower than brutes, yet it is pleasing to know that the knowledge of Christ filled some hearts, lifted them to a higher level, and kept them from doing horrible things. Listen to the words of two Indian Christians, which were told to the Rev. W. Spendlove:

"I have had a hard life," said one; "seen many deaths from starvation—thirty one winter. I have seen much wickedness, too: have known men to eat human flesh; kill the old folks by a blow with an axe; pitch the new-born child in the snow to die. Yes, greedy men go to other men's wives; blows to women instead of words; children beaten like pounding the drum. I heard the Good News; I took it in my heart, and kept it there. I kept from all this evil, but I am an old

## TIMES OF FAMINE

sinner. My heart has been black as your ink ; God has made it feel like raw flesh. He took away lots of my children. I rebelled ; I called the Great Spirit hard names. I said : ' God is not wise ; He must be unpitiful to want my children when I need them so badly.' Stop ! I am a foolish Indian ; my black heart makes me talk that way. Those evil things are not done now. Who stopped them ? What shamed us Redmen of our black, dirty ways ? I see it clear now. God's Spirit pricked holes in our hearts and minds. His Word has entered and stopped the fire of sin. It cannot burn now.

" I have drunk animals' blood, eaten raw flesh, and the bad, dirty insides of all wild animals. Nothing can change that heart. But I tell you there is another heart grown out of the old one ; now I have two. The new one is made by faith in the blood of Jesus. I take the holy bread and wine. I am happy ; my soul is free and clean. Now I cook my food, keep myself clean, wear white men's clothes, and pray daily to my Saviour. With these words I shake hands with you big praying-men."

And another is :

" I am a poor Red Indian wife, not supposed to speak first to white people. I speak with my back turned, my head down, and a shawl over my face. Why do this now ? My heart is full—running over. I know who is my Master ; His name is sweet and strong in my ears. He now keeps my heart steady with His words. I travel about the woods, and over mountains ; I carry heavy burdens, but my step is light, my heart is strong, the light is white in my eyes now, because my sin-burden is laid on Jesus."

To add to the misery of famine, there was always the horror of darkness ; for candles became very scarce, owing to lack or thinness of deer, from which grease is obtained. Over and over again Mrs. Bompas laments the want. And what a joy it was even to obtain a " bladder of grease " !

## TIMES OF FAMINE

"How you would smile," she once wrote, "to see my jealous care of every particle of grease; how I save every small piece from my own candlestick and keep it in a little box, so at the end of several days I have just enough to place in a saucer, and with a piece of wick form my 'wax candle' for dressing!"

These, then, are some of the hardships the missionaries have to undergo in that far-off land, in order to carry the Gospel message to the natives of the North. Much do they need our prayers and sympathy in their great loneliness, that they may not faint, but carry forward the banner of the Master.

## CHAPTER XII

### MID DRIFTING ICE

We have seen the Bishop travelling over the great Northern waterways in trim canoes in the summer, and on snow-shoes over the white trails in the winter. We will now watch him battling and struggling forward on a rude raft mid surging, drifting ice.

In May, 1881, he began those marvellous trips which only a giant constitution could have endured. From the Peace River district he made a voyage far north to visit the Tukudh Indians. Here he was given a hearty welcome, and rejoiced to find that the natives had begun to teach one another to read from the books which had been printed for their benefit. An Indian from the far-off Yukon came all the way to see him at this place, and urged him to go again and visit his tribe. The Bishop was standing by a smouldering camp-fire listening to the native pleading for his people. Suddenly the Indian pointed downwards to the dying coals at their feet. "That," he said, "is how you have left us. You kindled the fire of the Gospel among us, and left it untended to die out again. Why have you done this?"

The Bishop was much moved. He longed to go to them, or to send someone in his place, but his men were very few, and he himself was needed farther south. So, after spending the summer among these noble Tukudhs, travelling from May to August 2,500 miles, he returned to Great Slave Lake to meet an incoming mission party from England.

## MID DRIFTING ICE

After that he went up the turbulent Liard River from Fort Simpson to visit two forts there—Liard and Nelson.

Winter was close upon him when he once again got back to Fort Simpson. Mrs. Bompas was at Fort Norman, 200 miles away, and he must reach that place as soon as possible, to relieve her of the responsibility of the mission-work.

Arriving at Fort Simpson, he found the river full of floating ice, and no canoe could navigate that cruel stream in such a condition. He was urged to remain there where it was comfortable; it would be madness to go forward. But no, that was not the Bishop's way; he would go, no matter how great the difficulties.

A raft was therefore hurriedly built. This was a poor affair—only a few logs placed side by side, and several poles or boards across the top to hold them together. Even the sturdy Vikings of olden days would have shrunk from venturing forth on such a craft; but the Bishop was greater than they. He had not only the courage of the Vikings, but the holy enthusiasm of St. Paul, and these two virtues formed a combination which could accomplish almost any undertaking.

With one Indian he started from Fort Simpson upon his shaky craft. With long poles in their hands they steered their way down the stream. The floating ice jammed around them, threatening to crush their tiny craft and engulf them in a watery grave. At times they were standing in water half-way to the knees, owing to the pressure of some heavy blocks of ice. Then, as they handled their long poles, the water ran down their sleeves and drenched their bodies. The cold wind whistled about them, and froze the water upon their clothes till they were covered with an icy armour. The mittens on their hands became wet, then stiff and frozen, while ice formed on the poles, making them heavy and slippery. At night there was the camp-fire upon the shore,

## MID DRIFTING ICE

the brief rest, and then up and on again, for they must rush through before the river became solid from bank to bank.

Thus every day they battled on, chilled to the bone, and ever in danger, yet never giving up. But stern Winter knew no mercy. Colder and colder it grew, until at last the icy bridge was formed, to remain during long, dreary months. Then they were forced to abandon the raft, and fortunate were they to find shelter at a place on the side of the stream, known as La Violdete's House. Here the Bishop remained for ten days, until the ice in the river was strong enough to travel upon. At the end of that time he and four Indians started on foot for Fort Norman. They hoped to reach it in six days, and took just enough food to last them for that period. One of the Indians, seeing the tracks of a bear, went off in pursuit, and lost sight of the others entirely.

The Bishop and his three remaining companions pushed steadily forward. But, alas! they missed the right trail, and by the time they should have reached Fort Norman it was still six days' journey off. When they at length found out their mistake their food was very low, and they were forced to place themselves on short allowance. Wearily they plodded onward, beating their way through tangled bushes and tramping through the snow. Their feet, too, became sore, for the rough ground, covered with sharp stones and snags, tore their moccasins, and caused them to stumble and sometimes to fall.

At length they ate their last scrap of food—a fish and one small barley-cake between four starving men. Fort Norman was still two days' hard travelling ahead, and they must make it, or perish there in the wilderness. The Bishop was becoming very weak and footsore. His continual travelling and hardships since May were telling upon him. How he longed to stop, to just lie down under some tree, and rest, rest! But no, that would be fatal! His flock needed him,

## MID DRIFTING ICE

and he must not give up. So with firmly-compressed lips, and face drawn and haggard, he stumbled on, trying to keep pace with his more sturdy companions.

But even the Bishop's splendid will could not conquer his worn body. His feet refused to move, and he sank exhausted upon the snow. "Leave me here," he said to the Indians; "I can go no farther. You push on and send me back some food." There was nothing else to do, for men in desperate circumstances cannot stand upon ceremony. So, building a fire under one of the trees, and spreading some fir boughs on the ground, the Indians once again started forward.

And there in the lone wilderness the faithful Bishop was left, perhaps to die. Suppose the Indians, too, should give out ere they reached the Fort! What then? Or suppose prowling, hungry wolves should find him. Then, in either case, another name would be added to the long list of noble men and women who had given their lives for the Master's sake.

Meanwhile, at Fort Norman, Mrs. Bompas was enduring an agony of suspense. Where was the Bishop? Why was he so delayed? Had something terrible happened to him? Besides this, there was the responsibility of the mission-work, with the many demands of the ever imperative Indians. A white woman of high culture, away in the great North, living in a rude log-house, shut off from all communication with the outside world, and her husband lost somewhere in the wilds!

The loneliness and dreariness of this place has been vividly described by that earnest missionary, the Rev. W. Spendlove.

"We reside," he said, "in the northern confines of British territory, on the Arctic slopes of this continent, not far from the Arctic Circle and Great Bear Lake, amid wild, mountainous scenery. Either the wild fury of the storm rages or dead calm with intense cold prevails, interchanged with bright sun, and cheerless ice and snow landscape for eight months of the

## MID DRIFTING ICE

year. Ice-blocked and snow-bound, dark forest covers the banks of the Mackenzie River, and beyond, a trackless desert of beautiful, perfectly dry snow. Distance, 8,000 miles from England, upwards of 1,500 miles beyond the out-limit of Canadian frontier border of civilization, and our nearest missionary brother fifteen days' journey. Cut off from white people, shut up among Red Indian savages! Oh, what vast solitudes! What extreme loneliness! The effort to obtain sufficient food and fuel for these regions is no easy task. Other conditions of life are most disadvantageous. Nothing in nature to smile upon us for eight months. No sight or sound of civilization. No European Christian to mingle with, or fellow-worker to shake the hand, join in mutual sympathetic intercourse, and say, "Go on, brother, I believe in you and your work."

If such conditions were so trying and terrible to a man, what must they have been to a woman with a body by no means of the strongest, accustomed for years to a life of comfort and the refined atmosphere of London drawing-rooms? To make matters worse, "these Indians," so Mrs. Bompas tells us, "like all savage tribes, despise women. They call them among themselves 'the creatures,' and will not submit to a woman's sway."

One night towards the middle of November, Mrs. Bompas was aroused from sleep and much startled by loud knockings upon the door. Trembling, and fearing for the Bishop, she demanded who was there. "We bring you tidings of the Bishop," came the reply. "He is starving."

It did not take Mrs. Bompas long to spring from her bed, and examine the two Indians as to the truth of their report. When she heard of her husband's pitiable condition her heart sank very low. At the same time there came the thought and firm belief that the Arms which had shielded him through so many dangers would befriend him still.

## MID DRIFTING ICE

She well knew there was no time to lose, and her first effort was to induce one of the men, Whu-tale by name, to take relief to the Bishop. Though this Indian was not one of the starving party, he had learned the story from the three who had straggled, half-starved, into the Fort, and had hurried off with another to carry the tale to the mission-house. Mrs. Bompas knew he could be trusted to go in search of the Bishop, and with Indian sagacity would find the place.

"Whu-tale," she said, "Bishop is starving in the woods. I send him meat. Chiddi, chiddi!" (Quick, quick!). "You take it to him, eh?" But Whu-tale did not like the idea of starting out at that time of the night on such a long errand, and doubtfully he shook his head. "Maybe to-morrow," he replied, with true Indian passiveness.

"No, Whu-tale," urged the anxious woman. "To-morrow the Bishop must be here. He cannot stand until he has eaten meat. I want you to take it now, and go to him like the wind. If you go directly and bring Bishop safe, I will give you a fine flannel shirt."

At this Whu-tale grew interested. Though the Bishop's sufferings did not appeal to him, the offer of the flannel shirt moved him, and a little more briskly he remarked: "Then, it would not be hard for me to go, and perhaps like the wind."

Having accomplished this much, Mrs. Bompas had still stern work ahead. Wrapped in a deer-skin robe, she emerged from the house, and climbed the hill to the Fort, and aroused the Hudson's Bay Company's officer from a sound sleep to obtain a supply of moose-meat. The thermometer was nearly 30 degrees below zero, and starving wolves had been recently seen lurking near the fort. She thought of neither one nor the other, but only of her husband, out alone in the night.

At last Whu-tale was ready, and much rejoiced was she to see him start off on his errand of mercy. All the next day

## MID DRIFTING ICE

Mrs. Bompas waited and watched in great suspense. The hours dragged slowly by. Daylight came and went. Whutale had not returned. Darkness came, and just when Mrs. Bompas was about to give up in despair, the travellers returned, the Bishop hardly able to stand, and his beard fringed with icicles. The Lord had indeed preserved him from the many and great dangers, and thankful hearts offered up fervent prayers to Him that night in the little mission-house.

Here the Bishop stayed all the winter, and, notwithstanding his last fearful experience, left again in the spring, among the drift-ice, for the purpose of visiting Archdeacon McDonald at Peel River, whose health was not good. Of the risk the Bishop ran in this journey down-stream with the drifting ice the following description in his own words will give some idea :

“The breaking-up of the ice in spring in the large rivers, like the Mackenzie, is sometimes a fine sight. The ice may pile in masses along the banks to the height of forty feet, or be carried far into the woods. When any check occurs to this drifting of the broken ice, so as to back the stream, the ice may suddenly rise to the height of fifty feet or more and flood the country.

“The rivers and lakes freeze in winter to a depth of from six to ten feet, and the force and impetus of large masses of ice of this thickness, when hurled along the rapid current of a mighty river, are enormous. Few exhibitions of the power of the great Creator are more imposing than when ‘He causeth His wind to blow and the waters flow.’ ”

## CHAPTER XIII

### INDIAN WAYS

I TRIED once to take a snapshot of a group of friendly Indians gathered around a camp-fire. It was a picturesque scene—the rude brush lodge, the dusky-faced Indians squatted on boughs and robes, the lean dogs lying around, and the bright fire blazing up in the centre. What a fine picture it would make! But, alas! when the negative was developed, how great the disappointment! Instead of the bright blaze, there was a hideous blur, almost blotting out the figures grouped around. The beauty of the scene was gone; it could not be captured.

This is something like an attempt to describe the Indians of the North. To visit them in their camps, watch their quaint ways, and talk with them, is one thing; to paint them in words which will be real, picturesque, and living is quite another matter. There is as much difference as between the bright, sparkling blaze and the blur upon the negative.

A few men have succeeded in a wonderful manner in describing the life of the Indians, such as Longfellow in his "Hiawatha," and Fenimore Cooper in his "Leatherstocking Tales." If Bishop Bompas had so wished, what marvellous stories he could have told of his forty-one years among this interesting people! He did describe some of their manners and customs in two little books, "Northern Lights on the Bible," and a "History of the Diocese of Mackenzie River." But he has told us all too little. In this chapter it is, of course, impossible to tell all about the ways of the Indians

## INDIAN WAYS

in the vast field over which he travelled, for that field of work comprised 1,000,000 square miles; but we will suppose ourselves in a very fast and successful flying-machine, which will take us from place to place, and give us brief glimpses of these dusky children, scattered away up North over countless leagues of forest, mountain, and plain.

Indians are ever on the move, and well have they been called "People of the Wandering Foot." They do not stay long in one place, and for this reason their houses are made of skins of the deer or moose, stretched over slender poles in the shape of beehives or haystacks. When they wish to break up camp, they take the skins and leave the poles. In some places, especially in the Yukon, to-day they live in log-houses, and have regular villages in the fashion of white people.

To see a band of Indians breaking up camp is an interesting sight. Everything is bustle and confusion. The women do most of the work, and great is the chattering and scolding which goes on. The dogs lie around, and even the smallest dog has its pack to carry of the household effects, according to its strength. They have no furniture to move, for the ground is bed, chair, and table combined. The women do not have to trouble about their dishes and silverware, as a few tin cups and kettles are all they have, and fingers take the place of forks.

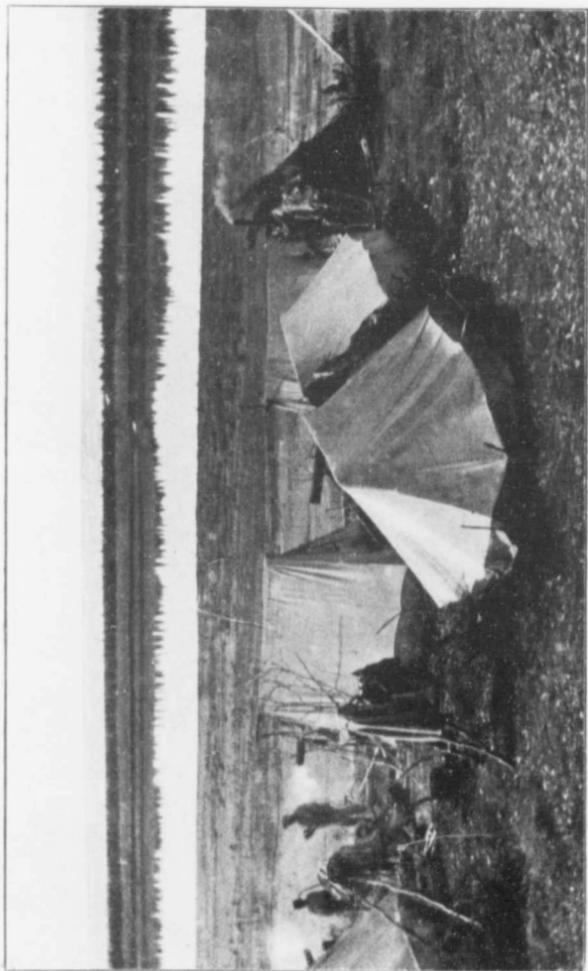
"When the Indians shift camp, which they often do every week or two, the men-folk start first, unencumbered but with their guns; and after making a track for ten or twelve miles, they mark out a spot for the next encampment, and then proceed on the chase till evening. The women, with their families and dog-sleds, loaded with tent, bedding, and utensils, trudge slowly after, and on arriving at the intended camp, after clearing the snow, they strew the space with pine-branches and erect the tent. After arranging this by dis-

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AN INDIAN SUMMER CAMP AT PEEL RIVER.  
*From a photograph by the Rev. C. F. Hiltner*

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## INDIAN WAYS

burdening the sleds of their loads, they proceed to collect fuel for firing, and have all ready for a repast by evening, when the husbands return, bearing the produce of their hunt. If a large animal has been killed, the wives walk to the spot the next day to carry home the meat and hide. The men, however, now more than formerly take a share in the camp duties."

The writer once, seeing a strange band of Indians thus getting ready to depart, brought his camera to bear upon the interesting scene, but so great was the indignation displayed by the Indians that he was glad to beat a hasty retreat. They have a superstitious dread of the little black box with the mysterious click, which accounted for their anger.

As white men go among the Indians, the old-time dress gradually disappears, and instead the men wear fine, factory-made clothes, and the women are gaily adorned in gaudy dress material and many-coloured ribbons, of which they are very proud. They are exceedingly fond, too, of perfume, and some will spend almost their last cent upon the sweet-scented stuff. But, get the Indian away in the wild, his real home, and there you will find him the most picturesque of beings. Clothed in a suit made of fur, deer-skin, or dressed leather, with a skin blanket, and with moccasins on his feet, you have the typical Indian of whom we love to read.

"The women's dress," so Bishop Bompas tells us, "mostly consists of a long leather coat trimmed with cloth or beads, and sometimes a cloth hood for the head. The women's faces were, till recently, often slightly tattooed with dark lines on the chin, formed by drawing a thread loaded with gunpowder or colouring-matter under the skin. The men were formerly much addicted to painting their faces with vermilion, but this has fallen into disuse among the tribes in contact with Europeans. The Eskimo young men stripe their faces with

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vermilion as a distinguishing mark when they have killed an enemy."

In olden days the Indians wove baskets of roots close enough together to hold water. This water was heated for cooking purposes by plunging into it several hot stones. Meat was baked by being buried in the earth and a fire made over it. Now the boiling is done in iron or copper kettles, and the roasting on wooden spits or skewers before the fire.

Their food generally consists of meat and fish, but they are coming more and more to use the delicacies of the white man. Tea and tobacco they love, and the effects are often none too good. In times of famine they will drink a large amount of tea, and then complain of "sore heart."

"An idle Indian," says Bishop Bompas, "may be more inclined to allay the pangs of hunger with his pipe than to brave the cold of winter in hastening to the chase. Many of the Indians complain of pains in the chest, which may arise from their incautiously imbibing the caustic ashes with which they often load their empty pipes in lighting these at their fire embers."

Before the arrival of Christianity the lot of the Indian woman was very hard. A man multiplied his wives as one would his cattle. They were only useful for hauling and chopping wood; they were slaves in the hardest sense of the term. Often mothers, knowing what their little girl-babies would have to suffer when they were grown up, destroyed them. One woman confessed to the first missionary among them that she had killed thirteen. But since the Gospel has reached them changes have taken place. Although women yet have much of the work to do, they are treated far better, and regarded with more affection.

"In Indian marriages it seems to be a part of the etiquette that the bride should show great reluctance to be wedded, till she has at times to be forcibly dragged from her camp. Her

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friends also may exhibit great opposition to the intended match; and yet this is, in fact, only a part of the ceremony. Among some Indians it is understood to be absolutely forbidden to a mother-in-law to look her son-in-law in the face at least until the birth of his first child. This does not seem to be enforced among the more northern Indians, but a son-in-law is looked upon as a sort of hunter for his wife's parents. Their daughter does not leave her parents' camp, and even after marriage appears to be more under their control than that of her husband.

"As soon as a child is born, its parents usually drop their own name and assume that of the child; and this is continued a good deal even in the case of baptized Indians; so that you may hear John's father or Jane's mother so spoken of in preference to their own name. A wife, instead of speaking of her husband, will prefer to speak of her boy's father. Polygamy was practised among the non-Christian Indians chiefly by the chiefs and leading men, and with the excuse that more than one wife was required by them to dress their furs and skins, and carry their meat and effects, and do other camp duties.

"The infant Indians are, as is well known, enveloped in bags of moss, which, in this severe climate, are admirable preservatives against cold and exposure. In these bags the infant is tightly laced up, confining the limbs, and leaving only the head exposed. This process of mummification does not seem to weaken the limbs, nor to give discomfort to the patient. The swing is the usual accompaniment of the moss-bag, where the swaddled infant is lulled to rest. Slung over her shoulder, this moss-bag is the constant burden of the mother's travels.

"In sickness the Indians are very pitiful. They soon lose heart, and seem to die more from despondency than disease. Their need is often not so much medicine as good nourishment and nursing; but this is hard to obtain. Food is often scarce even for those in health to seek it, and for a sick Indian

## INDIAN WAYS

it may be hard to find a friend in need. The constant removals are trying to the weak and infirm, and in times of distress those who cannot follow the band are left behind to perish. Indians have been known to devour their own children in cases of absolute starvation; but such instances are rare, and may, perhaps, be attributed to a temporary mania. Those who are believed to have perpetrated such an act are feared and shunned.

“The dying are often hastily wrapped up and laid aside, even before the last sigh has escaped, for there is a reluctance to handle the dead. There is no fear of the resuscitation of the corpse, which is, for the most part, stiffly frozen as soon as removed from the camp-fire. Chocolate is a favourite beverage with the sick where it can be obtained, and it is looked upon as a medicine. The Indians universally give it the name of ‘ox-blood,’ because it was mistaken by them for the blood of the musk-ox when first they saw it used by the whites. Rice, which is called ‘white barley,’ is another luxury coveted by the sick. Flour is known by the Tukudh Indians as ‘ashes from the end of heaven.’ Tobacco is ‘warmth’ or ‘comfort,’ and the pipe the ‘comforting stone.’”

The aged are at times left on the trail to die. When they are too feeble to keep up with the others, they are given some food, and generally a rifle and cartridges. For a while they struggle on, but after a time they give up the attempt and are heard of no more, unless a prospector, missionary, or mounted policeman happens along.

This has long been the custom among these Northern Indians, but only now prevails where the influence of the Gospel has not been felt. During the fall of 1771, when Samuel Hearne, the great explorer, was retreating from the Arctic coast with a band of Indians, one of the wives of the native men, in the last stages of consumption, could go no farther.

“For a band short of food to halt on the march meant death

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**AN OLD INDIAN DESERTED BY HIS PEOPLE**

This native was brought into Whitehorse by the Mounted Police. He had been left by his people alone on the trail. This is not uncommon among some of the natives in certain places.

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## INDIAN WAYS

to all. The Northern wilderness has its grim, unwritten law, inexorable and merciless as death. For those who fall by the way there is no pity. A whole tribe may not be exposed to death for the sake of one person. Giving the squaw food and a tent, the Indians left her to meet her last enemy, whether death came by starvation, or cold, or the wolf-pack. Again and again the abandoned squaw came up with the marchers, weeping and begging their pity, only to fall from weakness. But the wilderness has no pity; and so they left her.\*

“The Indians were formerly accustomed, instead of burying their dead, to place them on high scaffolds above ground; but this habit was probably owing to the ground being for many months in the year frozen too hard to dig it. The raising on scaffolds was also a safer preservative than burying under ground from the ravages of animals of prey. Since mingling with the whites, however, the Indians conform to European habits of burial. It was also formerly a superstitious custom to place with the deceased his bow, arrows, and other necessaries; and even in later times a gun, ammunition, tobacco, fire-bag, and other articles, have been buried in the grave of a dead Indian. Such a superstition it is hard to eradicate; and perhaps it needs some care not to quench too roughly the idea of a life continued after death, until the knowledge of a spiritual immortality and a final resurrection can be instilled to supplant the instinctive notion of a continued mundane life.

“The Indians had formerly much superstitious dread of using any clothing or other articles belonging to a person deceased. In case of a death, all the clothing and effects of the departed were thrown away or destroyed; and even the relatives would destroy their tents, guns, and other property, either out of grief, or from dread of using again anything

\* “Pathfinders of the West,” by A. C. Laut.

## INDIAN WAYS

that the deceased had come in contact with. These inconvenient customs are being gradually relinquished."

Little white tents are placed over graves on high hills. In some places the spots are well tended, and adorned with neat palings and quaint coverings. Often flags are erected on long poles. In olden days, in Southern Yukon, the Indians burned their dead, and placed the ashes in boxes, over which they built rude structures. During the Klondyke rush, in some places, these boxes were disturbed by the gold-seekers, which angered the Indians exceedingly.

The natives live by the chase, and for this reason, if for no other, they must be ever on the move to obtain a living. When game is plentiful the Indians live well, and, having enough for to-day, seldom take thought for the morrow. All kinds of game abound, from the lordly moose and the savage grizzly bear to the timid rabbit and the jaunty ptarmigan.

To visit a fur-trader's store and watch the various skins brought in for barter is an interesting sight. You will see the skin of the lynx, beaver, wolverine, bear, martin, ermine, wolf, and the different kinds of fox, from the common red fox to the costly cross or black fox. For this latter the Indians are ever on the watch, as it is worth very much. One black fox is a fortune. The animal is quite rare, and when one is sighted weeks and months are often spent in obtaining the prize. A few years ago an Indian started after one which he had seen the day before. It was drawing towards spring, when the tops of the foothills were losing their covering of snow, owing to the hot rays of the sun. Noticing Mr. Reynard on one of these bare places anxiously searching for mice, the Indian dressed himself in a suit of white cotton, made for the occasion, and crept cautiously to the edge of a bunch of trees near by. Then he began to squeak like a mouse. Soon the fox pricked up his ears and trotted off towards the woods, hoping for a nice morsel. As he drew near the Indian levelled

## INDIAN WAYS

his rifle, and shot the poor brute right through the head. This fox-skin was an excellent one, and the fur-trader who purchased it valued it at from 2,000 to 3,000 dollars.

Many are the risks the native runs in his various wanderings after the daily food. At times an angry moose threatens to impale him with his great antlers, or a wounded bear hurls himself upon the hunter. A few years ago an Indian, standing by his lodge, saw a huge bear coming towards him. Slipping back, he seized a small rifle and fired a shot at the brute. It was enough to anger the monster, and with a terrific roar he rushed upon the man. The Indian fought hard, but he was as a child in the fearful grip. His clothes and flesh were ripped and torn in a most frightful manner, and but for the timely arrival of several Indians the man would have been torn to pieces. As it was his life was despaired of, and it was all the police doctor from Whitehorse could do to cure him. When the bear had been killed the Indians cut him all to pieces, and threw the portions to the four winds of heaven. This is an old custom, and unless this be done it is believed the injured man cannot get well. As he did recover, however, the credit was given to their prompt action in scattering the bear's body, and not to the skilful attention of the "white man's doctor."

A sad incident happened about 100 miles back of Whitehorse. An Indian was out hunting with his little boy, about twelve years old. One day, seeing the fresh tracks of a moose, which circled around the camp, he told the lad to remain in the lodge while he started in pursuit. As the hunter crept stealthily along on his noiseless snow-shoes, he saw the bushes move in front of him. Thinking it was the moose quietly browsing, he fired right at the spot, and then rushed forward. What were his feelings to find, instead of the lordly animal, his own little son lying bleeding on the snow, dead. The poor boy, disobeying his father's command,

## INDIAN WAYS

had started off to do some hunting on his own account, and was thus struck by the fatal bullet.

In many places the power of the wily medicine-man is still strong among the Indians. This is especially so where the Gospel message has not taken firm root. The natives still believe that the conjurer has influence over things in the heavens above and the earth beneath, and to gain his favour various are the gifts which are slipped into his hands. One of the most interesting superstitions is called "fox medicine." The Indian, wishing to have success with his season's hunting, before he departs will give the medicine-man money or furs; he then thinks the foxes will be urged to come to his traps. At Little Salmon, on the Yukon River, a fur-trader suggested to the Indians that they should pay the conjurer after the season's hunt, according to the animals they had caught. This they did, though the medicine-man did not like it at all, for he received very few gifts from some of his people.

The same trader was once travelling with an Indian on a long trail. When pitching camp for the night, a branch fell and struck the native a heavy blow on the head. He imagined he was seriously injured, and sat for some time over the fire in a most despondent attitude. At length he looked intently into the trader's face.

"You got 'um paper?" he remarked.

"Yes," was the reply; and a leaf torn from a small notebook was handed to him.

"You got 'um pencil?" was the next request. This, too, was given; and then the Indian slowly and laboriously traced the figure of a cross upon the leaf. When this had been accomplished to his satisfaction, he threw it into the fire, at the same time blowing vigorously with his breath. Watching the flames catch the paper and carry it aloft, he gave a sigh of contentment, while a new expression came into his face.

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"What did you do that for?" asked the trader, much interested in the proceeding.

"Oh, medicine-man say when me leave on dis trip, if anything matter, me make all same cross on paper, and put 'um in fire; him get word dat way, and make me all same well Injun. Me better now;" and, suiting the action to the word, he leaped to his feet as if nothing had happened. What the cross had to do with it is hard to say. Perhaps it was some faint glimmering of the power of the Cross of Christ which had come to the medicine-man, and this he used to further his own plans.

In some places the conjurer is of a very jealous nature, and it is dangerous for anyone to interfere with him. Mrs. Bompas, years ago, at Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, had a thrilling experience, which might have proved quite fatal.

"On going down to the camp one evening," so she tells us, "we were attracted to one of the leather tents or lodges, where a low, droning sound announced the medicine-man's presence. 'Do let us go and see it!' exclaimed Maggie; and I, hardly reflecting on the prudence of the step, turned toward the spot whence the sounds proceeded. It was in Mineha's tent, and here I discovered my little pet widow. Her hand had been poisoned in some way, and she was suffering great pain. She was lying down, with her hand extended, and beside her crouched a young Trout Lake Indian, lately come in, a deserter from one of the portage boats. Fancy the scene! The woman moaning, with closed eyes; the Indian bending over her and singing a low, monotonous song, which is a kind of conjuring the Indians call 'making medicine.' Beside her lay a small bark vessel with a few spoonfuls of blood, which the young man drank from time to time, and then proceeded with his operations. There was a deep silence in the camp, except for these two sounds, when suddenly I appeared before

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them, and exclaimed, partly in Indian, at the absurdity of their doings. I knelt down by Mineha, and, taking her hand out of that of the man's, began to examine it. Then I pushed back my conjurer, which made his hat fall off, and evidently distressed his sense of dignity.

“By this time all the women of the other camps came gathering round the door. My hero persisted in his droning song, and I in my remonstrances and assurance that it was all rubbish, and displeasing to God. When at last the man gave over, he retired to the back of the tent, where I suddenly became aware of his gun, which the Indians usually kept loaded. For a moment I thought it was all up with me, and Maggie says I exclaimed: ‘Do it, then!’ However, he contented himself with bending towards me three times, with eyes almost on fire with passion, and uttering each time a word which was anything but a blessing! Well, the game was stopped, and so he quitted the tent. The man seemed fallen back in a state of exhaustion, and was trembling all over. The fact is, this medicine-making seems to be a kind of possession, which they give themselves up to. His condition then was pitiable to behold. However, there was nothing more to be done, as the feeling was so strong against me that Mineha would not let me prescribe for her poor hand; so we came away, rather thankful to escape safe and sound. I hear the poor woman is still suffering agonies from her hand, in spite of her having had medicine made over it again, during the whole of one night, by another man!”

Several years ago Bishop Holmes gave an interesting description of the medicine-man in the Diocese of Athabasca.

“Their faith in,” he says, “and fear of medicine-men was unshaken; their love for heathen feasts and practices was as strong as ever. Nearly all sickness, accidents, and misfortunes were attributed to the use of *muché muskeke* (bad medicine), directly or indirectly, by the medicine-men. They supposed

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that the medicine-man obtained himself, or employed some other to obtain, a hair from the head of his intended victim, and that the hair was put into the bad medicine, and the effect was according to the medicine-man's intention. They believed that the antidote could be obtained from the Indian doctor, but it meant a good round sum in blankets, horses, tobacco, etc. They believed that their medicine-men had direct intercourse with the *muché manito* (evil spirit), through whose assistance they were able to perform most wonderful feats. Insanity was attributed to the direct possession of an evil spirit. An insane person was called a *wetigo* (cannibal). When any person—man or woman—manifested symptoms of 'wetigoism,' the old Indian doctors were called in to practise all their incantations and exorcise the evil spirit, which in very few cases was successful. The first symptoms of cannibalism manifest themselves in dreams and insomnia. The evil spirit is said to appear in a vision with a plate of human flesh, about which there is an awful and irresistible fascination. The *wetigo* is strictly guarded by the medicine-men, who, with the noise of their drums and rattles in order to frighten the evil spirit away, would drive any sane man out of his mind. The last and most dangerous stage is when the *wetigo* has accepted from the evil spirit the meal of human flesh, after which he is securely tied with cords. He refuses any kind of food, and has an intense craving for human flesh. In this stage they suppose that ice forms in the breast of the *wetigo*, and they firmly believe that they have seen the *wetigo* vomit ice. The last remedy applied is the axe. Within the nineteen years I have been at Lesser Slave Lake three *wetigos* have been killed with axes, like animals, by their own friends.

"Another heathen custom was the cruel neglect of the aged and infirm. Starvation was the means employed among the Indians of getting rid of them.

"Such a description of the 'noble red man,' without a

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reference to his good points, might lead people to think that there is a good deal of truth in the saying that 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian.' But in the character of all Indians there are three redeeming features. First, their belief in the *Kesa Manito* (the Great Spirit), and, I might add, their strong belief in the personality of the Devil. Secondly, their generous hospitality. They have all things in common, and would give any traveller, be he Indian or white man, their last morsel, even if they had no prospect of another meal themselves for the next week. Thirdly, their passionate love for children. I could trust my children with them under any circumstances, for I should know that so long as there was a meal left the children would get the best of it."

Indians, as a rule, are shrewder and more intelligent than many people suppose. Someone has said that they are "instincts on legs," but this is wrong. They make splendid guides, and can find their way through a mazy forest or a desolate wilderness when white men fail entirely. The early explorers owed much to the Indians in guiding them on their long journeys.

They read the whites and understand their ways far better than many suppose. As they sit about the camp-fires, the pale-faces are all carefully discussed. Each man is known by some peculiarity. One is a fox, wolf, or bear, according to some characteristic which the Indians have noted.

They are humorists, too, and at times quick at repartee. A trader, Taylor by name, made a visit some time ago to a band of Indians at Big Salmon. He carried with him a dress which had been ordered for "Mrs. Charlie." Reaching the place, he inquired for the latter. Then the question was which Charlie's wife was meant. Was it Big Salmon Charlie, Little Salmon Charlie, or some other Charlie? Much puzzled, the trader exclaimed, "Toc much Charlie!" Quick as a flash an Indian turned to him and replied :

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"Taylor, heem keep road-house ; Taylor, heem cut wood down trail ; you Taylor ; too moche Taylor !"

Not long ago, when on a visit to England, Bishop Stringer spoke in a most interesting way about these Indians.

"A few years ago," he said, "those Indians were degraded, superstitious, and ignorant, without any written language at all ; but God's Word was given to them through Archdeacon McDonald, and the complete Bible was translated, and there was found a people zealous to learn to read that Word. It was the ABC of a written language to them, and it is the only book, outside one or two others connected with our Church, and it remains to-day the classic of all those Northern tribes on the Yukon side, as well as the Mackenzie River. Archdeacon McDonald tells of men who in those early days in three days learned sufficient to go off to their Indian camps and acquire enough knowledge themselves unaided to read God's Word. We thank God that that was the case. He tells of men who came long distances, some of them fifty years of age, and who learned to read in those early days. There was one man he speaks of who came 600 miles in order to learn to read God's Word.

"I want to tell you of one man, a good friend of mine who has passed away, an Indian who was ordained a deacon a few years ago, a blot out of the superstitious darkness of that Northern land. I had the pleasure of going with him from one camp to another across those barren forests, sometimes on barren grounds and sometimes in the shelter of the forest. From God's Word he would teach his people, gathering them together, night after night, holding little services, reading God's Word, and explaining it to them. After years of work amongst his people he passed away. As he was crossing the Divide to the Yukon side to reach a distant tribe of Indians, one man accompanied him—a young man named Amos—who had hitherto been quite careless about religious

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matters. The name of the deacon was the Rev. John Ttssietla. Ttssietla means, by the way, 'He laughs at a mosquito.' There are mosquitoes in that country, and I suppose that when he was a child he did not mind the mosquitoes, and he was called 'He laughs at a mosquito.' John was his Christian name. This time he was starving. There was no food in the land; game was scarce; and he felt that the last days were come for him unless he could get food. As he lay dying out on the top of one of the mountains, he said to Amos, 'Amos, I am about to leave you, but I want to give you this Book—God's Word—and I want you to read it. I want you to teach it to my people.' A few hours afterwards he passed away, and Amos, who had been hitherto careless, began to read that Word alone on the mountains as he lay to rest his friend, John Ttssietla. Then he began to teach the children to read, and then he began to teach others, and last year, when I saw him down in the Yukon Valley, I found that he was so much advanced that I hope in a year or two, after passing a few examinations, he will be able to take the place of his friend, John Ttssietla, in the work.

"I have not time to tell you very much about that Northern land, but I want to tell you this. As you go down the Mackenzie River from Edmonton the two thousand odd miles to reach the Arctic Ocean, every two or three hundred miles you find a place called a Hudson's Bay Company's post. There is usually a mission in connection with it. You will find around the old Hudson's Bay Company's post, if you watch closely, things like stumps which have been cut off level with the ground almost. What does that mean? They extend right round the fort. It means that forty-five years ago the Hudson's Bay Company people had to have a stockade all round those posts to protect their lives and their property. Now they have been cut down and used for firewood. What

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has caused that? The light of the Gospel truth which has gone into that land. We thank God for what has been done in connection with that, and for the influence of God's Word in that Northern region.

“The Bible is, as I have said, the standard book; and the language into which the Bible has been translated—it had to be translated into one particular dialect—is becoming the classic of many of the tribes in that Northern land, the central language, used by the people more and more. Other tribes learned to use it, and learned the meanings of words which they do not use in their own dialect. There is a great deal of difficulty, of course, in getting words when translating the Bible into those Northern languages. The name for God even is not known; and Archdeacon McDonald, I think very wisely, adopted one word, ‘Vittekwichanchyo,’ which means ‘I am.’ That word is now known all through that land in connection with the great Creator of the universe.

“The last speaker has told you that there are numerous snakes in South America. If we had a few snakes in that Northern land we should not be forced to translate some passages that refer to snakes in a roundabout way, calling a snake ‘a creeping thing,’ or something else of that kind. The sentence, ‘Wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove,’ is translated in one of the Eskimo languages—I think, in Greenland—by ‘Wise as an ermine, a weasel’ (because that is the wisest in the country), ‘and as harmless as a seal-pup.’ It seems amusing, but it is quite as expressive.

“As God's Word is sent out to that country, the Bibles are sold to the Indians. Nobody ever gets a Bible for nothing. The Indians are quite willing to pay for them. They pay for them, not in money, as you do here, but in kind. They sometimes bring in dried meat or fish, or something else of that kind. I have a little piece of dried meat

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here, and I think I had better show it to you as a part of the coin of that country. This is a very small piece, but I may tell you that this is the kind of meat which we like to use on our long trips. You can throw it around, and you can do anything you like with it. That piece is five or six years old now, and it has not changed at all, and it is quite as palatable as it was five or six years ago. It is very convenient for travelling in that country. An Indian will bring in a piece of that about a foot wide and about two feet long, and he will trade it for an Indian New Testament, and about four times as much as that for a Bible. That means a great deal for this people. Sometimes they bring in a piece of deer-skin, or something of that kind, and sometimes they bring in about ten big fish, and the missionary is able to turn them into money and send it to the Bible Society. In that way these people are taught to pay for the Word of God, and, of course, they appreciate it all the more. The price of a New Testament in the country is one skin. You cannot understand what that means. Its market value corresponds to about 2s. A whole Bible is worth three or four skins. These Indians sometimes receive a Bible in debt, and go off to their hunting-grounds; but the very first thing they always do, when they come in on the next trip, if they have anything, is to pay for the Bible which they have received. And how reverently they will use the Bible! They wrap it in deer-skin or something like that; and they bring back all the old Bibles again. I have had piles of old dirty Bibles. They revere them so much that they do not want to destroy them, and I have had to destroy them quietly after the piles became too large. It shows the reverence that they have for God's Word. These Bibles are carried with them, although they are heavy. Here is one. This is not one with the thin kind of paper, and it is very heavy;

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and one can realize what it means for an Indian having one of these books on a long journey where every pound counts so much. But you will understand how he appreciates it when I tell you that every family in that land which I have ever seen has had some part of God's Word in its camp, no matter where it went on its journeys."

We have seen in a previous chapter how when Mr. Bompas was consecrated Bishop of the Diocese of Athabasca, he had charge of a vast region of one million square miles. In 1883, finding the field too large, he had it divided, the northern portion being called Mackenzie River, which the Bishop took as his own. Here he carried on the work east and west of the Rocky Mountains for several years. But finding the task too great for one man—owing partly to the influx of miners along the Yukon River—he again had a division made in 1890, the region west of the mountains thus becoming the Diocese of Selkirk (now Yukon). Archdeacon Reeve became Bishop of the Mackenzie River Diocese, while Bishop Bompas decided to go into the regions beyond across the mountains.

## CHAPTER XIV

### STIRRING DAYS AT FORTY MILE

A GRAND picture rises before the mind as we think of Bishop Bompas far away in the Northland, worn by years of toil, and yet pressing on to new work. If I were an artist, I would sketch him standing at Fort Norman in front of the rude mission-house. He is looking away to the west, towards the Rocky Mountains, with his left hand to his ear, as if listening to voices from the great Yukon River. In his right hand he clutches two letters, one urging him to come to Manitoba to rest, the other pleading with him to return to England to spend the rest of his life in peace. Which call will he heed? That is the question, as we see him standing there in the "Valley of Decision." His own terse words give the answer, which might well be placed below the picture. "I find," he wrote, "the needle points west rather than east, and north rather than south."

Yes, that was always his idea, to be going farther to reclaim the sheep of the wilderness. He shrank from the thought of going back to England. He had been now twenty-five years in the North, and loved the wild.

"To life in England," he wrote, "and to my relatives there, I feel so long dead and buried that I cannot think a short visit home, as if from the grave, would be of much use. If over fifteen years ago, when I was at home, I felt like Samuel's ghost, how should I feel now?"

Leaving Fort Norman, he went again across the Rocky Mountains, and spent the winter of 1891-92 at the lonely

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rampart-house. He did not mind the loneliness, for he spent the time at his beloved studies. In the spring, when the snow had disappeared from the land, he would walk through the woods drinking in the beautiful things of Nature.

"I find," he said, "a few flowers even in this Arctic clime, such as the pretty wild-rose, the lupin and bluebell. There are also berry blossoms, and plenty of the white blossoms of what we call 'marsh tea.' These blossoms really make rather pleasant and aromatic tea. The leaves, when used for the same purpose, are rather bitter. Raspberry-shoots, birch-buds, and some other berry-trees are also at times used to make tea in the absence of the genuine article, but they are rather medicinal. The west side of the mountains is, on the whole, more flowery than the east side."

In the spring, after the ice had gone out, he went down the Porcupine River to the Yukon. It was here he met Mrs. Bompas, who was returning from England. They had not met since 1887, and Mrs. Bompas vividly describes this meeting. After speaking about the trip up the river from St. Michael's, she mentions the great excitement which ensued on July 26, when "two Indians came on board, bringing news of the Bishop, who is at the next village, 'Showman.' But a delay took place owing to the boiler being cleaned, and it was not until midnight that 'two bells' sounded, a signal for the boat to stop. I pricked up my ears, and then another bell, which meant, 'Stop her.' It must be for wood, of course; but I sprang from my berth, and looked out of my small window to see a pretty Indian camp, and—my husband on the beach, grey and weather-beaten, but in health better than I had expected!"

From here they went up the river to Forty Mile, where there was a large camp of miners and Indians. In the log-house, which had been built by poor Ellington, the Bishop and his faithful wife took up their new burden among com-

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plete strangers. Their special work was among the Indians, and for the children a school was at once started. There was much to do about the place—repairs of all kinds to be made, and the Bishop was kept very busy.

From time to time we catch brief glimpses of the life in the mission-house. Occasionally Mrs. Bompas lets in a little light, which is most interesting. We see the Bishop turning from the cares of the diocese to provide for some Indian child, or do necessary work around the house. She tells how the Bishop "has been busy carpentering and devising a number of things for our comfort—a beautiful cupboard to hold the girls' clothes, shelves and brackets, new bench for dining-room, bedsteads mended, a new door for our little dining-room, frames for double windows, new dining-table, and old one repaired. This, with his self-imposed duty of waiting upon everyone, superintending the kitchen, and doctoring any sick members, has filled up his time the last few weeks. I feel thankful when for a short time in the evening he retires to his study and takes up his beloved Syriac."

But, alas for "the beautiful cupboard and shelves" which the Bishop had so carefully made! Boards were very scarce—not enough even to make coffins in which to bury the dead, and the shelves had to be taken down to make a coffin for an Indian who had been brought in from the distant hunting-grounds. Mrs. Bompas, who relates this incident, tells most pathetically of the trials they had in connection with burying the dead on the Mackenzie River. The Indians would beg packing-boxes from the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, and as these were generally too small, arms and legs would often be seen hanging out of the box as it was lowered into the grave.

Whenever the Indians arrived from their hunting-grounds, the Bishop was kept busy almost night and day attending to their wants, and instructing them in the faith, if only for a

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few days. This teaching was by no means lost, for out on the hills and mountains the Indians had their daily services, when appointed leaders would instruct the others.

Many were the wants the good Bishop relieved. He always kept a store of medicine in the house, and became quite expert in his knowledge of Indian troubles. To them he was doctor as well as teacher, and they always turned to him in time of trouble. He was tireless even to the last in his attendance upon sick persons. Sometimes he even performed surgical operations. With nothing but a pocket-knife he has been known to sever a diseased toe or thumb of some member of his dusky flock. Once he cut off a man's leg with a common hand-saw, and the man is living and able to work to-day.

One spring, east of the mountains, he was public vaccinator. Smallpox was raging, and the previous summer over two thousand Indians are said to have died. The Bishop found at times much trouble in persuading the natives to submit to the operation, but, in spite of difficulties, he vaccinated about five hundred.

He had himself suffered from snow-blindness, and knew how painful it was. When he saw many of his flock thus afflicted, his heart was moved, and he did his best to relieve them. He had never studied at a medical college, but his keen powers of observation and the study of some of the standard medical books that he had always at hand stood him in good stead on many an occasion. He had witnessed so often the sufferings endured by his flock owing to snow-blindness in the spring that, when he returned home for consecration, he took advantage of the visit to attend several lectures at an eye hospital, and was henceforth able to treat the patients who came to him with splendid success. Great was the faith the Indians had in the Bishop's healing powers. Only a few years ago an Indian along the Yukon River, who had been treated by the police doctor for some time, was

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heard to say, "P'lice doctor no good;" and then with animation continued, "Ah! Beeshop heem moche good!"

So now at Forty Mile the Indians came to him with all kinds of troubles. One day a young woman arrived with her hand in a pitiable condition, and asked the Bishop to give medicine to make it well. She had had a quarrel with one of her neighbours, words led to blows, and then a rough-and-tumble fight ensued, and even hair-pulling. During the affair the woman's hand was badly bitten and lacerated by the sharp teeth of her opponent.

On another occasion a woman was brought prostrate and disfigured from a fight with her "man." (They never say husband here.) She was bleeding from mouth and ears, and must have received hard usage. We are not permitted to know the cause of their troubles, but no doubt they happened quite often, and the good missionary was quite accustomed to them.

But his patients were not all like these. There were other cases which touched his heart most deeply. A little boy, named Andrew, was one day brought into the mission-house with a broken leg. Carefully the Bishop set it, and this gave the child much relief. He became quite contented with his new home, and "sang and whistled in his bed so prettily," Mrs. Bompas tells us. It was difficult to keep the little fellow still, so the Bishop slept in his room every night so as to be near. Then, when the boy was well enough, the Bishop lifted him in his strong arms and carried him out on the platform. Andrew's face was radiant with joy, and how beautiful a sight it was to see his noble protector gazing fondly down upon him!

Not only did the women and children need his attention, but the men of the flock as well. Though many were quiet, and gave little or no trouble, there were always others of a turbulent nature. Of these the Bishop had no fear.

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He never hesitated to speak the word of rebuke, or to interfere in order to stop a fight.

One day two Indians became engaged in a serious fight close by the mission. One, Roderick by name, was determined to kill the other, and was making desperate thrusts with a long, sharp knife. The Bishop, observing the encounter, made for the contestants, and taking Roderick by the collar, quietly said, "Come." But the Indian still fought and slashed with his knife, the Bishop all the time retaining his hold, and saying, "Come, come with me." After much effort he succeeded in separating them, and half leading, half dragging, drew Roderick to the mission-house. Then the Indian, completely exhausted, sank upon a large stone near by. Ere long he began to realize how he had been saved from committing murder, and reaching out his hand, seized that of the Bishop to thank him for what he had done.

As the miners continued to arrive, the Bishop became much worried over the change that took place among his Indians, and sadly he wrote:

"Nothing could be of greater contrast than the squalid poverty and want of all things in which the Indians here lived thirty years ago and the lavish luxury and extravagance with which they now squander hundreds of dollars on needless food and dress, if not in a still more questionable manner. The Indians now place such high price on any meat or fuel, or other things which they supply to the whites, such as leather or shoes, that it is hard for your missionaries to live with economy among them, and the worst of all is that the younger Indians are only too apt to imitate the careless whites in irreligion and debauchery."

Then the white men exerted a baneful influence upon his Indians, demoralizing them through drink and in many other unlawful ways. He had to contend with the same difficulties as other missionaries in like circumstances. It

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was Hans Egede, the great apostle to Greenland, who, in 1730, said that while able in perfect security to sleep in the tents of the natives, he had to keep a watch and fire-arms by his bed as a protection against his fellow-Christians. Bishop Bompas remarked, after several years' sad experience with the whites among his little flock, that "the advent of white population strengthens the call for missions to the natives. While they are in the minority in population, they are not so in Church attendance. At Dawson, with a population of 4,000 or 5,000, no weekday services can be maintained, while at Moosehide, Klondyke, with only 500 inhabitants, frequently 50 attend daily evening prayers."

In January, 1895, the Bishop gave a description of this Northern settlement: "A town is laid down at Forty Mile, and they have two doctors, library, reading-room, debating society, theatre, eating-houses, and plenty of 'saloons,' as public-houses are called in the West, besides two stores or shops, and a few tradesmen. One debate was as to which has caused the most misery in the past century, war or whisky. It was decided to give the enviable preference to whisky. This was truly appropriate in a mining camp."

Though the miners, for the most part, were a hard-working, well-meaning class of men, there were a few who were bent on mischief and playing practical jokes. Some of these latter, at times, proved more serious than they anticipated, as it was in Ellington's case. Observing the venerable Bishop moving steadily about his daily work, with his thoughts on higher things, they imagined it would be a fine idea to spring upon him a practical joke. So one day a man with a very serious face came to the mission-house and asked the Bishop to bury a certain miner who had recently died. This the Bishop agreed to do at the appointed hour. When the man had departed, Mr. Totty, who was at Forty Mile, remarked that it was strange that they had not heard of the man's illness.

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At this the Bishop became suspicious, so, going to the white settlement, he asked a store-keeper there when the man had died. "He is not dead," was the reply. "Some of the boys wanted to have a little fun and watch you read the Burial Service over an empty box."

Though, fortunately, the attempt upon the Bishop failed, this trick had imposed upon Mr. Ellington some years before. He, in all sincerity, stood by the open grave, and read most feelingly the beautiful Burial Service from beginning to end, only to find out at last it was all a farce.

Notwithstanding certain jokes of this kind, the miners had the profoundest respect for the Bishop and his devoted wife. Though many of them were indifferent to all things spiritual, still, they could admire nobleness when they beheld it, as they did every day in the two faithful soldiers of the Cross in their midst. As a token of their esteem, on Christmas Day, 1892, a splendid nugget of gold was presented to Mrs. Bompas, with the following address, signed by fifty-three miners:

"It is proposed to make a Christmas present to Mrs. Bompas, the wife of the Rev. Bishop Bompas (for which purpose a collection will be taken up amongst those who are willing to contribute), and that the present shall be in the form of a Forty Mile nugget, as most appropriate to the occasion, as a mark of respect and esteem from the miners of Forty Mile, irrespective of creeds or religions; and, further, that it be distinctly understood to be a personal present to the first white lady who has wintered amongst us."

## CHAPTER XV

### FLOODED OUT

SEVERAL years ago it was my privilege to take service for Bishop Bompas at Carcross during his absence at various stations down the river. I slept in the mission-house, and that evening spent some very pleasant hours looking over the Bishop's library. As book after book was examined, I noticed how many bore marks of hard usage—not only worn from constant packing and repacking, but they were soiled by water. How had it happened? I wondered. Had they been spilled from a canoe in one of his long voyages, or had they been exposed to a drenching rain? These thoughts came to my mind, but not the right one. Not until years later did I learn the story of how these books became soiled.

It was at Forty Mile, in the lonely days before the words "Klondyke" and "Yukon" thrilled the whole world, when the noble Bishop was caring for his little flock at this far northern mission station. The winter had been a long, trying one, and eagerly all were awaiting the coming of spring, when the snow would melt from the land, the birds fill the air with their music, and the ice in the great river would rush roaring down to the sea.

Day after day they watched and waited. When would the ice go? The eager little dusky faces of the mission children were often pressed against the panes, waiting to catch the first glimpse of the movement. Occasionally the Bishop rose from his rude desk, strode to the door, and stood looking anxiously up-stream. He knew better than the little ones

## FLOODED OUT

what the going out of the ice might mean to them. They were on an island cut off from the mainland by a small creek, or what is called in this country a "slough." He had heard stories from the Indians of bygone days when the ice had jammed below and flooded the whole island, while huge blocks of ice rushed along, sweeping down everything before them. At times they became stranded, and remained there long after the waters had subsided, grim witnesses of the terrible time.

Thus all day long they watched and waited. Towards evening a shout was raised: "The ice is going! The ice is going!" and all rushed to see a wonder which, once beheld, can never fade from the memory.

"It was," to use Mrs. Bompas's own words, "as if a commanding officer had issued orders to march, and the whole regiment obeyed. The great mass swept by in a frantic rush, completely beyond the power of the pen to describe. Huge blocks of every shape and size, carried along at a rapid speed, ground and tore one another, while many monsters were forced upon the bank by the fearful pressure. Seven hundred miles of ice, five or six feet thick, were crowded down that stream, at this place about 650 yards wide."

"Huge blocks," says an eye-witness, "would get squeezed up by the pressure of still larger ones coming down behind them. Then the block in front would dart swiftly forward, like a greyhound slipped from the leash, and the great, tearing mass behind would sink and disappear, to come rolling up again half a mile farther down. On they went, tumbling over one another in their haste and gladness to be free: down to the bottom; up again into the air, grinding the sponge-ice to powder; blocked up for a moment, then whirled on again, until they were themselves pulverized, or hurled on to the bank, or reached a clear space where they might for a few hundred yards float onward more peacefully."

## FLOODED OUT

Having watched the grand sight for some time, and feeling the danger of a flood was now over, the Bishop and his household retired to rest, after commending themselves to the great Father's keeping. But little were they aware that down where the Forty Mile River flows into the Yukon a jam was being formed; and the ice and water thus impeded began to rise and overflow the banks. Unconscious of the danger, those in the mission-house slept on. Presently they were awakened by the terrible sound of water sweeping around them, and rushing through the house. The Bishop sprang from his bed, lighted a candle, and moved downstairs. Here he found the floor covered with water, which was steadily rising. Thinking not of himself, nor of his books, but only of the helpless little ones upstairs, he waded through the icy water, and seizing what provisions he could lay his hands upon, carried them upstairs. He did not know how long they might be kept there, and the children must not starve.

Rapidly the water rose, flooding all the furniture downstairs, the little organ, and the books which were on the lower shelves.

There was now nothing else to do but to remain upstairs and see what would happen. The children huddled around, trembling with fear, and listening to the roaring outside, and the water rushing through the house. The Bishop, strong and calm, tried to soothe their fears, speaking words of kindness and comfort. He could trust when the little ones feared, for had he not often been in the midst of so many great dangers? and the Master had delivered him out of them all. No doubt he thought of his peril upon the raft on the Mackenzie River amid drifting ice, his danger among the Eskimo, and his many other wonderful escapes, of which he seldom spoke. He would think, too, of the time his canoe was wrecked, and he and his companions were saved as by a miracle, the details of which he never told. Yes, after all

## FLOODED OUT

these mercies in the past, he could feel sure that the same One who had stilled the stormy winds and waves of the far-off Galilean lake was able still to save.

Higher and higher rose the water. It crept up the stairs, inch by inch, step by step. Oh, what a cold, cruel monster it was, reaching up its icy fingers to clutch the little band above! How much higher would it come? Would it reach the upper floor? If so, what then? Besides the water, there was the danger of the floating ice. At any instant a huge block might surge against the building and sweep it away like a toy house of cards.

While the little band huddled there, anxious eyes were peering through the darkness. A few members of the mounted police were pacing up and down the shore, listening to the roaring flood, and thinking of those in danger on the island. As the water steadily rose, they hesitated no longer, but, launching their two stout canoes, started to the rescue. Moving up the narrow creek or slough, which was somewhat protected from the ice, they reached a position directly opposite the back of the mission-house, several hundred yards away. But now their work began in real earnest, for across that rushing flood, mid blocks of ice, and through the darkness, it was necessary to guide their craft. It needed courage and muscles of steel to accomplish the task, but when once these sturdy guardians make up their mind to do a thing, there is no turning back; whether it be fire, frost, or flood, they press straight forward. So now, in the face of these difficulties, they moved on foot by foot, sometimes feeling the keels grinding on a piece of floating ice, or again being swept back by a whirling eddy. But advance they did, and at length reached the house. It was impossible to gain admittance by the door; the water was too high for that. They shouted, and from a window upstairs came the Bishop's glad response. Swinging the canoes to this side of the house, they held them

## FLOODED OUT

close; the children were all lowered one by one out of the window, to be received by the strong arms below. Then came the Bishop, the last to leave.

Swept onward with the current, they were all borne safely across the waters and landed upon the mainland. Full of joy and gratitude was the Bishop's heart at the rescue which had been made.

When morning broke over the land the waters had subsided, and the river was clear of ice. The mission-house was still standing, but all around huge blocks of ice lay stranded, where they remained for many days. The mission-house was in a lamentable condition. Everything was soaked, but what did it signify so long as all were saved?

This was not the only time when a flood arose and drove out the missionaries. In the spring of 1901, when the Rev. John Hawksley and family were stationed here, a flood swept upon them, and they were compelled to flee to the hills.

"For a time," says Mr. Hawksley, "we were in some danger from large floes of ice floating round the buildings, threatening us with destruction. Owing to the pluck of one Mr. Royal, a white man, and Angus, a native member of our Church, we were taken over the broken ice and landed safely on the hills after five hours' suspense, most of which time was spent in an open boat, exposed to the biting wind blowing at the time. We had to pass the night on the hills. We had neither food nor blankets, but the Indians at once set about making us comfortable, two of them actually venturing back to fetch a tent to shelter us, and the others willingly sharing their blankets and food with us. You will be pleased to learn that none of us were any the worse for our adventure. The church had four feet of water in it, and the house somewhat less. Our losses were rather heavy."

## CHAPTER XVI

### HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

A NUMBER of years ago Rudyard Kipling wrote in a most interesting way about the foot-service mail to the hills in India. He drew a picture of the land where the robber lurks, the tiger stalks unseen, and lonely "exiles are waiting for letters from home." The hero in this story is a humble carrier of the overland mail, with bags tucked in his waist-belt, fording swollen rivers, climbing steep cliffs, facing tempests, stopping at nothing, ever moving on :

"From level to upland—from upland to crest,  
Fly the soft sandalled feet, strains the brawny chest."

But had Kipling turned his attention from India to the cold, desolate region of North America, along the great Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers, what subjects he might have had for his facile pen and vivid imagination !

Here are regions, portions of which lie girdled by the Arctic Circle, ice-locked from seven to eight long dreary months. More than this, huge, almost impassable, mountains lift their hoary heads as great barriers. These peaks, snow-capped and majestic, glow with unrivalled splendour when touched by the rising or setting sun, as if bidding defiance to any bold enough to intrude into their domain.

Cooped up in this desolate place were a few exiles, thousands of miles from home or any town ; their companions the wild beasts of the forests, straggling bands of uncouth Indians, and the faithful dogs.

During the brief summer months the mail and supplies

## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

were taken into the country by open boats or small steamers, which plied on those great Northern waterways ; but in winter all these routes were closed, and for eight months nothing happened to break the monotony or the silence which reigned supreme. No stranger appeared with tidings of the world beyond ; no newspaper or magazine beguiled the weary hours, and no letters from loved ones cheered the loneliness of the great darkness. They were like men buried alive.

Bishop Bompas faced all this for thirty-five years, and only at the close of his life did he have a railroad at his door and mails two or three times a week.

When he first entered the country in 1865 he found it somewhat hard to wait for things to reach him from England. Seldom did he speak about this hardship, and then only because he was thinking of his dusky flock.

"You can have little idea," he once wrote, "of the way in which we count here by years what you would count by days. You would say, 'I will get it to-morrow.' We say, 'It has not come this year ; perhaps it will come next.' Or, 'I must order such a book from home. If no mishap occur, in three or four years I may hope to see it.' A bit of white chalk would, I think, have been of more use to me the last twelve months than fifty sovereigns ; and I have often thought I would barter everything I brought out, except the Bible, for one or two Sunday-school primers. . . . But I hope I can say I am learning, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content, and to rely on the promise that 'my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by JesusChrist.'"

When Mrs. Bompas first went to the Mackenzie River as a bride, she had to wait eight long, dreary months without receiving one letter from her friends at home. Great was her joy when one day the Bishop came from a trip and poured the long-looked-for letters into her lap.

## MAIL

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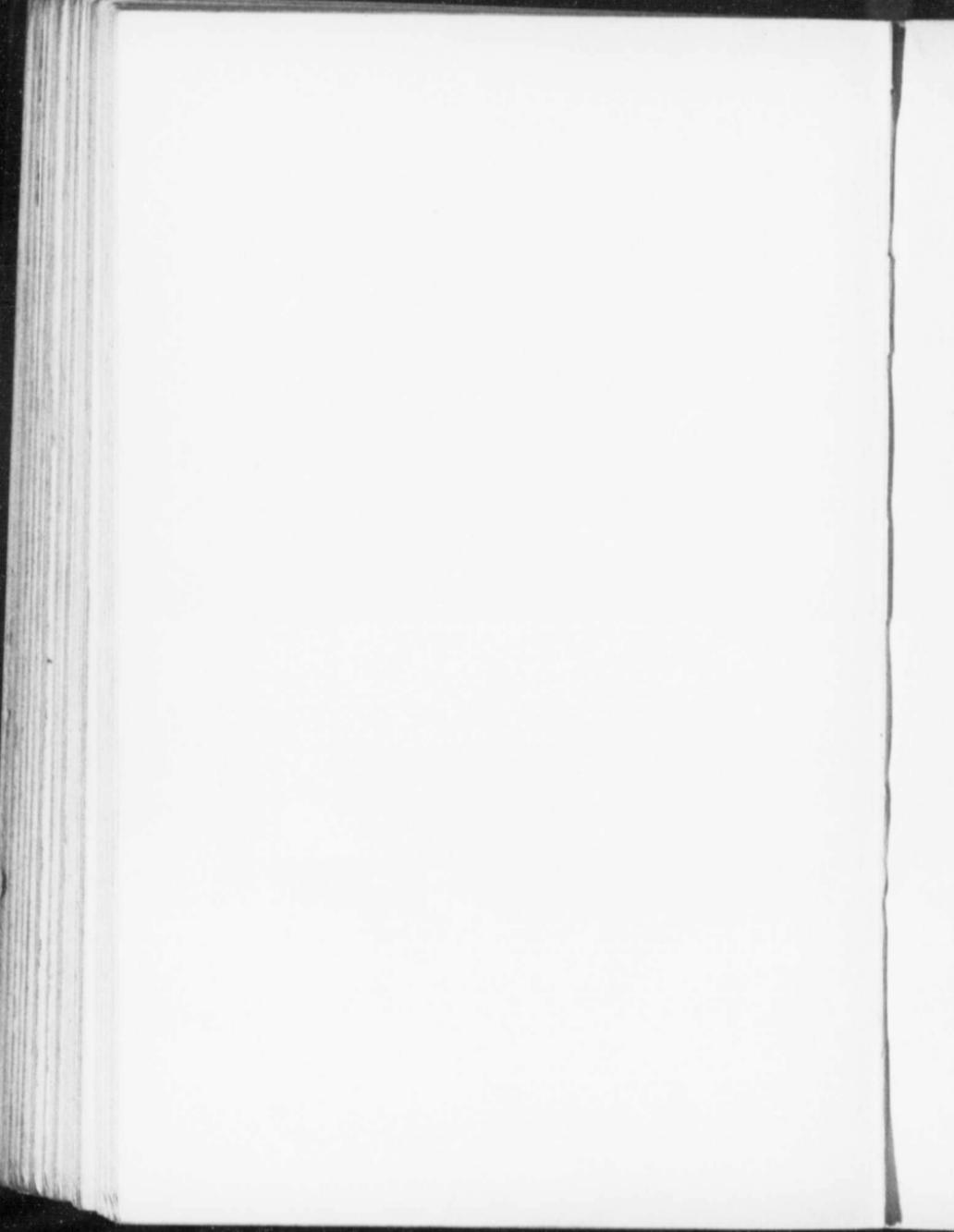
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TAKING THE MAIL INTO DAWSON IN SPRING WHEN THE STAGE CANNOT RUN

Weeks after the ice in the Yukon River has gone out, Lake Le Berge, about twenty-five miles below Whitehorse, holds firm. It is, therefore, necessary to transport freight and mail over the ice to the steamers which are waiting at the foot of the lake.



## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

People in a settled country, even though they live miles from towns or cities, can usually get many little things they need by mail for a few cents, but up here in the North it is different.

"There is no use," says Mrs. Bompas, "in fretting and exclaiming that you cannot possibly go without soap or candles, or pins and needles; that your stationery department is at its lowest; that your knives and forks are reduced to one blunt scalping-knife and two or three one-pronged forks. To nearly such predicaments as these we have ourselves been reduced. One year our mission-house at Slave Lake lacked putty to fasten in our small window-panes. We tried flour-paste and several other experiments, but the flour froze, and we had to resort to pins, which my Indian babies used to delight in pulling out. One year I had hardly any soap. To confess the honest truth, I believe *that* was the only privation I ever wept over like a child. We might have made some soap without difficulty, but, alas! one of the necessary ingredients in soap is salt, and salt had not come among that fall's supplies. One year, again, I lacked hair-pins. The Bishop, who is endless in his resources, undertook to manufacture me a few out of some wire for netting which was in our mission-store. The articles turned out capital to all intents and purposes, albeit somewhat blunt at the point, lacking a file to sharpen them."

The bringing in of the mails in the winter-time was a Herculean task. Bishop Stringer, who spent so many years in the North, relates some thrilling stories of the difficulty of the undertaking.

"Our mails," he says, "used to come to us twice a year. The winter post had to be brought from Edmonton, 2,200 miles to the south, by sledge and dogs. The year before we came away there was deep snow on the road, and the mail was so delayed that the mail-men's provisions gave out, and

## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

all their dogs died except one. The two Indians who were in charge of the mail unfastened the bundles, and discarded all the small packets, thinking the larger ones must be of more value. With this lighter load they struggled on. They found a moose-skin frozen, and kept life together by boiling pieces of it and eating them. They took two or three weeks to travel the last 250 miles. They came in completely worn out. One man harnessed himself to the sledge in front of the solitary remaining dog, and the other pushed behind. They travelled three days like that. One of them had taken his baby boy with him, but, in spite of their own privations, the men contrived to keep the child plump and well."

Much delighted were the missionaries to see the couriers, and eagerly they seized the precious mail, but, alas! nearly all the letters had been left far behind in the smaller packages, and all they brought were a few advertisements. Sadly disappointed, they had to wait several months longer until the next mail-man arrived.

As a rule, the letters were much soiled and worn from frequent handling at the various posts, and at times Bishop Bompas complained of the thinness of the envelopes, which was not conducive to secrecy.

An amusing incident happened on one occasion, when the courier was hurrying forward with the mail. In some manner he broke through the ice, and dogs, man, and letters were thoroughly soaked. It was a cold day, so, heading for the shore, the Indian made a good fire, dried his clothes, and then gazed sadly upon the wet letters. At length a thought occurred to him, and taking the soiled epistles out of the envelopes, he stacked them around the fire, near enough to dry, but not to burn. When this was completed to his satisfaction, he began to replace them. But, alas! though well-versed in woodland lore, he had never acquired the

## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

gentle art of reading, so that the letters went back helter-skelter. Into envelopes addressed to the Bishop went important missives meant only for the Company's officers, or the tender sighings of some fair maiden for a Northern lover, while the Bishop's letters were disposed of in a similar manner. Thinking he had accomplished a very clever feat, the courier pushed on his way, and, reaching the Fort, was much astonished at the exclamations and excitement of all. Not until the whole matter was explained by the puzzled courier was its humorous side seen, and then a good laugh ensued.

When Bishop Bompas crossed the mountains and lived along the Yukon River, for a number of years, in winter he was more than ever cut off from the outside world. There were no regular mail-carriers, and from the time the river closed early in the fall until it opened late in the spring he could not expect to receive one letter. So intolerable did such a life become, that at last efforts were made to obtain one mail at least during the winter.

The man who made this trip was an Indian of the great Thlinkit tribe, of more than ordinary grit, endurance, and muscle. He was well known as a famous traveller and courier, having made several wonderful trips through the Cassiar country carrying mail and gold-dust. To him, therefore, was entrusted the responsibility of conveying the mail to the waiting exiles along the Yukon River. For the trip he was to receive \$700, and a tax of \$1 on each letter, to be collected when delivered to the owner, these missives being from five hundred to seven hundred in number.

Starting from Juneau (now the capital of Alaska) by canoe, with two Indian youths, a dog-team, and supplies, Jackson reached the mouth of the Stickeen River. Up this stream he paddled to the head of canoe navigation, then through a dense forest for seventy-five miles to Atlin Lake.

## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

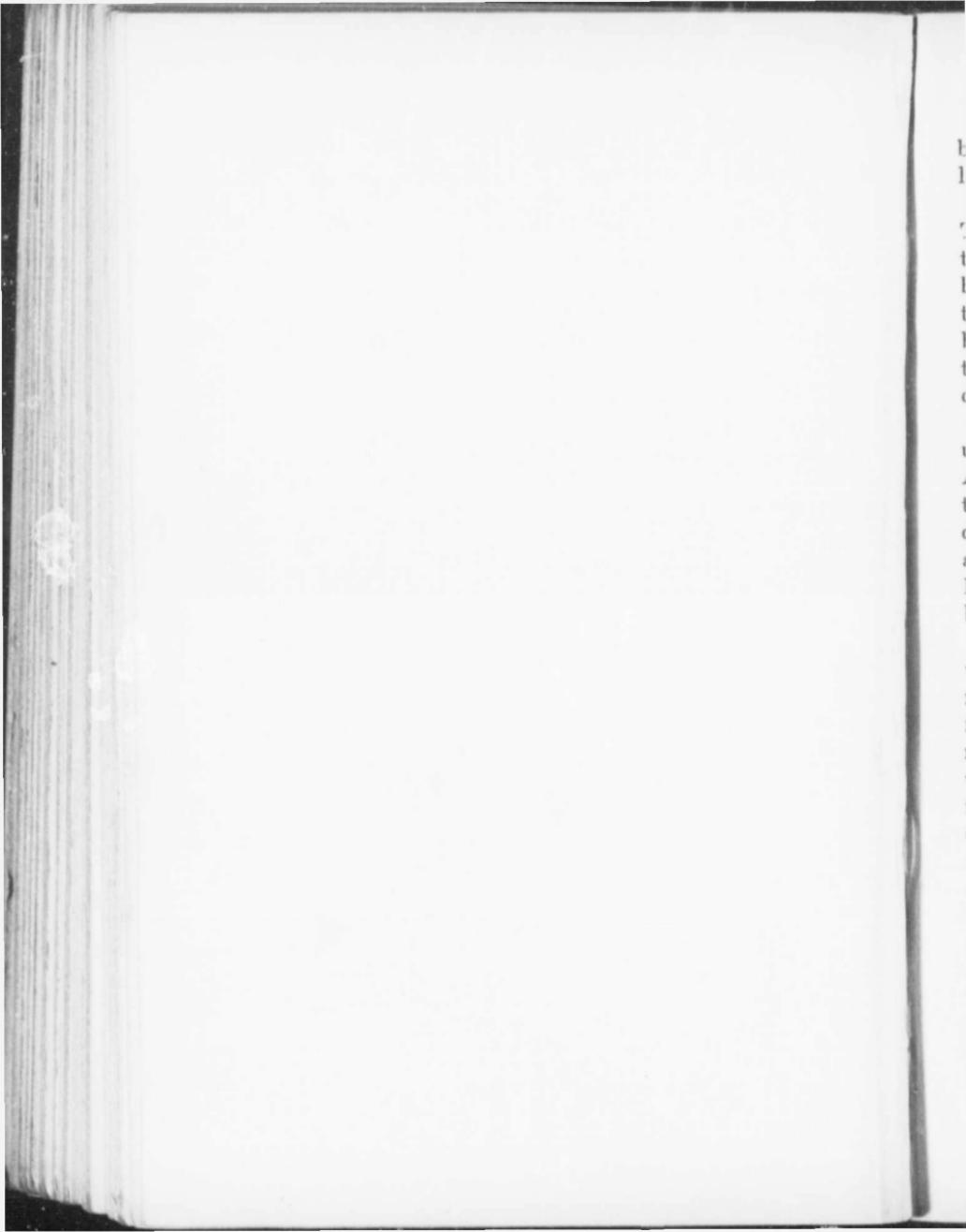
Out upon this lake they moved, and were making good time, when a storm, swift and sudden as the rush of doom, swept down upon them, snow and hail, mingled with the on-rushing wind, blotting out everything from view. The cold was intense, unbearable. The dogs added their pitiful cries to the howling storm. The leader—noble animal that he was—bravely faced the tempest, but the wheel-dog refused to move; he held back, crouched, and then dropped in the snow. The keen, stinging lash had no effect upon the fallen brute. Whipping out his knife, Jackson severed the traces, pushed him aside, and pressed on with the remaining dogs. Not far had they gone before another refused to work, and dropped in his tracks. He too was abandoned to share the fate of his companion. With the team thus reduced it was impossible to take forward the load of provisions, which were therefore stacked on the ice, and a stick erected to mark the spot. With little left to hinder their progress they sped on, and after a terrible struggle reached some friendly trees. Without the storm raged with fierce violence, covering the land and their scanty provisions upon the lake deep with snow. The next day the tempest abated, and once more Jackson and his companions continued their long journey.

Only one who has travelled in the winter along the Yukon River can realize what it means. The ice does not form smooth and level, as in many streams. It freezes at the bottom, and this, rising to the surface, fills the river with a floating mass of crushing, surging blocks of ice. As the current is swift and strong, this body moves along for miles, until a sharp bend on one side and a projecting point on the other combine to form a narrow channel, where the ice jams. The on-rushing mass, driven against this, piles up in wild confusion, huge cakes at times being lifted ten to fifteen feet, and held as in a mighty vice. For miles in places the river is thus packed, and as far as the eye can view nothing is to



#### PACK-HORSE SUPPLIES IN 1898

As the only way of travelling over the mountains was a trail, horses were loaded with provisions, etc. These are called "packs," and it is only a skilled hand which can bind the load on the animal's back, and tie what is known as the "diamond hitch." Pack-horses are still used in the Yukon, where the trails are unfit for carts or waggons.



## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

be seen but a grim, icy field wedged between steep banks, lined with dense, scrubby trees.

Over this the traveller has to make his devious way. There is no other course, and as the dogs creep on, many are the yells of agony which split the stinging air. The sled becomes wedged, and the poor brutes strain in vain to free the load. Or at times it topples upon them, burying their bruised bodies in the snow. To add to the misery of cold and the cruel lash, their feet become raw from the sharp ice, and drops of blood mark every foot of the trail.

Such was the ordeal that Jackson and his dogs had to undergo at frequent intervals in their long 800 miles from Atlin to Circle City. Day after day they pressed on, down through the Golden Horn, across Marsh Lake, by the dreaded Whitehorse Canyon and rapids, over the desolate and wind-swept Lake La Berge, and along the Thirty Mile River, avoiding with extreme caution the river's fearful breathing-places, the watery grave of many a poor musher.

To add to their difficulties, food at length ran low, and when thirty miles from Fort Selkirk, only a handful of flour remained. With nothing for the dogs, and only a mouthful for the Indians, and wearied to the point of exhaustion, they reached the settlement. Here provisions were obtained, and when a rest had been made, they pushed forward. After a further hard struggle, with the thermometer from 50 to 60 degrees below zero, their destination was reached and the mail delivered. Precious were these letters to the lonely exiles, but how great had been the suffering of Jackson and his little party in their long, terrible journey!

After a time, when thousands of people were flocking into the country, a better winter mail service was established. This was by means of the famous Mounted Police, of whom we shall hear more in another chapter. From the White Pass Summit to Dawson, a distance of over five hundred miles,

## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

men were stationed at twenty different posts. To them, therefore, the post-offices and the carrying of the mail were entrusted. From point to point the bags were carried by teams of strong, well-fed dogs, drawing 500 to 700 pounds of precious letters. They travelled almost with the speed of fleet horses, at times day and night, accompanied generally by two men.

Such trips, however, were not made without the spice of excitement. Many are the stories told of those stirring days: the rivalry of dog-teams, the betting, and the more serious incidents from the dangers of the ever-uncertain river, which was always a menace to the traveller. No one could tell when the ice beneath his feet would give way and engulf him in a watery grave below.

A corporal and a dog-driver were hurrying the mail forward on the last day of November, 1898. Splendid progress was made until eight miles from the mouth of the Hootalinqua River. Suddenly the ice began to move, breaking up at the same time into large and small blocks. Unable to gain the shore, men and dogs were swept down the river. It was a serious situation, with the vast field of ice heaving and grinding, bearing them on to apparent destruction. Fortunately the block which was bearing them surged for an instant near the shore, and passed beneath an overhanging tree. With cat-like agility they sprang and caught a large limb, and thus drew themselves up to a place of safety. Though every effort was made, it was impossible to save the mail, and it was swept down the stream, carrying, no doubt, the Bishop's long-looked-for letters.

But steadily the mail service improved. This was due to the building of the White Pass Railroad from Skagway to Whitehorse, a distance of 110 miles. From this latter place the mail was taken down-river by steamers. But when the Yukon was locked in its winter sleep, much of the old diffi-

## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

culty remained. To overcome this the famous stage-road was constructed—320 miles—from Whitehorse to Dawson. For the service splendidly equipped sleighs were provided, capable of holding passengers as well. These, drawn by six, and at times eight, fleet horses, made the journey in a few days in all kinds of weather.

Though this road winds its long way through a dreary wilderness, the natural abode of highwaymen and robbers, yet never once has there been a hold-up, or the mails intercepted. This is due in a large measure to the magnificent service of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, who are stationed at regular intervals along the trail during the winter months. Ever alert, they strike terror into the hearts of desperadoes, who turn to other fields.

The principal trouble with this service is in the opening and closing of the river during spring and fall. When the stage cannot travel, and the ice is floating in the river, the mail is run down by canoes, which are hauled over any solid ice by dog-sleds.

The outbound couriers have the hardest time of all at such seasons. During November, 1901, three men, with three teams of dogs each, left Dawson for Whitehorse with about two thousand pounds of first-class mail. The ice was running in the river, though solid in places along the shore. At times they were wading to their waists in the ice-cold water, with the thermometer degrees below zero, or creeping on hands and knees along some slippery, shelving edge, when at any instant there was danger of being hurled into the surging mass in the dark water below. In places even this precarious trail was denied them, and they were compelled to force their way through dense thickets of bushes and over tangled masses of dead timber. The cold was intense, and fearful were their sufferings. Thus for days these picked men of the Royal Mail Service fought their way up that crooked river against

## HOW THE BISHOP GOT HIS MAIL

almost insurmountable difficulties, but win out they did, and at length reached Whitehorse, and delivered the mail in perfect condition.

Little did people in city, town, or country realize, when they received letters from friends in the far North, what a sacrifice had been made for their sake by these stout-hearted heroes in the simple path of duty.

During the time the police carried the mail, there was always the period in the spring, when the ice was bad, that the people at Dawson and other places received no letters. Then, when the river did open, and the first steamer arrived, with tons of all kinds of mail, great was the rush and excitement. The police at Dawson had charge of the post-office, and they had only a small building in which to serve those thousands of people who were anxious to receive their letters. They did the best they could, however, under the circumstances. People stood in a long black line waiting their turn. Some of these would stand there all day and all night, waiting for the precious letters. Men have even been known to take their blankets, roll themselves up in these, and sleep right by the door to be ready when the office opened the next day. Women were always served first, and some of these did a thriving business, as men would pay them so much to obtain their letters for them. Since then a great change has taken place, and now at Dawson there is a fine post-office, with a competent staff of workers to serve the people.

Thus an outline has been given of the way Bishop Bompas received his mail as he wore out thirty-five years of his noble life there in the vast wilderness.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

SELDOM did any man have such an excited throng thrust upon him in so short a time as did Bishop Bompas. While he was steadily and quietly carrying on his Master's work at Forty Mile, a stir which was to thrill the whole world was taking place in a certain portion of his diocese.

Gold had been discovered by a white man, George Carmack, and his Indian companions. It was on a little creek, a branch of the Klondyke, that the precious metal was found. When word reached the outside world, months later, a wild stampede took place. Merchants gave up their business, clerks left their desks, farmers their ploughs, blacksmiths their anvils, and rushed northwards to make their fortunes.

They knew nothing of the difficulties they would have to face, and many, becoming discouraged, soon turned back; others of a more determined character pushed forward. They climbed the rugged Chilcoot and White Pass summits, facing terrible obstacles. Cities of tents sprang into existence on the shores of Lake Bennett and other places, where men and women watched for the Yukon River to open. Some moved down over the ice, and many were the strange scenes to be noticed—a team of goats hauling a sled, or a woman driving a young heifer, which pulled her load! In the spring thousands of rude craft followed the ice down the river. All along the Yukon to-day may be seen little mounds, some with rude crosses over them, which tell their own sad tales of poor fellows who perished in the waters far away from their homes.

## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

Boats were dashed to pieces, or, cut in two, were left stranded in some desolate place. The full story of the rush will never be told, but the little that is known fills us with wonder at what these people endured for the golden treasure.

They poured into the Klondyke, and here, where this little stream joins the Yukon, they built the city of Dawson. Some distance back were the rich creeks, and here the surging, excited gold-seekers dug with feverish haste into the yielding gravel. Many had more money than they knew what to do with. Men staked their claims, and worked them with windlass and buckets. Numerous are the marvellous stories told of those stirring days.

One man, who had been a bar-tender at Forty Mile, inquired how far it was to the main creek, where he wished to stake a claim. When told the distance, he was too lazy to go on, and staked in a little tributary creek, known as a "pup." As a result of his laziness, in the spring he carried with him out of the country \$132,000 in gold-dust, which he had taken out of his "pup" stake. And this, remember, represented only a fraction of what the claim was worth.

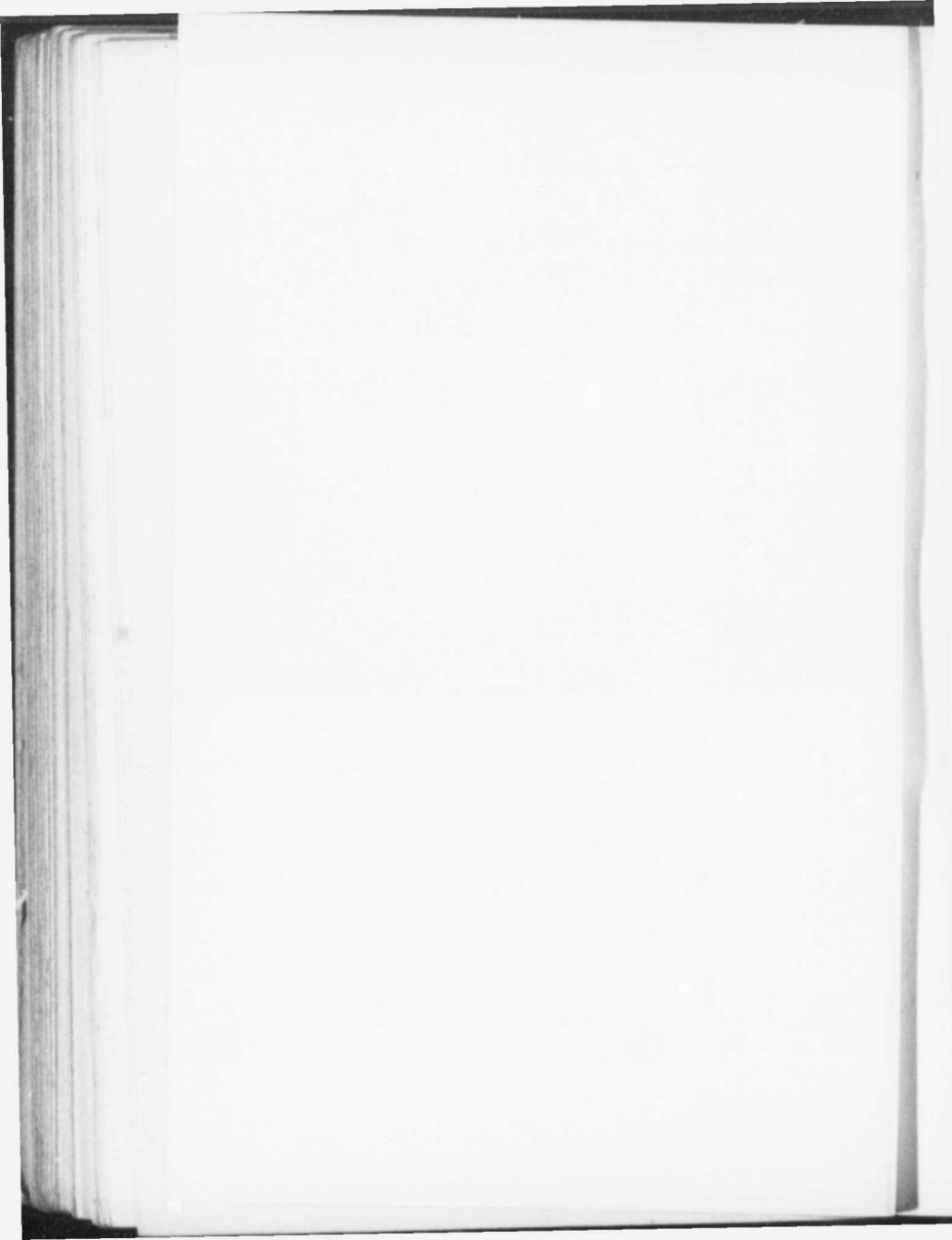
One man was in the habit of washing out some of his gravel every night, and used to fill his gold-pan from his dump, and take it into his shack for the purpose. He soon found that he was obtaining \$70 to the pan, and the amount was steadily increasing. This regular increase, and the man's excitement over his evening's work, soon became so well known that many of his neighbours met at his place every night, and watched the proceedings with interest, and, at times, with envy. The fortunate digger was always very jubilant, especially when the amount reached \$120 to the pan—and a panful is only a very small fraction of the day's dump.

One night the neighbours trooped in as usual, but instead of seeing him bright as of old, found him sitting down with a very long face. For a time he would only shake his head



GOAT-TEAM WITH SLED ON THE TRAIL, 1898

All kinds of teams were used on the trail in the days of the great rush to the Klondyke. Anything that would draw a pound was forced into service, even goats and heifers.



## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

when asked what was wrong, and look wistfully at the pan. Finally he told his tale, and in a deep, melancholy voice exclaimed: "I'm off the pay-streak, boys; I only got \$57 (£11 4s.) to the pan to-day."

He was really still in the heart of a very rich pay-streak, but he was so accustomed to large results that when a falling-off appeared, he became discouraged, and imagined his claim was exhausted. And yet that same man, a few months before, would have looked upon \$57 to the pan as something wonderful.

Amusing, too, are some of the stories told; and the following, if not strictly true, may serve to show that, even in the midst of the wild scramble, the humorous side was not forgotten.

One man, so it is related, possessed a very long pair of whiskers. He had been working hard in his drift all the winter, and during that time had neither washed nor shaved. In the spring he cut off his whiskers, washed them out in his gold-pan, and obtained \$27 as the result.

There was gold everywhere; it was little thought of. It was stored away in anything that happened to be convenient. Gum boots, filled with precious nuggets, were thrown carelessly aside. Cabins were never locked, and there was strong feeling among the miners in reference to the stealing of gold. A sneak thief or a sluice-box rover was considered the most contemptible of beings, and was hounded out of the place.

But though gold was plentiful, it was not everything. Just think of men staring at their millions and having little or nothing to eat! Prices were very high, and on several occasions provisions ran short. Eggs sold for \$1 apiece, and common candles brought fabulous prices. A man who had brought in some potatoes on a venture sold the 200 pounds for \$150 out on one of the creeks. At Bennett, where goods were packed on mules to be carried over the

## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

summit, horseshoe nails one day ran out. One man had a small supply. A rush accordingly took place for the coveted article, and the fortunate owner easily sold his nails for \$1 each (*i.e.*, 4s.). In fact, a volume could be written of the tales told—some true, some untrue—of the prices paid for the most common things. We shall, however, mention but one more, which has its humorous side as well.

A man who had recently arrived wished to do some mending. Making his way to the nearest store, he asked for a needle. "It will be fifty cents, please," remarked the storekeeper, as he delivered the article. "Fifty cents for a needle!" exclaimed the customer in astonishment. "Are you not mistaken?" "Oh no!" blandly replied the dealer. "You see, the freight is so high we have to charge big prices."

Imagine freight being high on a needle, when a whole package could come by mail for two cents! And yet this is the cry in the Yukon to-day. Prices, though nothing compared to what they were in the early days, in many cases are exorbitant, and the excuse is as of old—the cost of bringing things into the country.

Formerly nearly everything was paid for in gold. Nuggets and gold-dust were used instead of coins. It is said that a certain public-house was torn down lately in Dawson, and when the floor was taken up the earth beneath was panned out, and gold-dust and nuggets to the value of \$3,000 were obtained. To-day it is different, and the ordinary money is used. In Dawson twenty-five cents is the smallest coin in use, and in Whitehorse the five-cent piece, though you have to put several of them together if you wish to purchase anything.

It takes one some time to get accustomed to the various terms used in the Yukon. A twenty-five-cent piece is called "two bits"; fifty-cent piece, "four bits"; and seventy-five cents, "six bits." They are so commonly used that it is hard after a time to say anything else. A person who first

## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

enters the country is called a "cheechacho." After living in the land for two or three years, or having seen the Yukon River close and open, one is dubbed a "sourdough." This name is taken from the lump of sour dough a prospector or miner carries with him to start his bread. Travelling with dogs, the ordinary words used are "Mush on!" and "Hike on!" "Hit" is another common term. Instead of saying, "He started on the trail," it is always, "He hit the trail." The word is used in another way. Several years ago, when Whitehorse was in its infancy, a number of gambling men came to church. When the plate was passed around, one of the men gave the collector a ten-dollar bill.

"Take the change out of that," he said.

"How much?" asked the collector.

"Oh, hit me for five," was the reply.

He was accordingly handed back five dollars, for it was well understood what he meant.

The guard-room is commonly known as the "skookum house." "Skookum" is an Indian coast word meaning "strong." An insane asylum is known as the "bug-house"; and a person who is crazy is said to be "bugs," or "bug-house." How these terms came to be used is rather a mystery. "Up against it" is applied to one who has had bad luck. "A wad of dough" is simply the money a man has made, and has nothing to do with pastry. These and many more are common expressions in the Yukon, and it is marvellous how soon one gets accustomed to them.

Through all this excitement Bishop Bompas was living quietly at Forty Mile. He watched the living stream of eager gold-seekers hurrying by through the summer and winter. Many were the wants he supplied, and the weary men he assisted with food and clothing. But the gold fever did not possess him. Sometimes we hear about the greediness of missionaries, and that it is money they are after. But here

## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

in the North, at a time when millions were to be made, the missionaries stood aside. They joined in no stampede, and they staked no claims. They were there to carry the Gospel message, and not to dig for gold. It is most interesting to read the Bishop's letters to his brother George in England at this time, and a few extracts will give a vivid picture of what was going on :

“ BUXTON MISSION,  
“ UPPER YUKON RIVER,  
“ April 15, 1897.

“ I think I will put on paper for you a few notes about the sudden change that is taking place in the course of a striking Providence in this region. From being a poor, desolate, and neglected country, it is suddenly becoming a rich and populous one. This is the effect of the new and very valuable gold-mines discovered last year about fifty miles south of us, at a place now called Klondyke and Dawson City. These new mines are said to be as rich as any yet known for their size, which is at present very limited. Only about 100 claims are yet found that are very profitable. . . .

“ At the new mines last autumn any claim could be bought for a few hundred dollars. Now we hear that some have already changed hands for \$50,000, and some are estimated to be worth \$500,000. The owners of the richest claims are said to be leaving the country in spring, having already as much gold as they can carry, and being as rich as they care to be; and they will sell their claims at a high price to others.

“ The miners of Circle City, about 300 miles below us, have been coming up all winter, hauling their sleds of provisions, to the number of about 500, till the Yukon has become like a thronged thoroughfare. They have paid, I think, as much as \$250 for an Indian dog to help haul their sleds.

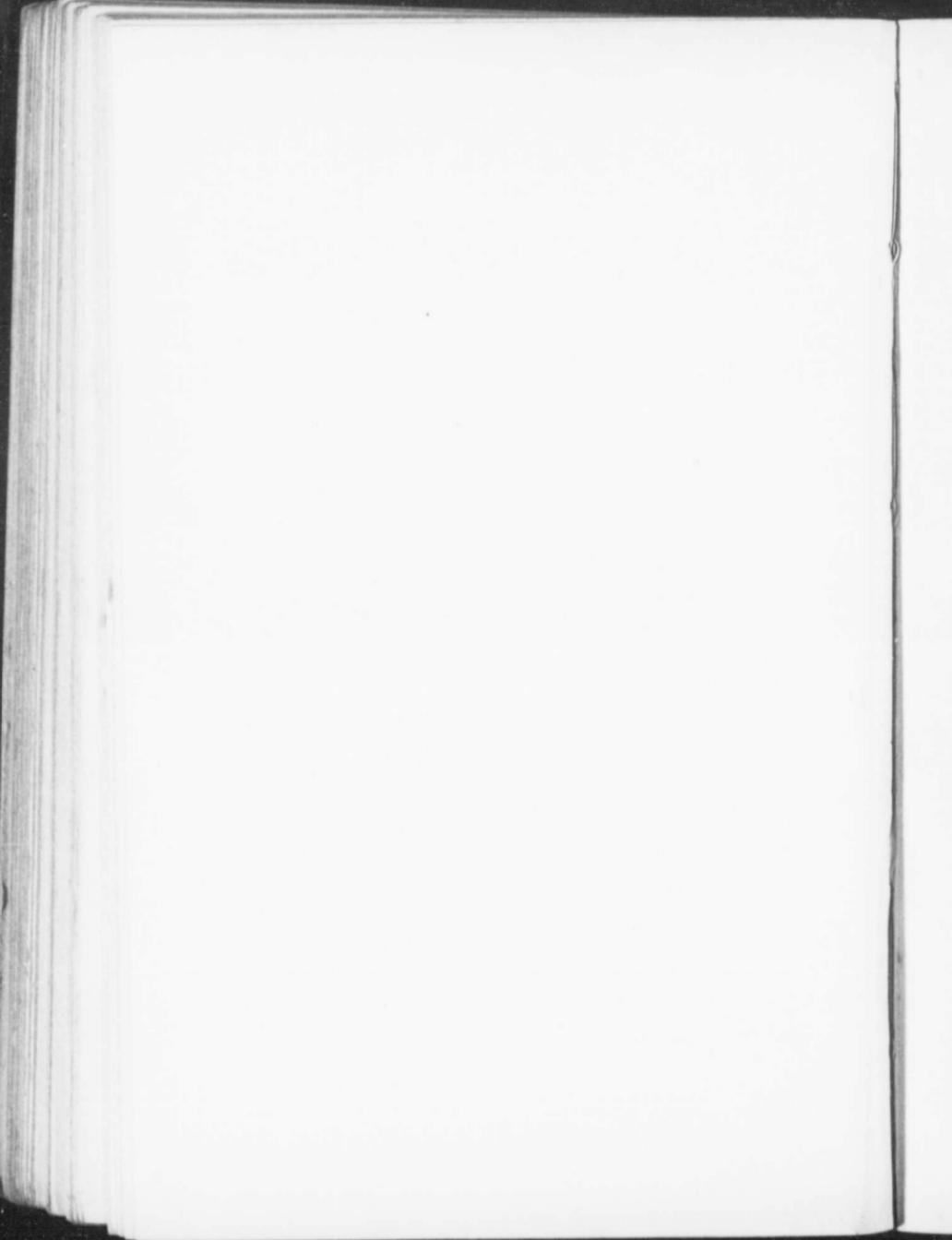
“ Flour and meal have both been selling during the winter at from \$½ to \$1 per pound; and the Indians here loan out



*Photograph by F. J. Harnacher.*

**THE GOLDEN LURE: A SEVEN THOUSANT CLEAN-UP ON LIVINGSTONE CREEK DURING THE SUMMER OF 1906. THE LARGE NUGGET IN THE PAN IS WORTH \$470, OR NEARLY £100**

A miner's gold-pan, containing \$7,000 of the precious metal. The large nugget is worth \$470, or nearly £100. This amount of gold was obtained from a "clean-up" on Livingstone Creek in the summer of 1906. The mining had been done during winter and spring, and when the water came the whole was washed out.



## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

their dogs at \$1 per day. The Indians, too, get somewhat rich, but, of course, they squander their money.

"The temperature has been most singular. The winter set in very early, being severe in October, and partly so in November. Then three months, December, January, and February, were so mild that it was not like winter at all. This seems quite a providential favour to the numerous travellers.

"For myself, during the past winter I have enjoyed more ease and leisure than usual, from having more helpers around me, and I have devoted my days to digging the mines of God's holy Word, and have found, in my own estimation richer prizes than the nuggets of Klondyke."

*May 28, 1897.*—"I hear now that the creeks are so winding as to make the gold streak extend 200 or 300 miles. I am told £4,000 was washed from the earth of one claim in one day. Another bought a claim for £10,000, and paid it all off out of the ground in two or three months. The richest claims are thought to be worth £100,000 or £200,000. (A claim is 600 feet of the creek, which each miner is allowed to pick for himself at the start.) . . . From \$1 to \$2 per pan is reported to be a common rate there. This is something like taking your washing-basin, filling it with earth from your garden, and then, after washing away the earth with a little water, finding a silver crown or half a sovereign at the bottom. I suppose, in such a case, you might go again, and so do the miners. They next proceed to work with sluice-boxes, which is only a similar process on a larger scale. The earth is thrown into wooden boxes or troughs with a corrugated or uneven bottom, so as to retain the gold when the earth is washed out.

"An Irishman who was here yesterday is said to do his work so badly that his wife used to make from \$4 to \$20 a day by picking up his leavings. She is now gone on a visit home with her earnings."

## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

During this mad rush the Bishop was not idle. He was planning how the Church might be brought to these miners. He himself was not accustomed to work among white people, and did not feel equal to the task. But there was a man upon whom he could depend at this critical time. This was the Rev. R. J. Bowen, who had recently arrived from England. To him, therefore, the Bishop stated his plans, and as soon as possible Mr. Bowen started up the river to plant the standard of Christ in that excited camp of gold-seekers. It must have seemed a forlorn hope to the young missionary as he drew near the new town. Almost two years before he had visited that place, and on the very site where his camp had then been pitched large buildings were now erected, and a hurrying crowd thronged the streets. The great cry was gold; for that the people had come, and not for religion. Yet among them Mr. Bowen began to work, and through his earnestness won the hearts of the miners, and induced many of them to attend service.

These men were not miners in the ordinary sense of the word. Many had never handled a pick or shovel, but had been reared in ease in comfortable homes, sons of noble families, who had joined the mad rush to win a fortune in a short time. Such men were not slow to see the efforts the mother-Church was making for their spiritual welfare in the great Northland. They saw the earnest missionary valiantly standing in their midst, pleading the Master's cause. Their hearts were touched, and around him they rallied.

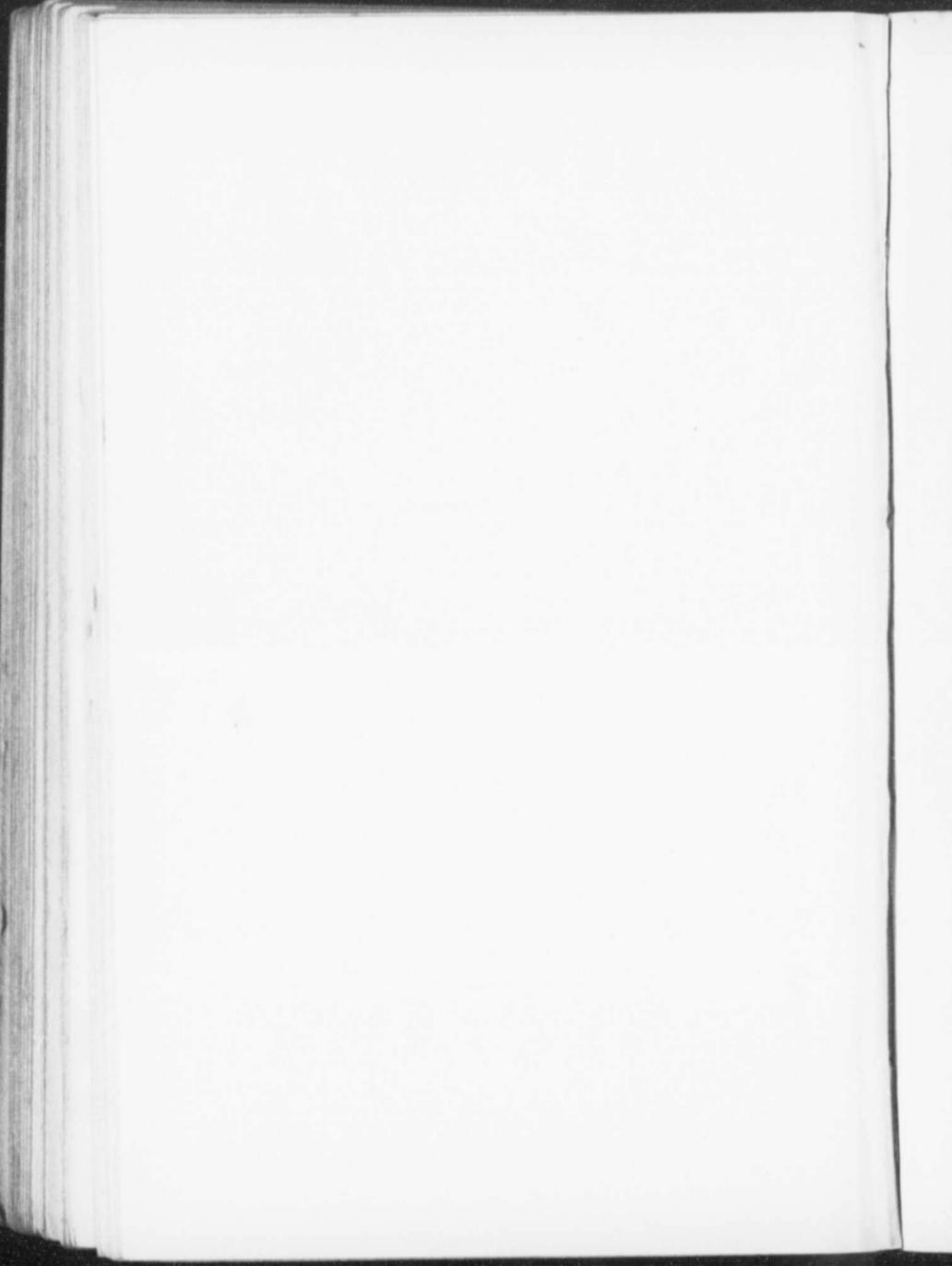
A log church was at first built, and called "St. Paul's." When Dawson grew to be a large city, this was replaced by a new frame church which cost \$14,000. It is now used by Bishop Stringer as the cathedral of his diocese.

When the Church work was well under way at Dawson, the Bishop for a while relieved Mr. Bowen, who returned to Forty Mile, and was united in marriage to Miss Mellet, who had



#### PROSPECTORS AND MINERS ON THE TRAIL

Horses and dogs are expensive in the North, so when prospectors wish to take provisions over the trails they must do much of the work themselves. It is no uncommon sight to see men harnessed up wearily drawing their load day after day. At times a sail is hoisted to catch any favourable breeze. This is of much service on crossing an inland lake, or a low, flat region.



## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

been labouring in the diocese for some time as schoolmistress. At Dawson the Bishop was out of his element. So long had he laboured among the Indians that work among the whites was very hard. In his letters of that time he draws a pathetic picture of the condition of affairs—the dwindling of the congregations, and the frank acknowledgment of his own inability to do much among the miners. “But Christ reigns,” he wrote, “and the work is His, not mine, and let us trust and hope.”

This worry, together with improper food, brought on a severe attack of scurvy, and when he went back to Forty Mile in April, he was in a very weak condition. Yet, notwithstanding his illness, he persisted in conducting the Indian school and attending to his correspondence.

“I cannot move,” he wrote, “without losing my breath, nor walk a few steps without great pain. If I can hold on till I obtain green vegetables, they may benefit me.”

After a time “green vegetables” reached him from Dawson, and at once an improvement took place. To these the Bishop declared his recovery was almost entirely due.

Mrs. Bompas, during this trying season, was at Fort Yukon, unable to reach the Bishop. She had been summoned to England, to the bedside of her sister, who was dangerously ill. On her return to San Francisco, after a few months' absence, she found that wild excitement reigned, owing to the Klondyke gold discovery.

“The whole of the great city,” so she writes, “was gathered on the wharf to witness the departure of the first steamer for Klondyke. On the boat itself the crowd was no less conspicuous. Men and women seemed locked together in frantic excitement. Shouts and cries were heard on all sides. Parting gifts were thrown on board, hats and handkerchiefs waved with enthusiasm, and in a few instances with wild sobs of pain. Then the anchor was raised, and the vessel started for

## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

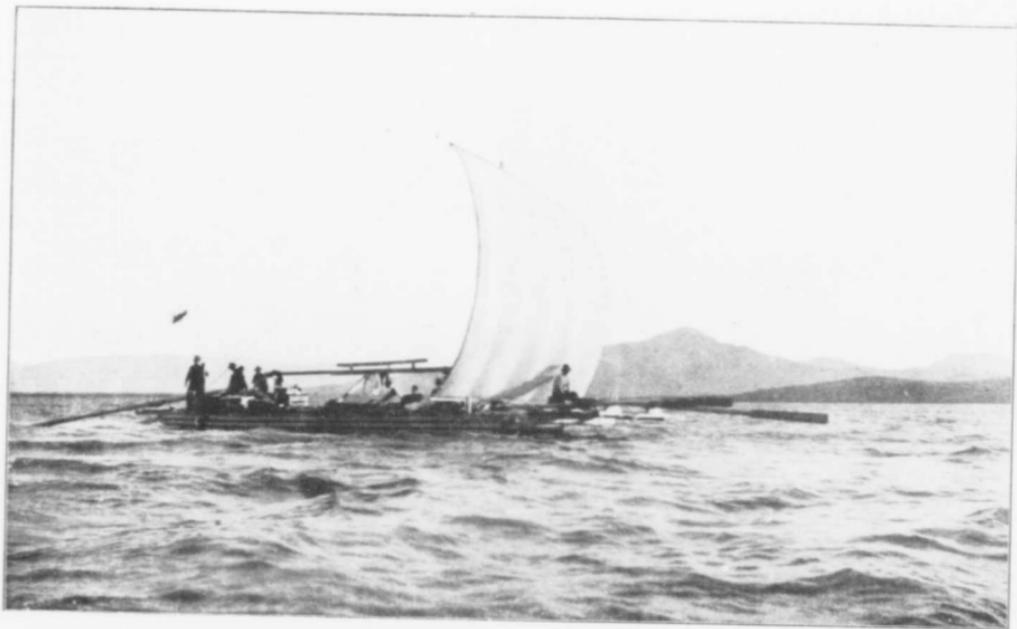
St. Michael. Such a motley crowd is not often seen gathered together in one vessel. The Company did its best to accommodate all, but the attempt was but partially successful. Seven men were often the occupiers of one state-room, and the chief number of passengers were of the roughest kind of miners. On reaching St. Michael, the same number of passengers were moved on to the smaller steamer. Here our discomforts were considerably increased."

After a tedious voyage up the river, Fort Yukon was reached. It was a memorable day on which they arrived at this place.

"The miners," continues Mrs. Bompas, "were looking eagerly forward to the gold-mines of the Klondyke, when the whole load of passengers were set ashore, and the captain announced that he was not going a step farther. Prayers, entreaties, and remonstrances were unavailing. He gave no excuse for his conduct but that he was going back immediately to St. Michael—it was supposed, to lay in a cargo of whisky."

And at Fort Yukon Mrs. Bompas was stranded for eight long months, thirty miles within the Arctic Circle. Fortunately, the Rev. John Hawkesly and family were stationed here, who did what they could for her comfort. But to the Bishop at Forty Mile, in feeble health, disturbing news arrived of the riotous times among the miners at Fort Yukon, and their desperate efforts to overpower the American soldiers. Such information caused him much anxiety, and most thankful was he when at length the ice ran out of the river, and Mrs. Bompas was able to continue her way after the long delay.

The following summer the Bishop turned his attention to the southern part of his diocese. Word had reached him of stirring towns on Lake Bennett and Lake Atlin. Thinking them to be in his jurisdiction, he made the long and difficult journey up-stream to view the land. Reaching Bennett during the summer of 1899, he was astonished to see a



THE RUSH TO THE KLONDYKE. ONE OF MANY STRANGE CRAFT

"From one point on Lake Bennett," wrote Colonel Steele, Superintendent of the North-West Mounted Police, "I counted on an eight-mile stretch of water over eight hundred boats under full sail; and, for forty-five miles, at no point were the boats more than two hundred yards apart."

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## THE GOLDEN KLONDYKE

flourishing city containing thousands of people. But greater still was his surprise to find that Bennett and Atlin were in British Columbia, and that he had gone several miles beyond his diocese. His stay was very brief at Bennett, and on his return trip down the river he spent two days among the Indians at Tagish, gaining much information concerning these natives and their language. One week later Bishop Ridley arrived at Bennett, and, writing of the visit of his brother-Bishop, he says :

“ Dr. Bompas has the full tide of civilization forced upon him to his sorrow. . . . A week before my arrival he stood where I now write. Would that he had waited the few days, that I might have had the honour of welcoming him to my diocese. He thought Bennett and Atlin were within his, and therefore ventured so far. Arriving here, he found that he had trespassed beyond his jurisdiction no less than fourteen miles. The newspaper-man who reported an interview with him states that he hurried northwards and buried himself once more in the frozen north, that no other man loves but for the sake of its gold. This report, copied into an American paper, added striking glosses to the account. What would the dear Bishop think if he saw himself described as the most devoted of Catholic (meaning Roman Catholic) Bishops in the wide world? This gloss was evidently by a Roman newspaper, who covertly hit at the snug and comfortable lives of Protestants who assumed episcopal authority. Bishop Bompas, says the paper, was so modest that he would not talk of the countless hairbreadth escapes from awful peril and death, treating them as phases of everyday life, not to be counted worthy of notice.”

The following winter Bishop Bompas remained at the Indian village of Moosehide, and, amidst school labours and diocesan cares, formed plans for important extension of the mission-work.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE MOUNTED POLICE

WHO has not heard of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, that devoted little band of men, about one thousand strong, who guard an empire? What magic lies in the title! What visions rise before the mind of lonely detachments, long, bleak trails, deeds of heroism, constant watchfulness, unswerving devotion and loyalty to the Sovereign of the Realm!

We have seen in former chapters how helpful they were to the Bishop in bringing in mails in the early days, and of their rescue of him and his household from the flood at Forty Mile. It therefore seems right that some account should be given here of these noble men, who patrol these great Northern regions, and how they have aided not only the miners and frontiersmen, but the missionaries as well.

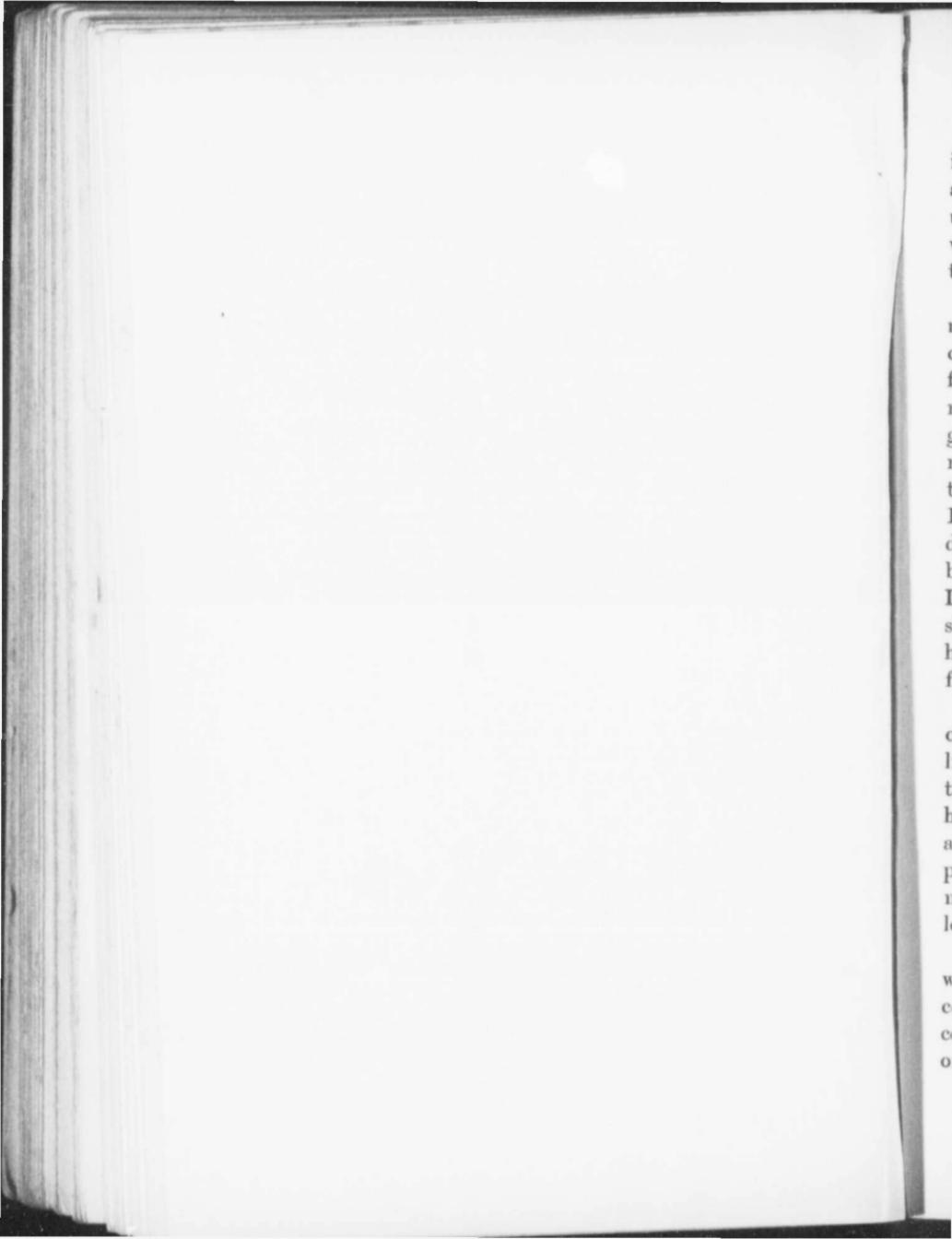
There was a time in the history of Canada when the great North-West Territory belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company. At length the British Government purchased the land from them for a large sum of money. Settlers began to pour into the country. All kinds came, bad as well as good, took up land, brought their families, and built homes, many of them out in lonely places. Liquor-dealers, horse-thieves, and desperadoes began to flock into the new country, thinking it a good place to carry on their illegal business. The Indians,

add i s s e o ir e. n n d at n- n- ur ck of nd it ts,



**BREAKING TRAIL: THE MOUNTED POLICE TAKING THE MAIL FROM DAWSON TO FORT McPHERSON**

It is a most trying task breaking down the trail for the dogs to bring along the sleds, loaded with provisions and camping outfit. The snow is generally light, and even after the snow-shoes have crushed it down the sleds draw hard, and the poor dogs make slow progress.



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## THE MOUNTED POLICE

inflamed by whisky or hatred of the new-comers, were always a source of trouble. It was never known at what instant an uprising would take place, when thousands of dusky warriors would sweep over the land, carrying destruction and death in their train.

It was at this critical time, 1873, that a little body of men, known as the North-West Mounted Police, entered the country to preserve law and order. What could a mere handful of men do in such a vast country, against such a host of redskins and evil white men? It was like the stripling David going forth to meet the giant Goliath. But as David had right on his side, and a mighty Power behind him, so had these few dauntless men who took up their gigantic task. Every man, as he went forth to make an arrest or settle some dispute, knew that he had the power of a great Empire behind his back. The renegade white men knew it, and the Indians soon knew it, too. They were well aware that if they shot down one of these prairie riders, thrust a sword through his breast, or injured him in any way, they would have to face the wrath of the whole British Empire.

Going, therefore, to his work clad with such an authority, one man, even a stripling, was a match for a horde. The lifting of his gauntleted hand was sufficient to quell a mob; the appearance of a red coat in a drinking and gambling house, where six-shooters were lying all around, was as if an army had appeared at the door; and a mere speck on the prairie caused the lone frontiersman and his wife to breathe more freely, for they knew a rider of the plains was on his long patrol of watchfulness.

They became the sleuth-hounds of the trails, and the watch-dogs of life and property. Woe to the man who had committed any crime! there was no region or country which could free him from the grip of the alert Reds. There was only one door of escape, and that was death. On snow-

## THE MOUNTED POLICE

shoes and with dog-teams, through vast forests, over sweeping prairies, across barren grounds, they would track their man until they found him, either dead or alive.

No more thrilling instance is given of their coolness and courage than during the building of the Canadian-Pacific Railway right across Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was in 1883 that out on the prairies the work of construction was being rushed ahead. At one place a wily Indian chief, Pie-a-pot by name, and his numerous tribe had pitched their tents, and refused to allow the work to go on. Pie-a-pot had hundreds of well-armed braves, anxious for a fight, and only waiting for an opportunity to begin their deadly work. Here at last was the time, and their hearts beat high at the thought of sweeping away the pale-faces who had invaded their country.

The Mounted Police never considered numbers. When word reached them of what the Indians were doing, two smart members of the force, a sergeant and a constable, rode into Pie-a-pot's camp. Just think of it—two against so many! It seemed like the sheerest piece of madness. The sergeant at once ordered the Indians to leave. This command was received with shouts of laughter. The braves gave vent to savage threats, and the women made the air resound with their shouts of derision. Then the sergeant calmly pulled out his watch, and told Pie-a-pot he would give him just one-quarter of an hour to obey his order and strike camp. At this the excitement became more intense. The braves jeered, discharged their rifles under the horses' noses, and jostled the riders; but the two policemen remained as calm as if nothing unusual was going on.

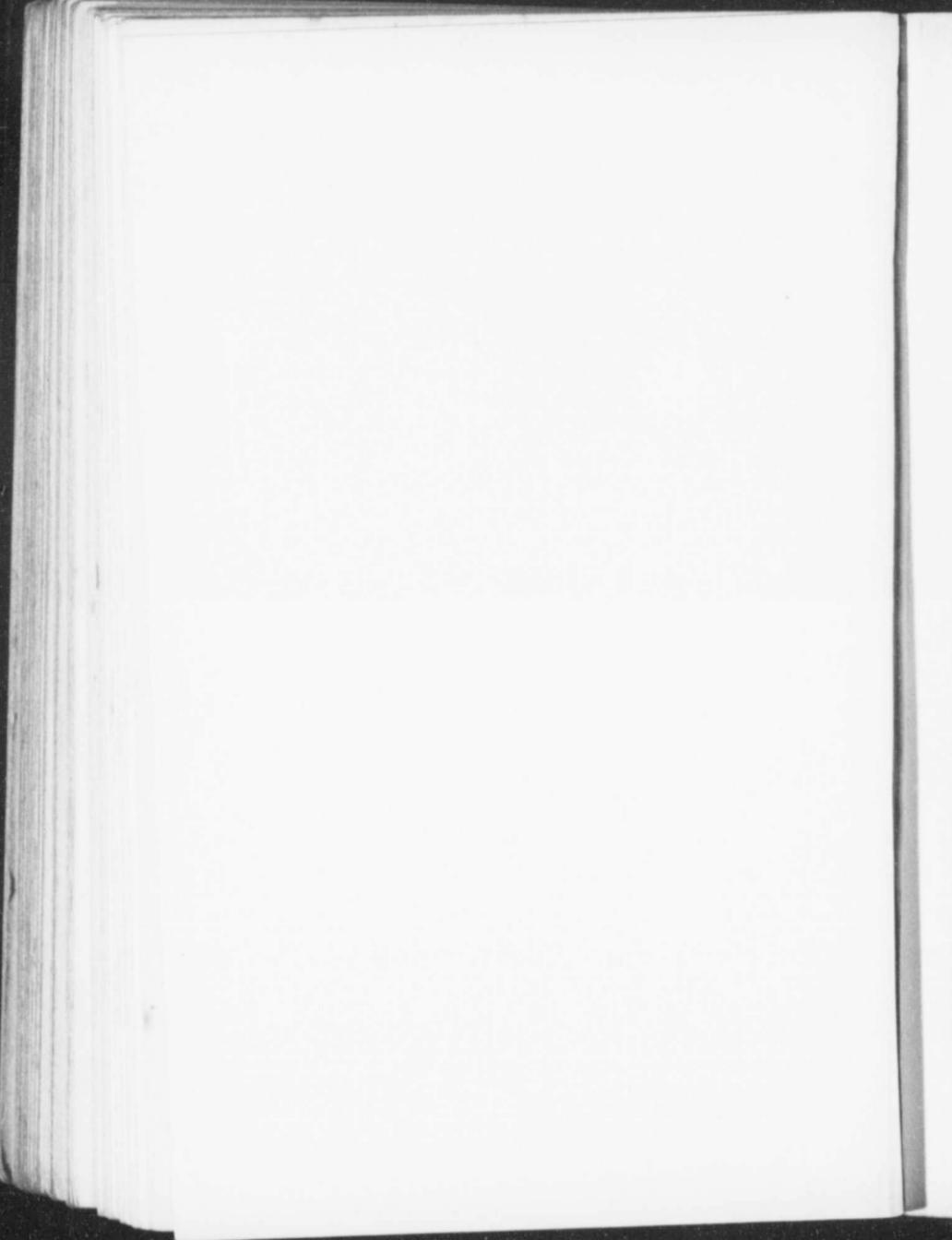
At the end of the fifteen minutes the sergeant placed the watch in his pocket, threw the reins to his companion, and walked deliberately over to Pie-a-pot's tent. The coverings of the tent are spread over a number of poles, tied together



*From a photograph by Muirhead.*

#### THE ROYAL NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE

When a strike is made in a new region, and the prospectors and miners rush to the place, the Mounted Police at once pitch their tents there. If the strike prove of importance, and the camp is likely to be permanent, the Police erect good log-houses for themselves.



## THE MOUNTED POLICE

near the top. These poles are so arranged that the removal of a particular one, called the "key-pole," brings the whole structure down.

The sergeant did not say a word, but very quietly, so as to impress the Indians, kicked out the key-pole of Pie-a-pot's tent, and brought the whole affair down upon the old man's head. Howls of rage went up at this insult to the chief, and all rushed for their arms.

It was a critical moment. The least sign of weakness on the policemen's part, or a motion from Pie-a-pot, would have been fatal to the two brave men; but they were as cool as ever. The sergeant then walked around, and kicked out all the key-poles of the other tents.

"Pie-a-pot," says W. A. Fraser, the Canadian author, writing about this, "had either got to kill the sergeant—stick his knife into the whole British nation by the murder of this unruffled soldier—or give up and move away. He chose the latter course, for Pie-a-pot had brains."

At this time the Mounted Police had not advanced into the Yukon territory; but as the miners began to arrive, Bishop Bompas longed for some authority to protect his dusky flock, and to quell the disturbances which sometimes took place. It was partly due to him that at last a body of these men were sent to Forty Mile. Just across the little Forty Mile River they built their post, at a place known as Cudahy. From here they patrolled the creeks, and settled any turbulent spirits who were bent on making trouble.

One night a man and a woman came to the Bishop's house and asked him to marry them. This he at once did, never suspecting anything wrong. Just at the conclusion of the service a knock sounded upon the outer door. There the Bishop found a policeman, who at once asked to see the man he believed to be in the house.

"But he is engaged," remarked the Bishop, "and cannot

## THE MOUNTED POLICE

very well see you just now." When, however, he heard that he was needed for some mischief he had been doing, the good missionary became very uneasy. He took the policeman into his study, where the newly-married man was standing with his back to the door. The policeman noticed that a revolver was sticking out of the man's hip-pocket, and knew he would have to act without delay. Quickly crossing the room to where the man was standing, he seized the murderous weapon in one hand, and clapping the other on his shoulder, told him that he was a prisoner.

This sudden arrest surprised him, and he turned angrily upon the Bishop, thinking he had informed upon him. But the policeman soon explained everything, and that the woman standing there was the wife of another man living at Forty Mile. "In that case," said the Bishop, sternly looking toward the prisoner, "the marriage I have just celebrated is null and void." Then the humour of the situation seemed to strike him, and he added, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "And I have got the fees!"

The policeman then took the prisoner away, and driving a log into the ground in the centre of the largest of the shacks, handcuffed the man, and fastened him to the log with a trace-chain. They gave him several blankets, in which he rolled himself up and went to sleep. Finally, the man was expelled from Forty Mile. He was packed into a boat in the middle of the next night, given a piece of bacon, and pushed out into the current, with strict orders never to return. He was never heard of again—or the woman he had married—or the fees!

When, several years later, so much gold was found on the Klondyke River, and thousands of men poured into the country, many more men of the Mounted Police were sent to the Yukon. If you were to go to-day to a little place called Tagish, on the head-waters of this great Northern river, you



#### THE MOUNTED POLICE COOKING A MEAL

On the trail the mid-day meal is eaten in the open, in some sheltered place if possible, where there is sufficient fuel for a fire. The dogs remain in harness, and are not fed until their day's work is done. It is a very trying experience to light a fire and prepare a meal on a cold day.



## THE MOUNTED POLICE

would see a number of tumble-down log-buildings; and going farther still down that stream, other deserted houses in lonely places would be seen. These ruins once throbbed with life and energy. The Yukon River was the great highway of traffic, and as the living stream moved by, summer and winter, ever-watchful eyes from some detachment noted the procession; willing hands were ready to uphold some weary wayfarer, and chafe his poor, numb body; active feet were always in readiness to track the miscreant to earth and bring him to justice. Only on the final day of account will it be known how many lives were saved, how many bands of lawless men held in check, and how much good done by that little body of men.

That was several years ago, and since then changes have taken place. Now there are two great nerve-centres, Dawson and Whitehorse. As the telegraph operator feels the beat of a city's pulse many miles away, so the commanding officer knows what is taking place in the most remote portion of his huge district. Now, all along the trail which leads from Whitehorse to Dawson, a distance of 320 miles, policemen are stationed at regular intervals. A hold-up is an unknown event, and one travels as safely as along some quiet village in Eastern Canada.

If you go to the barracks at Whitehorse, you will see a pile of old registers, with thousands of names recorded there. Every man who goes down the river in an open boat must give his name, and have his boat registered. Sometimes three or four men go together. Then, upon reaching Dawson, if any are missing, the police at once begin to inquire. They know who were in the boat, and they at once ask what has happened to the others. In this way criminals have been found out and punished. Many are the stories those old registers could tell of the early, stirring days.

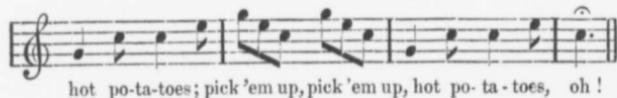
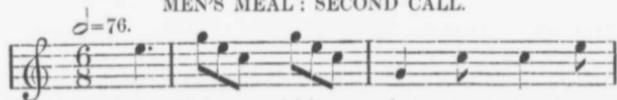
The writer has travelled 1,000 miles by dog-team in the

## THE MOUNTED POLICE

Yukon, and everywhere he went he met members of the force, no matter how desolate the region. One Saturday night he and his Indian arrived, cold and tired, at a police post. Here they were kindly sheltered and fed. The next day being Sunday, the police-team was harnessed to a sled, and a drive made to a road house some distance away. Here service was held. No one could sing, but a big gramophone served instead, and rolled off several old, familiar tunes.

Everywhere the missionary goes he is sure to find a hearty welcome and assistance from these men. Living in the shadow of the big log barracks for about five years, the writer has seen much of these men. Many of them are from England, Ireland, and Scotland. They are, as a rule, a gentlemanly class of fellows, some having been bred in homes of comfort and luxury. Here they are all equal, unless they obtain the much-coveted stripes on the sleeves which lift them to the rank of corporal or staff-sergeant. Their scarlet uniforms, with the well-polished buttons, are often seen on the streets. They have their own skating-rink, near the barracks, toboggan-slide, and a fine library and recreation room. It is certainly pleasant to hear all through the day the sweet bugle-calls, summoning the men to their various duties. The present bugler, who is the son of an English clergyman, has kindly supplied the notes and words of some of the bugle-calls.

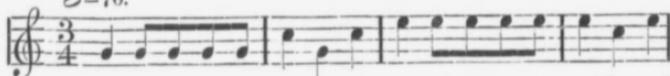
### MEN'S MEAL : SECOND CALL.



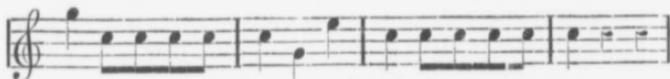
# THE MOUNTED POLICE

## STABLES CALL.

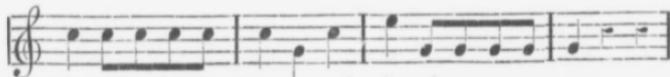
$\text{♩} = 76.$



Oh, come to the sta-ble, all ye that are a-ble, and



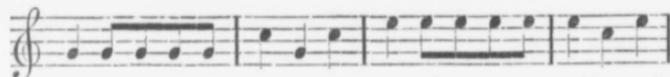
Wa - ter your hor-ses, and feed them some corn ;



Wa - ter your hor-ses, and give them some corn ;



Wa - ter your hor-ses, and feed them some corn.



Oh, come to the sta-ble, all ye that are a-ble, and



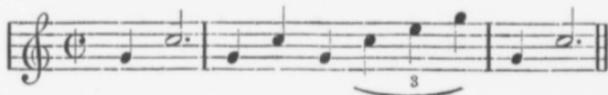
Wa - ter your hor-ses, and feed them some corn.

## LIGHTS OUT.



Lights out! lights out!

## REGIMENTAL CALL (R.N.-W.M.P.).



## THE MOUNTED POLICE

It was mentioned in another chapter how the police carried the mails along the river with dog-teams before the stage-road was built from Dawson to Whitehorse. They still do much work in this line, carrying mails to lonely outlying creeks. But the great task is that of carrying the mail over the Rocky Mountains to Fort McPherson, 475 miles from Dawson. Away up there in that desolate region, at Herschel Island and other places, are Hudson's Bay Company's men, as well as missionaries, hunters, and trappers, eagerly longing for news from the outside world. About Christmas-time a patrol starts from Dawson to carry the mail to these people afar off.

It is a Herculean task to break trail through a desolate wilderness and over the wind-swept Rocky Mountains. Only the hardiest men and dogs are chosen for this task. Usually there are about four policemen and two Indian guides, with five dog-teams and toboggans. If you look into a police report, you will read there the events which happen day after day, for it takes about three months to make the round trip of 950 miles in all. How careful is the man in charge not to tell too much about what that march means! But anyone who has been on the trail can easily read between the lines, and he sees hardships endured and difficulties overcome of which Arctic explorers might well be proud.

Suppose we pick out a few of these matter-of-fact entries of the trip of 1905 :

"*January 1, 1906.*—Roads very heavy. Distance travelled, twenty miles. Snowing all day. Thirty-five degrees below zero."

"*January 8.*—Followed McQuesten Lake to the end, and then followed the edge of the hills for about seven miles. Weather, 48 below. Strong wind all day."

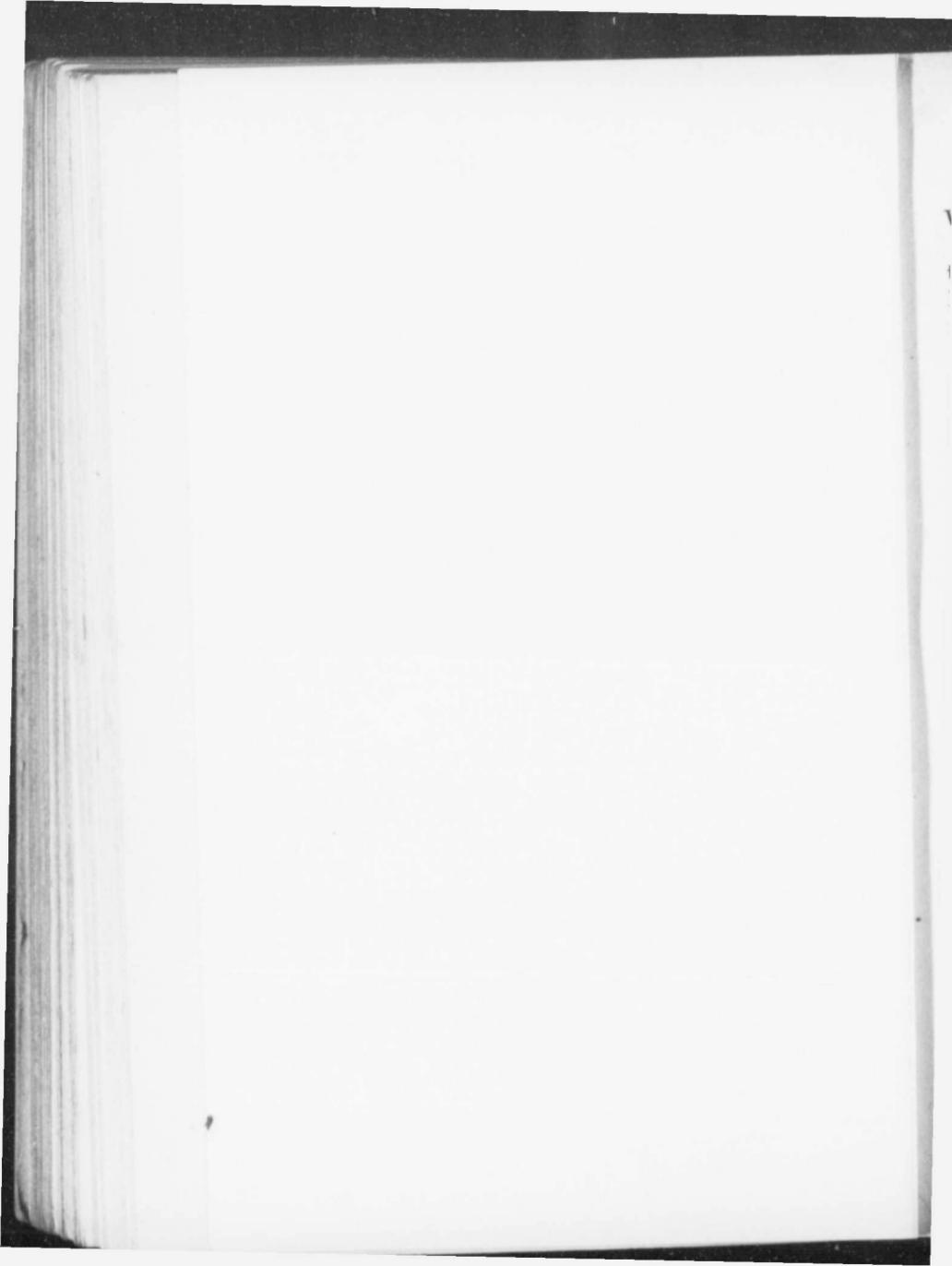
"*January 9.*—Four men went ahead to break trail."

"*January 10.*—Weather very windy, and 61 below."



THE DAWSON—FORT McPHERSON MAIL ROUTE

The dogs used by the Mounted Police, in harness and on the trail, are the best that can be obtained, and even then some of them give out beneath the fearful hardships of the trail.



## THE MOUNTED POLICE

"*January 16.*—Snow very deep, with water on ice. Weather 18 below in a.m., and 38 below in p.m."

"*January 18.*—Had a very hard day on the dogs, and they just played out. Braine Creek is nearly all glacier. Nearly all of the party got wet, and we had a narrow escape from freezing. Distance travelled, eighteen miles. Weather, 54 below."

"*January 26.*—Left camp at 8 a.m., with a blizzard blowing."

"*January 27.*—Dog John had to be turned loose on account of frozen feet."

"*February 1.*—Had to turn dog Ping loose, and neither he nor John turned up at night."

"*February 2.*—Dogs did not turn up, and I reckon their feet are too bad for them to travel."

"*February 8.*—The mountain we crossed is a very bald one, and we could not see much of it on account of storm."

"*February 14.*—Left camp at 7.30 a.m., and followed the portage two miles to Peel River, and then seventeen miles down the Peel to a native cabin, and camped there at 8 p.m. We had eaten the last bite of food for breakfast, but fortunately came to an Indian camp, where we obtained twenty-four rabbits, and gave the dogs each half a rabbit. Distance travelled, nineteen miles. Weather, 52 below."

"*February 15.*—Followed the Peel River down to Fort McPherson, where we arrived at 4.30 p.m. On our arrival all of our dogs were just about played out; in fact, one of them, Sandy, dropped about a mile above the fort."

And so His Majesty's mail was carried over that desolate waste. The bare words, "dog's feet frozen," "broke trail," "52 below zero," "wind blowing," "snow very deep," and such-like—what pictures rise before the mind as we read these laconic words! They are typical of the North, where men shrink from enlarging on their hardships, lest they

## THE MOUNTED POLICE

should seem like boasters. It was the same with Bishop Bompas. Read the accounts of his journeys, and you will find them, as a rule, long, dry statements of his many journeys.

These pictures of the carrying of the mail from Dawson to Fort McPherson will prove interesting. They were given to the writer last summer by one of the men who made the long journey. As far as is known, they have never yet been given to the public.

And so far up in this Northern region these noble men carry on their great work. Well it was that King Edward lately bestowed upon them the additional regal name, and now they are known as the Royal North-West Mounted Police. Their motto is, *Maintien le droit*. And well do they follow it out. One more closing incident is typical of them all :

A young man was sent to hunt up some horses that had strayed. It was winter, and a blizzard struck him. He never returned, but the next spring, in a cut-off *coulée*, an officer on patrol found a uniform by the side of a skeleton. A piece of paper arrested his attention. Picking it up, he read the pathetic words which had been scrawled there by the young man, on a leaf torn from a pocket-diary, the winter before: "*Lost. Horse dead. Am trying to push ahead. Have done my best.*"

## CHAPTER XIX

### “FAINT, YET PURSUING”

WHEN on a visit to one of his mission-stations during his later years, the Bishop was asked to write a few lines in an autograph album. He at once complied with the request, and wrote the words, which he felt applied to him as they did to Gideon and his 300, “Faint, yet pursuing.”

Years of strenuous work were telling upon his gigantic constitution, and he began to realize that ere long he must lay down the staff of office. For some time he had his attention turned towards the southern portion of the diocese, to the Indians who were gathered at Caribou Crossing, which had become quite an important railway centre. In August, 1901, he and Mrs. Bompas bade farewell to all at Forty Mile, and started on their journey up the river. Whitehorse was only in its infancy, and the Rev. R. J. and Mrs. Bowen had just returned from England to take charge of the Church work. In their little tent they received the venerable couple, and did all in their power to minister to their comfort. The welcome at Caribou Crossing was most meagre. A tent which belonged to Bishop Ridley gave them shelter for a few hours, when, hearing of a bunk-house across the river, they at once rented it, and afterwards purchased it for \$150. It was dirty and uncomfortable, but the Bishop placed a rug and blanket on the big table for Mrs. Bompas to rest while he went to explore. The house was infested with gophers, which ran along the rafters, causing great annoyance. But, notwithstanding the toil of the day, evening prayer was held

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in Bishop Ridley's tent. Here services were conducted till the fall, when the weather grew so cold that Mrs. Bompas's fingers became numb as she played at the little harmonium which she brought with her. After that, services, morning and evening, were held at the mission-house, “which,” as Mrs. Bompas tells us, “had been used as a road-house and post-office, and possessed one good-sized room, over the door of which there still exists the ominous word ‘Bar-room’ (now hidden behind a picture); and in this room we had to gather—Indians and white people—for Sunday and week-day services, for baptisms, marriages, and funerals, for school-children and adult classes, etc.”

In 1903, Bishop Ridley, of Caledonia, paid a visit to Caribou Crossing on his way to Atlin. The description he gives of the episcopal residence and the life of the venerable occupants is most interesting, a few extracts of which must be given here:

“There on the platform stands the straight and venerable hero of the North, Dr. Bompas, the Bishop of Selkirk. I jumped from the train and, though I had never met him before, I grasped his hand and exclaimed, ‘At last! at last!’ We knew each other well by letter only. He was as placid as the mountains and the lakes they embosom.”

Then a glimpse is given of the “Bishop's house, built of logs, on the sand. The flooring-boards were half an inch apart; so shrunken were they that it would be easy to rip them up and lay them down close together. Then the roof: it was papered, with battens across the paper. I was anxious to see inside less of the light of heaven through the rents. Ventilation is carried to excess. Everything around is as simple as indifference to creature comforts can make it, excepting the books, which are numerous, up-to-date, and as choice as any two excellent scholars could wish.

“The question that has often sprung from my heart has

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been this: if this poor thirty-pound affair is by comparison delightful, what of the contrivances that have sheltered them in the past forty years?

“Never in my life did I value hospitality so much, or feel so honoured, as here, under the roof of these grand apostles of God. Two septuagenarians of grace and broad culture, whose years have been spent nobly in God’s eyes, have deliberately chosen an austere type of service, not for austerity’s sake, but for Christ’s sake, under circumstances the average citizen of the Empire would feel to be past endurance. They are as happy as heroic. She, accomplished far beyond the standard one meets with in London drawing-rooms, unless among the most cultured circles; he, a fine scholar, steeped in Hebrew and Syriac lore, as well as in the commoner studies of the clergy, live on, love on, labour on in this vast expanse, little trodden but by the Indians for whom they live and will die.

“If such lives fail in Christ’s cause, that cause is doomed. Let those who criticize cease their cackling, and try to imitate by self-sacrifice such lives as those I have just touched on; and they, too, may have some share in the betterment of mankind—the expansion of Christ’s kingdom and the eternal welfare of humanity.”

Anxious days followed the Bishop’s removal to this place. The diocese was scarce of clergy, and when Mr. Bowen left Whitehorse earnest appeals were sent “outside” for men. Then it was, upon the Bishop’s earnest request, that the Rev. I. O. Stringer arrived in November, 1903, to take up the work laid down by Mr. Bowen. Much pleased was the Bishop to have Mr. Stringer so near, and at once marked him as his successor.

Then followed the death of his old friend Archbishop Machray, and as senior Bishop of the province of Rupert’s Land, he was summoned to Winnipeg. A message reached

## “ FAINT, YET PURSUING ”

him from Mr. John Machray, nephew of the late Primate, telling him of the Archbishop's death, with the addition: “ As senior Bishop, it is important that you should attend a conference of Bishops in Winnipeg to select a successor.”

Though the Bishop shrank much from leaving the North to mingle with the bustling world, yet, after a few minutes' thought, he sent back the following answer:

“ I will try to be with you by Easter.”

And on Easter Eve, April, 1904, with Mrs. Bompas and Susie, a little deaf and dumb girl,\* he was met by several of the clergy at Winnipeg, and was present at St. John's Cathedral on Easter Day, though only as one of the congregation, being too much overcome by the crowd and bustle of the city to take any active part in the service. What thoughts must have surged through his mind as he looked upon the great prairie city, which had changed so much since last he saw it thirty long years before!

On the following Sunday he was able to preach in St. John's Cathedral. “ His sermon,” so Mrs. Bompas tells us, “ was in his usual earnest and unembellished style, referring to the last time he had officiated in that church, nearly thirty years before, alluding with pathos to the many who had left the busy whirl of life during that period, and expressing his great pleasure that, among the many changes that were taking place in the Church, the services of St. John's Cathedral still retained something of their old, almost austere, simplicity.”

The Bishop's time was fully occupied during his stay in Winnipeg. There were old friends calling upon him, reporters seeking interviews, meetings to attend, and addresses to deliver, which wearied him very much. His voice was feeble, and could not be distinctly heard at the gatherings where he

\* This girl was placed in the Deaf and Dumb Institution at Winnipeg. She died on February 26, 1897, of tuberculosis, aged ten years.

## “FAINT, YET PURSUING”

told of his Northern diocese. But what did that matter? The people thought more of the man—the man of whom they had heard such wonderful things—and cheered him heartily.

The Archbishop of Rupert's Land, in an address at the 107th Anniversary of the Church Missionary Society, at Exeter Hall, London, April, 1907, thus referred to the visit of Bishop Bompas to Winnipeg:

“Dr. Bompas, that splendid veteran missionary, who came down at the time of my election—he was as humble as a little child—when he stood on the platform at a great missionary meeting, and when I, introducing him, spoke of the hardships he had gone through, corrected me thus when he started to speak. He said: ‘It is you men at the centre, with your telephones and your telegrams, who have the hardships. We have a soft time in the North. Nobody ever worries us.’ That is all that he said about his hardships. Then he told the story of his work in a simple, childlike way.”

The city life did not agree with him. He longed for his Northern flock and the quietness of his little log-house at Caribou Crossing. A doctor was consulted, who strongly advised him not to return to his diocese for some time. Before this the Bishop was uncertain when he would return; but after the doctor's verdict had been given, he hesitated no longer, but fixed a date for his departure. Only three weeks did he stay in Winnipeg, and then started northward. Acts of kindness were showered upon him on every hand. All delighted to honour the noble missionary in their midst. As he stood on the platform before leaving Winnipeg, an unknown friend, knowing that the Bishop would not afford himself the luxury of a good berth, slipped into his hand a ticket for one in the Pullman car.

When once again in his own diocese, the longing grew stronger for rest, and he became impatient for the time when his successor would be appointed. Then, the delay in the

## “FAINT, YET PURSUING”

election of the new Archbishop gave him much concern. He felt it was his duty to go once more to Winnipeg to hasten matters, and many were the letters written and received before everything was finally arranged. His annual trip down the river to visit the various mission stations became more and more of a burden, and he wished to stay quietly in one place to carry on his desired work.

And that desired work filled him with gladness. “The daily round, the common task” was all that he asked for. Praise might go to others; he wished for none for himself. The Indian school occupied much of his time, and part of each morning was given up to it. The building over the river, which at first had been used for the school, was exchanged for the log police-barracks, quite close to the mission-house. It was an interesting sight to observe the venerable, grey-haired teacher among a number of stirring young Indian pupils. Gladly did he leave his beloved translations to be awhile the teacher.

“Freely the sage, though wrapped in musings high,  
Assumed the teacher’s part.”

Though the Bishop used to say that to teach Indians was a very difficult task, “like writing in the sand, instead of graving in the rock,” yet he never gave up, but went bravely on till the last.

A portion of his time was devoted to letter-writing and translation work. He was always an early riser, and his letters were written in the early morning in the quietness of his study. Letter-writing he seemed to love, and seldom did he pen less than six or seven missives a day. It was in this manner he could express himself most freely, and sometimes, when wishing to convey a message to a member of his household, he would do so by letter, at times leaving it at the post-office to be delivered later in the day.

Rarely did he miss meeting the train on its arrival at the



#### AN INDIAN BOY AT PLAY

When the Indians come into town the dusky lads are fond of imitating the ways of the white people. Too often they copy the worse side. But this little fellow is certainly engaged in innocent sport.



#### AN INDIAN BOY AT WORK

Indians on the Yukon dislike work. Around the towns they will beg for food and clothing. At the Whitehorse Rectory a pile of unsplit wood was kept ready, and the able-bodied natives were made to earn their food and clothing.



## “FAINT, YET PURSUING”

settlement, that he might be at hand to receive his mail as soon as possible. His tall, erect figure, with the leather travelling-bag\* slung across his shoulder, walking up and down the platform, was a most familiar sight. Strangers would gaze with curiosity upon the veteran of the North, of whom they had heard so much, and often snapshots were taken, to be reproduced in books, magazines, or newspaper articles. This latter the Bishop bore with good-natured tolerance, considering it a necessary evil, and one of the discomforts of modern civilization. He told one of his clergy—him who now wields the episcopal staff—who was busy taking a number of pictures of the Bishop and his Indian school, that he did not wish to see *him* go, but he would like to see the *camera* make a hasty departure.

For some time the Bishop wished to change the name of Caribou Crossing, as his letters often went to other places of a similar name, and thus caused much delay and confusion. After careful consideration, he chose the name of “Carcross.” Many objected to the change, and strongly-worded articles were written in the local paper condemning the “mongrel name of Carcross.” The Bishop remained silent, replying to none of these attacks. At length a letter appeared, addressed to the Bishop, from the Secretary of the Geographic Board of Canada, stating that at a meeting of the Board “the name ‘Carcross’ was approved instead of ‘Caribou’ or ‘Caribou Crossing.’” The Bishop smiled, but said nothing. Since then the new name has steadily won its way.

Notwithstanding the school-work and study, ample time was found for other duties which devolved upon him. There were Indians calling at most unseasonable hours for advice over some perplexing question. The advice thus freely given was often interpreted in most unexpected ways. On one

\* This travelling-bag was exhibited in 1909 at the Missionary Loan Exhibition held in Montreal, and attracted much attention.

## “ FAINT, YET PURSUING ”

occasion he had a long talk with an Indian who had taken a young woman as his second wife, having wearied of the first. The Bishop told him it was wrong to have two wives, and that he should only have one. The Indian seemed much surprised with these words, and promised to obey ; but, to the astonishment of all, he put away his old, faithful wife and kept the younger.

Once, at a wedding of two Indians, the Bishop repeated very carefully the words, “ for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health,” etc., and told the groom to repeat them after him. The Indian was much puzzled. He could not repeat the words, neither could he understand their meaning, and looked vacantly around. After a time a light illumined his face, and, turning to his passive, dusky bride, he said : “ Me sick, you take care me ; you sick, me take care you—eh ?”

The building of the new church at Carcross was a great comfort to the Bishop. Services had been held in the mission-house, which was too small to accommodate all who attended. The cost of the building was met almost entirely by kind friends outside the diocese. In 1904 Mrs. Bompas visited Eastern Canada, and addressed the Women's Association at Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and Quebec on mission-work in the North. Great was her surprise when, at the annual meeting of this noble handmaid of the Church at the Cathedral in Toronto, she was presented with the generous gift of \$800 towards the church building fund for St. Saviour's, Carcross. Other gifts came steadily in, and the success of the church was complete.

In the erection of this little building the Bishop was most active, not only superintending the work, but doing much manual labour himself. With his own hands he made a little gate for the church-door, to keep out the numerous Indian dogs which were always prowling around during service.

## “FAINT, YET PURSUING”

This specimen of the Bishop's handiwork remained for some time after his death, a curiosity to all who looked upon it, especially to tourists.

It was a happy day when at last the church was opened for service. It was consecrated on August 8, 1904, after Mrs. Bompas's return to the diocese. The services were of a very simple nature, for the Bishop seemed to have an almost complete disregard for external things. Seldom did he wear his episcopal robes—not even when visiting the different mission stations in his diocese—being content to use the long white surplice with the black stole, minus his Doctor's hood. This was a cause of worry to Mrs. Bompas, who rejoiced to see all things done “decently and in order.” Once, on the Mackenzie River, when starting to hold a Confirmation service some distance away, he was urged by Mrs. Bompas to take his episcopal robes. He refused to do so, saying that the surplice was sufficient. On that trip his boat was swamped, and everything was lost, and only with difficulty were he and his companions saved.

Anxiously the Bishop awaited Bishop Stringer's return from Winnipeg to take charge of the diocese. No jealousy came into his heart at the thought of handing over the work to another. It was his own wish, for he knew a younger and stronger man was needed. For himself, he did not wish to leave the Yukon or to retire. He resolved to still carry on his Master's work as a humble missionary much farther down the river. He was eager to be away among his dusky flock, free from all the cares of the huge diocese, which were becoming a great burden.

At length Bishop Stringer arrived, and at once he handed over the affairs to him, and discussed his own plans with the enthusiasm of youth, little thinking that the Master of Life was about to call him to a higher service.

## CHAPTER XX

### LIGHT AT EVENTIDE

IN a famous picture an old warrior, scarred in many a fierce battle, is seen hanging up his sword; his work ended, he could afford to rest. But not so with Bishop Bompas, the faithful soldier of the Cross. No thought of ease entered his mind, but only more work for the Master. As St. Paul of old handed on his commission to his son Timothy, so did this veteran apostle of a later day pass on the torch to a younger son in the faith, that he might be free for other work. Then came the end, the last scene in the life of this noble man, for "God's finger touched him, and he slept."

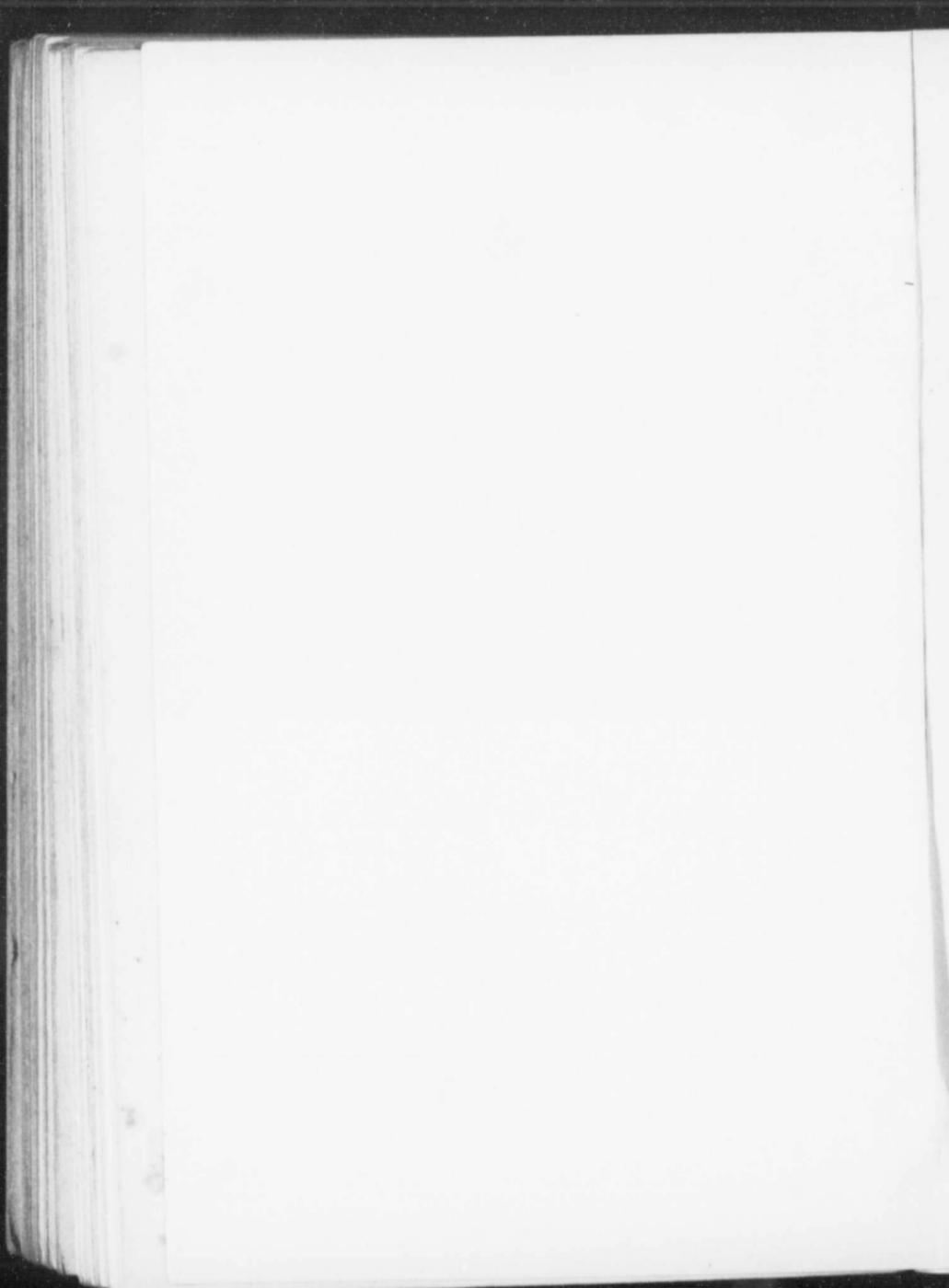
Far away in dear old England, 7,000 miles from a quiet grave in the great Canadian northland, the following account of those last days has been beautifully written as a loving tribute by her, the faithful wife, who for long years bore with the devoted Bishop the burden and heat of the day:

"The storms on Lake Bennett, on the shores of which Carcross is situated, are at times pretty severe. The winds blow in gusts down the steep mountain gullies, and toss into fury the waters of the lake. The depth of that lake between Carcross and Bennett is very great. It has often been sounded, and no bottom reached. Many a hastily run-up scow, full of brave, enterprising miners, has been wrecked on these waters, and many a nameless grave in the white man's territory marks the resting-place of some poor fellow who was strong



#### ON THE TRAIL

The writer's last trip into Livingstone Creek, seventy miles from Whitehorse. The scene is on a large mountain lake, with towering rocks on every side. The Indian, Jimmy Jackson, is at the rear of the sled.



## LIGHT AT EVENTIDE

to venture, but had not learnt to realize the many dangers and vicissitudes of a miner's life. But the lake has its periods of calm no less than those of turmoil and unrest. Mark it on some evening of summer, when scarcely a ripple stirs its surface. The reflection of the mountains on the water is so clear and vivid that one is tempted to doubt which is the reality and which is the shadow.

“Such a calm, such a change from turmoil into peace, marked the evening of the life we have been considering. We believe that God's servants have been given a premonition of the approach of death. The Bishop had laid his plans some months ahead, and made necessary preparations for a winter down the river. He had always been remarkable for physical strength and energy. For his winter travelling he was always seen running, with the jaunty pace of the Northern tripper, ahead of his sledge. He was ever ready to help the men hauling up a boat at some of the portages, or in pushing it down the bank into the river. Among our party it was always the Bishop who insisted on charging himself with the heaviest articles, and it was only within the last two years that he abstained from hauling water from the lake for the whole of our household. But symptoms of some diminution of strength and vigour in this strong man were beginning to show themselves. The eyes that had pored so long with imperfect light over the pages of Hebrew and Syriac, in which he so delighted, were failing, and had to be strengthened by glasses stronger and yet stronger still. Since his last attack of scurvy he had lost all sense of smell or taste. No one could be with the Bishop many hours without observing an expression of weariness and dejection in his countenance, which was as intense as pathetic. He was often heard whispering, ‘Courage, courage!’ To more than one of his friends he had given his impression that he had not long to live. To his brother he wrote just a year before his death :

## LIGHT AT EVENTIDE

'For myself, I am most thankful to be in this happy retirement. When the time comes, I hope for as tranquil an earthly ending as that of our brother George, though perhaps mine may be more sudden, and possibly not even in my bed.'

"The Bishop's burden of responsibility had of late years been greatly increased by the advent of the white men. The population of the diocese had increased sevenfold and at rapid strides. The problem of providing for the spiritual needs of these people, and especially of keeping the Indians from the allurements of the whisky traffic and the snares of the gambling-table, was weighing heavily upon him. But the darkest hour is the hour before the dawn; the labourer's task was nearly accomplished. The Rev. I. O. Stringer had been nominated by the Bishop and approved by the Church Missionary Society and the Canadian Board of Missions as successor to Bishop Bompas in the See of Selkirk (now called the See of Yukon). He was a good man and an earnest Churchman, and had had some years' experience of mission-work among the Indians of Peel River and the Eskimo of Herschel Island, at the mouth of the Mackenzie. Mr. Stringer was consecrated Bishop in St. John's Cathedral, Winnipeg, December 17, 1905, and his arrival in Selkirk Diocese was ardently looked for. With him was expected the Rev. A. E. O'Meara, of Toronto, to be placed in charge of the newly-started mission at Conrad, twelve miles from Carcross, the centre of a new mining camp.

"And so, with the mission staff a little better equipped, with the work of the diocese passing into younger and less toil-worn hands, our Bishop could now turn his thoughts to his own plans for the coming months. The Church Missionary Society had suggested to him a retiring pension, but this he declined to accept, unless he continued in some depart-

## LIGHT AT EVENTIDE

ment of the work of the mission. His great desire now, and one which had for a long time past occupied his thoughts, was to start a new mission on Little Salmon River, where there are often congregated together 200 Indians who have seldom come within sound of the Gospel. But Bishop Stringer and others dissuaded him from the new venture, thinking that the work of starting a new mission, with the prospect of having to build a house and get in supplies for the coming winter, was one for which neither the Bishop himself nor his wife, at their advanced age, were fitted. Accepting this disappointment as God's will, Bishop Bompas prepared to go down the river to Forty Mile, below Dawson. Now was there bustle and unrest on the mission premises at Carcross preparatory to the departure.

"A passage for the Bishop and Mrs. Bompas and two Indian girls had been secured on one of the river steamers to sail on Monday. This was Saturday, June 9, a day calm and bright, as our summer days in the far North mostly are. The Bishop was as active as ever on that day. Twice he had walked across the long railway bridge, and his quick elastic step had been commented on as that of a young man. Later on he had been up to the school, and on to the Indian camp to visit some sick Indians. Then he went home, and remained for some time in conversation with Bishop Stringer, into whose hands he had already committed all the affairs of the diocese. Then the mission party dined together, and at eight o'clock they all reassembled for prayers. After prayers the Bishop retired to his study and shut the door.

"Was there, we wonder, any intimation of the coming rest in the breast of that stalwart warrior, whose end of life was now so near as to be reckoned, not by hours, but by minutes only? Was there any consciousness of having fought a good fight, and finished his course? We know not. Sitting on a

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box, as was his custom, he began the sermon which proved to be his last. Presently the pen stopped; the hand that so often had guided it was to do so no more. Near him was one of his flock, an Indian girl, who needed some attention, and as he arose he leaned his elbow on a pile of boxes. And while standing there the great call came: the hand of God touched him, and the body which had endured so much fell forward. When Bishop Stringer reached his side a few minutes later, the Indian girl was holding his head in her lap. Nothing could be done, and without a struggle, without one word of farewell, the brave soul passed forth to a higher life.

"And so the tale is told, the chapter ended, of that life begun seventy-two years since. A suffering, uneventful life, and yet, we hope, not all unfruitful of God's glory, and of souls won for the fold of the Good Shepherd. Most aptly do the words of the poet apply to him:

"O good grey head which all men knew,  
O voice from which their omens all men drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fallen at length that tower of strength,  
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew.  
Such was he whom we deplore.  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er."

"The awe and silence which overspread the camp, and school, and mission that night and the following day were very striking. By the morning of Sunday tidings of the Bishop's death had been flashed to Ottawa, and London, and all down the river. On Tuesday morning notices of the Bishop's life and work were in many American and Canadian newspapers, with his portrait.

"The funeral had to be on Monday, June 11, Festival of St. Barnabas (the Son of Consolation). Messages came from the Indians down the river, as well as from friends elsewhere, expressing deepest sympathy with Mrs. Bompas in the terrible



THE BODY OF BISHOP BOMPAS TAKEN IN A BOAT FROM THE CHURCH  
TO THE GRAVEYARD

Mrs. Bompas and Mrs. Cody are sitting in the back part of the boat. As there was no team available on the Mission side of the river, the boat was the only means of conveyance.



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shock she had sustained. The Indians heard with extreme satisfaction that their friend and Bishop had once expressed a wish to be buried among them. Two of them came and offered to dig his grave, adding, "You no pay me." In the Indian cemetery, therefore, beautifully situated less than a mile from Carcross, was the grave made ready. The mountains, clad with their dark pine-woods, looked down grave and solemn on the Indians' burial-ground. There were not many graves, but they were well and carefully kept and tended, for they were all friends who lay there, and we knew the life and history of each one. Below the cemetery were the waters of the lake, in summer ever studded with swift canoes, or white man's row-boats, or the steamer *Gleamer* and smaller vessels. But on this day there was no movement on the lake. All vessels had their flags half-mast high, and deferred their sailing that their captains and men might attend the funeral. It took place at five o'clock. On account of the distance, only two of the Bishop's clergy were able to take part in the solemn service, Mr. O'Meara, of Conrad, and Mr. Cody, of Whitehorse.

"The little church of St. Saviour's was now filled with all the white population of Carcross and all the Indians who had come to do honour to the great man who had fallen in their midst. The two hymns chosen from the Hymnal Companion were most appropriate. One, 'For all the Saints,' telling of the triumph of the saints of God after earth's hard fight; the other, 'Jesus lives,' breathing forth the blessed hope of victory over the grave and a glorious resurrection. The service was conducted by Bishop Stringer, assisted by the two clergymen; and then the dear Bishop's body was lifted into a boat waiting at the foot of the bank, and rowed by two natives over water as smooth as glass to the cemetery. Three white men and three Indians carried the body from the shore to the grave; and after the beautiful service had been read,

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the children of the Indian mission-school came one by one and dropped into the grave their little offerings of wild flowers, which had been gathered for the occasion.

“There is a humble grave in one of the loveliest and most secluded spots in the Yukon territory. Dark pine-forests guard that grave. During the winter months pure, untrodden snow covers it. It is enclosed by a rough fence made of fir-wood, which an Indian woodman cut down and trimmed, leaving the bark on, and then fixed strong and stable around the grave. But none will disturb that spot: no foot of man or beast will dishonour it; the sweet notes of the Canadian robin and the merry chirp of the snow-bird are almost the only sounds which break the silence of that sacred place. The Indians love that grave; the mission children visit it at times with soft steps and hushed voices to lay some cross of wild flowers or evergreens upon it. There is a grey granite headstone with the words, ‘In the peace of Christ,’ and the name and age of him who rests beneath. It is the grave of Bishop Bompas.”

“On the night of the Bishop’s death,” says Bishop Stringer, “one group of Indians after another came to the Bishop’s house with sorrow depicted on each face as they asked at first if the sad news were true, and then other questions, showing their deep concern. In the morning they came one by one to look for the last time on the face of him who was always their friend. Never more could he listen patiently to all their troubles; never again would he get up from the midst of his work and tramp off half a mile to their camps to see a sick person, and give all the relief possible in medicine, food, and clothing, and, above all, advice in their many adversities and, oftentimes, complicated troubles.

“The day after the funeral an Indian and his wife arrived on foot from Skagway. As Mrs. Bompas went out to shake

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hands with them as old friends, she said, 'Bishop has gone.' The woman looked interested, thinking she meant he had gone to visit some of the other missions. Mrs. Bompas tried to explain. 'Bishop dead three days,' she said. Then the truth seemed to dawn on the Indian woman, and she repeated, with rising inflection, 'Bishop dead? Bishop dead? Bishop dead?' at the same time giving vent to such a wail as I scarcely ever heard from a human being. I then realized more than ever how much the loss of our dear Bishop meant to his own people, the Indians."

All men had a profound respect for Bishop Bompas, especially the hardy prospectors. They had endured so much on the lonely trails that they looked upon the Bishop as one of themselves, who had not spent his life in ease and luxury, but struggling with Nature at her sternest. In speaking of the late Bishop, a prospector at Carcross said:

"I feel as if I had lost my best friend. Sometimes some of us were hard up—no funds and no food; but we always felt we could turn to the Bishop for help. We knew that to knock at his door and ask him if there was any odd job we could do meant always, and especially if the Bishop knew we were hard up, that he would find something for us to do—now some wood to get, or, again, some stove-pipe to fix, or a few nails to drive for Mrs. Bompas, or some other work that would give him the opportunity to pay us sufficient to keep body and soul together."

Bishop Stringer, who records this conversation, also mentions that on the Mackenzie River he once met a miner who had been in Dawson in the early days. "When asked if he knew Bishop Bompas, he said he thought he had seen him. When he was described as a pioneer in the land, he suddenly exclaimed: 'Oh yes; that's the man who wrote the book.

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I have often seen him and spoken to him. Many of us have read his book. The miners know him as "the man who wrote the book." He referred to the 'History of the Mackenzie River Diocese,' which contains much matter of interest to the miner about the North."

The letters received by Mrs. Bompas were full of the sincerest sympathy. Some were from the men of the "Old Brigade," who had stood shoulder to shoulder with the Bishop in his great fight against the powers of darkness. Beautiful as well as pathetic are the words of the Venerable Archdeacon McDonald, from Winnipeg:

"He was a man dear to me, and I thank God for the abundant grace that was bestowed upon him, enabling him to labour patiently and persistently among the natives, for whose sake he became a missionary. I cannot forget that it was to replace me he first came to the North, when, as it was thought, my earthly course was nearly run, and I would have to lay down the Banner of the Cross. Nobly has he borne the standard; he has fought the fight of faith, he has finished his course, and has gone to receive, with the Apostle Paul, and all who love the appearing of our sweet Saviour Christ, the crown of righteousness which shall be bestowed upon them. . . . Thus another landmark has gone. Bishop Bompas achieved a great reputation for devotedness and saintliness and the most heroic courage. Like our great pattern, he constantly went about doing good. He counted not his life dear unto him, but exposed it many times in his great Master's cause. He has left a splendid record and example for all Bishops and clergy. You and the Bishop have done a magnificent work in that Northern region—a work that has blessed not only the Indians, but, in an indirect way, the entire Church of God."

Thus lived and die<sup>1</sup> this noble missionary in the great Northland, among his dusky flock. Though he is dead, the

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results of his noble life cannot perish. With him will always be associated thoughts of mighty rivers and great inland lakes, snow-capped mountains and sweeping plains; thoughts of heroism and devotion to duty; but, above all, thoughts of gratitude for countless unknown natives of the North, on river, mountain, and plain, who have been lifted out of darkness and brought close to the Great Shepherd's side, through the light of the Gospel carried by a faithful herald of salvation—this noble Apostle of the North.

THE END