Tillicums of the Trail

Being Klondike Yarns Told to Canadian Soldiers Overseas by a : : Sourdough Padre. : :

By George C. F. Pringle
Chaplain in the Field with the Cameron Highlanders of Canada.

McCLELLAND & STEWART
PUBLISHERS TORONTO

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PS
8531
R55T5

Printed in Canada

TO MY WIFE

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Foreword

PTE. Clarke of the Orderly Room staff told me how my coming as Chaplain to the 43rd in 1917 was announced to the men attached to Battalion Headquarters. They were "killing time" off duty in one of the cellars under the brick-piles on the flats facing Avion. I give it in his own words as well as memory recalls them.

"We knew," he said, "that D. T. Macpherson had some news by the hurried way he slithered down the muddy dug-out steps. He came with bent head over to the candle-light where a bunch of us were resting after a few hours "running" and "mending wire" with explosive hardware dropping around us. 'Well,' said Mac, when he got over near us, 'I've got a new job and it's a cushy one. No more listening-post for me or walking around in a front-line trench asking for a blighty. Nay, nay! The new chaplain has arrived and I'm his batman. After this I'll have to work only one day a week. On Sundays I'll pass around the hymn-books, lead the singing, and see that none of you fellows miss church

parade.' 'You'll last about two weeks, Mac,' said Jesse Elder. 'The chaplain will have to get rid of you if he wants to make good. Otherwise you'd handicap him, corrupt him and kill his influence. But what's his name and where is he from?' 'His name is Pringle, Capt. George Pringle. I heard him tell the O.C. that he had spent years in the Klondike Goldfields in early days.' 'Well,' Elder replied, 'that sounds good. He ought to be able to give us some Rex Beach-Jack London stuff. See what sort he is, Mac, and when you get better acquainted sound him about coming under-ground here to give us some stories of the North.' The proposition sounded all right and Macpherson said he'd try for it."

When Mac put the request to me I welcomed the chance it gave me to talk to ready listeners about a land I love, to me the fairest under heaven. The men were always eager to listen, eager because the stories were about Canada and they were home-sick. Also because in every man there is something that stirs responsive to tales of the mystic Northland, vast, white, and silent. Then besides, the mad years of the Great

Stampede had their own appeal, when the golden treasures were found and adventurers from the Seven Seas rushed to the discovery. What days those were, filled with tragedy and comedy, shameful things we would fain forget but can't, incidents too of heroism and comradeship that will live in our memories forever, and through it all, bad and good, an intense, throbbing life that was irresistibly fascinating. Little wonder that my soldiers, out themselves on a great adventure, would listen to stories of the Yukon and its adventurers in those glorious Stampede days.

Many an hour have I spent with my men off duty spinning these "sourdough" yarns, and I know very often we forgot for the time the dugout and the trench, hardly hearing the boom of the guns or bursting shells.

The incidents are true both in prologue and story. In "The Lost Patrol" and "Soapy Smith" I am indebted to my good friends Staff-Sergt. Joy of the R.N.W.M.P. and Mr. D. C. Stephens of Vananda, for inside information not otherwise obtainable. Mr. George P. Mackenzie, Gold Commissioner for the Yukon, has given

me data I needed from government records. I am very grateful to my former "O.C.," Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Urquhart, M.C., D.S.O., now commanding the 1st Battalion Canadian Scottish, for arduous work done by him in getting my manuscript into shape. The preparation of these sketches, as they now stand, came about largely through the kindly encouragement and expert advice of Dr. Haddow of the *Presbyterian Witness* in which journal some of them were published.

The stories are put down pretty much as I told them. I have had, of course, to make some changes to suit a written narrative offered to a larger circle. The language and style are homely, for the stories were first given in simple words and I have tried to reproduce them. Some names have been changed for obvious reasons. Probably I seem at times to speak much about myself; where this happens I couldn't avoid it in telling my story. For the rest I make no excuse. There is one advantage about a book, if you don't like it you can shut it up!

If these pages serve to keep alive old friend-

ships and pleasant memories among my "tillicums" of the trail, and the men in khaki to whom I ministered, I shall be content.

GEORGE C. F. PRINGLE.

Vananda, Texada Island, B.C.

Tillicums of the Trail

I.

The Fan-Tail Trail

A NIGHT in June 1917 found me under one of the brick-piles on the Avion front in a safe little cellar that the Hun had fixed up for himself and then turned over to us. I was seated on some sand-bags set against the wall, with a "capacity house" to hear a Klondike tale. A few candles gave a dim light hazy with thick tobacco smoke, making it easier for fancy to have free course. There were no interruptions except the occasional call from the top of the dug-out stairs for some man to report for duty. The sound of shells and guns came dully to our ears and seemed unheard as, in imagination, we travelled afar to fairer climes and by-gone days.

*   *   *   *   *

I'll tell you to-night of my first trip to the North and my first attempt to travel with a dog-team on a winter trail.

In 1899 I was a Missionary in the back-woods

of Minnesota learning to preach, practising on our American cousins out of consideration for the feelings of my fellow-Canadians! I was quite contented in my work, preaching at little country schoolhouses with long distances to drive between, but getting everywhere the best they had of hospitality.

One day in the winter of 1899-1900 a telegram came to me from Dr. Robertson our Canadian Superintendent of Missions asking me, if agreeable, to report at Winnipeg that week for duty in the Yukon. I couldn't resist "the call of the wild" and I wired acceptance of the appointment. Two weeks later I was on the C.P.R. headed for Vancouver. There I got a berth on a little steamboat named the *Cutch,* bound for Skagway, Alaska, the great gateway to the "Golden North."

I'll not easily forget that trip. The boat was crowded beyond what seemed possible. Every berth was twice taken, one man sleeping at night the other in the daytime. The floors of the cabins were occupied as berths night and day. They slept under the tables and on them and in the gangways and on the decks. Meals were

"on" all day in order to get everyone served. There were some wild times aboard and plenty of discomfort, but the greatest good-feeling generally prevailed for the boat was headed north and every hour brought them nearer to the land where fortunes were made in a day. Amazing stories, and all the more amazing because they were true, had come south telling of the richness of the new gold-fields. Gold-dust and nuggets lay scattered apparently without known limit in the gravels and schist of the creeks. It was a "poor man's diggings" too. A stout back, a pick, a pan, a shovel and a little "grub" were all you needed. After two or three days' work it might be your luck to strike the pay-streak and have your secret dreams of sudden wealth come true. Why not you as well as those other fellows? There was Lippi who had already cleaned up a million out of a part of his 250 feet on Eldorado, Macdonald "the Klondike King," otherwise, "Big Alec the Moose," who had been offered in London five million for his interests, Dick Lowe who owned a 50-foot "fraction" on Bonanza that some said had almost as much gold as dirt in it. Johannsen

and Anderson, the "Lucky Swedes" and "Skiff" Mitchell who worked No. 1 on Eldorado. These all had been poor men and there were hundreds of others that had done nearly as well. Besides, the claims were mostly just being opened up and nobody really knew what more marvellous finds might yet be made. Aboard the boat were all sorts of men from all parts of the world but all alike were filled with high hopes. Keen they were to try their luck in this big gamble where such alluring prizes were going to fortune's favorites. So nobody was looking for trouble. They had no lasting grievance against anyone who didn't interfere with their one great object of getting to Dawson. The only growling was at the slow progress the boat made, but an "ocean greyhound" would not have been fast enough to satisfy their eager haste.

It was a glorious trip in spite of all we had to put up with. Most of us were seeing for the first time the beautiful scenery of the western Canadian coast. Our boat sailed straight north for a thousand miles in the Pacific yet with land always close in on both sides. It is the most magnificent combination of ocean and mountain

scenery in the world. It is more majestic than the fiords of Norway, nor can the Inland Sea of Japan have anything more lovely, and here there is a full thousand miles of it. The ocean has inundated a great mountain range. For days we sailed through winding channels broad and narrow, and among giant mountain peaks that dwarfed our boat. Sometimes the trees came right down to the water's edge, or we steamed between precipitous cliffs where the tide-rip ran like a mighty stream. As we got further north glaciers glistened within rifle-shot and we could see plenty of little ice-bergs around us that had toppled off into the water. It was mountain-climbing by steam-boat!

Our voyage ended at Skagway, a typical "tough" frontier town that boasted the last and worst "gun-man" of the west, Soapy Smith. But that is "another story." I spent a night there and then took the narrow-gauge railway over the White Pass to Log-Cabin, where I left the train. From Log-Cabin, a lonely-looking, huddled-together group of a dozen small log buildings, I was to start on my first trip on a Northern trail in mid-winter. The Fan-tail

Trail it was called, running over these wind-swept summits seventy-five miles to Atlin on Atlin Lake, one of the great lakes that feed the Yukon river. I was to go with a dog-driver or "musher" named Stewart who had been commissioned to bring in the new Sky Pilot "dead or alive." It was afternoon before I reached Log-Cabin but Stewart decided not to wait until next day but to start right away. He wanted to make it over the summit, eighteen miles, to the Tepee, the first roadhouse on the trail, and there put up for the night. This would break the journey and enable us to do the rest of the trip to Atlin—sixty miles, before nightfall the next day. It all sounded vague to me, seemed indeed a very big proposition, but I agreed, being green and not wishing to display my ignorance by discussing it. Moreover I was young and ready to tackle anything. Stewart was experienced, knew the trail, and was as hard as nails. He had a team of six dogs hitched tandem to a sleigh about eight feet long and two feet wide on which he had lashed a high built load of freight. I trotted along bravely enough after Stewart and his dogs and for a few miles held

my own, but when we got out into the drifts I commenced to lag. He tried me sitting on top of the load but that made it top-heavy and we had several upsets. Twice we had to unlash the load, get the sleigh up on the trail again and reload, all the time working in snow up to our waists. It showed that plan worse than useless. Then he suggested that I try if I could guide the sleigh holding the handles, like plough-handles, that projected behind. To hold these gave me help and it would have been fine if I had been able to keep the sleigh on the trail, but that is learned only by long practice.

After several bad mishaps I had to give that up. Then Stewart told me to go ahead on the trail and make the pace according to my strength. But that wouldn't work either, for, in the drifts my feet could not find or keep the trail, and the dogs following me were continually getting into tangles in the deep snow. There was nothing for me but to follow as best I could. When within five miles of the Tepee we left the wind-swept plateaus and entered a forest. There the trail slanted down to the gulch where our night's journey was to end. Among

the trees there were no drifts and while it was easier going for me so it was for the dogs. They knew well enough where they were, that there was rest and dinner for them at the end of that five miles, and nothing could hold them. I was pretty well "all in" but I struggled on trying to keep up until a sort of partial unconsciousness came over me. I seemed to see only the two moccasined heels of the musher ever disappearing before me. All I seemed to know at last was to keep my eye on them as they slipped away, away, ever away, from me into the darkness. Stewart could hear me coming and of course didn't appreciate the situation. I hadn't trail-sense enough to tell him to go on and I would follow slowly for now the trail was comparatively easy. I heard the timber wolves howling but there was no danger from them that winter as long as I kept going. I know this now, but I was a "tenderfoot" then. Stewart knew my brother John as the best musher on the Teslin trail and thought, no doubt, that I'd be able to stick it without trouble. When we got near enough to hear the dogs at the roadhouse howling, ours quickened their pace and I was left hopelessly in

the rear. I grew faint and sick with my efforts, staggering along, running into the trees and off the trail, to crawl back again and go a few yards on hands and knees. At last, stumbling like a drunken man, I ran into the roadhouse yard and right into my brother's arms! He had reached the Tepee that night on his way out from Atlin to Log-Cabin. I could eat no supper, slept not a wink all night, for every nerve and muscle in my body seemed on fire, nor could I touch breakfast, except a cup of tea.

As long as I live I shall never forget my first hours on the trail. Even now I can close my eyes and see again those moccasined heels slipping away from me into the snow-white darkness and feel again something of the sick exhaustion of those last few gruelling miles.

In the morning our teams lined up again. My brother headed for Log-Cabin, thence Vancouver, then Eastern Canada and home. I to travel wearily on for another day towards a mining camp with all its unknown problems for me as a green missionary. I was homesick, anxious, and physically felt almost useless. Maybe I had some unshed tears in my eyes as

we stood together a moment before saying good-bye, for John said, "Well, George, you're just at the present moment the 'wateriest-looking' preacher I think I've ever seen." It was "good medicine" for it made us all laugh and so we parted.

The rest of the trip was luckily easy for me. Stewart had left part of his load at the Tepee and I was able to ride on the sleigh whenever I wished. By noon my appetite asserted itself with redoubled force. We stopped at the Half-Way House and had a satisfying dinner. By the time we came within sight of Atlin, across the five miles of frozen lake, the clouds had cleared away and I felt the zest for adventure and love for my work, that had brought me north, coming into their own again.

It was a week before I got the stiffness of that run over the "Fan-Tail" out of my muscles. My memory will ever hold a clear-cut and painful recollection of it.

II

Down the Yukon on a Scow

SAINS-EN-GOHELLE is a neat little mining town not far from Lens where the Canadian Camerons on several occasions put in their short "rest" periods after their turn in the trenches.

I remember the place more distinctly because it was there I first donned the kilts. The Quartermaster, Medical Officer, and Chaplain were attached to the battalion for rations and duty only, and on such matters as uniform were not under the authority of the battalion commander. So I had never changed from the usual khaki dress. But our new O.C., Lt.-Col. Urquhart, was keen to have us all in kilts so that on parade we three would not look, as he put it, "like stray sheep." The M.O. and the Q.M. (both named MacKenzie) were willing enough. They were stout built fellows. I hesitated. I am of the grey-hound type, built for speed not beauty, and feared that I would look a spectacle in kilts. In-

deed, I was apparently not alone in my opinion for Major Tommie Taylor advised me if I put them on not to go out too much when it was getting dusk. "The police might arrest you, padre," he said, "for not having any visible means of support."

The O.C's wishes prevailed at last and Macpherson and I went over to see Henderson, the regimental tailor. We picked out a good kilt from the stores, my measurements were taken and next day I had a try on. It took quite a while before everything was right and I was ready for the road. I walked down the little village street that first time in kilts with something the same unpleasantly self-conscious feeling you have when in a dream you find yourself in a front seat at some public gathering with only pyjamas on. I saw two French peasant girls coming. I blushed all over and felt like "taking to the tall timber." But I faced the music with a fearfully conscious bravado. My fears and self-conceit fell in ruins together for they never gave me so much as a glance as we passed. Of course I might have known that "kilties" were

a common sight to them and that they had seen many better legs than mine!

At dinner I had Colonel Urquhart look me over and he decided I was first-class (said so, anyway!), a little white about the knees but the sun would mend that. I soon felt quite at home in the kilt on parade and off it, and in the six months I wore them nothing happened to justify Tommie Taylor's warning.

I recollect that one day during a "rest" I happened in to one of the huts where they were discussing for the "nth" time the famous naval battle of Jutland fought the year before. Someone had picked up an old newspaper, a *Sunday Observer,* giving a critical account of the whole engagement, and they were talking it over again. All were agreed that it was a real victory for our Navy, for while the action was costly and the German fleet was not destroyed, yet the glorious fact remained that the Huns had had to "beat" it. We patted our Navy on the back again in several different styles and gloated over the return of the enemy's fleet to its compulsory hermitage at Kiel. Then someone started to talk about the relative merits of land and sea fighting

from the standpoint of discomfort and danger to the fighting man. "Smiler" McDermid was all for the Navy. "Those big battleships are just floating fortified hotels," he said. "Every man has his own bunk, blankets warm and dry, regular hours, good grub, and no pack to carry. They don't average a fight a year and then the scrap is over one way or the other in an hour or two. Besides they're always getting in to port to coal up or be dry-docked and then there is shore-leave every night in dear old Blighty. No long marches, no mud, no trenches, dirt or vermin. Give me the Navy for a cushy job every time." "Shorty" Montgomery didn't think it would be as good as it sounded—"You would get fed up with the ship after a few months. It would be your prison for weeks at a time. There would be nothing to look at but the ocean, nowhere to go but walk around your own limited quarters. On the other hand, we are constantly moving from one front to another and in and out of the line and seeing new towns and villages. It's a sort of free Government tour through France and Flanders. Our life, although hard, is not so monotonous nor the dis-

cipline so strict as it must be in the Navy. In a scrap, if the ship goes down, you go with it, while on land you have a fighting chance to save your own life anyway."

Others had gathered in and took part. Preferences were pretty evenly divided, the general opinion being that it would be more comfortable to live on board a battleship but more agreeable to do our fighting on land. The talk drifted to personal experiences on ships and when I said that I had once been "a sailor before the mast" on the Yukon "the fat was in the fire," and it was up to me to tell this story of my first trip on a scow four hundred miles down the Yukon River to Dawson. Before I started Clarke asked me to wait a few minutes till he rounded up the fellows in the other huts. When I began our hut was full.

* * * * *

I had been nine months in the Atlin Gold Camp at the head waters of the Yukon and had gone out in the fall of 1900 to Kingston, where I spent the winter. Next spring the command-request came from Dr. Robertson to go to the Yukon again, this time to the Creeks back of

Dawson City. I had got a taste of the North in Atlin and I was eager to go. I followed the usual route from Vancouver to Skagway, then over the Pass to White Horse, a relay camp just below the rapids.

It was early in June, but the ice was not yet out of Lake Lebarge, an expansion of the river some miles below White Horse. I had to wait ten days before it was clear. This forced stay used up my funds so that I could'nt pay steamboat fare. The only other method practicable for me was to work my way down to Dawson by getting a job as one of the "sweep-men" on a scow. I heard that Mike King had three twenty-ton scows ready to load and was looking for a crew, so I applied and was taken on as an "able-bodied seaman." There were eighteen of us in all, including the cook who was a southern darky. We were a queer mixture. You didn't ask too many questions of chance acquaintances in those days but I know that in our crew there was a doctor, a gambler, a sky-pilot, a Mormon, and a carpenter or two. The others I couldn't figure out. My profession wasn't known at first for I wore no clerical uniform. Sweater, rough

pants, and heavy boots served my turn, and the others were dressed much the same. Each of us had to sign an agreement not to mutiny against the pilot, to obey his orders, and to accept fifteen dollars at Dawson, with our food on the way, as full payment for all we might have to do, loading, unloading, and on the river. First we had to get our cargo aboard, baled hay and sacks of oats, sixty tons in all, so the first work I did in the Yukon was longshoring.

We were ready to go about ten in the morning and shoved out into the current. We had no self-propelling power, simply floated with the stream using "sweeps" to keep in the main channel. These "sweeps" were about fourteen feet long, heavy, roughly-shaped oars, two at bow and stern of each scow. We stood up to work them at the command of our pilot. He was a good river-man from Ottawa, and I can hear him yet singing out his orders as he looked ahead and with practiced eye noted shoals or eddies that we could not see, or if we saw, did not know their meaning. It was "Hit her to starboard forrard," "Starboard all," "Port all," and "Steady all," when we got into good water

again. We made a good get-away and soon were floating swiftly and silently onward in mid-stream. This great river, five hundred yards wide twelve hundred miles from its mouth, was brimful from the spring thaw and the three big, heavily-laden scows lashed side by side were carried along like a feather. You could feel the rhythmic surge and heave of the mighty flood almost as if the swell of some far-off ocean storm had crept up-stream to us. So in very truth a great river has a throb of life in it, a pulse beat-in unison with the deep life of the Universe.

We didn't need to tie up at night because of darkness. There is no darkness there in June and you could hear the singing all night long of innumerable birds among the trees on either bank and see them flying about. I wonder when they slept! On the scows we had an easy task. It wasn't constant work. After getting safely past some shoal or rocks we would pull our sweeps in and lie down beside them for sleep or rest until aroused by the captain's voice. When we tied up to the bank it was usually that all hands might be assured of a right good sleep and not because of darkness or exhaustion.

By morning we had reached Lake Lebarge and were towed across to the outlet where our scows were soon again in the grip of the river. This part was called "Thirty-Mile," a rough, rapid, winding stretch, dangerous even to steamboats, demanding skill and vigilance. Our pilot took a long chance in risking the three scows abreast. We nearly made it, but, when there was only another ten miles to go and travelling at a tremendous pace, he gave the order to "put her to starboard all" at one of the curves a trifle too late. We all saw the danger, a jagged bank angling into the stream, and put every ounce we had in us on the sweeps. It was in vain. The port scow crashed against the rocks. We held for a few minutes, barely time to get a line ashore and round a tree when the current caught us again and commenced to swing us out into mid-stream. The tree bent, held a moment, and then came tearing out by the roots. Things were looking bad. Two sweeps were broken and we were circling round with the broken scow filling fast. We had to try for another landing or it would mean a complete wreck, with loss of the cargo and some of the crew as well. The next

ten minutes were extremely interesting, to put it mildly, but fortune favoured us in the shape of a back eddy, these strange currents that circle up-stream near shore. We worked furiously towards it and at last made it although the momentum of the almost unmanageable scows crashed us again on the rocks, there was no strong current to drag us off. We got a line ashore to a good stout tree and so made fast.

The injured scow was settling and the only thing to do was to unload it as quickly as possible, and then seek to repair the damage done. Otherwise the owners stood to lose heavily with hay and oats selling at one hundred and twenty-five dollars a ton. We had a strenuous time emptying that scow. First the twenty ton of fodder had to be taken out a bale and a sack at a time, averaging dry over one hundred pounds each, and every minute getting wet and wetter. They had to be carried on our shoulders across a rickety make-shift gang-plank of sweeps to the rock shore and there stacked up somehow. Next we rigged up a Spanish windlass and dragged one corner of the scow into the shallows and worked up to our knees in ice-cold water at what

seemed an endless task of baling. At last, with baling and the pull of our windlass, we got the broken part clear so that it could be mended.

Only two or three could work handily at that job so after a rest several of us climbed the bank and went into the woods to explore. There were evidently miles of good spruce timber on extensive mesas running back to the low rolling mountains. The ground was sprinkled with flowers among the blueberry and cranberry bushes and we found several clusters of very pretty wild orchids. But what surprised us most was to literally walk into numerous coveys of willow grouse. They were so unafraid that we easily knocked over a good score of them with sticks. When we got to the scows with our "poultry" our story of the tame grouse would hardly have been believed if we hadn't been able "to deliver the goods." When Sambo, our cook, saw us, his eyes rolled and all his ivories were displayed in a full-sized grin of welcome, and we surely did have a feast of fried grouse next day in which "all hands and the cook" took leading parts.

During our absence one of the carpenters was

nearly drowned. We noticed when we returned that his face was scratched and that it had an unusual thoughtful expression. In examining the extent of the damage from the inside of the scow, to get a better look he poked his head down the splintered hole, lost his balance and slipped through to his waist, with his head under water and unable to move further in or out or to shout for help. He would soon have drowned had not someone happened to notice the frantic waving of his feet in the air. One of them said they had seen dumb men talking with their hands but they had never seen any man make such an eloquent speech with his feet. When he was got out he had imbibed about all the Yukon river he could accommodate.

It wasn't long, once the scow was made water-tight, before we had it reloaded and were on our way again. After we passed the mouth of the Hootalinqua (Indian for "Home of the Moose") we had very little work to do. The river was so straight, broad, and full that our pilot simply kept mid-stream and had no trouble. Shooting Five Finger Rapids was exciting but not specially dangerous at high water if you

knew the right channel. We swept through into smooth water in fine style. The men for'ard were soaked with spray but they soon dried out in the plentiful sunshine pouring down on us from a cloudless sky.

Before noon on the third day we came in sight of the white-scarred mountain-dome at the foot of which, unseen by us yet, was the famous Mecca of Gold-hunters, Dawson City. In an hour or two we were floating round the cliff in bad water where the Klondike river rushes into the Yukon. A few minutes of hard work to keep our course and not be carried away over to the far shore and then we were through and every-one was pulling to edge in close to the right bank where our journey was to end. Now we could lift our heads and pause to look ashore and see this mushroom city of cabins and tents, and the outlines of the hills and valleys behind it where fortunes were hidden for the lucky ones. At last we found a place to tie up about four scows out from land. There were dozens of scows and hundreds of boats and rafts of every shape and sort, and the whole place, waterfront and streets, stores and cabins, swarming with men night and

day. We got in about noon, had our dinner and then wandered about in the crowds sight-seeing.

After supper we started to unload and worked all night at it. About midnight we knocked off for an hour, had a bite to eat, and then went over by the invitation of the owner of the cargo, a Dawson man, to have drink at one of the many waterfront saloons. I was young, inexperienced, and didn't want to go at all but "the bunch" wouldn't leave me behind. So I went. We all lined up at the bar and were asked in turn what we'd have. It was "whisky" all down the line till it came to my turn and I confess to a strong desire to be "one of the boys" and say the same. It was, I think, a "toss-up" what my decision would be, but somehow I managed to say in a timid, apologetic voice, "lemonade!" I had an idea that they would jeer at me, for my order had to my ears, in those circumstances, a very effeminate sound. I was surprised to hear one or two others after me follow my lead and I didn't feel so much "out of it."

Six months afterwards I received a letter from a fellow I'd got chummy with on the scows. His name was Dolan. He was young and fair-

haired and I remember we nick-named him "The Yellow Kid." He had gone on down to Mastodon Gulch and had struck fair pay there. I quote from his letter, which I still have after these twenty years. "Some rich pay has been found here and the usual camp has sprung up with road-houses and 'red-lights'. All night it surely is 'hell let loose'. I've cut out the 'hootch'. It was getting me at White Horse. Your call for lemonade at Dawson that night we landed showed me that a fellow can be in with the boys and yet not drink." This sounds to some of you perhaps a little "fishy," or like a conventional Sunday School yarn. But, honest, that is just as it happened and Dolan hadn't the faintest resemblance to a "sissy." It simply showed me that the laws of influence work on the frontier the same as elsewhere and that a man doesn't need to haul down the flag of self-respect or principle to get into the right kind of good fellowship. I needed just that lesson to put backbone into me for the days of fierce temptation that were immediately before me.

We went back and finished our job as longshoremen, lined up for our fifteen dollars and

parted with handshakes and sincere good wishes all round. I hunted up Dr. Grant's cabin and there got a right royal welcome. We breakfasted together and then I rolled in to one of his bunks for a sleep and heard nothing more until I was roused for dinner.

III.

A Klondike Christmas Dinner

ALL Canadian soldiers who got to France will remember what we called "the hospital" at St. Pierre in front of Lens. This "hospital" wasn't a hospital as we understand the word. It had been a pretentious Roman Catholic children's school. Now it was a massive ruin, a great heap of bricks, mortar, splintered beams and broken tiling, with parts of the stout walls here and there left standing. It became the customary battalion headquarters on that section of the Lens front. It was only 300 yards away from No Man's Land and so was convenient as a centre for directing operations. In the ruins a cellar-door had been discovered by which entrance was obtained to a vaulted brick tunnel running underground the whole length of the building crossed by another at right angles. Further exploration had found three small rooms above on the ground floor that could be used. They were covered by such a depth

of rubble that they were practically secure from ordinary shell-fire. The O.C. and officers took up their quarters in these rooms while the men attached occupied the tunnels. It was dry there and warm, altho, dark and too low to permit one to stand erect. This last was of little importance for our usual attitude when off duty was a recumbent one! Altogether it was one of the most comfortable "forward" headquarters I have ever been in.

It happened that on Christmas Day, 1917 the 43rd and 116th were holding the line on the 9th Brigade front. The 116th had established its orderly-room in a cellar under a ruined brick house not far from the hospital. I chanced to drop in about noon. They made me stay for Christmas Dinner. The hospitality and good fellowship were perfect. The dinner was a feast. We had soup, roast turkey with all the fixings, vegetables, pie and pudding, tea and cake. We were crowded closely but there was room to work our "sword-arms." The turkey had been roasted and the whole dinner prepared in a corner of the cellar-stairs by one of the men. How he managed to serve such a delicious hot

dinner is beyond me. These men that did the cooking in the line for the different groups of officers were most of them simply miracle-workers. They were continually doing impossible things with army rations, shaping up appetising and varied meals cooked under heart-breaking and back-breaking conditions on primus-stove or brazier in a three-foot corner of dug-out or pill-box. They did it regularly, kept their dishes clean, and their tempers sweet. I salute them.

After dinner officers and men all crowded in as well as they could, we sang a Christmas hymn and lifted our hearts in prayer to God. Then I read the story of the birth of Jesus. As I read the familiar words in those strange surroundings memories were stirred, and I think we were all picturing scenes in the land across the sea. Other days and the faces of loved ones came before us and we were back home again and it was Christmas time in dear old Canada. I gave a simple message in few words and then left. I spent the afternoon tramping around the trenches seeing all the men I could to give them Christmas greetings. The exercise was also al-

most a necessary preparation for our own headquarters officers' dinner at six. There we had two roast chickens and everything good to go with them, all cooked in his best style by our "chef," Pte. Buchanan.

In the evening I went downstairs into the tunnels where I planned to have a Christmas service with the men. Col. Urquhart and Major Chandler came along. We were the only ones who had seats for we each had a folded-up overcoat under us. The rest of the "congregation" sat or lay on the floor of the narrow tunnels with candles here and there for lights. I sat at the junction of the two tunnels with my men behind, to right, left and in front of me. I read, prayed, preached and pronounced the benediction sitting down, for the roof was too low for standing. The only thing that was conventionally "churchy" was the use of candles for lighting, and of course my church was cruciform in its ground plan! But there was the Message, there were reverent worshippers, and surely the Unseen Presence also, and these are all you need anywhere to constitute a Christian Church.

After the benediction and when the two offi-

cers had disappeared up the ladder, I was assailed by a chorus of voices with "tell us a Yukon story," as the refrain. I stayed, sat down again, and there with my men gathered round me in attentive silence I told my Klondike story of a Christmas Day years ago. In fancy we travelled far from France, forgot the war, and moved for a little while amid snow-clad mountains and silent valleys in a vast and weirdly beautiful land. I named my tale a Klondike Christmas Dinner.

* * * * *

It was in the winter of 1904. A week or two before Christmas, Jas. McDougal had invited me to have dinner on Christmas Day with him and his wife. Their cabin was half-way up the mountain side on the left limit of Hunker Creek, six miles below Gold Bottom camp where I lived. You need have no fear of having a "green Christmas" in the Yukon with its eight months of solid winter with anywhere from 50 to 90 degrees of frost. It was "fifty below" that morning. Every nail-head on the door of my cabin was white with frost. My little stove had its work cut out, after I lit it and hopped back

into my bunk again, before it had warmed the cabin enough to make it comfortable for dressing. I remember how that fall my top bed-blankets had got frozen solid to the logs at the back of the bunk while I was out on the trail one week and they never loosened up until the Spring, so that my bed rarely got disarranged and was very easily "made." When I took out some food for my dogs they crawled out of their kennels stiff with lying for warmth all night in one position. The exposed parts of head and shoulder were coated white with frost from their breath. They bolted their breakfast and got back quickly to the comfort of the nests they had left. The gulch was filled with the white mist which developed in extreme cold. It hid from my view the few cabins on the other side of the creek. Then I came in to get my own breakfast. As a special treat I had sent to Dawson twenty miles away for a pound of beefsteak for which I had to pay a fabulous price in gold-dust. It was real beefsteak but it had been "on the hoof" too long and it was like the camp, "tough and hard to handle." Not so tough though as the steak McCrimmon told me he had

got in Dawson by rare good luck in 1897 when he had been feeding on bacon and beans for months. "That bit of steak," he said, "lasted me off and on for a week. I got away with it at last but it was a long, hard fight. Honest, parson, that steak was so tough the first time I tackled it I couldn't get my fork into the gravy."

Breakfast finished and the dishes washed I put on my parka over my other clothes and with fur gauntlets and moccasins I was ready for the road. The parka, by the way, is a loose-fitting, smock-like garment that slips over the head and comes down below the knees and has a hood. It is made of "bed-ticking" usually and so is light to walk in but keeps the heat in and the cold out. First I went across to Bill Lennox's cabin and asked him to feed my dogs at noon. Then I hit the trail for McDougal's. I followed it along the bottom of the narrow valley among miners' windlass-dumps and cabins. At most of them I stepped in for a few minutes to wish my friends a Merry Christmas and also to tell or hear the news. There was always something of living interest to gossip about in those glorious, exciting days. Men were finding fortunes

ten or twenty feet below the surface of the ground or even in the grass roots. Fortunes too they were in the alluring form of gold-dust and nuggets, fascinating, raw, yellow gold lying there just where God made and dropped it. I've seen it so plentiful that it looked like a sack of corn-meal spilled among the dirt. It drove men crazy, and how could they help it. A wild, glorious gamble it was, with the thrill of adventure, temptation, and novelty always present, and a wonderfully beautiful land, new and interesting, as its setting.

It was towards noon before I turned out of the main trail, taking one that wound its way up the mountain side for half a mile until it came out on a flat stretch of snow. I was now above the frost-fog and could see, a few hundred yards away, a small straight plume of white smoke rising out of what looked like a big shapely snowdrift. The trail ran straight to it and soon I could see a log or two of the little cabin showing between the comb of snow hanging from the eaves and the snow banked up against the base. The door was low and when it opened in response to my knock I had to bow my head to

get in. I entered without ceremony for they were expecting me. I heard a cheery voice with a Doric accent tell me to "come right in." I could hear the voice but could see no one for with the opening of the door the warm air meeting the cold immediately formed a veil of mist. But it was only for a moment for in the North in winter you don't keep the door open long. You either come in or get out, as the case may be, without lingering on the threshold. But what a hearty welcome when the door was shut behind me from McDougal and his good wife! No delay either, no shuffling your feet in the hall until the maid takes your card to mysterious regions in the inner chambers of the house, and comes back to lead you into a waiting room where you may sit down. Betimes the hostess graciously appears and with formal greeting and conventional smile gives you a hand to shake that has on occasions as much welcome in it as the tail of a dead fish. But this welcome was real, immediate, and unmistakable. I was right at home as soon as I stepped into the cabin for in so doing I came into the parlour, dining room, bed-room, and kitchen. They hadn't even a

"but and a ben." There was something special about their welcome too, even in the hospitable north. To the miners generally I was known as the "sky-pilot," or "parson," or by my first or last name. But to these two true-blue Presbyterians with their Scottish traditions I was always "the minister," and so in my reception there was a respect and courtesy that gave their greetings a rare fineness of tone. Sometimes it is good for you to have people place you on a pedestal. You usually try to measure up to expectations and in that country self-respect was often the sheet-anchor that kept you from drifting to the devil.

It was only a one-room cabin eight feet wide and twelve feet long, log walls chinked with moss, rough board floor, roof of poles covered with a foot of moss and a half foot of earth on the top. The only place I could stand upright in it was under the ridge-pole. There was one window of four panes, each about the size of a woman's handkerchief. The glass was coated an inch deep in frost, but some light came through, though not enough to dispense with candles. Under the window was a table, simply

a shelf two and a half feet wide and three feet long. At the end of the cabin opposite the door was the bed and to my left the stove, a sheet-iron one-chambered affair with an oven in the pipe, a simple, small Klondike stove which was not much to look at but capable of great things when rightly handled. After taking off my parka it was to the stove I went first. It's a habit you form in the North any way, but if you have a moustache, as I had, the heavy icicles formed by your breath on a six-mile walk in that extreme cold need to be thawed off near the stove, and that by a gentle, careful process, the reason for this gentleness only experience would make you appreciate. Once this is done there is no need to sit near the stove. Indeed you can't get far away from it if you stay in the cabin.

But I must describe my host and hostess. Mr. and Mrs. McDougal looked more like brother and sister than husband and wife. They were both small of stature and resembled each other. Both were well past middle life. Their hair was growing grey. They had no children, but his pet name for his little woman was "Grannie." McDougal had graduated from a Scottish Uni-

versity and after his marriage decided to leave the old land for America. They settled in California. As the years went on they found themselves getting within sight of old age without enough money laid by to save them from dependence on others in their declining years. Then came the news of the gold discoveries. It appealed to him for he saw in this adventure a chance to lay the haunting spectre of poverty. Grannie stayed behind in their pretty cottage home in the sunny south. A year or at most two and they hoped he would be back with enough to put their minds at ease. In 1897 he set out and after a trying journey reached the Klondike in 1898. He managed to find and stake this shelf of pay-gravel far up the mountain side. It had ages ago been part of the bed of a stream. He worked with eager haste to get enough to go back to his home and loved one. But the run of "pay" was poor and uneven, water was scarce, and his "tailings" required continual "cribbing" to keep from coming down on claims in the creek below. It all meant enforced delay in the realization of his hopes. The summers came

and went with "clean-ups" good and bad but in the aggregate not quite enough for the fulfilment of his plans. Grannie was wearying for him and at last after six lonesome years she could stand it no longer. She heard that there was a railway now over the White Pass and steamboats on the river, and so in the Spring of 1903 she bravely set out for the North-land where she could be with her man again. Nearly two years she had been among us, a dear little lady with a heart so kind and pure and motherly that she became the patron saint of our creek. Men fiercely tempted in those strange days have found strength to save their souls because of the ministry of Grannie's life and words.

But we were just sitting down to dinner at the little table in front of the window. Now boys, I feel guilty in describing this dinner to you here knowing the simplicity of your army fare, but perhaps it will be a sort of painful pleasure for you to feast with us in imagination. First I said a simple grace thanking God for our food and asking a blessing upon it and us. We had soup to begin with, thick hot Scotch broth it was, then roast ptarmigan, two each of these

plump, tasty little birds which the old man had shot from the cabin door, native cranberry sauce, parsnips and potatoes. These were good "chee-chako spuds" shipped in from the South. We had home-grown potatoes in the Klondike sometimes, but in a summer which had one or two nights of nipping frost every month it was hard to ripen them. They were usually small and green, and so "wet" that the saying was "you had to wear a bathing-suit to eat them." Also of course there was home-made bread and excellent tea.

But the dessert was the masterpiece of the meal. It was a good, hot, Canadian blueberry pie about as big round as the top of a piano-stool. It had a lid on it and the juice was bubbling out through the little slits. It certainly looked delicious and it tasted the same. It was cut into only four pieces. I maintain that no self-respecting pie should be cut into more than four pieces except perhaps in the case of a very large family. Grannie gave me one piece, McDougal one, and took one herself. That left one over and when I was through with my piece I was urged of course to have the other

piece. What could I do? What would you have done in my place? Courtesy, inclination to oblige, and my palate all said take it. My waistband said, "Have a care," but it was awfully good pie and I cleaned the plate!

Then McDougal lit his pipe. Grannie cleared up the table but left the dishwashing until after I had gone as she wanted to share the conversation. What a jolly three hours we had! Not a great deal there to make us happy, you would say; a lonely log-cabin in a far land and in the depth of an almost Arctic winter with no other human habitation within sight or sound. Yet we forgot the fierce cold that circled us, for the little place was comfortable, and better still our hearts were warm with love and friendship. McDougal was finely educated and had travelled, so the cabin was neither small nor lonely. Its walls expanded and took in many guests. A goodly throng was there for we wandered at will among a world of books and men. He loved a good, clean joke, and let me tell you when we got going the stories both grave and gay were worth your hearing.

Grannie was with us heart and soul in it all.

Her face beamed with cheeriness and good will. Sometimes, however, a far-away look came into her brown eyes. I knew what it meant. She longed to get away from the North and back again to the sunshine of her Southern home. She was getting on in years and our extreme winters were very trying to her. Whenever she got half a chance she would tell us something about their home in California, the warm, bright summers, the lovely gardens she and her neighbours had, and the flowers growing in profusion, especially the roses charming the eye and filling the air with their perfume.

Dear wee Grannie, she never lived to go back. One winter the brutal cold gripped her and in spite of all we could do it took her life away. It was a sad day when we placed her body in the grave on that hillside. All the creek assembled to show their affection, and in deep sorrow. It was her last request that she should be buried there. She didn't want to be far from the man she loved even though it meant a lonely grave in a lonely land. The Klondike is for McDougal his homeland now. Fifteen years have passed since then and he still lives in that cabin

on the mountain slope where the woman he loves best lies buried.

But there was no thought of sorrow that Christmas Day. Nowhere in the world was there a merrier party, and when it came time for me to go, (I had a wedding at Last Chance Roadhouse), it was with a feeling that the cabin had been a sanctuary of friendship, happiness and hospitality. When I went out into the darkness and the bitter cold I was hardly conscious of it for my heart was aglow. All through these years filled with many vivid experiences that day has kept its brightness. Nor will it ever fade away but seems to shine more clearly in the Halls of Memory as the years go by.

IV.

Some Klondike Weddings

IN the fall of 1916, a month or two across from Canada, I was posted for duty at Shorncliffe Military Hospital, Major C. Reason of London, Ont., commanding. I was billeted for a few weeks in a Sandgate private house where the landlady used to do a little cheap profiteering on our coal allowance. She gave me mostly cinders for my grate, mixed with a modicum of coal. The room was altogether too large for the fireplace, and anyway I was fresh from Canada and wasn't inured to the rigorous climate that prevails inside English homes in winter. I used to write my letters in bed. It was the only way I could keep warm in my room for any length of time.

Major Reason soon arranged a place for me in the Officers' quarters and there I was quite cosy and happy. The Medical Officers were congenial and made my initiation into Army life a pleasant experience. The style of men

they were can be judged by the fact that by common consent we decided to read aloud a portion of some worth-while book four evenings a week in the Mess after dinner. We chose "The Professor at the Breakfast Table" by Holmes, and that winter we read it through and no one played truant. Is there another Officers' Mess that has that record?

The Officers were all strangers to me except Captain Ferris of Edmonton, President of the Mess. I knew him in my Toronto University days in the class of '98, as "Buster Ferris," when he was one of the scrimmage bunch on the Varsity Senior Rugby team. Those were the days of "Biddy" Barr, Counsell, Hobbs and McArthur on the football field, and Hamar Greenwood, MacKenzie King, Arthur Meighen, Tucker, Billie Martin, and Eddie Beattie in the Literary Society. In 1894 the students boycotted all lectures because of the Senate's action in regard to Tucker and Prof. Dale. We were all wild "Bolshies" for a few weeks and those I have mentioned were our leaders. I wonder if they still remember those revolutionary meetings in the Spadina Ave. hall!

The Nursing Staff under Miss Urquhart gave their services in a wholehearted spirit that was beyond praise. Indeed, throughout the whole hospital staff "one unceasing purpose ran" and that was to serve the patients in every possible way.

The hospital was finely located on a slope running down to the sea. It looked south over the Straits of Dover, where we saw the destroyers and transports crossing and recrossing continually, with usually a "Silver Queen" or two floating overhead on the watch, their sides glittering in the sunshine. On a clear day we could faintly discern the cliffs of France where great deeds were being done, and whither, some impatiently awaited day, it would be our good luck to go, if only the war lasted long enough!

I quickly learned my duties in the hospital and liked them. We had an Officers' hospital, also large surgical, venereal, and medical divisions, usually full. There was work for me in great plenty and variety. Apart from the regular parade services there were communion services and informal evening meetings at convenient times and places. Nearly every day I walked

through all the wards and as it seemed opportune would sit down by a bedside to chat, write a letter, or get directions for my errands. How varied these requests were! One wants me to look after his mail which he thinks is being held up somewhere; some ask for a New Testament or a recent book; this one has a roll of films to be developed; another wants me to find if a certain battalion has arrived safely from Canada and where it is stationed for his brother is in it; another asks me to buy two Xmas cards, "real nice ones," one for his Mother and one for his "next-best-girl." This one wants a money-order cashed; a homesick fellow wonders if I could possibly get him one of his home-town papers; another gives me his watch to be mended, or would like some good stationery, or a fountain pen. In every case I promise to do everything I can and all that the law allows.

Then there are those, always some, who are passing through the Valley of the Shadow who want to hear again about Jesus and His Love and Power. Nothing else will do. Also there are men, not many, who are downhearted, sad, or bitter. You wonder indeed how certain of the

poor fellows can smile at all. Ask them how they are and they would say through clenched teeth and pain-drawn lips, "All right." What plan did I follow in dealing with these numerous needs? I had no plan, except to place all my resources of body, mind and heart freely at their disposal. You would have done just the same, you couldn't help yourself. They repaid me a thousand-fold with welcomes and friendship, intimate confidences, and marvellous stories of their experiences.

Apropos of the variety of a chaplain's opportunities to serve, here's a story that was current around the wards. It was told to me as a good joke on the padre. A wounded Australian soldier had been taken to one of the big Imperial hospitals in the north. None of his own chaplains were near and so a fine old English padre took upon himself to visit him. For days the chaplain's best efforts to get on friendly footing failed. One evening, however, after a very satisfying dinner at the Mess the clergyman felt he would make a special try, and with his Bible in hand went into the ward and sat down by the bedside. "Now, my boy," he said, "I am going

to read you a few verses of Scripture, and I hope they will impress you." The soldier shammed sleep and said nothing, seeming as unresponsive as ever. After a verse or two, however, he opened his eyes and sighed deeply. The chaplain stopped reading and looked at him in pleased surprise. He smiled and said, "Go on Sir, it is good." Thus encouraged he read on through the whole chapter, hearing many deep-drawn sighs of satisfaction from the bed. When he was finished the soldier assured him the reading had done him a world of good, it had been just what he needed to make things look brighter, and he asked the chaplain to draw his chair up as close as he could and do him the favor of reading it again. This was getting on with a vengeance, and the padre was highly pleased with himself. When he ended and was warmly thanked he was curious to know what there was in the chapter that had benefited the soldier, and so asked him. "Well Sir," said the Tommy, "You're a good sort, and I'll be honest with you. It wasn't what you read that did me good, but all the same you've made a hit with me. They've kept me on the 'water-wagon'

ever since I came to this hospital, and, Sir, your breath has been just like a taste of heaven to me." Collapse of the padre!

My first attempt to tell Klondike stories in public overseas was in an entertainment given by the Sergeants' Mess at which I had been asked to be the speaker. That day I had married one of our convalescent patients named Pte. Trainer to a Devonshire girl. My thoughts were running in matrimonial channels and so I decided to narrate some incidents connected with two or three of my Klondike weddings.

* * * * *

Nearly sixty miles into the hills back of Dawson a new run of gold had been discovered on the Dominion Creek flats, a district that looked so unpromising to prospectors that it had been so far left untouched. Some claims had been staked on it but no prospecting done. Ole Tweet, a Norwegian, had taken over one of these claims as all he could get out of a bad debt. He sank a hole on his ground and found first-class pay. The inevitable stampede followed and soon cabins, windlasses, and dumps commenced to show in all directions. Tweet's cabin

was the first to be built and so many stampeders had to be sheltered, that he turned temporarily from his mining, got out logs, and built a good roadhouse. It was a profitable business, for he ran a clean place where you could get plenty to eat and a comfortable bunk, and it became the popular resort of the miners. He hired a cook, an unmarried woman of middle-age, whom he had met in Dawson. She was a good woman in a country where women of the right kind were scarce, so she soon had many admirers. Of all the suitors for her hand there were two whom she favored, one a Scottish Canadian, whose first name was Archie, and the other Ole Tweet. As time went on she became worried because of her continued inability to decide which of these two men she would marry. Both were equally pleasing to her and they were both worthy fellows. She spoke to her heart and no clear answer came back. Yet she knew she could not rightly keep them in suspense any longer.

Sitting one summer day by her open window, wishing for something to help her to come to a final decision, it chanced a little bird alighted on the sill, looked up at her and said, "tweet,

tweet!" The bird's chirp settled it. Her difficulty was solved and she accepted Ole Tweet. That was his real name, not "fixed" for the story. I married them in that same roadhouse on Dominion.

It is said, but I cannot vouch for the truth of this, that Archie was missing for a day or two after the engagement was announced, until someone found him in his cabin with a number of little birds he had caught and caged, trying to teach them to say, "Airchie, Airchie." But it was too late!

One of my friends, (call him Jones if you like), a miner on Hunker Creek, had been having such heavy clean-ups one Spring that he determined to write to his sweetheart in Tacoma announcing his intention of coming out before the freeze-up that fall to marry her. Sensible woman that she was, she wrote back to tell him not to come. She would come North instead, he could meet her in Dawson and so save the expense of his trip out and back. She had her way, and I was asked to tie the knot at the Third Avenue Hotel in Dawson. I shall not attempt details of the affair, only to say that I never

came so nearly disgracing myself at any sacred ceremony as on this occasion. The little room was crowded with guests, standing around the walls, sitting on chairs, on one another's knees and on the floor, closing in around the little six-foot space in the centre reserved for the wedding party. The room grew very warm and close. I knew Jones was nervous for he had privately and very earnestly pleaded with me to "make it short." He and his best man had been standing in front of me for full ten minutes expecting the bride and her attendant momentarily. Ten minutes is a long time for a man to wait in such circumstances and we were all on pins and needles. By the time the door opened to admit the bride the atmosphere had become electrical, and when in entering, her dress caught in the doorway and something ripped, there were little outbursts of choked-back laughter, and I could see poor Jones fidgetting more than ever. I hardly dared look at his anxious face for it took me all my time to keep my voice at a proper reverential pitch. As I went on I heard, whenever I paused, a low, persistent, irritating noise that seemed in the room and yet was hard

to place. I thought it must be either the humming of the wind through a window crack, or the distant buzz of a gasoline-saw making fuel for Dawson's homes. I located it at last. It was the subdued chattering of the bridegroom's teeth, as if he had a severe chill! It is an absolute fact. It almost floored me for a moment and I thought I could not go on. I paused to regain my composure. The silence made the noise more distinct and explosive gurgles of laughter here and there told me that others had noticed it. The perspiration ran down my face in streams. There was nothing for it but to struggle on, and in an abnormally sad voice I continued without pause, until I came to the question asked of the groom, where I had to stop for his reply. If Jones had stammered his answer I could not have held in any longer, but would have burst into nervous laughter. I am thankful to say he said "I will" with never a tremor, and I was able to finish without disgracing "the cloth."

My last story is of a Creek wedding held in Last Chance Roadhouse on Hunker. It was Christmas Day. I had just come down the

mountain trail from McDougal's where I had my Christmas Dinner. The wedding party was waiting for me when I arrived. The roadhouse was a low, log building about fifty feet long and twenty wide. There were no partitions. The bar was at one end, the kitchen at the other, and the part in between was a sort of "Anyman's Land." It was dining-room, parlor, and gambling room in one. The bunk-house was separate. Things were "humming" from kitchen to bar, for remember it was Christmas at a roadhouse on a main creek trail in the Klondike in early days.

Not the most suitable place in the world for a wedding. For all that, it went through in fine style. We stood up beside the table and the place grew quiet. A blanket was hung up by the roadhouse man in front of the bar—done because of his innate sense of the fitness of things. There was no bothersome noise, except the opening and closing of the doors as people came in and went out, and the stage-whispering of a few men in the bar who had got too far along with their celebrations for their fellows to control them completely. The names of the bride and

groom, their true names, were, Jensine Kolken and John Peczu Kazinsky. She was a Norwegian Lutheran, he a Hungarian Roman Catholic, married by a Canadian Presbyterian minister in a Klondike roadhouse. Rather an unusual combination but it turned out splendidly. They loved one another sincerely and all these years have lived happily. They are prosperous and have several children.

After the wedding many toasts were drunk. I drank mine in soda-water. Before the toasts Mrs. Kazinsky had gone to the kitchen and was there busy about supper. She was the roadhouse cook and had a lot of work to do preparing and serving meals to the holiday crowd. I said good-bye, put on parka and mitts, and set out on my seven mile tramp to Gold Bottom, where we had arranged a Camp Christmas Tree Entertainment for that night.

It was cold, bitter cold, the roadhouse thermometer said 50 below zero, and yet it was a grand night. We had seen no sun night or day for weeks, but for all that it was clear as day with a light more beautiful than that of the sun. The whole broad, snow-white gulch around me

was flooded with light. I looked up to the sky and there my eyes beheld a wondrous sight, magnificent beyond imagining. The dome of heaven, from east to west and from north to south, was filled with an iridescent misty glory, glowing with strange light in which gleamed lovely, delicate shades of green and gold. You could see this luminous mist and yet see through it as if it weren't there at all. It was almost uncanny, like seeing the invisible. In the midst of it floated the moon at the full, ablaze with abundant light, spilling it down in wasteful abundance mixed with the Aurora, coming to the silent earth to change it to a glistening, white fairy-land of unrivalled beauty. Far, far beyond in the clear depths of the cloudless sky a thousand, thousand stars sparkled intensely like well-set jewels. As I gazed the misty glory disappeared as if by magic and in its place I saw great arrows of witching light shooting in masses back and forth through the air.

I stood, as many times I did those winter nights, spellbound and reverent in the presence of God's handiwork. Fancy took wing. Perchance this fair light was from the shining pin-

ions of angels as they flew hither and thither on heavenly errands. Perchance it was the gleaming from a myriad spears, as the armies of the Lord of Hosts marched and countermarched in some Grand Parade. Or were these the wild, elemental forces of nature playing at games that the Creator had taught them and that they had played from all eternity?

Apart from these dreamings, I know I shall never see anything, with my mortal eyes at least, so startlingly and mystically beautiful as these canvasses which God hangs out night after night in the far North for all to see who will but lift up their eyes to the heavens.

My talk was ended. Captain Ferris, my old friend, was in the chair and after the usual courtesies he brought us down to "terra firma" with a joke on the padre. "Now, Captain Pringle," he said, "those were wonderful sights you saw after you left the wedding in that roadhouse where you took only soda-water in the toasts. We know you so well that you didn't need to tell us what you took. We know you are a teetotaller. But, padre, for the sake of the strangers here, and in view of the amazing things

you saw after leaving the roadhouse, say again to the crowd distinctly, that it was "only soda-water." I "said it again," we all had a good laugh, and dispersed.

V.

Wolf Dogs

I had been with the 43rd about two months and during that time we had been out in "rest" twice, once at Villers-au-bois and once at Camblin l'Abbe. They were very interesting French towns, especially to one who had always lived in western Canada, and although they had been pretty badly knocked about by shelling they were havens of refuge, rest, and comfort to us after the trenches. But my man Macpherson wouldn't grow enthusiastic with me over these two places. "Wait till you see Auchel, sir, that's the place for us. Why it's the French 'home' of the 43rd. That's a real town and fine people, and they think there's no other battalion quite as good as ours." I heard the town often spoken about in the same way by others and was delighted when I learned one day that we were to move back to Auchel. I wasn't disappointed in my expectations. The place had been a prosperous farming village until the discovery of

coal nearby had developed it into a fine little town. It had retained much of its former quaintness, and the mines had brought it in contact with newer ideas by which it had benefited, and the town was vastly cleaner, better lighted, had better stores, and was generally more up-to-date than the old village had been.

As in all the many thousand French towns and villages, the Roman Catholic church edifice was by far the largest building. At Auchel it was located in the Market Square without any enclosing fence, and on the weekly market-day when the Square was crowded with stalls many of them would be placed against the buttresses of the church.

Auchel was unique among the towns we knew in France in having a neat little Protestant Church as well, called "L'Église Evangelique." It was a plain building seating perhaps 150 people and built after the style of our own small country churches. On the wall at the right of the platform was the verse in French, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God," and on the other side, "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our in-

iquities." High on the wall behind the pulpit was inscribed the verse, "Dieu est Amour," and just behind the speaker were the words, "God bless our Sunday School." Their pastor gladly gave us the use of the church. We held our Communion Service in it on Sunday and turned it into a reading-room during the week.

It was in this Protestant church at our own sacrament service that Capt. Jack Verner was baptised and took his first communion. He is buried overseas.

It was in Auchel, when our battalion had been warned to be ready to move at an hour's notice, that the padre gathered a dozen Camerons who were not on duty, got a lorry and driver, and went off with his men to a town twenty-five miles away to get a supply of books, magazines, writing-paper and benches for his reading-room. I needed the men to load and unload the equipment. We were away all afternoon. When we came back, the adjutant, a conscientious Scot, gave me what, from a military point of view I richly deserved, a right good scolding. No orders to move had come, but if they had, there would have been a serious reprimand coming to

somebody. "All's well that ends well." We didn't move for a full ten days and in the meantime the men had their reading-room. Our parade services were held in the ramshackle-building which had been a cinema before the war. The most inspiring part of our worship was the singing. There was a piano to give us the right pitch and tempo, the congregation did the rest. It would have thrilled you to stand on the platform and hear those eight hundred men singing the grand old songs of Zion. It was glorious. I was "lifted," and when the time came for the sermon I couldn't help preaching with heart as well as voice. It gave me an idea of the great loss we may sustain in over-modernizing our church services. The congregation often doesn't sing, or sings feebly. Its voice of praise is frequently drowned out by the pipe-organ or choir. We obtrude these latter so much upon the eyes and ears of the people that we seem almost to merit the observation of a critical Roman Catholic, that he would rather bow before an altar and a crucifix in church, than before a showy, loud-voiced pipe-organ and choir, performing in front of an audience which ap-

parently took little part in the service except to listen.

It was in Auchel, too, that our battalion received its great gift from the Women's Canadian Club of Seattle, Washington. On May 16th, 1918 the consignment reached us. It was, as far as I know, the biggest present in kind that was ever given a Canadian battalion in France. How such bulky stuff got through at all and in such prime condition is a miracle that someone else will have to explain. But there it was. Six big wooden boxes each half as large as a piano-box and packed full. There were many kinds of things and practically enough of every kind to give everybody in the battalion a good share of it all. I had to have a parade (voluntary), and Macpherson and I handed out the stuff, which we had unpacked and arranged, to the men as they lined up. There were great quantities of fine candies in bulk and in many small fancy boxes, lots of chewing-gum and tobacco, hundreds of cigars and thousands of cigarettes. There were a score of immense homemade fruit cakes. Then there was a generous abundance of dates, raisins, figs, writing-paper, pipes, pencils,

fountain-pens, safety razors, snuff, vaseline, soap, tooth-brushes, wash-rags, socks, sapadilla, handkerchiefs, tooth-paste, shaving-soap, medicines, joke-books and many odds and ends in smaller quantities. Most of the smaller parcels were tied up in pretty ribbon and white tissue-paper with Christmas cards in them and ornamented with Christmas labels, for the boxes had been due three months before.

It was in Auchel that I talked to my men about northern dogs. One evening we gathered in L'Église Evangelique and I told them some stories about wolf-dogs I had known or handled.

* * * * *

One winter I heard that a group of men were prospecting on Duncan Creek about two hundred miles farther out than my location at Gold Bottom. I decided to take a month or two away from my regular circuit on the creeks around me and pay a visit to these new diggings, take along some reading matter, tell them the news, have some services, and bring back their mail.

I needed a dog-team for the trip. My own dogs were not then old enough for a long journey nor were they properly broken, and so I picked

up an odd dog here and there on the creek until I had a string of six. They were of mixed sorts but all had been broken to the sleigh, and their owners, who had no work for them, were glad to have the dogs taken off their hands, fed and cared for.

I'm not going to speak of them all but only of three that had more distinctive characters than the others.

When we travel with dogs in the North they are hitched up tandem (usually) to a sleigh about two feet wide, a foot from the ground, and eight or nine feet long, and are guided by voice and gestures only. There are no reins. Of course you carry a black-snake whip to urge the lazy ones on. This whip is about ten feet long with a heavy loaded butt needed for protection if a refractory husky should turn on you. The leader is the all-important dog. The others have only to keep their traces taut and follow on, but the leader has to use his head with all his wolf and dog senses and instincts. He must find and keep on top of the old trail if there is one buried under the drifts, know whether new ice is safe enough or not, and avoid the serious peril

of water under the snow, for at very low temperature, with creek channels frozen solid, water is squeezed out and runs under the snow. It of course freezes very quickly, but if you and your dogs get into it, while still liquid in extreme cold weather, it means an immediate camping to save your feet and those of your dogs, and dry wood may not be near just then. This may well mean death, for death soon comes to the crippled man or dog away from help in the sub-arctic winter if he cannot build a fire. Your leader too, must respond to all the few words of command. These are "Mush!", a corruption, through the old French-Canadian Coureurs-du-bois of "Marchez!"; "Whoa!", the whole team knows that welcome word; "Gee!" to turn to the right, and "Haw!" to swing to the left.

Now this pick-up dog-team of mine was strange to me and I to them, so the introduction was a fight or two until they knew I was boss. Then I had to "learn" my dogs and place them in the string so that they could work properly, and also see that they all did work until they became a real team where each dog was doing his share.

I first picked on a big grey-muzzled malemute named Steal as a likely fellow to lead. Dogs' names there don't usually indicate their character, but his did. All malemutes are born thieves, some men think. I don't agree, but in this case I had a thief by nature, education, and name. He would break into your "cache" if it could be done and steal what he fancied. His owner claimed he could read labels on canned goods, for he would carry away bully-beef tins but not canned-fruit. It was his keen nose, not his eyes of course, that told him the difference. Once you knew of this failing it could be easily guarded against on the trail. It would have been of little moment if Steal had done his duty as leader. He knew all the tricks of the trail and would have made a fine leader if he had tried to do his bit. But I hadn't gone far before I realized that he wouldn't work away from the whip. Running behind the eight-foot sleigh I had it and the five dogs between me and Steal. His traces were always trailing. He would rarely quicken his pace no matter how fiercely I shouted "Mush on, you malemute!", nor for the crack of the whip. I had to run along beside

the team on the narrow trail, throwing them partly off, before I could reach him with the whip. Then he would dig in for a few hundred yards but soon commenced to slow down, continually looking back to see if I were coming at him again. This performance was demoralizing to team and driver, so some change had to be made. I put a smaller dog named Mike in the lead and hitched Steal up next the sleigh as my "wheel-dog." He worked there. He knew perfectly that his game was up and put his shoulder against the collar from that on. He was that sort of dog that works well under the lash, although as a fact I never had to strike him now. I simply cracked the whip above him if he showed signs of shirking and he would get right in and pull, at the same time emitting a series of howls that could not have been more woeful if he were being killed. Anyway, I could see that the dogs in front took it as a warning of the punishment awaiting the laggard and would pull so hard I would sometimes have to slow them down.

Do not think I was cruel, or drove the dogs at their top speed always. In the north there is

more real kindness and expert care used by dog-mushers in handling their wolf-dogs than in the way pet-dogs and house-dogs are treated in our cities. A dog doesn't appreciate having its nose kissed by human lips, and it is gross unkindness to let unthinking impulse lead you to over-feed them, or give them wrong food and make them sick and weak. It is cruel to keep your dog chained up for days at a time alone in your back-yard, varied only by taking him out for a walk usually on a leash. Our trail-dogs are almost always healthy, hungry, and happy. Each day they have, what every dog really needs and loves above all else, a long run in the wilds with other dogs, satisfying the old, inborn, "pack" instinct. They are carefully fed, not much in the morning, perhaps a chunk each of dried salmon and the same at noon. A good feed at dawn or during the day would mean a sick or "heavy" dog along the trail. But at night the first meal prepared is for the dogs, a good, big, hot feed of boiled rice, cornmeal, or oatmeal, with a liberal allowance of fat bacon cut up and mixed in and perhaps a couple of dog-biscuits each to crunch for dessert. Every toe

of every dog was examined daily and any sign of sensitiveness would mean a salve, or, if expedient, a soft moccasin small enough to fit the foot and protect it from the trail. The dogs were felt carefully all over to see if they were sore anywhere. Too much depended on his dogs on the trail for a man to be careless, or harsh, or ignorant, in their handling.

Mike was a dandy little dog and served me well the whole journey through. He wasn't as knowing on the trail as Steal and got us into a tumble that might have had troublesome results. Travelling along a ledge running about fifteen feet above the bottom of the gulch, he took the team too near the edge and got on the "comb" of snow which broke off with him and he dragged the whole team, sleigh, and driver over the brink, to roll in a confused heap to the bottom. It took me an hour, when daylight was precious, to get straightened out and going again, but otherwise we were none the worse.

I found that Mike had one other fault. It took me two or three days to notice it. He had the knack of keeping his traces straight but not tight. He rarely pulled more than enough

just to keep them from sagging. No matter how hard the going Mike was only a "leader." He never got down and pulled. I hesitate to criticize him, for at least he did do his work as leader when without him I'd have been in a fix. He did his own part, carried his own harness, and willingly. That's a great, good quality, in dog or man. Often, though, I wished he would forget being a leader, drop his dignity, and just be an ordinary work-dog, especially in deep snow climbing a steep bank when the other dogs and the driver were pulling and shoving with all our strength to make the grade.

At Duncan I found a hearty welcome and spent ten days visiting around the cabins. Before I started back an old-timer named Brodeur came into camp limping behind his dogs. His axe had glanced while felling a tree and gashed his foot. First-aid was given, but it was evident that he should be taken to Dawson where he could get expert surgical treatment. We arranged that he should come back with me. Before we left he sold his dogs and sleigh for thirty-five ounces of gold, about five hundred dollars. The dog he wouldn't sell was his

leader, named Shep, the best sleigh-dog I have ever seen in the north. Brodeur refused to sell him for any money, not, however, because of the dog's usefulness, that would have had a market value, but for what you would call sentimental reasons. To put it simply, they loved each other.

Of course there was only one place in the team for this king among dogs and Mike now came second in the string. What a grand dog Shep was! I can't tell you half his fine qualities. I don't know what noble dog breed was mixed with the wolf in him, but he was master of the team, in harness and out of it, from the start, and they seemed to sense it and not resent it. The first night Steal tried to dispute it by leaving his own pile of hot rice to snap some from the far-side of Shep's. Before you could think Steal was down half-buried in the snow yelling in his accustomed way, while Shep nipped a few little slits in his ears. It wasn't a fight. It was corrective punishment properly administered, in the same spirit in which you spank your little boy. A dog can travel quite as well with a few healthy cuts in his ears as

without. Was it Shep's way of boxing his ears?

Shep was no bully, but he wouldn't allow any fights among the dogs. He had, too, the rare art of "jollying" the team along the trail. This was seen when the going had been hard all day and the dogs were growing weary. Then he would talk to them as he travelled in his whining, malemute way, and it would seem to brighten them up. Perhaps he told them funny dog stories, or pictured the joys of a good supper when they got to dry timber and camped. Whatever your explanation, Shep was the cause, and the effect was seen in a brisk and willing lot of dogs going strong at the close of the day. Always he pulled his best. Whenever it was heavy sledding he would get right down dog-fashion, with his belly close to the trail, tongue hanging out, and do all he knew to keep things moving; heart, lungs, muscles, toe-nails and teeth were all enlisted in his effort to serve the man he loved who was riding under the robe in the sleigh behind. How did he use his teeth? This way—Climbing up a bank through the brush, making around an overflow on the creek, we were nearly being stalled; Shep, not

content with his usual efforts, had managed to grip with his teeth a stout branch that stretched conveniently near, and was using teeth and neck-muscles to add to his pulling power! Do you wonder that Brodeur loved the dog? Shep never knew the feel of the whip in punishment. At night when the team was unharnessed his first move was to the sleigh where he shoved his muzzle into the old man's hand and looked into his face asking him, I suppose, if everything was going well.

We reached Dawson in good form and soon had Brodeur comfortably located in the "Good Samaritan" hospital. Shep made his bed, the first night, in the snow a few yards from the door, but he discovered which window was Brodeur's, and he camped under it against the logs of the hospital until his master was well. The foot mended rapidly and soon the old trapper and his noble dog were back in the hills again.

VI.

Lost on the Divide

IN March and April, 1918, the Canadians were lying along the low ground beyond Vimy Ridge, facing the Germans who held the Lens-Mericourt-Arleux front. The 43rd was entrenched about a mile forward from the base of the Ridge. We had taken over from the "Yorks and Lanc's" who had done a lot of excellent engineering in the sector they had been holding. The trenches had been deepened and well drained. The dug-outs were numerous, large, and mostly safe. The months of their tenure had been quiet, and everything was in good repair. No Man's Land was wide, a quarter mile in places, smooth, covered with grass, and inhabited by colonies of larks. Apparently no raiding had been done, for that always brings some artillery retaliation showing in parapets and barbed wire knocked about, and ground torn by explosives.

When the Canadians commenced raiding, the

Hun still held himself well in check, in spite of the loss of a few men killed or taken prisoner every night or two. He had a tremendous surprise developing for our Fifth Army away to our right flank, and he didn't care to "start anything" with us that might disarrange his plans. Not that we were left severely alone, for it was on this same comparatively quiet front, on Wednesday afternoon, April 3rd, that I saw more enemy shells drop on one particular spot in a limited time than I ever saw happen in any other sector.

Our Regimental Aid Post was a spacious comfortable place underground off "Vancouver Road," and there some 3rd Field Ambulance "bearers" had taken up their quarters along with our medical section. The dug-out had only the one defect of not being any too deep for safety. Well, it so happened that something had aroused the enemy's suspicions about our Post. Maybe the fresh earth thrown out from a little trench-improvement work near us had attracted the notice of the German air-men. Whatever the cause they evidently had come to the decision that it would be wise to "shoot us up," which

they did with a vengeance. Captain Mackenzie and I were coming down the sunken road when the fusilade opened. At first we thought it was the usual stray shell or two, but for three hours we couldn't get within fifty yards of the place. The Hun gunners lobbed them over unceasingly. The dust of an explosion was still in the air when you could hear the hum of another shell coming. We were held up and just had to wait for the "strafe" to cease, anxiously wondering if the roof was holding and our men were safe.

It stopped at last and we ran down the road. One of the entrances was smashed in but the other still held up. We went downstairs to find our men crowded into one small portion of the Post that remained intact. All around was evidence of their miraculous escape. I shuddered to think what would have been, had a shell penetrated the roof there and burst among them.

McClymont told me that their lights were blown out seventy-two times by the concussion of shells exploding near the entrances, and that when they went out about the twenty-fifth time Macpherson started them singing some music-hall choruses to relieve the strain. About the

fiftieth time, by mutual unspoken consent, they changed to hymns! I'd have changed long before that; indeed I doubt if I could have found voice steady enough for song!

The foregoing facts I glean from an old note-book in which at the time I further jotted down that "the Hun threw 235 "5.9" shells on and around our R. A. P. in less than three hours. One entrance was crumpled in and dirt and bricks heaped on our beds. Twenty men there but no one hurt. The shelling represents a waste of twenty-five thousand dollars, and our cosy home gone."

That night we moved across the road to a deeper dug-out, one that had been built by the Germans, located by Sergt. Sims. Talking in the evening after supper about the day's event, our conversation naturally went afield to other adventures, and I was led to speak of a narrow escape from death I had in very different circumstances in a distant land.

* * * * *

In nearly eleven years of the Yukon trails, living on the creeks among the mountains in

early Klondike days, I could not fail to have my share of memorable experiences, some of them with more than a spice of hazard. I lived just the regular life of a "musher"—a man on the trail—and while that mode of life assuredly held nothing of monotony, yet I grew so accustomed to it that it all seemed part of the usual, familiar course of things.

After the summer, beautiful but brief, there came the eight months of grim, relentless winter. Then we had to face the long darkness and the deadly cold; to travel vast, white valleys filled with an almost terrifying silence broken only by the ugly howling of the wolves; to battle through deep and drifting snow along miles of lonely summits, with blizzards blinding and bewildering. But against each problem or task that Nature set us we matched, with zest, our wits and skill. There was the joy of conflict in it. Experience made us self-reliant and we learned to love the life, so free and clean, so full of stirring incident and victorious combat with the elements. Only now am I commencing to get the true perspective of those Yukon days, and by comparison with the soft conventional life

of these later years, recognizing how unique and interesting they were.

There comes to my mind a very unpleasant time I had one winter night, when I lost my way, broke my word, and spoiled a happy gathering. If it were a sermon, my text would be, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The Christmas festivities in the Yukon long ago usually continued for about a month. The weather was so frosty that work on the windlass was both disagreeable and risky, so it became customary for the mid-winter weeks to be occupied in visiting or entertaining neighbours and friends. Small "parties" were held in a sort of rotation at the larger cabins up and down the valleys. Everybody was merrymaking. Hospitality knew no artificial bonds, for in those golden days, there was neither prince nor peasant, rich nor poor. Don't think from this that we had no right social standards. I know that much of the fiction about the North is built on the theory that the men in the Klondike diggings practically adopted the moral code of the brothel. That assumption may make a novel "spicy" and increase its sale, but nevertheless it

is quite untrue. We, of the creeks, had worthy moral standards, simple but definite, and rigidly enforced. Our social grading, however, was not based on the length and value of a man's "poke," nor on his grandfather's record. If he lived an honest, decent life among us, he was barred from nothing.

In addition to the many smaller affairs, each gulch, where there were miners, would have one big evening for all, church or roadhouse being requisitioned for the occasion. These were called Christmas Tree Entertainments, or simply "Trees" for short. It was one of my duties to name the members of committees to have charge of all arrangements, and I was also expected to be chairman at all the "Trees." To meet this last requirement each creek had to choose a different date so that I could make the rounds.

In the winter of 1905 we had carried through our entertainments at Last Chance, Gold Bottom, and Gold Run. Sulphur Creek was the last, and they had been working to make it the best of all. It was to be held on Dec. 28th. One of the Sulphur men, Robertson, had come over to Gold Bottom to "size up" the programme

there and report to his committee. He told me that Sulphur's Tree would easily eclipse the others, and that I must on no account miss it. "You can depend on me, Robertson," I said, "and I'll see whether you Sulphurites can make good your boast. I'll have to 'mush' across from Gold Run that afternoon, but I won't disappoint you."

At noon Dec. 28th a very happy party of six old "tillicums" were gathered in Jordan's cabin on Gold Run. His partner Jim Prophet was there, Coldrick the Londoner, Macgregor the Australian, Bousfield and myself. Prophet had been lucky enough to get a moose that had strayed into the valley within rifle-shot and it lay partly cut up on some poles by the "cache." So he had invited his friends in to help eat some of the choicest parts, moose-steak in ordinary being, of course, too common for a special feast. I shall forbear entering into details of that meal, but our meat-dish was young moose-heart stuffed, roasted, with fresh Klondike river grayling as an entree. Grayling are caught in the fall when slush ice is running in the river. They are sluggishly heading for deep water.

You fish for them with rod and line baiting with raw meat. When you pull one out he freezes stiff almost before you can get him off the hook. You catch what you need, take them home, and stack them up like firewood in the cache where they will remain frozen. There you have your winter's supply of absolutely fresh fish.

We were sitting at the table when there came a knock on the door, and in response to Jordan's hearty "Come in," it was opened and the form of our good friend Corp. Haddock, of the North West Mounted Police, emerged through the mist. He sat down a minute or two but wouldn't stay. He was calling at all the cabins giving orders that no one was to attempt to leave the valley until the weather moderated. The barracks thermometer registered 65° below zero, and a dense fog had formed. Under these conditions it was perilous to attempt any journey away from human habitations. No one spoke of my intended trip, (although I found out later that Haddock knew my plans), until he had gone, when Coldrick said, "That puts the finish on your mush to Sulphur, Pringle." "No," I

replied, "I gave my word I'd be there and they will be looking for me. I have crossed that divide fifty times. I know every flake of snow on it. Unless the corporal catches me and puts me in the 'cage,' I'll be chairman at the Sulphur Church this evening."

This sounds boastful and foolhardy, but as a fact it was neither. I realized perfectly what I was facing, and knew that, barring accidents, I could keep my promise. I had fifteen miles in all to go, and only one mile of it difficult travelling through deep snow on the low summit, and for that I had my snowshoes. True, it was extremely cold, but I was suitably clothed and knew how to take care of myself, surely, after six years constantly on the trail.

So Jordan went out to get my snowshoes. He came in with the unexpected news that my snowshoes, and likewise their two pair, had disappeared from their pegs. It was plain that Haddock was "wise," and had taken them along with him down creek in a well-meant effort to make me stay indoors. I would have to go six miles down the trail and back to get another pair, and they also might not be there. That was out

of the question. I hesitated only long enough to picture the trail. There was only that one mile on which I used the shoes, and though the snow there was deep I could wade through without them. It would mean perhaps an hour longer, but it wasn't two o'clock yet and I had a full six hours to travel fifteen miles. I decided to go.

I set out and made fast time until I struck the drifts on the summit. The short spell of gloom we called day had ended, and it was rapidly growing dark. Before I got over that mile there would be no light, and this unpleasant white fog would be blindfolding my eyes as well. With it all I didn't worry. This was a difficult job that faced me, but I was in my own workshop, had my own tools, and was working at my own trade. Fate, however, had decreed that I should botch things this time.

Somehow, unwittingly, I turned a gradual quarter circle to the right in the drifts, and was then travelling along the low, undulating divide instead of across it. Laboriously but confidently I kept on through the darkness and the fog, unconscious of my error, until, after three hours,

I found myself at the foot of a grade that I had thought was the slope down into the Sulphur valley. I soon found my mistake. It must have been some large cup-shaped depression on the divide, its bottom strewn with a fearsome tangle of fallen trees carried down by a snow or land-slide. For two testing hours I fought my way through that piled up brush and snow. When I got clear I felt myself on an up-grade.

It was a long climb out of that hateful valley and I knew now that I was lost. To try to re-trace my steps would have been suicide. I had given up all hope of reaching Sulphur in time for the Tree and was growing a trifle anxious. It was terribly cold and dark. I had been work-ing extremely hard for hours and I was getting hungry. I didn't dare to stand still or rest. My moccasin thong had come undone and I had to take off my mitts to fix it. So sharp was the frost that my fingers grew almost too stiff to do the work and I nearly failed to tie the lace. They were white and numb when I thrust them into my fur gauntlets, beating them against my chest as I went on. My whole body sensed the chill and threat of that momentary stop. It told me

that if I were forced to take my last chance for life and try to build a fire, I would almost surely fail; to find dry wood, to prepare it, to light it, and wait nursing it into a flame sufficient to warm me would be a succession of almost hopeless chances, too desperate to take now unless there were no other way.

My climb brought me at last out above the frost-fog, and I thanked God I could see His stars and get my bearings. Far away to right and left in the darkness I knew the valleys of Gold Run and Sulphur lay, but between me and them stretched impossible miles of rough country. Puzzled a moment my anxious eyes caught the flicker of a light, low down in the north, hardly to be distinguished from the stars on the sky-line. This was indeed my "star of hope." It meant warmth, and warmth was life to me. I fixed its location and with new heart headed for it.

For six hours I travelled straight away like a hunted moose. I was young, lean and fit as a wolf. I was tired but not at all exhausted. In wind and limb I was good for miles yet. But I was becoming exceedingly hungry, and felt

the clutching, icy fingers of the frost getting through my clothes, and I knew there was no time to waste. Hunger and ninety-five degrees of frost on the trail combining against you with darkness as their ally, will soon club you into unconsciousness.

However the game isn't lost or won until the referee blows his whistle. I was determined to fight it right out to the finish. The light was my goal and I forgot all else. I must get to it even though I might have to crawl at last with frozen hands and feet. In the hollows I lost sight of it, picking it up again on higher ground, until, when I knew I hadn't much time left me, it glimmered clear, down hill, not a hundred yards away. I'll tell you the lights in Paradise will not look so beautiful to me as did the Jo-Jo Roadhouse bonfire that night, for they had a big fire outside under an iron tank melting snow for water and it was the flame of this I had seen.

My fumbling at the latch roused Swanson, the owner, from his sleep. He opened the door and pulled me in and I was safe. I had been beaten in my endeavour to get to Sulphur in time for the Tree, but I was victor in a more

serious contest. I had won a game against heavy odds in which the stakes were life, or death, or maiming.

They told me later at Sulphur, that at half-past eight the crowd at the Tree got uneasy, and by nine o'clock the concert was declared off and a well-equipped search-party set out with dog-teams. They went the round-about but well-trodden trail down to the mouth of Gold Run, and up that creek, until they found my solitary tracks turning off to the divide. They sent their dogs back to the Gold Run cabin with one of the party, and followed my trail all night on snowshoes, making the Jo-Jo late next morning an hour after I had left on Swanson's shoes for Sulphur.

I arrived at that camp by an easy route early in the afternoon. I had made their Tree a failure, I had broken my word, I had disobeyed Police orders, but I didn't get a scolding even, from anybody.

VII.

A Strange Meeting

THE German High Command had a big surprise to spring on the British Army in France early in 1918. Their preparations culminated in the smashing attack they made in March on the Fifth Army commanded by General Gough. The Canadians lay facing Mericourt beyond Vimy at that time. To our right, covering Arras and beyond, the Third Army, under General Byng was holding, on their right lay the Fifth Army. Before and during their great effort the Germans refused to be "drawn" at Mericourt into any serious retaliation, no matter how often we raided them. We knew why later when General Gough's line went to pieces. The Huns were going to "get us," they believed, in another and more thorough way than by counter-raids.

It looked for some weeks as if they might realize their hopes. The Fifth Army's formation was broken, and in confusion, they were

driven back and back for miles, until with reinforcements they managed to hold only a short distance in front of Amiens. In a few days the British lost, in prisoners alone, 200,000 men. To save themselves from being outflanked the Third Army had to withdraw from a portion of their former line and swing their right wing back facing out. They completed the difficult movement with brilliant success, and presented to the enemy an unbroken front of fighting men, well-munitioned, and supported by an effective artillery fire. This move saved the British forces from what looked like imminent disaster.

Byng's men used Arras as their pivotal sector. It was only a few miles from us, and it was with anxious hearts we heard, those days and nights, the ceaseless thunder of the guns on our right, as the terrific struggle continued. It was dismal news too, that came from Belgium. There Mt. Kimmel had fallen, and the British had been strategically forced to evacuate all the ground we had won at such enormous cost around Passchendaele; and this, remember, was the fourth year of the war.

Those were fateful days for the Canadians.

Our front was quiet, but we were nevertheless in an extremely perilous location. Vimy Ridge was behind us, and behind it again was lower ground which would be hard to hold in a flanking attack by our enemy. Many additional batteries had been crowded in on the Ridge with their silent guns trained on Arras lest the Third Army, which still occupied that town, should be broken and the Germans get through. In that event the Canadian Corps would probably have been cut off by the enemy's advance through the valleys behind us, and our career, as a Corps, would have ended. Certainly we would have sold our lives and freedom dearly, but with lines of communication cut our position would have soon been untenable, and successful retreat probably very nearly impossible. Don't dream that the front-line men were panicky. We knew that millions of brave men were still facing our common enemy and that back of them and us was the indomitable will of our Empire and our Allies. In this connection I recall a conversation between our Col. Urquhart (a thorough Scot), and a visiting officer, in which they referred to the situation at Arras. "It is

very serious indeed," said our guest, "for if the British break there, we Canadians are in for our biggest tussle with the Hun." "Do you know," asked Urquhart, "what troops of ours are engaged there?" "Yes," was the reply, "the 15th Division." "Well," said the Colonel, "that is a Scottish Division, and I can assure you, sir, there will be no break at Arras." Nor was there. Those Scottish lads stood firm. Repeated and determined attacks by the finest German troops could not break their front, nor drive them from their ground. The critical days passed, the enemy's progress was everywhere effectually and permanently stopped. Then when we were thoroughly prepared we took the initiative, and in August, the same year, commenced that grand victorious advance which ended the war.

Those days we often keenly discussed the situation from many angles. I was in "A" Company's dug-out one time when we were giving our opinions as to the relative merits of some of the different units of the British Army. We got away from the present war into history, and were recalling other famous campaigns and the exploits of the troops engaged in them. Some-

one said that while Canada, since she became a Dominion, had not had much chance until now to become illustrious in war, yet for forty years she had maintained the finest force of military police in the world, the Royal North-West Mounted. I was proud to mention that my brother had served in that crack organization for thirty years, and from that remark I was eventually entangled in the yarn which I here unravel.

* * * * *

I am the youngest of ten. My two brothers, John and James, were grown up and away from home before I had got beyond infancy. John visited us frequently after I had reached boyhood. James enlisted with father's consent in the North-West Mounted Police, went west and never returned. That force was organized in 1873 and my brother joined them in 1878. When I was a young lad there was no doubt in my mind which was my favorite brother. John was a minister, and ministers were an unknown quantity to a youngster of my age, and so I wasn't much taken with my preacher brother.

But it was different with James. He was a

soldier and a specially interesting sort of soldier. His business was chiefly, so I thought anyway, to go galloping on horseback across the prairies of our wild west, chasing bad Indians and horse-thieves, and having all kinds of real adventures. How I longed for him to come home! I pictured him, in fancy, riding down our main street in Police uniform, with pistols in his belt and perhaps a knife too, his carbine slung by his saddle, and handling easily a spirited horse! I would then point him out with pride to the other boys as my brother, and maybe, when he saw me, he would come riding over to the sidewalk and speak to me in front of all the other fellows. My boyish heart used to glow as I imagined what might possibly soon come true.

The prairies were undoubtedly a very long distance off in those days. There were no railways on them, none indeed to carry you to their outer-boundaries in Canada. Parties of police recruits went down through the United States to Fort Benton or other suitable points, and then came north, mostly by trail, to the Canadian plains. It was a long journey, I knew, but on the other hand mother used to get letters from

him, and he would say in them that he might be home for Christmas, a treasured hope. Nearing Christmas mother would be busier than ever in the kitchen, making the cakes and other good things we always had in abundance at that festive season. I liked to be on hand then for there were bowls, in which tasty confections had been mixed, that required scraping out and it was my delight to attend to them. She would often talk to me then about her soldier boy, and I was an eager listener. "Maybe your brother James will be home this Christmas," she would say with a glad note in her voice. Then there would come the letter containing the unwelcome news that he couldn't get a furlough this year, they were so short of men and had such a vast territory to patrol, but we would surely see him next year. Mother would go into her room for a while with the letter, and when she came out she would take me on her knee, hug me up to her and kiss me, then would go about her work strangely silent. Her soldier boy never came home. He went farther west and north, and my story is of the first meeting I had with my brother, the first anyway I had any memory of.

It occurred in the Yukon in a roadhouse on Eureka creek.

I visited that creek regularly about once a month. To reach it I had to "mush" down the Indian River valley, ten miles from the mouth of Gold Run, and then cross the river to Eureka which flowed in from the opposite side. Five miles up Eureka was the first cabin. Above that on both forks of the stream there were miners. In summer I could cross Indian by a shallow ford and in winter on the ice, but for a trip or two in the Spring it was a tumultuous flood which I had to navigate on a make-shift raft.

It was in the Spring of 1902 when making this trip I found the river, as I expected, in spate. I was prepared with axe, rope, and a few spikes, and in an hour or two had a small, rough float constructed. I made and launched it a hundred yards above the point I sought to reach on the other bank, for I knew the rapid current would carry me down that distance at least before I could effect a landing. On this side of the river there was no one nearer than ten miles, for this was the "back-entrance" to Eureka, (Bonanza

and Dawson lying off in another direction), so I always wrote out a note stating what I was attempting to do, dated it, and put it up on a tree by the trail. Thus if anything unexpected happened, some "musher," coming by within a week or two, would know the circumstances.

Then I pushed out into the water with my rough paddle. I had a light pack on my back holding my shoes, a dry pair of socks, and other trail accessories. That time I had made my raft rather too small. I had to stand in the centre or it would tip me off, and it wasn't easy to keep my poise in rough water with the logs mostly out of sight under my feet. When within a few yards of the other side, my frail craft caught for a moment on a hidden snag which tore some of the lashings loose, and the two outside logs showed signs of getting adrift. If that occurred I would shortly be swimming for my life in the surging, ice-cold water. The raft was only about seven feet across and to save it from breaking up I "spread-eagled" on it, catching the rope ends with each hand and thus holding it together. I had to lie almost flat to do this, and for the next five minutes was giving

a life-like imitation of a submarine about to submerge. Luckily my raft struck the bank, I caught the limb of a tree and swung myself ashore. I made the five miles to Macmillan's cabin in double-quick time and stayed the day there in the bunk, with my clothes drying out around the stove.

During the next two days I went around the cabins visiting, and "ringing the church bell" for a meeting in the roadhouse. There we gathered in the evening, not a man absent that could come. The roadhouse became a church, with the bar-counter my lectern. On it I had a lighted candle which I had to hold in my right hand, the book in my left, when I read or we sang, so that I could see the words distinctly. The business of the place was practically suspended except the cooking at the kitchen end, and at odd times when a traveller came in for a drink or a meal he would be served quietly, and then go on his way or stay as he was minded. The stools and benches were filled and some men were sitting on the floor around the walls.

In the middle of my sermon two "mounties" entered at the door behind me. They closed the

door and stood near it listening. I turned my head for a casual glance at the newcomers, stammered, stuck, and couldn't go on. I turned from my congregation, and, taking the candle in my hand, stepped nearer. There before me was the man whose face I had so often gazed at, with silent admiration, as I saw it in the photograph in my mother's room. It was indeed my brother James, the hero of my boyhood days! Our hands clasped as I spoke his name. I turned to the crowd, told them what had happened, and that I couldn't go on with the address. They understood. We sang a hymn and ended the service forthwith.

The talk I had with my new-found brother can be better imagined than described. He had been sent from the upper country, the Tagish Post, to the Eureka detachment, had arrived that evening and had heard that a "George Pringle" was having a meeting on the creek. He had come over confident that it was his "little" brother, for he knew I was in the Klondike.

We spent a day together, one of the never-to-be-forgotten days of my life. Then the next morning I started back on my circuit. He came

with me to Indian. We built a good raft together, and he watched me safely over and until I was out of sight in the trees. Then I took down my "notice" and hit the trail for Gold Run. George Earsman, living in the first cabin I came to on that creek, was a sympathetic listener while I told of the strange meeting. But he could not forbear humorously remarking that I had in a sense, "turned the tables" on my brother. Back in Galt, he said, no doubt James had often put me to sleep, and when next we met I was trying to put him to sleep!

I saw my brother only once more. Ed. Blanchfield brought me a letter from Dawson some weeks after marked "urgent." It was from Jim, stating that orders had bèen received requiring him to leave the Yukon for Police headquarters at Regina, Saskatchewan. He had to take the first up-river boat, the *Casca,* which sailed the next day. I made record time over the twenty miles from Gold Bottom next morning. John came in nine miles from Bonanza, and I spent a happy afternoon with my two "big" brothers before the steamboat pulled away for the south.

After those many strenuous years serving Canada in wild and dangerous days on the prairies, and among the forests and mountains of the northland, he now takes his rest. His is a lonely grave near one of the outposts of settlement on the northern reaches of our prairies.

VIII.

Ben

ONE of the pluckiest deeds I have ever seen done by any airman I witnessed in 1918 on the Mericourt front. On a line two or three miles behind us, and stretching roughly from Arras along Vimy Ridge to the Souchez valley, we had our usual complement of observation balloons. These were held by long wire cables and contained two observers each.

One fine clear day five of these balloons were up, high in the air, watching movements behind the German lines. Macpherson and I were tramping along through one of our deep communication trenches on some errand, when the sound of distant, anti-aircraft shells bursting in the air, reached our ears. We climbed out at the Beehive dug-out to see what was up. Far above the balloon nearest Arras there was appearing, against the blue sky, many little white clouds of smoke caused by exploding shrapnel, while near the ground we saw two open parachutes descending, the observers had "jumped

for it." From the smoke above there emerged an aeroplane darting straight down on the balloon. Almost quicker than I can tell it, a volley of incendiary bullets from the plane had ignited the big bag, and it fell to the earth like a twisted torch in smoke and flame.

The German never swerved, but headed away for the next balloon. The observers from that one by this time were nearing the ground under their parachutes, and in a few minutes the observers of all five were either on the ground, or floating gracefully to the earth beneath their big "umbrellas," seeking safety from this nervy Hun. By this time everything along the Ridge that could reach him was turned loose. There was a perfect storm of shrapnel, machine-gun and rifle-fire. Hundreds of shells exploded around him and thousands of bullets sped towards him, and it seemed impossible that he could continue. But he didn't even try to escape. He went right on through that deadly fusilade, courting death every second, until he had reached the Souchez and had burned every one of our five balloons. Then and not till then, did he turn towards Hun-land.

In spite of our irritation at his complete success, we could not deny the pilot's great bravery. The recognition of his courage was heartier because he really put none of our men in actual jeopardy, although he offered himself and his machine-gunner as an absurdly easy target to our guns throughout the whole affair. No doubt his mate, he himself, and the plane were hit a good many times but not enough to bring them down or stop their work. In all probability the plane would have to go to the repair sheds and the men into hospital after they landed.

The whole show, which we had seen clearly from start to finish, was over in ten minutes, and we went down to tell the fellows in the dug-out what we had just seen. The description called up memories of other deeds of bravery, and some stirring stories were told. I offered one about my dog Ben who, I claimed, had a place by right in the world's list of heroes.

* * * * *

It is hard to believe that dogs do not think along much the same lines as we do in the simpler relations of life. I find it impossible to disbelieve in affection existing between dogs and

men, and in a marvellous readiness on the part of the dog to go the whole way in laying down its life for the man it loves. I do not know how to interpret their actions otherwise.

One winter, among my dogs I had a half-mastiff, half-wolf, that I had raised from a pup. He was my favorite, a big, awkward, good-natured fellow who wanted to follow me everywhere, and when I left him at home would cry, in his own way, with vexation. He would go wild with joy when I returned. He also seemed to take upon himself the guarding of the cabin. Strangers might come and go for all the others cared, but Ben would always stop every man he didn't know at the cabin door, not in an ugly or noisy way, but as a matter of duty, until I opened the door and welcomed the stranger in. He never interfered with those who had been once admitted to the cabin should they come again, noticing them only to give a friendly whine and wag of the tail. I suppose you can all match my story thus far, but let me go on.

One hard winter in the Yukon, when the snow was very deep on the hills, and there had been a prolonged spell of unusually extreme frost,

the wolves commenced to come down at night into the valleys close to the cabins to hunt and devour stray dogs, or anything else they could get. One night I was roused from sleep by the very unpleasant noise of a howling, snarling, wolf-pack fighting over something not far from my cabin. I wrapped my fur robe hastily about me, and opening the door peered out. They were gathered in a circle round what was apparently a crippled wolf, doing it to death. I shut the door and hurried into my clothes. I wanted to have a shot at them, for there was a bounty on wolves, and their furs were worth something.

As I slipped out of the door after dressing, it occurred to me to see if my dogs were secure under cover. They were whining and uneasy, but I found them wisely keeping safe in their stout log kennels, all but one of them. Ben's kennel was empty.

Instantly I knew what the brave young dog had done. Here was a band of strangers, suspicious looking characters, coming towards the cabin. He went out to meet them alone. He must have known by instinct, as the others did,

that savage death would meet him in those dim, gray, howling forms. Maybe he trembled with fear, but he went out for my protection to engage in a hopeless fight against a pack of ravenous timber-wolves.

Immediately I grasped the situation I fired at the edge of the pack. They commenced to run, disappearing like ghosts in the moonlight on the white mountain-side, but not before I got two of them. Poor Ben was badly torn. I carried him in my arms into the cabin, lit the fire, and in the candle-light dressed the great, tearing gashes. A few minutes more and they would have had him killed and eaten.

For two days I worked as best I knew to save his life. But he was suffering agony, and at last I decided it would be more merciful to put an end to his pain by having him shot. I went up to the N. W. M. P. Post and got Corp. "Paddy" Ryan to come and do it for me. We carried him a little distance from the cabin, and laid him at the side of the trail. I confess I turned my head away while Ryan shot. Ben rolled down the hill a few yards through the snow, until he stopped against a bush. We watched to see if there was

any move. "He is dead," we said, but to be sure I gave my whistle. For a minute nothing happened, and then I saw his faithful, battered head moving up very slowly out of the snow, and swaying to and fro. Ryan shot again. Ben's head dropped and he died.

I think I did what was best in the circumstances, and maybe I'm imagining motives that weren't there, but all the same there comes an ache in my heart whenever I remember that last shot. In his death-throes, blind and broken, his controlling impulse was to come to me when I whistled. Perhaps he thought I needed him. I believe there are dogs in heaven. Because the Bible says there are dogs kept out, it is not accurate exegesis to assume that there are none let in. And if I meet Ben I feel as if I'll have to try to explain it all and ask forgiveness. But I don't think he will bear any grudge. He was too big-hearted for that. I gave him a good grave on the hillside near my cabin door. It was all I could do for him then.

IX.

A Trail Sermon

IN October, 1917, orders came to join in the big push on the Flanders front in what proved a vain attempt to cut the enemy lines of communication with the Belgian coast held by the Germans and used as a resort for submarines. The Canadians were asked to take Passchendaele Ridge which rose abruptly about 300 feet above the miles of mud flats its guns dominated. These muddy fields had been captured by Australians and New Zealanders after desperate fighting, but it was almost impossible to hold them without terrible punishment from the concentrated German artillery fire, bombing, and machine-gunning because of the enemy's position on the Ridge. No trenches could be made in the mud for the sides would slip back in, and there was practically no protection for our men outside the few small concrete blockhouses or "pill boxes" the Huns had built. So we had either to withdraw or go on and chase the enemy off the Ridge.

The 9th brigade of the famous Third Cana-

dian division was chosen for the post of honour. This was the task of capturing the almost unassailable German positions on Bellevue Spur which was a part of the Passchendaele heights lying immediately in front of us. Of the brigade, the 43rd battalion (the "Camerons" of Winnipeg) and 58th were to make the attack, with the 52nd in close support. The 116th, junior battalion of the brigade, was employed as a labour battalion, and a dirty, dangerous job they had, "packing" ammunition and "duck-walks" at night through the mud up to the attack area, doing pick-and-shovel work, and afterwards carrying back wounded men under shell-fire.

Friday, October 26th, was the fateful day. Someone suggested that Friday was unlucky and 26 was twice 13, but this was countered by the seven letters in October and the lucky number at the end of 1917! It wasn't luck in sevens or thirteens that won the battle, but simply that we had men and officers with an unyielding determination to carry on in spite of all obstacles, unless wounded or killed, until their objective was gained. Contributing causes there were in training, equipment, and leadership that helped

our men to do the impossible, but the deciding factor, the real cause of victory, lay in the brave hearts of the soldiers who faced the Spur that chill October morning.

The ground had been reconnoitred by Lt.-Col. Grassie, our O.C., who had to leave for Canada before the attack took place. Our operations were carried out under the skilful direction of Major Chandler.

In one of my old note-books I find a description of the affair scribbled Oct. 27th during a leisure moment in Waterloo pill-box. "From Banks Farm we moved up to within striking distance of Bellevue Spur taking over from a battalion of Wellington New Zealanders. Headquarters occupied the concrete blockhouse near the foot of the spur and about 400 yards away from the enemy lines. We were under direct machine-gun fire and sniping from their posts on the crest of the hill we had to capture. Our blockhouse was continually shelled. The enemy guns had its location to a nicety and kept it under almost constant fire. Twelve men in all were killed at the door at different times during the few days we stayed there.

"In the attack yesterday morning, fifty of our men in the centre were able to make and hold their objective, but the battalion on our right was forced to fall back to the edge of the hill after being exposed to a fire which cut it down to ineffective strength. One of our companies on the left ran into a murderous fire from a group of German posts opposed to them. We withdrew to the brow of the hill and sent word back for re-inforcements. Our centre still held but their position was precarious and before nightfall would have become untenable if these Germans to their left were not dislodged. The 52nd were ordered to reinforce our left wing and renew the attack. This time we were successful, 150 prisoners were captured in half-an-hour and the whole front cleared. The 58th were enabled to advance and we had no further trouble in consolidating our position."

Two V.C's were won that day. Bobby Shankland, a subaltern in the 43rd, under enemy observation with its consequent machine-gun and rifle fire, made the trip from one of our advanced platoons back to battalion headquarters and out to his men again. He brought accurate in-

formation at a critical time when prompt action properly directed meant victory; the lack of it meant defeat. The renewed attack on the left wing with the definite objective he advised saved the day for us. He was recommended for the highest award and it was duly awarded him. Lt. O'Kelly of the 52nd won the coveted honor by the gallant and effective way in which, regardless of personal risk, he led a company of the 52nd against a group of pill-boxes filled with machine-gunners.

Many other gallant deeds were done on the hill that day of which there was no one left to tell.

During this time a stream of wounded had been coming back past Waterloo Pill-box where our battalion Medical Aid Post was at work. The floor of the blockhouse was a foot deep in mud and water. The stretchers were almost submerged and the back of the man was almost always in the water. At times the stretcher-cases were lying in three rows outside in the cold, the rain, and the mud. There they were constantly in danger of death from shelling. Twice shells burst among them, killing and

wounding again a dozen men on each occasion. Half the cases never got into the dressing station. They were given a look-over, fixed up as well as we could, and sent hobbling off over the "duck-walks" to safer areas farther back. Only the most severe cases were held for the attention of the overworked M.O. The long stretcher journeys to the rear were terrible experiences for both bearers and wounded. They had to pass through shelling, gas, and bombing. The carrying parties often became stretcher cases themselves on the way back, and the wounded in that rough journey must have suffered tortures of both mind and body.

The outstanding memory of it all is that of the mud. It would seem impossible for a sensible man to develop a bitter hatred towards an inanimate and apparently harmless thing like mud. But it was "the very devil" to our minds. We walked in it for endless miles. It held our feet and wore us out. If you fell sideways you would probably break or sprain your ankle. We sat down in the mud, slept in it, fought in it. It clogged our rifles and machine-guns. We cursed it with intensity. We ate rations that

tasted of mud, wore clothes that were loaded with it, carried with aching muscles stretchers and wounded that were made heavy with mud. Many wounded were lost in it, and many of our dead, that we never found, were swallowed by it. Hindenburg in his memoirs considers Passchendaele the most terrible affair his armies had anywhere engaged in. It was bad for them but it was worse for us attacking, and the thing that made conditions almost unbearable for both sides was that omnipresent vampire of those rain-soaked Flanders' fields.

On the 28th we were relieved and moved back and, in a day or two, found ourselves in tents in the mud of a ploughed field near Nine Elms back of Poperinghe. We had done nobly, so they told us, added fresh laurels to our fine record, fought a fight and won a victory, the praises of which would resound throughout the Empire. Needless to say we were glad we had not failed but for all that there was much unspoken sorrow in the men's hearts. So many of our comrades had been killed. What a remnant our 100 men looked when the battalion paraded to hear some fine words of heartsome

praise from our brigade commander, Gen. Hill.

On the Sunday morning we had a parade service. It lasted altogether only fifteen minutes. It was a prayer for the mourners at home, a hymn of thanksgiving, and a word of cheer to ourselves. Towards evening Sergt.-Major Lowe told me that some of the men wanted me to come over and talk to them. In one of the tents, I found thirty or so crowded in to hear a story of the Yukon, and in the tents close around others were listening as I talked. We were all in a serious mood, and somehow the consciousness of this influenced me, that night, to weave my stories into a message in which there would be comfort and cheer for men who had been hard hit, and had faced in roughest form the stern realities of life, and death, and suffering. There was help in it, I know, because I spoke of Jesus of Nazareth. When you want to minister to men in such times, don't your thoughts just naturally turn to the Man of Nazareth? So I spoke of Him and clothed my message in Klondike phrases and imagery. Here it is very much as I gave it that evening at Nine Elms.

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We are all feeling a little bit down these days. The savagery of war and our heavy losses in men we knew and loved has stirred deep thoughts in us, grave inner questionings why these things should be, perplexing difficulties about the meaning of life and the power of death, the reason of suffering and the goodness of a God who permits it, criticisms of a social order, nominally Christian, which produces the barbarities we have witnessed and taken part in. We are groping for light like the blind, and wishing we could find a sure guide in our thinking on these tangled problems, in whose solution we might find satisfaction and assurance.

There is one song of all our soldier-songs that I think will live and that is the one where we sing of "a long, long trail a-winding into the land of our dreams." There's something true to experience about the thought of the long road of life. It takes me back to old trail days in the North, and I picture the long, long, trail of life winding its way from out of the mists of the past, through pleasant valleys and over windswept mountain summits, on and on into the unexplored land of the future. My message is simple

enough. It is an appeal straight from your padre's heart that in your sorrow and uncertainty you decide to take Jesus of Nazareth as your guide down the trail of life for all the days that are to come. I ask you to follow Him because He is the very guide you need to find the right trail and keep it under your feet to the end. Life is all we've got and it is therefore too precious to risk in any unnecessary way. It is so important that we find and keep the right trail and save our lives from spiritual death, we cannot afford to accept any guide who has not the very finest credentials. What are the credentials of Christ when He offers himself as our Guide? They may be spoken of in many ways, but I am going reverently to put him to the three tests any guide in the Yukon would have to face before he could qualify to lead anyone on a mid-winter trip into new country over an unknown trail beset with dangers.

But before I can get to this examination of His credentials I know many of you are mentally stumbling over difficulties you have with or about the Bible. It has been said with much truth that "the Bible has kept many an earnest

man from Christ." It is not going to do it with you if I can prevent it. I have heard you wondering about the truth of the Garden of Eden story, about a God who hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he could slay the first-born of all the Egyptians, the story of Jonah and the fish, the difficulties of accepting Biblical science and history, the miracles, and such like things, and when you all have given your special stumbling-blocks I could probably add some of mine that you hadn't thought of. I am not going to attempt just now to deny or remove any of these particular difficulties but show you a way round them, a right way of approach to the Bible, so that instead of keeping you from Christ it can fulfill its divine mission of revealing Him.

I had a partner with me for one winter in my log-cabin at Gold Bottom, way in the Klondike hills. His name was Jack Crowe, a Nova Scotian, who had come out from Dawson to teach the little school we had started for the dozen children on the creek. We took turns at cooking. One winter morning, the mercury clear out of sight in the bulb of our thermometer, it was my turn to get out and light the fire and make

breakfast. This consisted principally of oatmeal porridge, bacon, bread of our own make, and coffee. There were two big bowls of porridge with nothing left in the pot. We sat down, asked a blessing, and commenced our breakfast. The first spoonful I took my teeth struck on something hard. It wasn't porridge and I took it out of my mouth. It was a button. What did I do? Throw my bowlful of porridge away and do without half a breakfast on account of that button which I couldn't swallow? No, I did just what you or any other ordinary man would have done. I placed the button beside my plate and ate the porridge with relish, and I think if there had been twenty-five buttons in that porridge I'd have done the same, an odd button or two out of place wasn't going to deprive me of my needed breakfast. Fifty below zero makes you too hungry to be fastidious. Further, let me take you into my confidence, I found the place where that button belonged before the day was over, sewed it on, and it did good service.

Of course you see my point. I don't blink the difficulties in our thinking about the Bible.

They exist. Most of them can be explained when we study the subject a bit, some few are still half-solved puzzles to me which I enjoy working at when I have leisure, and some I suppose I shall never quite see through; but just let us lay them all aside for the time being and go straight to bed-rock and see if there is gold in the claim of Christ himself. You know, by the way, it is strange how what at one time we thought useless material in the Bible finds its place as we gain more experience of life. When I was very young the psalms seemed almost meaningless. Now some of them voice the deepest longings of my soul for I have learned the bitterness of life as well as its sweetness. The minor prophets at the end of the Old Testament seemed to be "cumberers of the ground" until I learned something of the crookedness of present day politics, the prevalence of the cancer of sanctimonious hypocrisy, and the power of Mammon-worship to obstruct social reforms long overdue. Then it seemed that a book like Amos was not only up-to-date, but far ahead of us. There are passages in the fifth chapter that should be painted in giant letters on the walls of

legislatures, in halls of justice, in the market-place, and above the pulpits of Christendom.

But leave your lesser problems unsolved for the time and get the first, biggest question settled as to the validity of Christ's claim to be able to guide us safely through life.

In the old stampede days up there, and it's the same still, the first qualification demanded in a guide was that he should know the trail. It was impossible to talk business on any other basis. Every other virtue your would-be guide possessed would be useless without that essential one. Christ is prepared to stand that test, make it as "acid" as you like. How can we test Him when we do not ourselves know the way? We all have a God-given intuition by which we can tell that the direction the guide would have us go is right or wrong. Even a Canadian who had never been in Scotland and wanted to go there would have "horse-sense" enough not to follow a man who offered to take him to Edinburgh by going five thousand miles due West from Halifax.

So with Christ. He asks no blind faith or sanctified superstition. What direction would

He lead us? What is the great burden of His message accepted by all Christian Churches down underneath the load of dogma, form and ceremony? Where would He lead us if we followed Him? The road is marked by two parallel lines, the eternal boundaries of the Christ trail, on the one side it is heart-righteousness and on the other brotherly kindness; and to show us what He meant, He walked that trail Himself His life through. It's a great thing to have a guide who knows the trail not only "on the map" but has been over every bit of it and knows it perfectly. He shows by His own life just what He means, the heart right as His was right, and a brotherly-kindness that gladly lays down its life to help others. Doesn't it seem to you to be the right direction, the right trail, the right guide?

This seems to me like trying to prove an axiom. You can't prove it by process of logic. To state it is to prove it. We know by intuition it is right and it is the only trail. Take the fundamental need of heart-rightness. It is the *heart* of man in which evil dwells. The cruel ambition that permitted this war originated in the

hearts of a group of men. The greed for money that refuses to permit social iniquities to be removed has its habitation in men's *hearts*. The whole horrid brood whose mother is selfishness exists only in men's *hearts*. *"Out of the heart"* Christ said, evil comes. Cleanse the heart and you clean the world. But you can't have your heart right the way Christ teaches unless you have a place in it for your brother. A Christian must be and will be deeply interested in Social Reform. You can't follow Christ and forget your brother, for the trail of Christ is the trail of self-sacrifice for others. Christ then knows the right trail which would lead you and me and the whole world unto a happier, sweeter day. I know no other way that so completely satisfies my sense of what is right and true as the way of Christ.

The second test of the worth of a guide, after I was satisfied that he knew the way, was whether he was able and willing to help me when I got into difficulties in hard places. The trail leads dizzily round the mountain side with a precipice below. I'm a tenderfoot. I have neither the nerve nor skill to take my dogs and

my sleigh safely past. I'd fall to my death surely if I attempt it. He tells me it's the only way through, and he is right. I say I can't make it. He replies that all he offered to do was to lead along the right trail. It is up to me to follow. Or the mountain climb is so steep and the snow so deep that I haven't strength for it. Again I appeal to this imaginary guide. He says it is not his business to do anything more than walk ahead and show me the way. But I can't follow him and I know to camp on the mountain-side means death. No matter what perfect knowledge such a guide would have it would mean tragedy for me unless he had more than knowledge. But there is no guide, white, Eskimo, or Siwash, that I have ever met would act that way. He would take his own dogs round the mountain then come back and, with expert strength, take me safely past the danger. He would help me somehow to make the steep grade.

So on the trail of life there are the towering mountains of sin. They lie across the right trail in every man's life. We are all sinners. You remember how Christ once dispersed a

mob. He said, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone," and while He wrote on the ground they all took the chance, as we would have done, to sneak away self-condemned. Well, no man can cleanse his own heart of sin and yet no true man can rest content in sin. It must be done and no human power can do it. If we are to get past the mountains of our sins, and we must get past them or die, then our guide must be able to get us over. That's why we need a Saviour. It meant Gethsemane and Calvary to him. It is the Atonement, and whatever varying interpretations it may have, it must ever mean that the Guide is also a Saviour. He is getting us safe across to the God-ward side of our sins. They are no longer in our way if we will but give ourselves to Him to take us over. No longer are they a barrier between ourselves and God as we journey on. Before we reach the land of gold which we pilgrims are seeking, we also come to the dark valley and mystery of death. Can He find a safe way for our feet in the darkness? Will He leave us to follow when we cannot see him? Not He. He found His own way safely through—that's the meaning of

His empty tomb—and He guarantees to hold us securely in that strange experience at the end of the trail till, going on, we make through the fog into the land beyond, and see the golden city of God. Our guide is stronger than sin and death.

There is another test. My guide must not only know the trail and be able to get me through safely but he must be one with whom I can talk. Men used to go crazy in the North through sheer loneliness. Days alone on the trail with your dogs amid the deep silences of the sub-arctics makes you hungry for conversation with some other human being. I have turned ten miles out of my way on a heavy trail simply to get to some trapper or prospector where I might hear "the sweet music of speech." I remember having as a guide on a three weeks trip to the Lightning Creek Camp an Indian who was of the conventional silent type. He knew the trail and his duties perfectly. I had only one fault to find with him. He wouldn't or couldn't chat with me in either English or Chinook. I paid him off at Lightning. I couldn't stand it any longer. I hired another man for the return trip, not such a capable guide, but one with

whom I could have a little chat around the camp fire in the evenings.

It is just like that on the trail of life. Many times we ache to unburden our hearts to someone who will hear and understand and speak comforting words to us. Our dearest earthly friends can't quite enter into the intimate sanctuaries of a man's life. There are many lonely places on our journey when heart and soul cry out for that companionship that none can give but Jesus of Nazareth. "Comfortable words He speaketh, while his hands uphold and guide."

He is my guide and I cannot do without Him. I would lose my life in the wilderness if He should leave me to fend for myself. I have utter confidence in Him. As I come to know Him better my faith grows stronger. At the end of the trail, if I have time to think, I shall have many regrets as I look back, but I know there is one thing I shall never regret and that is that long ago I placed myself in the hands of Jesus Christ for good and all.

So long thy power hath blest me,
  Sure it still will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent,
  Till the night is gone.

X.

How Cheechaco Hill was Named

THE war did the work of a can-opener on many national and individual reputations, and discovered that their accepted labels were misleading. The estimates we had formed of certain nations have materially changed because of the part they took, didn't take, or were slow about taking in this world-crisis. We saw the effect more clearly on individuals. The standing a man had in his community might be taken at its face value in the battalion for a few weeks, but he was soon re-examined, and if necessary, the label changed to be true to contents. This was especially evident overseas when we were away from home and its influences. There is a camouflage possible in civilian life where a man's real self is not known much outside his own home. This camouflage was usually torn aside in the army. We were thrown into such continuous intimate relations with one another in the huts and outside them that there was little

chance for any man to travel under false pretences. It wasn't many days before you were sized up physically, mentally, and morally. The O.C., Adjutant, and senior officers were the only ones in a battalion having more privacy and protected by military etiquette who, if they wished, might wear a mask for a time, but not for long. The whole battalion somehow soon got to know pretty much all about them, or thought it knew, and labelled them accordingly.

Some men with fair reputations in their home town in Canada were found in rare instances to be cads in camp and curs in the line. But to the honor of those of the old British stock, our own Canadian men in particular, the great fear in the hearts of multitudes of them was that they might not be able to do or be all that the highest traditions of race or family expected of them. They came from the comfort of peaceful homes where war had meant only an old, foolish, long-abandoned way of settling international disputes. At the call of brotherhood, they left those quiet homes and came in their hundreds of thousands to the old lands across the sea. There, in training, they were surrounded with

strange conditions of life, and when later they went into the line were faced with tasks of incredible difficulty and harshness. Throughout the long years of war they were rarely disconcerted and never dismayed. Most of them were just good, ordinary, Canadian boys, practically untested until now, but in tribulation developing qualities that made them men "whom the King delighted to honor." Labelled, if you like, "plum-and-apple," when opened up they proved to be genuine "strawberry." Faithful comrades, brave soldiers, they played the new game so nobly and well during those weary, homesick, war-cursed years that they won for Canada a name unsurpassed in honor among the nations.

It was not so much the grand moment of an attack that revealed character but the strain and monotony of the common round of a soldier's life. It was the pack, the trenches, the mud, the dug-out, and the hut, that showed you up for what you really were. When you got a fruit-cake from home did you "hog it" all yourself or share it with your chums in generous chunks? Did you squeeze in near the stove on a cold day no matter who else was shoved away? Did you

barely do your routine duty or go further and lend a helping hand? These were the sort of tests in common-place forms that made it impossible to hide your own true self from the other fellows. If you asked me for instances I could fill a page with names from my own acquaintance of young chaps previously untried who proved themselves "gentlemen unafraid."

It was a severe test for the young men, but peculiarly hard for those in our volunteer army who were middle-aged. With habits formed and living a settled life at home, they abandoned it cheerfully, and unflinchingly set about accommodating themselves in the most unselfish spirit to necessary campaign conditions, which must have been to them almost intolerable.

In this condition I have in mind Captain Turner, Medical Officer to the 43rd Battalion for six months. He was a man near fifty years of age, with wife and family left behind at home in a Western Ontario town. "Doc" Turner joined us at Nine Elms, where we were resting in the mud after our attack on Bellevue Spur. He came direct from the base and had never seen any front line work. It was customary for

the M.O. and the Padre to live together and work together in and out of the line, so he shared a tent with me. A few days after his arrival we moved into the line for the second time on the Passchendaele front. It was on the evening before this move that he did me a service that I shall never forget. He "saved my face" in the battalion. This is how it came about. That afternoon I sat in my chilly tent writing some of the many letters which I had to write to folks at home, telling about their heroic dead. Captain Turner had gone over to Poperinghe. I sat too long at my work and got chilled through. After supper I was feeling wretched and went to bed hoping that a few hours warmth and rest would cure me. I got worse, and about 10 o'clock to cap the climax, when I was feeling very miserable, a runner came from the orderly room with the news that we were to pull out for the line next morning, breakfast at five and move at six. Then the horrible thought came to me that perhaps I wouldn't be able to go with the battalion. If I weren't a great deal better by morning I would have to stay behind in a C.C.S. at Remy. What then would everybody think?

It looked queer that I should be going around quite well that day and then, when the order comes to go back into the line, I take suddenly ill. I knew my own boys would say nothing, but perhaps in the back of their minds they would wonder if their padre was really scared. But no matter how charitable the Camerons were it would look to outsiders deplorably like a genuine case of malingering. My one and only hope seemed to lie in the magic of Doc's medicines. "As I mused the fire burned." He had not returned and the medical tent was a hundred yards away in the mud. How anxiously I listened for his footsteps but it was one o'clock before I heard the welcome sound. He was very tired with the six-mile walk and busy day and after I told what the orders were I hadn't the heart at first to let him know how sick and worried I was. He had taken off one boot before in desperation I poured out my tale of woe. Good old Doc! He cheerfully pulled on his wet boot again and went out into the night and rain and through the mud, roused Sergt. Sims and hunted around till he got the stuff he wanted. He was soon back and made me swal-

low fifteen grains of aspirin. I would have swallowed an earthquake if he had promised it would cure me. Then he piled his greatcoat and one of his own blankets on me. Enough to say I was clear of the fever in the morning and devoutly thankful that, although a little shaky, I was able to form up with the rest at six o'clock.

Doc played the game just like that all through his first spell in the line. Often I wondered at the matter-of-fact way he carried on like "an old hand" under conditions which were bad enough in all conscience to everyone, but must have been doubly so to him. But if the real stuff is in a man it will show up "under fire" some day, and Captain Turner is only typical of thousands of uncertain-looking "prospects" that assayed almost pure gold in the crucible of war. When our turn was over and the welcome news came to move back to divisional rest, Doc and I travelled out together with two or three of the boys. We had about five miles to go and the Hun artillery seemed to be chasing us with his shells. They dropped just behind us with uncanny precision for a mile or two blowing up the slat duck-walks we had come over. I was in the

lead and because of "the general scarcity of good men" I was hitting a fast pace. At last I heard him call out, "Hold on, padre, I can't keep this pace any longer. They can blow me to Kingdom-come if they like but I'm going to slow up whatever happens." Strange, too, that slowing up saved our lives, for a few minutes after we were stopped by a salvo of shells ahead of us bursting where we would have been if Doc hadn't put on the brakes.

The battalion moved far back to the sleepy little farming village of Westerhem where one day Captain Ross, of the Y.M.C.A. sent a request to come over and give a Klondike talk to the men in a neighbouring town. That evening they filled the big marquee and stayed for over an hour while I told them how Cheechaco Hill got its name. It is a story with a moral and has a logical connection with my prologue. What that is I think you will have little difficulty in discovering if you read the story.

* * * * *

The creek names of the Klondike are filled with the romance of the early days. They tell in large something of the story of the pioneer.

The names all have color. They speak of incident and adventure, of hopefulness and disappointment, of loneliness and homesickness. There's Dominion Creek and Fourth of July Creek. You hardly need be told that a Canadian "discovered" one and a Yankee the other. "Whisky Hill," "Squabblers' Bench," "Paradise Hill" has each a story of its own and the names hint at it. Mastodon Gulch with its remains of bone and ivory found in the ever-frozen gravels takes us back to the giant Tuskers of those prehistoric ages before the northland was gripped by the frost. Bear Creek suggests an adventure resulting perhaps in a juicy bear-steak or a hurried scramble up a tree. All Gold Creek, Too Much Gold, and Gold Bottom have the optimism of their discoverers boldly disclosed. Of these three only the last paid to work. I asked Bob Henderson, from Pictou County, Nova Scotia, the discoverer of the Klondike Goldfields, why he chose the name "Gold Bottom." "On the principle," he said, "that it's wise to give a youngster a good name to inspire him to live up to it. I had a day-dream, you know, that when I got my shaft down to bed-rock it

might be like the streets of the New Jerusalem. We old-timers all had these dreams. It kept us going on and on, wandering, and digging on these lonely creeks for years." Last Chance Creek has a story of its own and sometime I may tell you what I know of it. It entered Hunker Creek about fifteen miles back of Dawson. In the rush days a roadhouse was put up there and named after the Creek. Later it was assumed that the creek was named after the roadhouse and that the roadhouse got its name because it was the last chance to get a drink outward bound on that trail!

But I must get to my story of Cheechaco Hill. There are two words in common use in the Yukon, one is Sourdough and the other Cheechaco. A sourdough is an old-timer, cheechaco is a Chinook word meaning greenhorn, tenderfoot, or new-comer. In every old prospector's cabin on a shelf behind the stove-pipe you would see a bowl which contained sour dough from the previous baking. This was used as yeast to be mixed in with the dough at the next baking. When he used any he would always replace it with the same quantity of fresh dough sure to

be soured before he made bread again. The cheechaco had to learn how to bake and usually would borrow some of this yeast-dough from some old-timer down the trail until he had his own sour-dough and so earned his graduate title. Now for my story.

In the winter following the discovery of the Klondike diggings, two Australians were sitting in their cabin on Bonanza Creek at No. 5 below Discovery, having a smoke after a hard day's grind down the drift and on the windlass. One of them was telling with great relish of a practical joke he had played that day on two cheechacos. The winter trail in the creek valley ran close on their shaft. That afternoon two men, evidently partners, hauling their outfit and sleigh had stopped for a rest and one of them had climbed up the dump to the windlass and, after a word or two of greeting, commenced to tell their difficulties. They wanted to find some place to put in their stakes, "open" ground that they could "claim" for their own on which to prospect. They had come seven miles up the creek and there seemed to be nothing open. They asked the Australian if he could tell them

where they could stake. This question revealed them as the most verdant of cheechacos, for if you knew of any unstaked ground likely to have paydirt in it you weren't going to give your information to a stranger. You or your partner would slip away quietly after dark. You would carefully endeavour to conceal your movements until you had the ground securely staked and recorded. Even then any information you might have would only be given to other friends. So of course he told the strangers he could not help them.

The cheechaco then asked him if it would be any use staking on the mountain side, overlooking the creek. This was too much for the old-timer for everyone with any sense knows that alluvial gold can't climb a hill. It was a natural law that the heaviest substances always seek the lowest levels. Gold was no exception to this rule. You find it in bed-rock in the valleys where it has burrowed its way down whenever a run of water has loosened things up and given it a chance. So the Australian couldn't resist the temptation to agree that there was lots of room on the mountain-side, plenty of trees,

they'd be above the frost-fog and "nearer heaven" than in the creeks. They took the thing seriously, asked a few more questions about correct methods of staking and recording and then went on their way. It was a right good joke and such green specimens were certainly proper game; somebody would put them wise up at the Forks anyway, and the two had a hearty laugh over the incident.

A day or two afterwards they saw a small tent and the smoke of a fire on the hill opposite, sure enough the cheechacos had "bit." They had staked two claims, a "bench" and a "hill-side" adjoining, and were cutting wood and hauling moss for a cabin. The news spread along Bonanza until all the creek knew about it and laughed. The two men didn't sense anything wrong and looked upon the Australians as their friends. They often came down to the cabin to get advice about building their cabin, how to fit the corners, what size to make it, where to get the moss for the roof and chinking between the logs in the walls. They needed pointers about cooking and a supply of sour-dough for their first batch of bread. Apart from

their ignorance of frontier ways, they were right good fellows. One came from England, the other, Nels Peterson, from Sweden. They had fallen in with one another in Seattle when they happened to be outfitting in the same store, there they had spoken to one another, got acquainted, and agreed to go north as partners. One was a professional Swedish music-hall comedian and the other a London "cabby" with a witty tongue and a kind heart. Such were the strange partnerships of the Klondike.

In a few weeks the cabin was completed, seven feet by eight. The next step was to sink a shaft. By this time the old-timers were regretting their part in the affair. They decided not to say anything until after the cabin was finished, because these strangers would have to build a cabin somewhere in which to live. Now they hesitated to confess the trick they had played on their new found friends. They concluded that the best way out for all concerned was to let them learn necessary lesssons in cabin building and sinking a shaft, and then tell them, when they had gone down a few feet and found no gold, that probably they had better go and try again

on some outlying creek like Eureka or Black Hills. That looked the easiest way out of a situation which had become unexpectedly embarrassing. The best they could do now was to say nothing and give every assistance in hurrying the farce to its finish. After the cabin was completed the snow was shovelled away from a ten-foot patch where a landslide had made it comparatively level. There a fire was lit to thaw the ground, for it never thaws in the Klondike except by artificial means. When this had been burnt out they dug down three or four feet to frost, cleared out the hole, and put down another fire. So by successive "fires" they slowly worked their way down. At ten feet they had to stop digging operations to make a hand-windlass, an "Armstrong hoist" we called it, and a wooden bucket. The fires for thawing were still needed. Now one man worked down the shaft and the other on the windlass hoisting the filled bucket and lowering the empty one. They thawed and dug this way through four feet of moss, then twelve feet of black "muck" before they struck gravel. They had been told not to bother about "panning" in muck. There was

never gold in muck anyway. When they got into gravel a pan of it was taken into the cabin and washed out. There were no results.

Keenly disappointed they went down to their two friends that night and told them of their bad luck in not getting gold when they got into gravel. They were interrupted by excited exclamations and questions. Surely it couldn't be really gravel, they must be mistaken for no gravel could get up there. If it were true gravel it meant the upsetting of all current placer mining theories, and the prospect of unlimited possibilities of new gold deposits on hillsides and benches. Such news would set the whole Klondike on the stampede again. But of course there must be a mistake. It was broken up sliderock and not gravel. Next morning they would come up and have a look. So they did and there was no doubt about the gravel. The cheechacos were advised to go on "sinking" and on no account to "talk" at store or roadhouse. After every thaw the Australians went up to see how things looked. One day "colors" were found in the pan, and after that the four worked together unceasingly in rushing the digging as fast as the

need of thawing would permit. The light flakes of yellow gold continued but it wasn't "pay" yet.

One memorable evening, after an all-day spell of work without panning, the four men gathered in the little cabin around the panning tub in the corner to test dirt taken out eight feet lower than the last sample. They were all bending over eagerly, watching in the dim candle light one of the sourdoughs, an expert, who was squatted beside the tub with the pan in his hands under water. Holding it aslant, he twisted it back and forth with a sort of circular motion until the top dirt was gradually washed off and the grevelly stones left. These he scraped off with his hands and then repeated the whole process. Slowly the pan was emptying. If there was any gold it would be slipping down to the bottom of the pan at the lower edge of it. The candle was held closer and breathlessly the four men watched as the last few inches of the pan bottom cleared of dirt. There was only an inch of black sand and gravel now. The miner swirled the pan in the water again, then brought it up and near the candle, ran his finger through the margin of dirt still remaining and as he did so he

left uncovered a shining track of yellow gold! There was a moment's silence, a hurried, deft swirl in the water and the pan was carried over to the table. There with bent heads they gazed with tense emotion first at the slender thread of gold and then at one another. Not much in itself, but it meant—well, who could tell what amazing new finds it might mean? Perhaps richer than anything yet known! Soon they were talking in earnest excited tones. The impossible had come true and they had found, on that hill side, a "prospect" which, if the pay dirt continued for any distance or depth, would bring untold wealth to them. It was a great night in that Klondike cabin. The sourdoughs confessed without reservation their attempt to play off a joke and how they had long been ashamed of it. The cheechacos laughed it off in good-will that was heightened by the happy outcome of it all. The Australians were to stake claims beside them that night and then to rouse their friends who were near and have them stake on half interests. The hillside was to be called on the records "Cheechaco Hill" in memory of its discoverers.

By the next day the news had leaked out, the camp went crazy, and in a week every piece of ground right over the Klondike summits from creek to creek had been staked off in claims, no matter how absurdly unlikely the locality was, although in the scramble many very rich hillsides were found.

Some punster said that the only "benches" in the Klondike that weren't staked were those of my log-church at Gold Bottom! And it was practically true. I remember once when going down Indian River noticing a tree with its trunk "blazed," and on the blaze these words were written: "I, Ole Nelson, claim 25 ft. straight up in the air for climbing purposes!" He had been chased up that tree by a bear and had put the event on record in this way, and indeed about the only direction by that time that was open for staking was "up in the air."

There was, however, much reason for this indiscriminate staking. It seemed as if gold was likely to be found anywhere now that it climbed up the hillsides. But in a year or two the mining operations showed how the gold got there. Ages ago there had been an upheaval of some kind

that had changed the course of the streams and had made valleys hills, and hills valleys. These deposits were in what had formerly been river or creek bottoms. The hill-side seemed an unlikely place but the gold was there, and the digging disclosed it buried deep where God had placed it, not haphazard, but according to one of the laws of nature.

XI.

The Lost Patrol

IN the Spring of 1918, following the smashing attack of the Germans towards Amiens, orders came from the French Military Headquarters, that all civilians were to move from towns near the line to safer areas further back. This order nearly got me into a "mix-up." It happened I was billeted at Madame Buay's humble home in La Brebis, when the new regulation came to them like a bomb from the blue.

One day soon after, at 5.30 A.M., Madame and her boy came to my room to bid me a tearful adieu. It was arranged by the authorities that they must leave before nine o'clock that morning. There was much talk, and would I help her so kindly by buying her poor little rabbits. They would starve if left behind and she could not take them. "There were just three," she said. I bought them for twenty francs; thought they would make a savoury stew for our Mess.

About half past nine, I went to view my live-

stock. When behold, to my dismay, I found that my three rabbits had increased, in the course of nature, to ten, and there were signs of more "in the offing." On the top of this came an unexpected message for the Battalion to move out at 2 P.M. that day. I tried to sell my rabbits to the local butcher, who had been permitted to stay until he cleared out his stock of meat. But no, he wouldn't buy them. They weren't, of course, fit to kill for food. At last in desperation, for I couldn't leave the beasts to starve, I rounded up the half-dozen small boys left in the place and unloaded my rabbits on them. I knew the ordinary boy cannot resist the offer of a live rabbit, even though father and mother might object. I would be gone by that time anyway. I tell only the simple truth, (those who know rabbits will not question it), when I state that I had not three nor ten, but sixteen rabbits, big and little, to give away to the boys. A second contingent had arrived numbering six! I was relieved to be quit of them, for at the rate they had multiplied that day I could see myself, before many weeks, marching at the head of a battalion of rabbits!

It was pitiful to see these French people leaving the homes in which they, or their ancestors, had lived for generations. Pathos and humor combined, sometimes, in the appearance of the odd conveyances and the motive-power used. I saw one dear old lady propped up in a wheelbarrow, her son trundling her along. There were plenty other strange and sorry sights. With it all they seemed cheerful, and determined to make the best of everything.

This battalion-trek I stayed behind with a half-company of men who had been held by fatigue-duties. When we set out we decided to try a short-cut across the fields, but we wandered considerably, and had not reached our destination when supper-time drew near. We had no provisions with us. While the men were resting by the road, tired, hot, and hungry, I sauntered off by myself to where I noticed a wreath of smoke above the trees of an orchard. I saw a few soldiers there, standing by a fire not far from the farm-sheds. As I got closer two of them came hesitatingly towards me, saluted, and one said, "Sir, is your name Pringle?" I said it was, and then we discovered that eighteen years

before we had knocked around together in the Atlin gold-diggings.

They remembered me after all those years! They belonged to a detachment of Canadian Railway Troops. The upshot of it was that when I told them of my tired and hungry kilties, they got me into friendly touch with the Q. M. Sergeant billeted in the farmhouse. He showed himself a right good fellow and in short order I was on my way back to my men heading a small but well-laden carrying-party. Our boys could hardly believe their eyes when they saw us toddling along, laden with two big kitchen dixies of hot tea, a dozen loaves of bread and a full tin of good, fresh hard-tack. The tea and rations refreshed us and made the remaining kilometres easy.

We found the battalion located in a picturesque little farm-village. The group of houses lay snugly hidden among trees, while out on all sides, over rolling land, one could see long stretches of cultivated fields, in blocks of brown and varying shades of green. Other than the farm buildings, there was only a small store, a blacksmith shop, and a tavern. The houses

were ancient, built with out-buildings to enclose a court-yard, in the centre of which was, almost invariably, a manure-pile and cess-pool.

The inhabitants were primitive in their ways, kindly farm-folk of simple manners, hard-working and apparently contented.

One well, over 130 feet deep, served for public use. It was worked by a hand-windlass and to get a pail of water was a laborious process. The rough wooden shelter over it was erected, so the inscription read, in 1879. I suppose it was an event in village history when that shelter was added. There must be a wide variety of things, besides water, at the bottom of that well. The water tasted good enough, but one's imagination should not be allowed to work too carefully over the subject.

Chatting along the way after we left the Railway Troops, my talk naturally turned from the kindness done us through those Klondike friends, to other fine men I knew in the North. I was made to promise to tell "the bunch" a Yukon Story some evening after we got properly settled in our new billets. Two or three nights afterwards, I redeemed my promise. In one of

the old barns, sitting on a low beam, with the men lying around in the straw, I related to them the grim tragedy of the Lost Patrol.

* * * * *

In the annals of frontier-life anywhere you like in the world, nothing can be found more filled with heroic incident in the performance of duty and the maintenance of a high prestige, than the history of our own Canadian Mounted Police. I choose this particular story, because it exemplifies, so clearly, their dominating sense of duty and the quiet fortitude in the face of danger and death, characteristic of their splendid record. It occurred in the far North, in Klondike days, in a region through which I have travelled and so it has for me a double interest.

Every winter since the Big Stampede, the Mounted Police have patrolled the four hundred miles of wilderness lying between Dawson and Fort McPherson. The latter place consists of a dozen log buildings, on the MacKenzie, far in the Arctic. It is the centre of administration for a hundred thousand square miles of territory. Dawson, the well-known gold-camp, is on the

Yukon River, close to the edge of the Arctic Circle. One round trip is made each winter, with dog-teams carrying mail, personal and official, needed to keep that Northern world of Indians, Eskimo, Whites, and half-breeds, in touch with civilization, and to uphold our British traditions of law and order.

The journey is always beset with dangers. One day out, and the members of the patrol know that their lives depend wholly on themselves. They may see no one else for twenty or thirty days. They will go through a vast and lonely land travelling along the wide valleys of frozen rivers, up long narrow gulches filled with snow, over miles of wind-swept mesas, and across high, treeless, mountain ridges. "All goes well, if all goes well," is a proverb of the trail, for in winter-time there, death is always near. His opportunity comes easily in numerous ways. A gashed foot cut by a slip of the axe in getting firewood, a sprained ankle, an unsheltered camp with a blizzard in the night, fog, or wind, or snowstorm, sick dogs or men, short rations, a mile in the wrong direction, all these very simply lead to distress, maiming or death. The greatest

and commonest danger comes from the glacial overflows. In winter the creeks freeze solid. This dams back the water in its sources in the banks, until the expulsive force in the hidden springs, deep in the mountains, drives the water out on top of the ice. Even in the most extreme cold you will find in these canyons, under the snow or shoal ice, pools of this overflow water remaining liquid for hours. To get into this with moccasins means an immediate camp and fire, otherwise there will be frozen feet and permanent crippling, and if one is alone and dry wood not at hand, it is fatal. All these and more are the chances the experienced "musher" must be prepared to take. No "tenderfoot," in his right senses, would attempt such a long journey, in winter, alone.

It was the morning of December 21st, 1910, that the patrol left Fort McPherson for Dawson. It comprised Inspector Fitzgerald, Constables Taylor and Kinney, and Special Constable Carter, with three dog-teams of five dogs each. They expected to be in Dawson about the beginning of February. They never reached Dawson. Their comrades at Fort McPherson

of course gave no anxious thought to them, and when the Dawson search-party came in at close of day on March 22nd, it was with surprise and horror, that they heard of the loss of the whole patrol. Next day the frozen bodies of all four were brought in, those who three months before had set out on that wilderness journey, so keen and strong. They were found within thirty miles of the Fort, but it was a long, long trail of 300 terrible miles that they had travelled.

Towards the end of January the Dawson police commenced to expect the patrol. After the first week in February, they became uneasy. On the 20th February some Fort McPherson Indians arrived in Dawson. One of them, named Esau, had been with the patrol, as guide, to the head of Mountain Creek, where he was discharged on New Year's Day. The Police had lost their way, had come on this camp of Indians and employed Esau to guide them until Fitzgerald was satisfied the party could do without him, when he was dismissed. It was a tragic mistake.

On the 28th February, Supt. Snyder of the Dawson Post, fearing trouble, despatched the

relief-party under Corporal Dempster, consisting in addition, of Constables Fyfe and Turner and a half-breed named Charles Stewart. March 12th, on the McPherson side of the Divide, Dempster saw the first sure traces of the lost patrol. In the Big Wind River valley he found a night-camp which had doubtless been made by the missing men. There were one or two empty butter and canned-beef tins lying about and a piece of flour-sack marked, "R.N. W.M. Police, Fort McPherson." The morning of March 16th, they discovered a toboggan and seven sets of dog-harness "cached" about six miles up Mountain Creek. On searching more carefully, a dog's paws and shoulder-blade were found, from the latter of which, the flesh had evidently been cooked and eaten.

Ten miles from Seven-Mile Portage, March 21st, Dempster noticed a blue handkerchief tied to a willow. He went over to it, climbed the bank, and broke through the fringe of willows into the timber. There before his eyes was the end of a chapter in the sad story. In the snow lay the bodies of Constables Kinney and Taylor. A fire had been at their feet. Their camp kettle

was half-full of moose-skin, which had been cut up into small pieces and boiled. Dempster's party cut some brush, covered the bodies with it, and went on in the direction of the Fort. He says in his report, "I had now concluded that Fitzgerald and Carter had left these two men in a desperate effort to reach the Fort, and would be found somewhere between this point and McPherson. Next morning, about ten miles further down the river, a trail appeared to lead towards the shore and while feeling in the new snow for the old tracks underneath, we kicked up a pair of snow-shoes. We then climbed the bank and a little way back in the woods we came on the bodies of the other two men. This was Wednesday the 22nd March. Carter had died first, for he had been laid out upon his back, his hands crossed upon his breast and a handkerchief placed over his face. Fitzgerald lay near him."

Dempster and his party then went on to Fort McPherson arriving about six o'clock in the afternoon the same day. There help was obtained and the remains were brought in. On March 28th, the four bodies were laid side by

side, in the same grave. The funeral service was read by the Rev. C. E. Whittaker, the Church of England missionary at that remote point. A firing-party of five men fired the usual volleys over the grave. The brave men of the lost patrol had all come to their last camping-ground.

Fitzgerald's diary of the fatal journey was found. He had kept it up to Sunday, February 5th, when it ceased. Between the lines, for there is no sign of weakening in the written words, one can read the pathetic story of a long struggle against death from starvation and exposure, an heroic battle, maintained to the last in terrible agony. Let me quote but six entries from the diary. It was carefully written commencing December 21st, the day they left the Fort. It is a sad but thrilling drama extending over fifty days, staged in a mystic, white, winter-land, cruel and lonely, silent too, save for the howl of wolf or roar of mountain storm. Every entry is of absorbing interest, but the quotations suffice to tell of the fateful seven days spent in vainly searching for the pass up Forrest Gulch, and then the brave struggle to retrace their steps to

Fort McPherson. Death ever came closer, stalked at last beside them every moment. He had no power to destroy their unconquerable spirits but he finally claimed their weary, worn-out bodies. Here is the chronicle.

"Tuesday, Jan. 17th. Twenty three degrees below zero. Fine in the morning, with a strong gale in the evening. Did not break camp. Sent Carter and Kinney off at 7.15 A.M. to follow a river going south by a little east. They returned at 3.30 P.M. and reported that it ran right up into the mountains, and Carter said it was not the right river. I left at 8.00 A.M. and followed a river running south but could not see any cuttings on it. Carter is completely lost and does not know one river from another. We have now only ten pounds of flour, and eight pounds of bacon, and some dried fish. My last hope is gone (of getting through to Dawson) and the only thing I can do is to return and kill some of the dogs to feed the others and ourselves, unless we can meet some Indians. We have now been a week looking for a river to take us over the divide, but there are dozens of rivers and I am at a loss. I should not have taken Carter's

word that he knew the way from Little Wind river."

* * * * *

"Tuesday, Jan. 24th. Fifty-six below. Strong south wind with very heavy mist. Left camp at 7.30, went six miles and found the river overflowed right across. Constable Taylor got in to the waist and Carter to the hips, and we had to go into camp at 11.00 A.M. Cold intense for all the open water. Killed another dog and all hands made a good meal on dog-meat."

* * * * *

"Tuesday, Jan. 31st. Forty-five below. Sixty-two below in the afternoon. Left camp at 7.15 A.M. had to double-up teams for the first mile and a half. Nooned one hour and camped at 4.15 P.M. four miles from Caribou river. Going heavy, travelled part of the time on our old trail, but it was filled in. Skin peeling off our faces and parts of the body, lips all swollen and split. I suppose this is caused by feeding on dog-meat. Everybody feeling the cold very much for want of proper food. Made seventeen miles."

* * * * *

"Wednesday, Feb. 1st. Fifty-one below. Left camp at 7.30 A.M. and camped at 4.30 P.M. on the river where we start around Caribou Born mountain. Killed another dog to-night. This makes eight dogs that we have killed. We have eaten most of them and fed what dried fish we had to the dogs. Sixteen miles."

* * * * *

"Friday, Feb. 3rd. Twenty-six below. Left camp at 7.15 A.M. Men and dogs very thin and cannot travel far. We have gone about 200 miles on dog-meat and have still about 100 miles to go. I think we shall make it all right but will have only three or four dogs left. Fourteen miles."

* * * * *

"Saturday, Feb. 5th. Forty-eight below. Just after noon I broke through shoal ice and had to make fire, found one foot slightly frozen. Killed another dog to-night; have only five dogs now and can only go a few miles a day: everybody breaking out on the body and skin peeling off. Eight miles."

These were his last written words, except his will, scrawled on a torn piece of paper with a

cinder from the burnt-out fire by which he died. It read ;— "All money in despatch bag and bank, clothes etc., I leave to my beloved mother, Mrs. John Fitzgerald, Halifax. God bless all."

So, in brief, runs the story of the "Lost Patrol." There have been widely-heralded expeditions to North and South Poles. In their months of outfitting and general preparations, these expeditions left nothing undone to ensure safety that science could devise or money buy. They knew they had the eyes of the world upon them with the consequent urge to worthy endeavour. I wish to take no honour from them, but to me there is something finer in the way brave men in lonely places and at dangerous tasks, in civilian as in military life, risk death continually, not for glory, or fame, or riches, but simply in doing their routine of duty year after year. The world takes little notice, save when some startling tragedy occurs, and then soon forgets.

This story is not told in vain if it will remind Canadians of our own noble fellows, who in the wilds of our far-flung northern boundaries are adventuring their lives in these so-called "com-

mon" ways. "Their heroic efforts," says Commissioner Perry, "to return to Fort McPherson, have not been exceeded in the annals of Arctic travel. Corporal Dempster's reports show that the unfortunate men were wasted to shadows. All were strong, powerful, young men, and in the best of health and condition, when they left on their ill-fated journey. It is the greatest tragedy which has occurred in this Force during its existence of thirty-seven years. Their loss has been felt most keenly by every member, but we cannot but feel a thrill of pride at their firm endeavour to carry out their duty, and the subsequent prolonged struggle they made to save their lives."

Brave and gallant gentlemen, I salute you!

XII.

An Edinburgh Lad

THE evening of August 7th, 1918, saw the British troops in France massed under cover along a front of many miles, ready for the morning and the grand attack of August 8th which led to our final victory.

Throughout the vast organization of our allied armies, now all under Gen. Foch, gigantic preparations of microscopic thoroughness had been going on for weeks. Our intentions had been most wonderfully hidden from our foes by all the artifices of elaborately developed camouflage. At night the roads of France back of the line were filled with hundreds of thousands of infantrymen marching to their appointed places; with countless batteries of big guns and little guns, and munitions, moving as required by the great secret plan; with lorries, armoured cars, and tanks, pounding along in almost endless succession through the darkness. In the daytime little movement was to be seen beyond what was usual. Artifices, many and varied, were used to

trick our foes, such as fake attacks in Flanders by a platoon or two of Canadians left in the north to mislead the enemy, the Canadian troops being then far south. Altogether it seemed that the Germans were left wholly in the dark as to our purposes. It was the largest and most brilliantly arranged venture in the war. Armistice Day testifies how well the plans were carried through.

Our own corps had been slipping by night into a little patch of timber, on the Roye road, called Gentelles wood. We had been gathered there for two days, lying low but so packed in, that, if the enemy artillery had dropped a single shell anywhere in the woods, it would have decimated a battalion. What a chance they missed! Enough to give old Hindenburg the nightmare if he knows of it. It seemed like another direct intervention of Providence. For weeks before, the Germans had shelled these woods, a little, almost every day, but now, at the very time when a few shells would have materially disarranged our plans, something stayed the hands of the gunners and not a single shell or bomb came near us.

On the 7th, as soon as it was dark enough, the tanks, hidden in the brush at the edge of the wood and by hedges at roadsides, commenced to move to their attack positions. Two score must have passed through our battalion bivouac. The leading tank made its own road crashing through the brush, going over ditches and fallen timber, and turning aside only for the large standing trees. Each driver, hidden away in the tank and peering through the small look-out, could see only the lighted end of his officer's cigarette which was used to guide him in the deep darkness of the trees. No other lights were allowed. When they were gone we too moved forward, deploying to our positions in trenches ready for "zero-hour" next day.

The night passed safely, a momentous night, in which the enemy had his last good chance to spoil our plans and save himself from overwhelming defeat. Just before dawn, through the light morning mist, our artillery barrage came down with infernal noise and destructive effect. It told the enemy that we were going to attack. The German batteries of course replied with damaging precision, but it was too late

then to save the day. Our guns lengthened range and the tanks went forward. The other fighting units followed and by sunrise the grand attack had been fully launched up and down the whole British and French front. It was an attack that was to continue victoriously for three months, finally forcing the Germans on Nov. 11th to confess themselves well and thoroughly whipped.

In this splendid affair the Canadian Corps had a place of special honor on the extreme right of the British line, and facing the central attack-area beyond Amiens down the Roye road. Of our own battalions the 43rd was on the right flank linking up with the left wing of the French troops. The "liaison platoon" was half Canadian Camerons and half French "poilus." This junction sector would probably be the place of greatest danger to the success of the whole advance, for there, if anywhere, misunderstanding or conflict in orders might occur leading to a dangerous dislocation in the long line of the Allies. We were very proud of the confidence placed in us. The results show that it was not misplaced.

It was a glorious victory. The tanks cleared up the out-lying German defence posts and enabled our machine-gunners and infantry following them, to put their full strength against the main German positions. Before noon the Hun was on the run. We chased him helter-skelter through fields of yellow grain, across meadows, and down dusty roads, cornered and captured hundreds of his men in orchards and chateaux. It was sunny, summer weather in one of the loveliest parts of France. Our success had surpassed expectations and we were still going on. There were "beaucoup souvenirs." The enemy in his hurry had left a litter of stuff behind him, post-cards half-written, tobacco-pipes half-smoked and still warm, shaving brushes with fresh lather on them, breakfasts commenced but finished elsewhere, if ever finished.

On Aug. 11th, three days after the attack our brigade was camped under the trees beside a chateau which had been a German Divisional Headquarters on Aug. 8th, and was now ten miles behind our line. I remember it distinctly for that day, a Sunday, I had preached my fare-

well sermon to my battalion. I had been inveigled into asking for a recall to England. They said I needed a rest. Perhaps I did, and then at that time you couldn't tell how much longer the war was to last. If I had foreseen an armistice in twelve weeks I should have done differently. So I was to go to Blighty for a few months, my substitute had reported for duty and there was nothing for me to do but go.

A group of men sat around me beneath the trees, as I lingered that afternoon, chatting about odds and ends of things, leaving the subject that, I think, was uppermost in our minds pretty much untouched, for we were all loth to say good-bye. Somehow the talk turned to stories of clever camouflage suggested by some of our recent experiences and the boys told several good yarns. I outlined an old one I had heard my father tell of the arts of camouflage practised by Indians in his own soldier days in Upper Canada. This elicited enquiries about my father, and how he came to be soldiering in Canada so long ago. It was a story I knew well, and so it was easily told. These men were friends of mine, true and tried, and I knew they

would understand and fill in from their hearts the simple outline I gave them of my father's life.

*   *   *   *   *

Ever since I can remember, Edinburgh has been to me the fairest city in the world. I am Canadian-born, my mother also, but my father was an Edinburgh man, and my earliest memories are filled with word-pictures of that city drawn in warm tones of affection by a home-sick Scot. Many an hour have I sat at my father's feet, as we gathered around the fire of a winter's evening, listening to his stories. He had a wide range of Indian and soldier anecdotes so dear to a boy's heart, but none of them live so clearly in my recollection as those he had to tell of his birth-place. Long before I knew what geography was I had a fairly intimate knowledge of Edinburgh. Calton Hill, Arthur's Seat, Samson's Ribs, Holyrood Palace, High Street and Princes Street, I had the right location and a true picture of them all. When boy-like I would be building forts with blocks or in the sand, they would always be called Edinburgh Castle.

I knew all his stories except one, and that one was his own life. I heard that too, at last, and it came about in this wise. An important registered letter used to come to father quarterly, containing his soldier's pension. Until I was well along in school I was not specially interested in the envelope or its contents, but one day I read the address as it lay near me on the table, and it was "559 Cpl. G. McDonald, R.C.R." Naturally I became curious. My father, George Pringle, was getting George McDonald's letter and money. My father was honest, I never, of course, questioned that. Still it was a puzzle to my boyish mind. He came into the room, saw what I was doing, and so I asked him to tell me about it. "It must look odd to you, my boy," he said, "and I've been waiting until you were old enough to hear and understand the explanation. To-night after supper, if no visitors come, I'll tell you the reason of it." That evening under the lamplight we gathered around his arm-chair and he told his own story.

"Long ago," he said, "when I was a boy, our family were living very happily in what was then one of the best parts of old Edinburgh.

My father was a man of substance and gave us all a good schooling and a trade. Of my mother I shall only say that she was to me the most wonderful and the most beautiful woman in the world. I had a twin brother John and we were very much alike in appearance. When we were fourteen years old our mother died. We mourned as only boys of that age can mourn, with deep grief too poignant for words. Within three years father married again. Our step-mother was an excellent woman and kind to us, and I know now my father did right. But we couldn't bear to have anyone else in our own mother's place. Loyal in our love to her we grew embittered towards our father. There were no "words," but when about seventeen years old we ran away from home, tramped south to London, and there, being Edinburgh tradesmen, soon found work. A year or so and then we got an inkling that father had traced us. Determined not to go back we enlisted in the Rifle Brigade and to hide our identity gave our names as John and George McDonald, our mother's maiden name. You see where our hearts were. Within the year our unit left for

Canada, and we had been in barracks at Halifax, Nova Scotia, only a few months when we were paraded one day before the commanding officer, Col. Lawrence. He took us into his own room and there he spoke to us as a friend. He had received a letter eloquent with a father's love for his two wandering laddies. Father had traced us by our Christian names, and our likeness to each other. I think, too, the name McDonald, which we thought would baffle him, only made him more certain. Col. Lawrence read the letter aloud to us, and it moved us deeply. Money enough was enclosed to buy our discharge and pay our passage home. The officer urged us to return. At first we were inclined to yield, but some dour devil of bitterness took control of our hearts and we said we would not go, would accept no money, and wished to have no further communication with our father. Such was the unrelenting reply the colonel would have to send back to Edinburgh. How many, many times has remorse punished me for that unkind decision. Yet we blindly thought that love and loyalty to the mother we had lost made it right that we should turn our backs on

our father's outstretched arms. We never heard from him again, and we have lost all trace of our relatives in Scotland.

"You can easily construct the rest of my story. After serving some years more we left the army for a time. I was married to your mother, Mary Cowan, at Murray Harbor South, Prince Edward Island. Shortly after we re-enlisted under our army name in the Royal Canadian Rifles, then a newly organized regiment, with which I served until I finally gave up the soldier life, and settled in Galt under my right name. My service was sufficient to get me a medal and a pension. The pension comes addressed as you have seen, and the medal is similarly inscribed. It is the regimental number that identifies me and the money and medal are rightfully mine. But a thousand pensions can never ease my heart of regrets for the suffering we needlessly inflicted on our father who loved us and whom we loved."

*   *   *   *   *

This was the homely story told in my father's words to those kiltie lads that summer afternoon under the apple trees in an alien land. They

listened and understood, for every true Scottish heart responds to these stories of our own folk and our homeland.

> From the lone shieling of the misty island
> Mountains divide them, and a waste of seas,
> But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
> And they in dreams behold the Hebrides.

And it's all the same whether they are from the east coast or the west, the Highlands, or the Islands, or the Borders, city or country-born, the Scot never knows the place Scotland has in his affections until he becomes an exile.

I slipped away after saying farewell, and, with my faithful henchman Macpherson, climbed up on a waiting lorry and was off down the dusty road towards Boulogne, homesick for the men I left behind me.

SEQUEL

It was my privilege to spend the winter of 1919-20 in Edinburgh taking lectures at New College, a glorious year. I had searched the city for traces of my father's people without success, and had almost given up hopes of ever finding them. One day early in the session I was

standing in the Common Hall of the college chatting with other students, when one of them named Scott asked me if he might enquire why my father went to Canada, for I had been saying he came from Edinburgh. I gave him a few details and he seemed much interested. Further explanations and his eyes lighted up with excitement. I soon found what caused it. Several eager questions and answers back and forth and I knew that one of my great ambitions had been realized. I had found one of the old Edinburgh Pringles from whom we had been estranged so many years. His mother was a Pringle, the daughter of an older brother of my father's. It was one of the supreme occasions of my life. In our hand-clasp in that college hall under the shadow of the Castle, the separation of nearly a century was ended. Some of you can guess how deeply I was stirred. Fancy or fact, I was certain he had my father's voice and eyes. We opened our hearts to each other and it was pleasant talk. I had reason to be proud of my new-found cousin. He was then assistant-minister in one of the noblest of Edinburgh's many fine churches, "Chalmer's Territorial

United Free," commonly called "The West Port." My first sermon in my father's city was preached from his pulpit, and in it I could not forbear telling the congregation of the strange and happy meeting with their minister.

XIII.

Last Chance

FOR three months in the fall of 1918 I served with the 1st Canadian Tanks. Canada had two tank battalions organized late in the war. Neither of them had the good fortune to get to France. The first was composed of volunteer recruits drawn largely from the Universities of Ontario and Quebec, and they were a remarkably keen lot of soldiers. Quite a number of the officers belonged to the faculties of these colleges and many of the men were graduates or undergraduates.

After arrival from Canada they were under canvas for a week or two at Rhyll in Wales, but soon moved into permanent quarters on the Bovington farm in Dorset county. Bovington was a great tank camp. A number of Imperial tank units along with ours were located there for training, with large machine-shops and many auxiliary units. The country immediately around the huts swarmed with soldiers and "herds" of noisy tanks.

I joined the battalion for duty about mid-August and stayed with them until after the Armistice. Those were very happy weeks. Everyone was good to me. Besides I had just come from the turmoil of France, and the quaint, quiet, pastoral beauty of Dorset seemed a haven of peace. I had pleasant times in camp. Then there were exhilarating walks to take with my good friends, Somerville, Smith, Macfarlane, Bobbie Kerr and others, over the downs through miles of purple heather, and along deep hedge-lined country roads to some old-fashioned thatch-roofed village, where we would have tea and a rest before returning. Or of a morning we would walk down the six miles to Lulworth Cove on the coast, three miles of our journey between hedges of giant rhododendron, with the limbs of oak, pine and beech trees forming a leafy arch over our heads. At the Cove hotel we would enjoy one of their famous boiled-lobster dinners, with potatoes, water-cress and lettuce, and a rice-custard dessert. Dorset, too, is a country filled with stirring, historic association recalling frequent battles fought against sea-borne invaders, and many also were the smug-

glers' stories we heard of this shore so near to France and so filled with coves and caves. There is romance as well as adventure. Thomas Hardy found inspiration in the Dorset folk-lore for his masterpiece, "Tess of the D'Urber-villes." The most imposing castle-ruin I have seen is there, Corfe Castle, visible for miles against the sky. It recalls fierce attack and pro-longed siege in the days of Cavalier and Round-head.

By the beginning of November the battalion was through its training, taking in its written examinations the highest marks in the camp. Soon after came the eagerly-awaited order to mobilize for France. In a few days we had our lorries parked, our kits ready, our fighting "colors" up on our tunics, and our final letters from England sent off home. The day was set, I think Nov. 14th, for our embarkation at a channel port for France.

They would have done great deeds in battle these fine bright lads, but they were not to be given the opportunity. Nov. 11th, 1918, was a dismal day for the Canadian Tank Corps. At eleven o'clock the order, "Cease fire," sounded

along our whole line in France and the Armistice emerged into history, blasting their hopes of active service. On a Sunday following I had to preach a sermon of rejoicing to the battalion. It was a parade service so that I had a congregation of 900 men who gave me a perfect hearing, but all the same the sermon was a failure. I knew it would be even if I had been eloquent, and in my heart I was glad that these Canadian boys could not rejoice with me. They were disgusted with their fate. Another day or two and they would have got to France, and that would have been something, even if they hadn't been fortunate enough to get into battle.

From their standpoint it was no occasion for hilarity. They fired no guns, they beat no drums, and generally were a very gloomy-looking lot of fellows. I am enough of a barbarian to like them all the better for it. Later in the week I tried to relieve the situation a little for some of them by telling in the rest-hut one evening what I knew of the naming of one of the famous Klondike creeks.

* * * * *

There is a well-known creek in the North

called Last Chance and I shall try to tell you something of its story. It may help you to feel that while you missed the real fighting in France there's still lots of chance of adventure in life for you all. Last Chance is a tributary of Hunker Creek, fifteen miles in the hills back of Dawson. In the rush days a road-house was put up there and named after the creek. Later it was assumed that the creek had got its name from the road-house, and this had been so named because it was the "last chance to get a drink" outward bound on that trail. But here's the real story.

"Old Yank" was the man who gave the creek its name. He was a gambler of that kind who go out into the wilds among giant mountain-peaks, and in far-off, unnamed valleys alone with their pick-axe, shovel, and gold-pan stake their lives on the chance that there is gold in rock or gravel. Who can quarrel with such gambling? There are no marked cards in that game. If they win they win clean, and if they lose, well they've lived a glorious, free life filled with health, hope, and work without a master, and the companionship of a few choice friends.

The old man had come to the time when he knew that shortly his prospecting days would be ended. Then he would land in some Old Man's Home unless he could make a clean-up soon and have enough to save him from that baleful finish. He had made several "stakes" when he was younger in the southern mountains, but he had either thrown his wealth away in the purchase or development of worthless claims, on further prospecting expeditions, or had lost it in a gold camp where he had been fleeced by some of the various kinds of human vultures which always flocked to the gold-diggings, when they proved rich, to prey upon the miners.

He told me a story of how once in the early days in the Caribou he was sitting in a card game with a number of strangers. He had lost half his spring clean-up to them when the police raided the road-house and took them all "in" to stand trial before Judge Begbie. Begbie was a man noted for his swift, stern methods and his keen penetration in court. He didn't interfere with what he called "square" card gambling among a group of miners, but he was a terror to the professional card-sharper. Next day every

man pleaded that he was a working miner and had just come in from the hills. Where all were dressed alike in rough clothes it seemed impossible to decide who were telling the truth. Begbie never hesitated. "Show me the palms of your hands," he said, and the constable made them line up with their hands held up, palms out. The judge inspected them rapidly, ordered two men detained and dismissed the others. Those released had callouses on their hands that you can get only by the use of pick and shovel. The two detained, questioned, and sent to penitentiary in New Westminster were soft-handed.

When I first met Yank the sinews of his right hand were so drawn up and stiffened by the jar of the pick through years of work that he could not open his hand. The way he got his fingers around the pick-handle was by shoving the end of it in with his left hand through the curve of thumb and forefinger on his right.

He was busy prospecting in a valley near the Klondike at the time those wonderful gold-fields were discovered. He was only a divide or two away. A squaw-man passing with three Indians on his way to the mouth of the Klondike to fish

salmon had stopped a day with him. He advised the man to "pan" here and there, where there was rim-rock showing, as they went along in the creek-bottoms. He himself was getting light prospects and it might be better closer in to the Klondike basin. He asked and was promised that, if they struck anything good, one of them would come back and let him know. They followed his advice and found rich pay on Rabbit Creek, but they failed to keep their promise to the old man whose advice had so enriched them. Yank never knew of the Klondike stampede, until the next year when two strangers, who had got lost, wandered into his valley and told him the amazing news. He put on his pack and left forthwith but he was too late. Hundreds of men from Stewart and Forty-Mile were now located on the best ground and the stream of stampeding "cheechacos" from the outside world was already commencing to flood in. There was nothing left that he thought worth staking. He crossed the ridge from Rabbit Creek, (now called Bonanza), with a heavy heart, heading back to his lonely cabin. Off the divide he came into a narrow gulch which he followed. It

widened into a good-sized valley. He was surprised as he went along to see neither cabins nor claim-stakes. He travelled its whole length indeed and found none. Although right in the rich region it had been overlooked. When he got to the mouth of the gulch he saw why, in those first days of hurried staking it had been left untouched, for the valley narrowed into a very small opening where it entered the larger Hunker creek. The stampeders passing up and down Hunker would rarely see the scarcely noticeable break in the hills hidden by the trees, or if they saw it would not think it worth exploring. He lost no time in going back up the creek to the wider part. There he put down a hole near the rim where it was only a few feet to bed-rock and found excellent prospects. He now set about staking Discovery claim. With his axe he cut, about five feet from the ground, a smooth four-inch face on four sides of a small tree in the centre of the valley, and then pencilled on the down-stream side this inscription, "No. 1 Post. Discovery claim. I, Joe. Chronister, claim fifteen hundred feet down-stream, and from base to base, for placer mining pur-

poses," signed his name with date and hour, and the number of his miner's certificate. Then he stepped off five hundred paces roughly down-stream through the brush and then "blazed" his second tree as before, marking it, "No. 2 Post, Discovery claim," and writing as on No. 1, with "down-stream" changed to "up-stream."

He camped that night on his claim, and before he lay down on his spruce-bough bed to sleep, he sat awhile by the dying fire dreaming old dreams again. Perhaps this time it would be very rich; it prospected fine but "prospects" were only prospects. "Well," he mused, "old-timer, you're near the end of the game. If there's nothing good under the muck here it will be 'over the hill to the poorhouse' for you. It's your last chance, last chance."

It was with this thought running through his mind that next day he entered the recording office in Dawson, with his good friend the stalwart Capt. Jim McLeod at his side to see that he got square treatment, and recorded discovery on his creek which was named on the government records, "Last Chance," at his request.

It is good to know that Yank's claim was rich.

Providence had been kind to the old man. He saved his clean-ups and lived in comfort the rest of his days in a snug log-cabin in Dawson, near the wild waters of the turbulent Klondike, where they rush into the depths of the mighty Yukon.

XIV.

A Moose Hunt

IT was my good fortune to be in London on "leave" the day the Armistice was signed. At 11 o'clock in the morning the multitude of giant "siren" whistles, used for warning the approach of enemy air-craft, broke into a wild chorus of deafening howls, and Londoners knew that Germany, the aggressor, had accepted the lowly seat of the vanquished. The sounds of public rejoicing commenced immediately and by the late afternoon the celebration was in full swing. It was a celebration in which I could not be content with a spectator's part. I entered into it with all my heart. The whole outburst, for the first day at least, was the spontaneous and natural expression of joy at a glad release from the curse of war, which had lain heavily upon the Old Land for four long, black, bitter years.

I then started out early in the evening, mingling with the immense crowds down Southampton Row and Kingsway to the Strand, along to Trafalgar Square, then up to Piccadilly, and

home after midnight by way of Regent and Oxford Streets. All those great thoroughfares and squares were filled from side to side with whirlpools of people. Everywhere were groups of dancers or singers, all sorts of foolish processions big and little, all sorts of bands, noisemakers and fireworks. Workmen standing on ladders, surrounded by thousands of madly cheering observers, were taking the light-shields off the street-lamps. This meant that London streets would be lighted for the first time since 1914. In the immense moving crowds huge circles would form as if by magic, then everyone in it, all strangers to one another, would join hands and dance up and down, and in and out, to some old song. I got into one of these happy groups by chance in front of Nelson's monument in Trafalgar Square, where we all danced up to the centre and back singing, "Here we go gathering nuts in May," and then commenced to circle round to the chorus of "Ring-a-ring-a-rosy." We were just like a throng of happy children at a picnic. Then the formation dissolved, and its members disappeared into the singing, shouting, noisy crowds.

I fell in with an English officer, and he and I joined forces with an English bugler wearing an Australian soldier's hat. He had lost his own cap and had picked this one up somewhere. We three marched along arm-in-arm; the bugler would blow a call, then pass the bugle to us and we would each make some hideous noises upon it. I had my Cameron glengarry on and as we crushed along with the crowd, every now and then, out of the clamor, I could hear voices calling to me, "Well done, Jock," "Good old Scotty." Don't think we were at all conspicuous, for nearly everyone was doing things quite as foolish. We felt compelled to shout, cheer, sing, or do something to express our overflowing joy that the war was past at long last. These people of the Old Country knew the deep tragedy, the terrible heart-breaking, nerve-racking strain of the war as Canada could not know it. "It was meet that they should make merry and be glad." I saw practically no drinking nor roughness. It was a remarkable demonstration free, that night, from all the artificiality of pre-arrangement.

Next day I attended the Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. The King and

Queen were there and many personages of note, but it was common folk who filled the vast building and crowded the streets for blocks around. There was no sermon. There could not have been any sermon or preacher adequate to such an occasion. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah was read, and how mystically and beautifully it expressed our thoughts, short prayers were said, and then the people stood up to sing, led by a great military massed band and the Cathedral organ. The instrumental music alone was enough to thrill one's soul, but when those thousands joined, with heart and voice, in melodious thanksgiving to God for release from the abundant travail of the bitter years, filling the glorious old temple full with a glad tumultuous harmony, the effect was indescribable. Hundreds were so moved they could find no voice for song, and could only lift their faces to heaven with tears of joy running down their cheeks. In all the history of the Empire there never was a moment when the whole British people were so stirred and held by such high and tense emotion. The glad, loud song of thankfulness had also the minor note vibrant with sorrow,

there was the echo of a sob in it. This great nation, rejoicing in righteous victory, kept sad and sacred memories of her million slain.

While in London for these few wonderful days I stayed at the West Central Hotel, and there, one afternoon later in the week, I was delighted to meet an old "tillicum" of the trails, Tom Patton. For three rare days we companied together and talked about old friends and other days. We revelled in memories of the glorious years we spent together in the far-off northland. In imagination we travelled again many a well-known mile, and memorable experiences we had in common were recalled. I was sorry when the last day of my leave came, for Patton was one of the very best of my old Yukon friends and "there are no friends like the old friends after all." That last evening three other old Klondikers, whom we had discovered in London, foregathered with us in my room and enjoyed a Yukon evening. There were many interesting stories told that night. Each had his own contribution, and there were some yarns in whose spinning we all lent a hand. There was one in which Patton and I had equal share, one I

had often told to my comrades in France to while away a weary hour. It described a hunting trip up the Yukon river he and I took one fall to get some wild-fowl. We ran on bigger game and that is why I call it a Moose Hunt.

* * * * *

In 1906, late in the autumn, when every night brought sharp frost, and fish and fowl were heading for the sea and the south to escape the icy-fingers of on-coming winter, Patton and I planned a fortnight's holiday up the Yukon to shoot ducks.

We hired a rowboat at Dawson, and put it aboard a river steamboat on which we had taken passage up-stream about a hundred miles to the mouth of White River. There the steamer slowed up enough to let us launch our boat and get into it with our outfit, leaving us then on the great river to our own devices.

We decided to make camp immediately for it was getting on in the day. So we pulled across to the left bank, tied up our boat, and commenced to look about us. I noticed a well-marked trail in the brush which I followed for a few yards and came on a cabin. I knocked at

the door and it was quickly opened by the occupant. I told him who I was and he asked me in. The place was dark, dirty, and smelly, nor was I taken with the man's personal appearance, for his hair was long and tangled, and his face almost hidden by an untrimmed beard. His welcome was genuine, however, and when I grew accustomed to the dim candle-light I noticed that he had clear, kindly eyes. He was glad to see me. I was his first visitor in three months. He had staked some gold-bearing rock, and there he had lived alone for a year trying to uncover it enough to prove it a real ledge, and to prospect it sufficiently so that he might interest "capital" in it. He had absolute faith in the value of his find, talking with assurance of the day when he would sell it for thousands.

I informed him that I had a partner and called to Patton who came along. We told him what we were out for. He advised us to stay the night there, and in the early morning we would be sure to get some sport in the marshes, ponds, and slack-water where the White joins the Yukon. He wouldn't hear of us making camp for ourselves, and we had to accept his hospitality. He

was very lonely, he said, and it did him a whole lot of good to see us and have some talk.

Late in the afternoon we went out to examine the ground and arrange our morning shoot. We heard a strange noise coming from beyond the distant northern skyline of the river valley. It sounded like the far-off cackling of barn-yard geese. Soon the source of it appeared in the north. It was the advance guard of a great flight of sandhill cranes on their journey to the south coast. They are toothsome birds, about the size of a small turkey but standing higher. They are very shy and it is all but impossible to get them within range of a shot-gun. I am not exaggerating when I say that they flew for two hours in a continuous, clamorous stream of arrow-shaped formations from our northern horizon, until they disappeared from view over the southern hills. There were thousands of them in that one contingent.

The old-timer, "Alabama Bill" he was called, served for supper that night a meat-stew composed of porcupine, moose-meat and other things. I ate my share and kept it. Patton is more sensitive that way than I am, and on this

occasion he proved traitor to the good old British maxim, "What we have, we hold." I don't blame him. One had need of keen appetite and strong digestion to enjoy and profit by that mysterious mixture. "Alabama" made us talk far on into the morning, but at last we rolled into our bunks. We slept uneasily for various causes, and were glad to get out in the early morning to be ready in position for daylight and our birds.

To make a long story short, we had good luck the next ten days as we floated downstream towards Dawson, tying up and camping when and where we wished, and hunting in likely places. The sloughs and little lakes were alive with ducks and geese, and we had our boat half-full of them before we reached Indian river. From that point it was an easy day's run to Dawson.

We made camp on the shore at Indian in the afternoon, and went back into the thick woods on the extensive flats behind us to explore. We came on a pond and got a few more ducks. This pond was peculiar in that at one side a trail led down to it, and the shore was trampled as if herds of cattle were accustomed to water there.

It was a "moose-lick," a place to which for years, at certain seasons, the moose came at night from miles around, because the water and soil had in them some salty substance which they liked or needed.

We weren't hunting big game and so had brought only one rifle for emergencies, but here was a chance right under our noses that we couldn't pass, although we knew it was rather late in the season for moose to visit the lick. At the edge of the pond we picked a good-sized tree that we could climb and find secure footing in. Then we went back the half-mile to the shore and had supper.

When it grew dark we went out to our tree and climbed up in it, to watch for the possible coming of the moose. For four long, miserably cold hours we clung to our perch. It was pitch dark and absolutely silent, save for the dull murmur of the Yukon, and the "plunk, plunk" of some little diving duck at long intervals in the pond. Half-a-dozen times we were inclined to abandon our vigil, but one encouraged the other and we hung on. About midnight we were rewarded by hearing, through the darkness, a

sound like the breaking of a branch away on the mountain slope. It startled us, coming on us out of the night when we were tense with prolonged listening to unbroken silence. Soon there was no mistaking the approach of the monarch of the woods. It seemed as if some great boulder were crashing down the hillside through the trees. Every now and then there would be a minute of complete stillness, and we could imagine him standing, with lordly, lifted head and wide-branching antlers, listening and sniffing the air for strange noises or smells. He seemed satisfied that no danger lurked in the woods, for he came straight across from the foot of the mountain. At last by the noise we knew he was nearing our tree. Nearer he came and very near, leisurely now, probably feeding. In the dense darkness we could see nothing of him as yet until we heard something scrape against our tree. Looking down with straining eyes, I marked his dark, slowly-moving outline in the brush. I could have dropped on the animal's back had I been so minded. The proverbial "salt" might easily have been placed on his tail. The time for action had come. I had the rifle.

In the darkness I couldn't see the barrel, so real aiming was impossible, but the moose was that near I felt I couldn't miss him anyway. I fired where I judged his shoulder should be. I regret to tell you that the flame of the gun showed that the bullet had gone an inch over his back, and I had missed him altogether! My left arm was around a limb and so the second shot was a trifle slow, but after the first, it seemed as if the moose jumped into the air, turned, and was fifty feet away in the timber on his back-trail when he lit! We heard him going at head-long speed and fired at the noise, but he went on until the sound died away in the distance.

We crawled down to the ground, stiff with cold, and dumb with disappointment. I knew it was a complete miss, but "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and we lighted matches and searched the ground and leaves for blood-stains. We searched his trail thus for twenty yards, then gave up, went back to camp and under our blankets. Patton was very decent about it. He knew how I felt. Once only did he make reference to my failure. The next day we were nearing Dawson, where our friends

would come and inspect our "bag," when he said, "Well, George, wouldn't it be pleasant to pull into Dawson with a fine moose lying between us in the boat?" "Don't say another word, Tom," I replied, "or I'll burst into tears!"

I felt my almost inexcusable failure very keenly, for I made three separate trips, alone, to Indian river, and hunted there persistently, and very uncomfortably too, for that moose, but he never gave me another chance.

XV.

An Old Prospector

THE good ship *Araguaya* of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Line was under commission during the war as a Canadian hospital ship on the North Atlantic. She and her sister ship the *Essequibo,* with the *Llandovery Castle* and *Letitia,* composed the fleet used to convey our wounded from the old land to Canada. The *Letitia* was wrecked in a fog on the rocks near Halifax with no loss of lives. The *Llandovery Castle* was sunk by a submarine while returning empty to England. Mostly all the ship's officers, M.O.'s, nurses, and crew were drowned or shot by the fiend who commanded the U-boat. The chaplain, Capt. McPhail, was killed. By strange chance his body, with life-belt, was carried towards France and months afterwards was found on the beach and buried.

Thank God all the German submarines were not run by such as sank the *Llandovery.* I have a snapshot taken from the deck of the *Essequibo*

of a U-boat which stopped that ship, searched her thoroughly but courteously and then let her go unharmed.

I spent ten months as chaplain on the *Araguaya* and a happy time it was. That was the "cushiest" job I have ever had. We were under cover all the time, had abundance of good food and luxuries for everyone, and every device that money could buy to entertain our patients on their nine-day trip across. Besides, in my special work I had a flock which never strayed far from me. They couldn't!

Practically all the staterooms had been taken out, only sufficient being left for M.O's, nurses, and ship's officers. This made fine, large, airy wards for the bed cases, fitted with swinging cots so that they did not feel the roll of the vessel. I had a comfortable room all to myself, for Col. Whidden and later Col. Murray were both very considerate of my comfort.

You will be interested to know that at the celebration of the completion of the Kiel Canal, the *Araguaya* was loaned by the R.M.S.P. Co. to the Kaiser for use as his private yacht during the regatta, as a token of British goodwill. The

suite of rooms our O.C. used had been the Kaiser's, and mine was one of those that "Little Willie" had occupied!

The ship's officers and crew were all first-class seamen of heroic stuff. The majority of them had been through the dread experience of being torpedoed, some two or three times, and had seen many of their mates shot down or drowned. Yet here they were from stoke-hold to pilot-house carrying on as cheerfully as ever.

Capt. Barrett, the skipper, a short, stout, ruddy-faced Englishman sat at the head of the table, with our O.C. and officers to his right and his own officers to his left. Many a merry meal we had together there. I can hear Major Shillington's steadying voice when he thought he saw trouble ahead in our arguments, Gunn with the happy laugh, Langham bringing us down to cold, hard facts, and the others good men all, with whom I companied those days. Tell your choicest funny story and you'd hear Capt. Johnson's stage-whisper, "I kicked the slats out of my cradle the first time I heard that!" I often wore my tartan uniform for "old-time's" sake, and the Cameron trousers always started

the skipper bemoaning that now we'd have a stormy night since the padre had put on his "tempestuous pants." Of course we frequently fought the question out around the table. I based my claim to wear Highland garb, blow high or blow low, not only on my connection with the 43rd, but because I was a thoroughbred Scot. I carried the war into the enemy's country by maintaining that it was wrong to let anyone wear it but those of Scottish extraction. My own Camerons were nearly all Scots, this I know from careful official census taken in France. We had ten or fifteen per cent. who did not belong to "the elect," but they became fine fellows from being continually in such good company, and I find no fault with them for wearing the kilts. But the principle is wrong. Suppose on the field of battle a fierce and haughty Prussian surrendered to a kilted man whom he thought to be a Scot, only to find on getting back to the corral that his captor was a peaceful Doukhobor in kilts. What a humiliation and what cruelty! I actually met an officer in France belonging to a Canadian Kiltie battalion (not ours) who asked me the meaning

of the words "Dinna Forget," the title of a book which lay before him on the table. I asked him what he thought it was. He said "I suppose the name of a girl, the heroine of the story, 'Dinna' maybe a local way of spelling 'Dinah,' and 'Forget' is her surname. That's my guess." He was in full, Scottish, regimental field-uniform when he spoke these words! I was dumb for a little before I could tell him what the words really meant. It is not the claim of superiority of race but simply a matter of honest practice. The tartan costume has become the recognized badge of Scottish birth or ancestry. It is therefore perpetrating a fraud upon the public for a man of any other race to parade in this distinctively national garb.

It would fill too many pages even to outline the varied aspects of our life aboard the boat. Matron Shaw and her noble band of nurses should have a page to themselves. We carried about nine hundred patients each trip and after two days out, when they became able to hear "The Return of the Swallow" recited without getting pale around the gills, everything went along with a hum. There were lectures, concerts,

movies, shovelboard and deck tennis tournaments, dozens of phonographs and all sorts of parlor games and books, and on Sunday our religious services. The boys were all glad to be going home to Canada and they were easily entertained.

The great event was, of course, our first sight of land and then the disembarkation. The later trips we unloaded at Portland, Maine, and I cannot recollect having seen a more magnificent demonstration of public good-will than was given us by those Yankees. The first time we put in there, while the boat was still twenty feet away from the dock the thousands of people on the wharf commenced to cheer and the bands to play, and we were bombarded with candies, cigars, cigarettes and fruit. Much of it fell into the water. When we tied up a score of committees came aboard and almost submerged us under endless quantities of oranges, apples, bananas, grapes, dough-nuts, cake, sandwiches, ice-cream, tea, coffee and soft drinks, and expensive candies and everything else that we could eat or drink, that the law would allow, in superabundance. They took our hundreds of

letters and many telegrams and sent them without costing us a penny. The latest newspapers, bouquets, of choice flowers for everyone, concert parties, and indeed everything good that kind hearts could think of was showered upon us. I remember a western bed-patient asked me if I thought they would get him a plug of a special brand of chewing tobacco. He hadn't been able to buy it in four years overseas and it was his favorite. "Sure thing," one of them said and in half-an-hour two men came aboard lugging along enough of that tobacco to stock a small store! I cannot go further into details. Enough to say that every trip it was the same, except that their hospitality became more systematized. Probably fifteen thousand wounded Canadian soldiers passed through Portland on their way home, and I know they will find it hard to forget the free-handed, warm-hearted welcome they got in that city. This memory will surely be a leaven working towards the maintenance and development of peace and good-will between Canada and the United States.

But I must tell my story of the North. One trip Major Dick Shillington persuaded me to

give them a Klondike evening. We gathered down below in "H" Mess and there I told something of the life-story of my old friend of bygone days, a trail-blazer and prospector, Duncan McLeod.

* * * * *

When first I met Duncan McLeod, "Cassiar Mac" he was commonly called, he and his partner, John Donaldson, both old men, were working far up a tributary of Gold Bottom Creek which had not yet been fully prospected. Each liked to have his own house and do his own cooking, and so they lived within a few yards of each other in the creek bottom at the foot of the mountain summit that rose between them and Indian River. My trail over to the other creeks passed across their ground, and when we became friends I seldom failed to arrange my fortnightly trip over the divide so as to reach their place about dusk. I would have supper with one or the other and stay the night.

McLeod was an old-country Scot, Donaldson born of Scottish parents in Glengarry county, Ontario. I am not using their real names, but

they were real men. One of them, Donaldson, is still living in the wilds of the Yukon, still prospecting. He was the first white man the Teslin Indians had seen and known. They looked upon him as their "Hi-yu-tyee," a sort of super-chief, during the years he lived near them. He had been just and kind with them, and his consequent influence saved occasional serious friction between the Indians and whites from becoming murder or massacre.

After supper we would all three gather in one of the cabins and I would hear good talk until far towards midnight. Then there would be a pause and McLeod would say, "Well, Mr. Pringle, I think it is time we were getting ready for our beds." I knew what he meant. "Yes, it is," I would reply. The Bible would be handed me, I would read a chapter and we would kneel in prayer to God. Then to our bunks for a good sleep and early away in the morning for me to make the twenty-five miles over the heights to Gold Run before dark.

What great talks those were I used to hear. I was only a boy then, and these old men had

seen so much of the wild free life of the West of long ago days. What stirring adventures they had had! They came west before the railways by way of the American prairies, and, lured by gold discoveries, had entered the mountains, and then following the prospector's will-o-the wisp, the better luck that lies "just over the divide," they had gone farther and farther north. They had met and become partners in the Caribou camp, and had been together nearly forty years, in the Cassiar, on the Stewart, at Forty-Mile and now the Klondike.

Donaldson had a wonderful native power of description. When story-telling he would pace slowly back and forth in the shadow beyond the dim candle-light and picture with quiet, resonant voice scenes and events of the past. How vivid it seemed to me! How the soul of the young man thrilled as he listened! Often there was a yearning at my heart when under his spell to lay aside my mission and go out into the farthest wilds, seeking adventure and living the free, fascinating life they had lived. How I wish I had written down these stories as they were told to me. But maybe they wouldn't have

"written," for much of the interest lay in the personality of the story-teller.

McLeod's part was usually to help with dates or names when Donaldson's memory failed to recall them, but often he too would spin a yarn, and when he did there was always in its telling a gentleness, I can think of no better word, that gave a charm often missing in Donaldson's rougher style.

They were both big men physically, but McLeod had been magnificent. He was now nearly eighty years old and broken with rheumatism, but in the giant frame and noble face and head crowned with its snow-white hair I saw my ideal of what a great Highland Chieftain might have been in the brave days of old.

Donaldson told me one night, while his partner was making a batch of bread in his own cabin, what he knew of McLeod's history. "I have never known a man," he said, "that would measure up to my partner. None of us want our record searched too closely but it wouldn't make any difference to him. Nothing, nobody, seemed to have any power to make Mac do anything crooked or dirty. Whisky, gambling,

bad women—he passed them up without apparent effort. Very strange too, even the few good women we have met in these camps never won anything from him but wholesome admiration. He had only to say the word and he could have had any one of them, but he didn't seem to care that way. What his experience had been before we met I do not know, he has never spoken much about it to anyone. But he and I have lived together as partners for nearly half a century, through the crazy, wicked days of all these gold camps, and Mac never did anything that he would be ashamed to tell his own mother."

A fine tribute. Perhaps under the circumstances the finest thing that could be said of any man, for you cannot imagine the thousand almost irresistible temptations that were part of the daily life of the stampeders in those northern camps. Enough for me to say that many men of really good character back East, where they were unconsciously propped up by influences of family, church, and community, failed miserably to keep their footing when they came to the far north where all these supports were absent and

temptation was everywhere. I do not judge them. God only knows the fight they had before they surrendered. So it was an arresting event to meet a man who had seen it all and whose partner of forty years told me he had lived clean.

I often wondered what McLeod's story was. I had known him for three years before I ventured to ask him details about his home in Scotland, and why he left it to come so far away. I knew he had been reared in a village south of Edinburgh, in a good home with good parents, and much else he had told me, but there had always been a reticence that made you certain there was something else held back.

One winter night when we were alone in his cabin, he opened his heart to me. He was an old-fashioned Scot. I was his "minister" and he knew me well. Besides he was coming to the end of the trail, and he needed a confidant.

He said his story was hardly worth while bothering me with, I knew most of it, but what he could never tell anyone was about the lassie he had loved and lost. He had fallen in love

with the brown eyes and winsome face of Margaret Campbell, a neighbour's daughter. They had gone to the same school, had taken their first communion together, and had both sung in the village church choir. When he revealed his love to her she told him she had guessed his secret and had lang syne given her heart to him. They were betrothed and very happy. But Margaret took ill in the fall and died before the new year. Early in the year he sailed from Leith for Canada, hoping that new scenes would soften his grief. As the years passed he kept moving west and then north. He grew to like the free life of the prospector and had not cared to leave the mountains and the trails.

Time had healed the wound but his love for the sweetheart of his youth was just as true and tender as ever. From a hidden niche at the head of his bed he took down a small box, brought it to the table near the candle and unlocked it. He showed me his simple treasures. His rough, calloused hands trembled as he lifted them carefully from the box. There was a small photo so faded I could barely see the face on it.

"You'll see she was very beautiful," he said, for he saw with the clear vision of loving memory what was not for my younger but duller eyes to discern. There was her gold locket with a wisp of brown hair in it. "She left me this," he said, "when she died." Last, there was an old letter, stained and worn, the only love-letter she had ever written him, for he had only once been far enough or long enough away to need letters. He had spent a week in Glasgow after they became engaged and she had written to him. This was all.

Somehow I felt as if I were on sacred ground, that the curtain had been drawn from before a Holy Place, and I was looking upon something more beautiful than I had ever seen before. As the old man put the box away his eyes were shining "with a light that never was on sea or land." Mine were moist, and for a little I couldn't trust my voice to speak as I thought of the life-time of unswerving fealty to his dead lassie. Such long, lonely years they must have been!

We did not say much more that night but the words we spoke were full of understanding and

reverence. When it grew late and he handed me the Bible I hesitated in choosing a chapter, but not for long. The comfort and rejoicing of the twenty-third Psalm were all we wanted.

One morning, not long afterwards, Donaldson came into my cabin on Hunker creek in evident distress. McLeod hadn't come out as usual to his work that morning, and he had gone to see what was wrong and found him in his bunk hardly able to speak. He had taken "a stroke." A neighbouring miner watched by the sick man while Donaldson hitched up his dogs and raced to Dawson for medical aid. Donaldson went off down the trail and I hurried up the gulch to my old friend. He lingered for two or three days. The doctor could do nothing for him but to ease his last moments.

I stayed near him until the end came. When he tried to speak his utterance was indistinct and what few words I could make out showed that his mind was wandering. Sometimes he was on the trail or in the camp, but oftenest he was home again in the far away land he loved, and in boyhood days among folk we did not

know save one, known only to me, whose name was continually on his lips.

He had a lucid interval just before he died and for a minute or two he thought and spoke clearly. I told him that death was near. Was there anything that we could do for him? "Not very much," he said, "I want Donaldson to have all I own. He's been a good partner. Bury my box with me. I'm not afraid to go now. It's just another prospecting trip to an unknown land and I have a Great Guide. He won't forsake an old prospector. He was one Himself, I'm thinking, when He came seeking us. He will keep a firm grip of me now that the trail is growing dark. I'm not afraid."

These were his last words, and as he slipped away, we, who were gathered in the dimly-lighted little cabin, felt somehow that the Guide he spoke of was right at hand. He would surely keep, "a firm grip" of the old miner on his last prospecting trip, even if strange storms were blowing, and it was black dark when they crossed the Great Divide. It would come morning too in that land when night was past, and

when the new day dawned I know he would soon find the one whom he had "loved long since and lost awhile."

XVI.

Soapy Smith, the Skagway Bandit

MY BILLET on the hospital ship *Araguaya* was very comfortable and my duties agreeable, but every time we reached port on the Canadian side of the Atlantic I had an impulse to desert the ship and become a stowaway on the hospital-train bound for British Columbia. It was there my wife and boy lived and I hadn't seen them for three years. However I got the chance at last to go without breaking regulations, for when I requested it, leave was readily granted me to stay ashore over one round-trip of the boat. This was supplemented by my taking the place of an absent conducting officer on the western train. So my transportation cost me nothing, except the congenial task of making myself generally useful to the returning soldiers.

We had crossed the prairies, dropping many

of our crowd at way points, and were climbing slowly along after supper up through a lonely stretch of mountains, when someone in the car where I was "visiting" gave it as his opinion that this would be a good piece of road on which to stage a train-robbery. This, of course, led to the mention of gun-men that they had known or heard of, men of the same ilk as Jesse James and Bill Miner. I contributed the story of Soapy Smith, the man who pulled off the most remarkably prolonged hold-up of which I have ever read. In the most approved dime-novel style he terrorized a town, not for a few days or weeks, but for six months.

* * * * *

"You'll have to see the spot where Soapy died." The Skagway man who said this was rather proud of the celebrity which the bandit had brought to the place. I had come by the steamboat the nine hundred miles north from Vancouver, and was forced to spend a day in Skagway before going over the White Pass on my way to Dawson. A resident of the town was taking me around showing me the sights of this mush-

room camp. It was humming with life and packed with people. The rush to the goldfields was then at its height. I judged by my friend's tone that he expected me to be deeply impressed with this particular sight. So down to the sea we went and out on the wharf. As we walked down he outlined the story of Smith's career in the camp. On the pier he showed me a dark stain, covering about a square foot, made by the life-blood of the man who for half-a-year forced Skagway to pay him tribute in hard cash. He was the leader of a group of men who robbed and cheated in wholesale style, and when it was necessary, in getting their victims money, did not stop at murder. No one had attempted successfully to interfere with him. Reputable merchants were all intimidated into handing him their "life-insurance premiums" whenever he asked for them. His reputation as a "killer" was such that on the fourth of July, when good Americans celebrate their freedom, he rode at the head of the procession on a white horse! Very few complained loudly enough for Soapy to hear. Without question his nerve is to be ad-

mired. I have never heard or read in the annals of the west anything to equal his record in that Alaskan port. Desperadoes have ridden into towns, "shot them up," took what they wanted and got away with it. But this man and his gang lived openly in a town of several thousands and in the most brazen fashion ran the place for months, although he was known as a crook, gunman, and leader of a gang of thugs. Skagway, it is true, was simply an eddy in a stream running into the gold-fields. In their mad haste to get on and over the Pass people wouldn't take time to straighten out the morals of the camp. The Soapy Smith business was especially uninviting as something to mix into. "It isn't my funeral," they would say, "and I don't want it to be."

Jefferson B. Smith hailed from the city of St. Louis in the U. S. A. He got the nickname he bore because at the beginning of his career of crookedness he used to sell soap to some of the citizens of Denver, Colorado. There is nothing remarkable about selling soap unless you do it Smith's way. In the evenings he and a con-

federate would set up their "stand" on a suitable downtown street. All he needed was a high box for a "pulpit" and a smaller box behind it to stand on. This with a flaring torch giving an uneven light, some cakes of cheap soap, a couple of five-dollar bills and some change, completed the outfit. A little clever "spieling," kept up more or less all evening, and the usual crowd would gather out of curiosity. He would show them an unwrapped piece of soap all the while extolling its great merits as a cleanser. To show how disinterested he was in introducing this superior article that only needed to be known to become popular, he would say he was going to wrap a five-dollar-bill in with some of these cakes of soap. He would sell the soap at fifty cents each piece, and everyone that bought stood to get the soap and make four dollars and fifty cents in cash out of the deal. Further if they watched him carefully they would see him actually put the five-dollar bill in when he wrapped up the soap, although he wouldn't guarantee that it would always be found there when the purchaser unwrapped his package. Of course

he deceived them simply by clever sleight-of-hand. Rarely would any money be found, but people liked to be fooled if it is done the right way. To get them "biting" he might let one of the bills go to a confederate who was seemingly just one of the crowd. It was a money-making business as a rule for there were ordinarily quite a number of "easy-marks" around. They got the soap anyway. So came the name "Soapy."

Well, it was the same old clever, crooked game in other bigger and bolder forms that he now worked in Skagway, with the gun-play in addition. When the steamboat City of Seattle came into port there on January 17th, 1898, Soapy and his "merrie-men" were among the passengers. He was a slight built man, only five feet seven inches tall, very dark complexioned with a full beard and moustache. He wore a round Stetson hat with a hard brim. He soon established headquarters in the "Kentucky saloon" and "Jeff Smith's Parlors." These were liquor saloons, not providing board or lodging, and running crooked gambling games in their rear,

a fruitful source of revenue to Smith's card-sharpers. Then he and his confederates got busy on all sorts of other schemes to steal people's money. He had at least thirty followers, and there wasn't a dishonest trick known to the underworld of those days that some of them couldn't work. They wore Masonic, Oddfellow, Elk and other fraternity emblems that might help in working "confidence-games." They opened up Information Bureaus where new-comers could be conveniently sized-up and robbed then or later on. One member who was very successful in luring victims was Old Man Tripp. He had grey hair, a long white beard and a benevolent countenance. It seemed impossible to suspect him of criminal intent. Smith had most of the gambling-joints paying him a big percentage. He even had men clever at the old, old "shell-game" running it in the fine weather at relay points on the trail.

One of his favorite stunts for a while at first was to recruit for the Spanish-American war which was just then stirring the fighting blood of Americans. While the would-be soldier was

stripped, having a fake medical examination, his clothing was looted of whatever money or valuables it might contain.

A rather amusing incident occurred during Smith's regime in connection with the efforts of a Sky Pilot to raise some money at Skagway to build a church in a little place along the coast called Dyea. The parson came to Skagway in a rowboat one morning and started out with his subscription list. One of the first he tackled by chance and unknown to himself was the notorious bandit. Smith heartily endorsed the proposition and headed the list with one hundred dollars which he paid over in cash to the clergyman. Then he took the latter gentleman along to the principal merchants, hotelmen and gamblers and saw to it that they all gave handsome donations. At the close of the day the visitor decided to make for home. He was happy in the possession of over $2,000 in cash for his new church, thinking too what a splendid fellow this Mr. Smith was. On the way to the beach he was "held up" by one of Mr. Smith's lieutenants and relieved of all the money

he had collected. He could get no redress.

Other occurrences, such as the smothering of the negro-wench in order to steal the few hundred dollars she had earned by washing, were despicable and worthy only of the meanest type of criminal.

Naturally there were many shooting scrapes in connection with the operations of the gang, and some killings, but nothing was done to end it. Not only was no move made to interfere with Soapy, but almost everyone refrained from speaking against him openly for reasons easy to understand. Of course there were men in Skagway who hotly resented the hold this outlaw had on the town, and were doing what they could to bring public sentiment to efficient action against him. One of these, a Canadian, was the editor of a local news sheet. In later years he became governor of Alaska. His name was Strong and it suited him, for he wasn't lacking in strength of character. One day, after his paper had appeared with an editorial making a scarcely-veiled attack on Soapy and his gang, he was met and stopped on the street by Smith ac-

companied by a tough named Mike Daley. They were loud and boisterous in accusing Strong of having offered personal insult to them in his newspaper. They demanded a retraction and apology and evidently meant to force a street-fight. Strong refused to withdraw his statement and declared that he intended to stand by his editorial. The loud quarrelling tones of the two desperadoes attracted the attention of two friends of Strong's, named D. C. Stephens and Allen, who happened to be walking down the same street. They hurried to the aid of their friend who at the risk of his life still refused to back down. The sight of reinforcements spoiled Smith's game and he and Daley went on without accomplishing their sinister purpose.

There was another man who did not hesitate to say anywhere, and in most forcible terms what he thought of these criminals. This man was Frank Reid, a land-surveyor. He was fearless, and too quick with a gun for these crooks to attempt to silence. But he got very little open support and could do nothing single-handed.

Of course things couldn't go on like this. In

the Spring matters reached a climax. Word had at last got into the Klondike that it wasn't safe to come out by way of Skagway with your gold, that you were likely to be relieved of your "poke" by desperadoes. This news commenced to turn out-going gold-laden traffic down the Yukon and out by way of St. Michaels. The Skagway merchants saw "the goose that laid the golden eggs" flying away, and it put them at last into a ferment of anger at the cause of it. This led to the formation of a Vigilance Committee of which Reid was the moving spirit.

Finally a Nanaimo man named Stewart, waiting for the steamboat on his way home from the Klondike, had $3,000.00 in nuggets stolen from him by one of Soapy's confidence men who had offered to turn it into currency. It was all he had and he made such a fuss that the whole town knew about his loss. He reported it to the U. S. Deputy-Marshal, a man named Taylor who was in Smith's pay. He got no satisfaction. The Vigilance Committee then took it up, and made it a "casus belli" against Soapy. They attempted to hold a secret

meeting in a private hall but Smith and his confederates managed to break in on them. They then adjourned to Sylvester's wharf. At the land-end of the pier Frank Reid and a man named Murphy were posted to stop anyone approaching who was not a member of the Committee. Smith heard of this move and set off on the war-path down the main street towards the water-front. He carried a loaded .30-.30 Winchester rifle and as he went down the road he called on everyone to put up their hands. There were hundreds of men there but Soapy got a completely unanimous "vote" as he passed along, until he reached Reid and in him he met a man who called his bluff. Reid ordered him to stop and fired at him, but his revolver, a .45 Colt, failed to go off. He then grabbed the muzzle of Smith's gun and shoved it up in the air before he could shoot. Smith in the struggle backed away hanging on to his rifle, and while the gun was thus lowered and pointed momentarily at Reid's groin he fired. Reid fell to the ground but instantly fired at Smith again. This time the revolver responded and Smith

dropped shot through the heart. He bled to death in a few minutes where he lay. This was the evening of July 8th, three days after the celebration already mentioned in which the gun-man had taken the leading part. So the wharf was stained, and so ended the life of a man with a career of which the last six months were unique in the history of the wild west.

Their leader gone, the break-up of his followers was quick and easy. After caring for Reid the Committee split up into armed groups of five or six men each. Some guarded the exits from the town, others closed the dance-halls, saloons, and gambling places. Every cabin was searched. Smith was killed on Friday and by Sunday the lot were rounded up and jailed. The captures included the five most dangerous members of the gang, Old Man Tripp, Slim Jim, Bowers, Mike Daly, and Scar-faced Charlie. It was indeed hard for any of them to escape. In front was the sea and behind the mountains with only one passable trail through them over into the Yukon Territory. They were all deported on out-going steamers. Most

of them got long terms in penetentiary. Before the shooting a few of them who saw danger ahead straggled over into Canada by way of the White Pass but they changed into "model citizens" when they came under the surveillance of the Mounted Police.

Smith was buried with scant ceremony and no mourners. Frank Reid lingered for two weeks when he also died. The whole place turned out at his funeral to do honor to his bravery in ridding the town of the pestilential group of criminals who had been in control so long.

Warwick Bros. & Rutter, Limited
Printers and Bookbinders, Toronto, Canada