OVERLAND ROUTE TO CARIBOU

by

A. L. Fortune

In eighteen hundred and sixty two a large company of men mostly Canadians, a few Americans and some Englishmen formed themselves into an overland travelling party and crossed the plains and the mountains to get a share of the gold of rich Caribou.

During the summer and fall of 1861, the hardy and persevering gold hunters and explorers who had been working on benches and bars along the Fraser and Quesnell rivers found their way into the region of Cariboo, and by hard work and privation climbing mountains and packing all tools, bedding and provisions on their backs, tearing through brush and dense forest in the hope of discovery, digging holes here and there, washing pans of dirt from likely places to expect some gold deposits, did triumphantly succeed to immortalize the fame of Cariboo, by finding very rich gold deposits in various places, but especially on the Antler and Williams Creek flat and benches, The news of these rich discoveries got into the Victoria and other coast papers and found their way to the Eastern press of Canada, and the United States, and thence to Great Britain and all places. The gold news created a gold excitment. Many got this gold fever and no doctor could cure it, in fact, many doctors were smitten with the fever. Lawyers, engineers, army officers, gentlemen's sons, and all classes had representatives who made their way by sea or land to the Cariboo Gold Mines in that good year 1862.

In the months of February, March and April great reports were published of the many thousands who were leaving New York by the Commodore Vanderbilt Line of steamers, by Aspinwall and other lines, Panama to Frisco and thence to Victoria for the great mines of Cariboo. We had witnessed the paper reports of the 49, 52, and later excitements to the gold fields of California and Australia, and the reports of several who succeeded; but not much about the failures of the majority; hence we thought we might be among the lucky ones who could go to Cariboo gold fields and be back in a few short years with a competency to live among our friends and have comfortable homes for the time of sickness or old age. Why not succeed as well as others.

It was at a time when the late and much lamented George Brown was a giant in Ontario. When his paper the Toronto Globe was believed in by the majority of Western Canadians.

The Toronto Globe not only informed its readers of the richness of Cariboo, the wonderful finds made by such and such a prospector; but it also gave glowing accounts of discoveries made

on the North Saskatchewan near Fort Edmonton by one (Tremolian)? Love who had been in Cariboo and came through one of the mountain passes with gold in his possession, which when exhibited at Fort Garry made the foundation for the story of the rich gold finds near Edmonton.

The pioneer paper known as the Norwester published near Fort Garry, owned and conducted by the late Mr. Ross in company with another gentleman, published these wonderful reports about gold near Edmonton. Several articles under the heading appeared in the Globe and other Canadian and American papers. Hence the reason who so many decided to try the overland route instead of going by sea and Panama.

We can understand how men meet and talk on favorite topics, how they write and enquire, get books and study up so as to get posted. So it was in different centres in the winter of 1862. Mr. George Tunstal, now of Kamloops; Archibald McNaughton, now at the mouth of Quesnel with some other young men in Montreal.

Second party from Huntingdon including James Wattie now of Valley Field, and his brother William Wattie living somewhere in the New England States, John Brown Gold Commissioner etc; in Cariboo. William Sellers and James his brother; Wm. Cameron and George Reed, Blacksmiths; and Harry Blanchford, William Sohyler, Mr. Anderson, a younger son of the late Laird near that place, and other worthy young men whose names I forget, the company altogether numbering sixteen or seventeen, known as the Huntingdon Company.

Third party there was the Ottawa Company formed by a few from that city, I can remember two brothers named in Glassford, and Joseph William and John Halpenny. Peter McIntire from near La Guerre belonged to this Company and a few others, may be one or two more.

Fourth, the Whitby Company consisted of five, a young Dr. McPherson with

formed this company.

Fifth, I remember a company in which were Joseph Torrance and William McKenzie and some more clever young men; but the name of the company I forget.

Sixth, The Toronto Company did not hold well together but there were distinguished men from that City, such as our worthy member now and long representing our Yale & Kootenay districts at Ottawa Mr. Mara, Mr. Wallace late of Evening Express once a paper of note in Victoria, a Mr. Josling, and a brother of Professor Hind of that place a painter of good ability besides others forgotten.

Seventh, The largest company was from St. Catherines near Niagara. Their chosen leader was the late Mr. McMeekin who was drowned near New Westminster and who wrote and published a very good account of our overland expedition. He was highly respected

by all the people and we still have his brother in Victoria, a gentleman that has made his mark in B. C. Our enterprising friend of Tranquille, Wm. Fortune belonged to that company. I think there were six tents, as many messes, and they were known as an orderly and considerate company.

Eighth, In the St. Thomas Company I remember Brock McQueen deceased, a long time living near Kamloops. John Dodd a gun lover on the plains, and others good and kind-hearted who took a sick man in their charge from Fort Garry. We shall have more to say about this sick man later on.

Ninth - This the Acton party consisted of six, Thomas Dunn, who died at Lillooch in '78, James Kelso, also deceased, and Erastus Hall who accidentally shot himself near Edmonton in the fall of '62. John Malcolm still mining in Cariboo, John B. Burns who returned to Acton where all this company hailed from, except the writer who came from the County of Huntingdon.

There were other small parties but I can only remember scattered names; such as Robert Warren also from Acton, a cousin of Warren's from Godridge, who was drowned in the Fraser River a few hours after leaving Tete Jaune Cache. James McKenzie, late H.B. trader at Kamloops, he with another young man or two, capsized in the Fraser river, but righted their canoe. McKenzie's companion caught cold and was buried at Fort George. He had lately left England, his name was Patterson.

Start of trip from River Beaudette.

There are other friends of whom we will not write now until we give our account of the trip to Fort Garry. The writer boarded the train at River Beaudette station on the second of May 1862. It was Saturday and he waited over until Monday enjoying the friendly hospitality of Rev. Thomas Muir and his late brother Rev. P.D. Muir and their dear families. After the good byes were given I again took Grand Trunk train for Detroit. I knew that range after range for many miles deep Ontario's habitable lands were occupied, and that her sons would year after year follow me and others to the West not finding scope near home to satisfy their longings.

The Canadian sun shone brightly by spells and then clouds would cast their dark shadows over the landscape like my clouds of parting with my dear wife, home and friends.

Detroit

In all the long journey of travel I met with none who were going my way until I reached Acton where I saw signs of sad partings with friends and lovers. As the train moved away from the stations and all the goodbyes and waving of hands subsided I discovered five additional passengers who were bound for Cariboo by overland route. We discussed the journey and the dangers of travel and soon glided off Canadian territory into Uncle Sam's land via Port Huron. That night we layed over at the City of Detroit, Michigan. Long before this time Detroit was a prosperous and promising city, boasting much of metropolitan charm, and great commercial advantages, because of its safe port and navigable facilities, being on the Detroit river.

Here our party of six must lay in ammunition, rifles and pistols, to be ready in case of having to fight our way on the plains against Indian tribes; for we knew we would soon come to the end of cities and settlements, and the protection of the law.

We were soon ready for the cry, "all on board", and away we sped on the Michigan Central through that part of the State much of which is sandy and rolling, but judging from the buildings on the farms and the bright villages we saw with the thrifty orchards, we felt convinced there was more than sand in the soil.

On the Mississippi to St. Paul

At LaCross we boarded a stern wheel steamer, and steamed all night against the strong current of the Mississippi river, and about 10. o'clock a.m. our boat touched the St. Paul levy.

Without accident or any vexation of note we had reached this point in safety. St. Paul then boasted of the name of city with a few thousand population, and several substantial stone buildings, but though most of the buildings were wood with paint on some. The site was pleasing on the banks of the river with a rolling land behind and plains to the west.

Off to Georgetown

We prepared for travel now on the four wheeled canvass covered coaches drawn by four horns, and expected to reach Georgetown on the Red River where a steamer would take us to Fort Garry. This one steamboat ride would be our last while we bade good bye to railroads at Lacross.

Village of Minneapolis

After a short stay at St. Paul we took our places in the prairie coaches and were soon wheeled into the village of Minneapolis where was a good sized frame building in which was conducted the business of the best hotel of the place. A few scattered and primitive buildings and some sawmills made up the Minneapolis of that time.

After leaving Minneapolis we travelled over a comparatively new settlement with clumps of timber and stretches of prairie, mostly light soil until we reached the St. Cloud ferry, on the Mississippi River. We forded some small streams, travelled over plains with no rolling hills and rarely any trees until we got to Breakenridge, a place of one small cabin and a new building in course of construction for a hotel, but on the map it was a large city laid out with blocks, streets, avenues and parks.

However, I should mention that at Otter Trail Creek where we put up the night before, we found a

family living on considerable comfort and seemed accustomed to the wild frontier life.

At Breakenridge we met a returning stage going back to St. Paul's. One of its passengers was a sick man named John Nichols who seemed so bad with consumption and helpless; that he seemed not likely to live many days. An American Doctor Symonton, who was aiming for the West like ourselves, advised the sick man not to go back to friends nor doctors for he would surely die; but to come along with our overland party, and if he died we would bury him. But the doctor declared that he had good hopes that the prairie air and the outdoor life might help to restore him to health and strength. Our sick man and the good Samaritan Doctor joined us and gave us work in the caring of the sick.

Reaching Georgetown

Our journey lay nearly North still on prairie but wood lands near the river sheltered us from the West winds and added more charm to the landscape, altho' not varying much until we reached Georgetown a distance if I remember of nearly four hundred miles from St. Paul, and accomplished in eight hours.

Georgetown at this station was a military station to keep Indians in check, a small company of soldiers were stationed there. There were no families that we noticed, but here was the place the steamer International was being built which was just launched, and being fitted up for the accommodation of a large crowd of passengers who had been accumulating here for weeks, and still waiting to get a passage on board of the steamer.

The place looked interesting with tents spread in all directions. Scattered along the Red River at this place we could see the white tents of the travellers mostly bound overland to British Columbia. Some were destined for Fort Garry and others for mission fields far interior.

It was about the middle of May and the air was still cool with not much sunshine. We did not wander far from the spot for fear of Indians; but we could see that the land was good and that the prairie extended especially to the West. We learned afterwards about the terrible Indian Massacre that brought death and misery to many of those kind people we found living on the way stations where we were fed, and where we got relay of horses.

Boarding Steamer at Georgetown

About three days after landing at Georgetown we got on board the new steamer. A few of the berths were ready and occupied by some notable passengers, namely, Governor Dallas's lady, who was daughter of the late Governor Douglas of British Columbia with her suite, another prominent person was the late Bishop Tache of St. Boniface, who had been in Europe and was on his way back with several young priests and brothers, destined for mission work in the great Lone Land. There were a few families also moving West to take up land near Fort Garry.

Besides our large party of mostly young men called the Overland Party. The Steamboat Co. gave us board and passage for a certain amount, but we stretched our bodies on the floor of the deck when we slept at night.

About the third day out we were informed that provisions were getting scarce, and we would have to do on two rationed meals a day. This was sorry news to the most of us for nearly all had ravenous appetites.

On the fifth day we were reduced to pemmican and a few soda biscuits. Hunger as sauce was needed to make that pemmican palatable for it was moundly and full of buffalo hair.

We were not interfered with by the Indians until we reached Pembina, when a tribe of them came along the shore in a threatening attitude against the boat and passengers. Some were drunk and others fired with rum sufficiently to make them bold and insulting. We moved on out of their way and had no further trouble.

Arrival at Fort Garry

Our approach to Fort Garry on the eighth day was a welcome event to the hungry passengers and boatmen; and it was a notable event in the history of that place. There were very few to meet us at the boat landing, for what is now a populous Winnipeg was then only a Hudson's Bay Company trading post inside of a fenced wall sufficiently strong and high to prevent the Indians from forcing their will against the few men in the employ of the Company.

The home of Bishop Tache was on the East side of the river and St. Boniface was a mere beginning of its present importance. We found his lordship kind and ready to give us much information about the Lone Land and the Indian tribes while he was with us on the steamer, and he was frequently troubled by us for information while our party was

preparing for our journey over the plains. He assisted us in securing a guide and gave us much important information.

Our large company was made up of so many small companies from different places that we severally had to arrange for the parties of our own small companies. The getting oxen and horses with carts and harness together, with flour and pemmican and other necessaries, for our long journey. We soon made the oxen market boom in the Selkirk Settlement, and animals not saleable a year previous were now commanding $35. $45. and some $50. per head.

We met the late James Ross, editor of the old Nor-wester, with a few other gentlemen who lived outside of Fort Garry. We had the great pleasure of forming the acquaintance of the late Dr. Black, and several families we called upon along the banks of the river in search of oxen. Many of these people with whom we spoke showed that reverence for God and His Word that we felt as tho' His Word had come with them and had been their rule of life. We were told that only one girl had been unfortunate in the whole forty years of their sojourn in the Selkirks Settlement.

We were shown how high the floods of a recent rising of the Red River reached into some of the houses, and told how the settlers had to move back several miles to some higher land to save their stock and household affairs until the waters subsided. We have not read of any rising since in the Red River that would equal the one described to us at that time. It was near the end of May that we landed in this settlement, and the growth of grass barely made a green shade in the most favored spots. We judged the Spring about 4 to 6 weeks later than it was about Toronto that season.

Governor Dalls of the Hudson's Bay Company kindly received a deputation representing our whole party, and gave us much good information concerning the route we were to travel. He sent a Courier ahead of us, who informed the chief traders at the severalposts on our route with kindly instructions to deal kindly with us and if possible prevent the Indians from hostile treatment of our party. He also had boats ready for us at each ferry, without these boats we should have been sorely embarrassed at six river crossings.

Governor Dallas had been in many places before he visited British Columbia, and he did not say much about this province to raise our esteem of it, except that part known as the Okanagan Valley. He declared that this was the most charming piece of country he had ever seen. What with the mountains, timber, rocks, charming lakes and creeks. The bald mountain slopes and benches covered with grass and bloom of flowers, and the wide plains and valleys filled with grass, and game so plentiful. Birds in great flocks and deer in large herds. He thought it a veritable paradise fit to be a Heaven for the pure in heart and the lover of nature and nature's creation.

At Fort Garry and all of the trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company we were well treated and liberally dealt with. The most of the oxen bought by our party were trained to travel singly in harness and two wheeled carts. The wheels of these carts were large and heavy made or oak without iron boxing or tires, and the axel was oak with no iron. The harness was made of buffalo raw hide without any pretentions to finery.

During our seven days preparing for the journey we wrote many letters to friends giving them accounts of travel and country, and of ourselves, and bidding the last farewell; for we did not expect to hear from them, or write to them, until late in the Fall.

Organizing for long trip across prairies. Goderich

Our people had several general meetings to discuss rules and regulations and appoint a managing committee so that we might be a systematic travelling company. We agreed to have three men appointed as our head leaders. They were the late Thomas M. Micken from Niagara or St. Catharines, Mr. James Wattie, now of Valley Field, Quebec and Alexander Robertson of Goderidge, Ontario, who was drowned in the Fraser west 50 miles from Tete Jaune Cache. They were three fine men and proved excellent commanders, and untiring friends to our company.

We thought well of the soil near the Red River especially through the Selkirk settlement, and had been shown various pieces of land cropped nearly forty years and still producing excellent crop without any application of manure. The country seemed too free of timber and too flat and plain to make home attractive. We soon tired of the monotonous view of prairie and sky, and sky and prairie. We did talk of cities somewhere and sometime; but they seemed too far off to go after or wait for.

The grainfields did not count for much then there was no market outside for anything but buffalo robes and furs. There were some flour mills propelled by wind, and they ground wheat and clay together and made a flour that was disgusting to eat. It was nearly black and would not rise in the bread.

We had some pleasant weather with warm sun while here which brought some grass to view and on the sixth of June we commenced our journey with about 800 lbs. in each of some of the carts, and 600 lbs. in other carts. Our caravan was not picturesque and looked primitive galore. We all had to learn how to handle the oxen in harness and singly.

The first day we went about seven miles and camped, our oxen we tied to posts with a long lariat so that they could eat grass and not leave us. Our Company of six had bought a good milch cow for $22.00 and she we led behind us with a rope for a few days; but she soon got attached to us and needed no rope but followed like a dog.

It was agreed that all parties and companies would reach White Horse Plains and wait there until every company was ready to track and enjoy the advantage of the guide equally. We had wood, water and grass at these plains and we need not suffer by waiting a little. Some were ambitious and on the rush to go on, others were slow and did not get in trim for travel so easily. To keep these two extremes together and give all the help of the guide was a puzzle for the committee to manage. Most of those who got to these plains the first day would not wait for the laggers but pushed on with the guide, while some of us more patient waited until the afternoon of that day for those behind who had promised to be on hand for 10 o'clock of that day.

We travelled until night and did not come up to the leaders, we rested but could not find any good water, only that which had to be strained to make supper. We then pushed on and although midnight overtook the leading party with our guide. We got out of bed next morning early and resolved that no cart or ox should move until the balance of our company would come with us.

Some of us made it publicly known that the first man who would start before they got orders from the Captain would have his ox shot before him. This threat resulted in all waiting for orders when the whole company had reached us. The reasons were many excusing the ambition and pushing spirit of the man who got ready first and were going ahead on the journey.

The summer season in Cariboo was short. In the long winter we could not earn money to keep the wolf from the door. The season from the first of June until Fall would soon pass. Our journey was long and our progress was slow at best. These men laboured hard, laboured late and early and intelligently, and lost patience with those who had been detaining them in making a start for their journey Their patience was somewhat tried.

Assiniboine River.

The country lying north of the Assiniboine river, was varied. We had level prairie by the stretches with some swampy land and small ponds of poor water, very few streams or springs to afford us good water, some brush land but no forest of timber until we neared Fort Ellis about 250 miles west of Fort Garry.

We found the country hilly and rolling a considerable distance east of Fort Ellis with clumps of small poplar forest usually on the north slopes and in valleys between in certain places. We could see here, and in many other places on our travel, lovely summer ranges for cattle and sheep, and see a promising future for stock industry if the winter feed and shelter could be made sufficient.

As we approached the high outer banks of the Assiniboine river the landscape and scenery caused us to halt and admire the charming view. From side to side of the low valley we could trace the course of the ever bending river as it carried its waters south and eastward in hurried flow, to discharge its surplus floods in the Red River at Fort Garry. The low valley of the river course was not wide but looked kindly covered with grass and bounded on either side with high hills and benches partly timbered and partly grassy.

We found the descent from the upland to the river bank long and steep on places and almost thought we had just come from a mountain top as we neared the river bank. This was our first river crossing, the Hudson's Bay Company had a scow run by a cable and pulley at this ferry, and we all got over safely; but it took us a long time to take across so many people and carts with the oxen. After a short journey over the river plat we came to the ascent and had a long climb to reach the summit of the table land when we soon collected on a camping ground near Fort Ellis.

Fort Ellis

This was a small trading post having only a few log buildings but boasting of an exciting history of successive bold traders with a few friends having to fight the Indians who sometimes made a raid on the store.

Some changes presented themselves here from the features of the country we had travelled. A large deep ravine dipped deep down to the south of us while on the opposite side rose high in the clouds with timber its north slope, a large hill, while to the north of the Fort a park like forest a flat piece of high land, stretched and sloped down to the crossing of the Qu'Appell river. It was a homelike and sheltered place and we rested over Sunday here.

I was commissioned to remonstrate with the guide for having misconducted himself and broken our rules a couple of days before reaching here. He had been told previously not to

obey anyone but the orders of the three commanders. The guide was influenced by some sly flattery and a little rum to start with a certain company each of two mornings before the rest were ready to go, and this gave serious dissatisfaction to those who did not benefit by the guide's information for wood and water at camping grounds. He promised to be more dutiful in future.

As agreed by some of us we had adopted the rule of holding religious services each Sunday and all had promised not to travel on that day.

We had been instructed by our informants to have our firearms and ammunition always ready and to arrange our carts in a circle at night having our oxen inside of this cart corral, and our tents arranged on the outside of the carts, with a sentry on the watch, in order to be on our guard in case of an Indian raid or invasion. This far we had met very few Indians but we were warned of danger and to be always ready.

The weather had been favorable for travel and the growth of grass, the prairie sun shone brightly and forced vegetation very quickly. The nights had been pleasant and warm to keep all vegetation in full vigor, the leaves had burst forth and the priairie flowers and grasses were increasing in beauty and numbers and adding much charm to our travelling.

Every night was welcome because of our chance to rest after the fatigue of the day's travel, for most of our people made it a point to walk in order to save our oxen and give them a chance to gain strength, which they did very fast after they got on good grass.

I will here mention that we did not intend or expect to have any women or children along over the plains or the rougher journey across the mountains, but so it turned out and I have often thought it a wise providence that a lady with her husband and three children, a milch cow or two and some riding or pack horses, with two men in their company overtook and travelled with us. They started from Fort Garry and had a light spring and covered carriage. Their name was Mr. & Mrs. Augustus Shubert long and favorably known in Spillimacheen, British Columbia. The kindly sympathy was frequently manifested by many of our men to the woman and her small children at times when assistance was needed by them. Her presence in the Company helped to cultivate a kindly and more manly treatment of man to man.

Qu'Apelle River

On the Monday we struck our camp at Fort Ellis and drove North to Qu'Apelle river about two miles when we found the H.B.Co's Ferry in good readiness for crossing our caravan. The crossing was nearly fatal to one of

our company who got badly dragged by his ox and cart in descending a long grade down to the crossing. If I am not mistaken the same party was nearly drowned off the ferry boat by some mishap. That night we camped on high sandy plains with poor grass in a heavy shower of rain.

The cattle and carts were secure and the most of us were safe in our tents sleeping, while the sentry kept on the lookout. This duty we took in turns. On the Tuesday morning our guide intimated that we were just getting into a good game country; and on that strength of his express information he borrowed a good rifle and some ammunition and matches, and rode off on some one's horse in quest of the game buffalo. It was known only to a few that he was in for a hunt and they looked for the pleasure of a high surprise to the Company when the guide would meet us at noon.

We were soon informed as to the guide's actions and promises, and soon came to the conclusion that our guide had left us. What was to be done? Some had one opinion to give some another. We lunched, waited, speculated, looked around our camp, but no guide came. It was a bright and balmy day with a kindly landscape. The land was improving the trail distinct and all started taking their places in the caravan line. We still hoped the guide would be up with us for the night camping. Some of our bright young men who were mounted on ponies rode ahead of us and made sure we were not wandering on false trails. They could determine which was likely to be the proper route by the signs of the most travelled.

Our anxiety increased as we travelled and thought of the great need of a guide. We at last reached a likely place to remain over night where wood and water were sufficient. But no guide came to us there. We did not know what he might do. We thought of him returning with a band of Indians to rob or murder us. Our sentry was made to understand what might be expected any moment. All were in readiness in case of an Indian attack.

At daylight we got ready and started, each company and every man looking out for the danger of Indians rushing down upon us, or the probability of losing the road we did not know. We frequently came to parts where the road so seldom travelled was obliterated from view by the effects of rains or the overgrowth. Again at noon the guide question occupied our conversation; we certainly thought now that he had left. We found out that he was afraid of some of the party who had used certain threats if he, the guide, would not submit and travel with them instead of being under the control of the authorized commanders.

We had agreed to have every company take their turn to lead out with their carts and thus benefit by having the new road or fresh prairie to travel on. We found that so many wheels passing over the same route and so many oxen tramping on the trail made it hard on the animals in the rear more especially in soft places the route became muddy and some places miry. So in arranging our places in rotation we all fared alike on the mud and the unbroken sod of the prairie. The weather got very hot hence we resolved to travel early in the morning and late at night so as to rest during the heat of the day. We found this essential for our animals which were naturally soft by living on the young grass.

Some of the men suffered by sore feet while those who had laid in a stock of Indian moccasins and persevered in using them learned to appreciate their pliable and cooling influrence on the feet. These were made of dressed buffalo hide, very porous, and of short duration.

And now we can speak of John Nichols, Dr. Symington's patient. He had now recruited greatly, he is not much troubled with cough and better able to walk. The good boys from St. Thomas took special care of Nichols and in a thousand ways and every time showed great readiness to help anyone in need, and do even more than their share in any duties such as bridge building, etc. which benefited the whole company. Some of the men had fiddles, flutes cornets and other instruments, our evenings were entertaining when we were not too tired. Singing, playing on the instruments and telling stories or anecdotes helped the cheer us on our journey.

On we went with no guide and still not losing our way for any long time, except on one occasion when a considerable halt was made so that the scouts would have time to explore the several passes between hills and ascertain positively as to the correct way. And yet without a guide and not much damage we at last reached the crossing of South Saskatchewan river where we camped and prepared to swim the cattle and horses, and ferry our provisions and blankets and selves in the boat provided by the Hudson's Bay Company.

South Saskatchewan River.

I will here relate an accident; James Kelso of Acton in his efforts to urge the cattle to leave the land and swim the river stepped into deep water and sank to the bottom at once. He was given up as lost, when a good friend George Reed of Huntingdon stripped off his clothes plunged into the river and dove after our drowning comrade. He came up likea hero with the helpless body of Kelso. We found a spark of life and kindled that into a flame, and after a long labor got him to breathe and show good signs of restoration. We got him over the river into a cart with blankets and he was carefully kept in great warmth until we reached Fort Carlton on the side of North Saskatchewan River.

The distance of the last river crossing when Kelso

got the wetting to Fort Carlton is 18 miles a piece of country mostly covered with tall aspen or poplar forest and wonderful peavine growth. The land seemed rich. Carlton House was not inside of a stockade, it was built on a bench not high from the river and having no hills nor forest near it. We thought the Indians were not bad when no more precautions seemed exercised by the people of the Fort.

The master of the Fort sold us a few articles and loaned us the use of the boat by which we took carts and all luggage over and swam the cattle. It took us the better part of two days to get all over this river. We were informed we could find our way easily without a guide to Fort Pitt. Our course was on the North side of the river which was not in sight. High banks with low flats, with some brush in places, very little timber to hinder our progress.

A spell before reaching Fort Pitt and east from there we passed high plateaux like a mountainous region with some timber on them. Still no Indians to trouble us. We were now nearing Fort Pitt some 200 miles from Carlton. The place of crossing the south Saskatchewan is I think since called Batoche where some fighting took place during the North West rebellion.

We enjoyed the balmy June weather since leaving the Qu'Apelle river crossing. The country was mostly rolling and hilly with clumps of small aspen forest, hence the winds were not severe and it was a sunshiny time with very little cloud or rain, and not many miry or swampy spots. We often thought of the wonderful future of this extensive country, pictured a time when railways and the farming developed, accompanied with stock raising and dairying industries would cover these prairies with hives of industry, and homes of comforts excelling those of more southern climes.

Soil, land, fertile hill and dale, all inviting the home seeker to settle down with his bridge and enjoy the blessing and luxuries of earth and Heaven in the Great Lone Land. We saw thousands of choice spots where we felt sure we might live and be pleased if there were markets and outlets for the products of the soil. Signs of the great bison once roaming in vast herds over all those prairies regions we could notice soon after leaving St. Cloud in Minnesoeta through to this western region near Fort Pitt.

As we neared Fort Pitt we approached the wooded flats near the river and travelled slowly until we cam to Fort Pitt. Here we found a few buildings, log houses, a trading post, some dwellings for the men. The most of the Hudson's Bay employees seemed to be from the North of Scotland. Orkney men especially. We saw none of their wives, but surmised that some of them contented themselves as bachelors and

others took Indian women as companions in their lonely stations.

We were much pleased with the hospitality of a Highland Scotchman who invited us to dine with him. He was cook and housekeeper. Our feast consisted of no bread, no fruits, no vegetables, no drinks; but Saskatchewan river water with sediment floating through it. The viands consisted of buffalo meat stewed, buffalo meat boiled and delicious Buffalo steak. Our talk was of home and friends, of lonely times and long distances, of probabilities and blessings of the future.

Hudson's Bay officials served us kindly here also. With their boats we crossed the river with all our luggage and again made our animals to swim the North Saskatchewan river. They recommended a halfbreed guide to us whom we hired to guide us to Edmonton. We could get a little French from him and so we were understood to each other. We found him true, faithful, efficient and agreeable, and most useful in finding the easiest routes and the most acceptable camping places.

We found the most of the small creeks so far not difficult to cross because of a long spell of comparative drought. Here we entered into a rainy region or got into a wet climate so were made to experience greater trials on this great journey. Soon after leaving Fort Pitt the rain came down good and heavy and by the time we got to camp everybody was soaking wet and the most of our bedding was wet also. The grass was immense, everywhere we went we were travelling amongst the grass, luxurious grass, and the land was very rich and rolling with hills and flats. Wet to bed and wet all night and wet the following day, this is the kind of weather until we got to Edmonton. The creeks got full to over flowing and many were the bridges we had to construct to cross the streams. Some we could ford with our carts and keep our provisions above the water. These were trying days testing our health and strength, what reader would like to travel every day in rain and go to bed twenty nights in succession in wet blankets.

On a certain Saturday night we reached a point of difficulty. Here as usual we arranged our carts in barricade style to guard against Indian invasion. Many of our party were uneasy on account of the long journey and unknown difficulties before us. These men proposed to work on the following Sabbath, but building a bridge across a much swollen stream near our camp.

A goodly number of the men objected to Sunday travel or Sunday work; after our Sabbath devotions. A few resolute men declared it wise to build the bridge at once for the rains might make the creek so large in a short time that we would fail in making a bridge. Those of us who objected to work or travel on Sunday were in the minority on this occas-

ion. The large majority went at the bridge and they worked hard and anxiously until they finished. They crossed with their animals and camped on the opposite side without purposing to make further progress in their journey that Sabbath.

Our party who opposed the Sunday work did not cross the bridge on the Sunday. Several deputations from the new camp visited us and advised us to come over the bridge for fear the flood might rise and carry it away. We told them kindly we would trust the God of the Sabbath who also ruled the floods. Our sleep was sweet and our witnessing for God was well rewarded. Though floods increased we crossed the bridge Monday morning. The bridge builders did not show a spirit of animostity towards our benefiting by their hard work. There was a history of our industry and daring well known to all.

I do not remember another Sabbath of bridge building nor Sunday travelling on that journey.

No live buffalo had we seen yet. Still the signs were many; carcases of the dead, bleached bones of long exposure to the sun and weather, trials to watering places or salt licks, reminded us of a chesker board. All proving that great herds of the bison had spent the winter in the country laying between Fort Pitt and Fort Edmonton. There were long stretches of country where we might nearly succeed to keep our feet off the grass by stepping on to the buffalo chips as we travelled over some of the plains.

The prairie wolves were plentiful here and seemed satisfied with the carcases of Bison, notwithstanding their decayed condition. We were disappointed at not seeing the live animals. Our able boys who loved the chase were sore at heart at the sight of the bones only. We wondered at this sight, where had the living herds gone? Why should they leave a country of such luxuriant grass, with abundance of water in small lakes and creeks as also in rivers? The country was rolling the north sides of the hills timbered with poplar, affording shade from hot sun or strong winds. Why then should the buffalo leave so good a country. On reaching Edmonton the experienced traders gave us the explanation.

They told us that the buffalo herds came north in winter to get out of the open plains of the south and find shelter from the winds in the rolling country where there is shelter from the cold blizzards and abundance of long grass produced on these richer lands. Then they go south in early spring to feed on the shorter and more acceptable stunted grass that grows on the more southern plains or grass regions of southern Alberta or the Dakotas.

We have often heard of the Indians following the buffalo herds. I think this may explain why we did not have trouble with Indians. We saw none on that part of our journey between Pitt and Edmonton.

We thought the country lying between these two points richer and more inviting for both agriculture, stock raising, or dairying than any part of the great plains we had travelled over. We would imagine that the winters that suited the buffalo so naturally in this part of the Great Lone Land, would not be severe on farmers who would prepare shelter and feed for their stock.

There may be more desirable places south of our course or north of what we saw; but we found nothing west of Fort Garry, now Winnipeg, nor west of Edmonton so good and adapted for settlement as this buffalo winter region west of Fort Pitt.

Our course here was some miles south of the North Saskatchewan river. As we neared the crossing to Edmonton we found a sharp and steep descent from the upland to the bed of a creek. Here we had to make use of ropes to lower our carts and cargoes. The ropes were fixed to trees at the top of the bank with a slacking tie. Here we had to help and be helped giving us another lesson of dependence on our neighbors. A journey of this kind helps wonderfully to root conceit out of the traveller. Good will and kindly manners count much in all conditions of life:- and especially when no family helps or connections are near us, and we find strangers filling a brother's place are we reminded of Christ's lesson of the Good Samaritan.

Fort Edmonton

We got nicely over this critical gulch and climbed the Western slope by hard work of our oxen. I think in less than a day's travel we stood opposite the great Fort Edmonton with the bluish grey water of the North Saskatchewan river flowing between the fort and our camping ground The Fort nestling on the north and our party camped on the south of the river. We had thus accomplished nearly a thousand miles travel by this primitive style, over an Indian country, where at any, or many points, we might have been overpowered, robbed or massacred by the wild Cree or Blackfeet Indians, who gloried in decorating themselves with the scalps of their foes, we were thankful we had been saved from such a doom. Happy to say we never lost one of our number.

Mr. Shubert with his wife and three children also arrived safely. They had a cow or two which supplied them with good milk night and morning. They had a four wheeled light double wagon with tent covering. A number of our party took much interest in their safety and well being, and great sympathy was manifested for the brave and devoted mother of those three children.

Thankful that our animals stood the journey and improved as we progressed. Thankful, many of us, for the great improvements in our health. The author of this book was an invalid more or less during the previous ten years. Others spoke of their incapacity from various kinds of sickness, and long before we reached Edmonton we had no weak members in the party, none looking for medicine, doctors nor nurses. We had just come through a rainy region, wet season and trying period, and all stood the ordeal of twenty wet days most bravely.

The missionary Woolsley was very diligent in his duties and was much esteemed by many of our party. The officials at Edmonton provided boats for us to cross our people and our luggage, carts, etc. We swum our animals and camped near the river west of the Fort. Here we set to work to dispose of our carts and such articles as we could not carry on pack animals. Some sold their oxen and bought pack horses and saddles, we were new to this work and many made sad mistakes.

I stuck to my ox and introduced him to a pack saddle attached a sort of harness from the shoulders, a brace, and breeching to hold the load in place going down the hills. One ox belonging I think to the Huntingdon party bucked wildly when the pack saddle was cinched tight upon him. He created no small excitement by his bucking and scattering of his load.

While our party was waiting and preparing at Edmonton, the guide who came with us from Fort Pitt collected some Indians and halfbreeds and serrenaded our company two nights by singing and drum beating and dancing Indian style, and showing up the exciting war dance.

Our large party spread their camps on the high land on south bank of the river, and if I remembered correctly the only Protestant Missionary Rev. Mr. Woolsley, a Methodist Minister who seemed to be out of reach of conference, Presbytery or Synod, was the pioneer preacher of the Gospel represeming the Protestant bodies. He heard of our arrival there and was soon visiting the camps and arranged to hold a service the Sunday following. His audience was attentive and seemed to take delight in this special service of worship. Our best singers took active lead in God's praise that day. A spirit of gratitude seemed to be manifested by our party. Gratitude and thankfulness became us well. We had experienced God's Mercy, His Guidance and His protection.

Here was a gentlemen in authority who had a wife in one of the Southern States, living with an Indian woman, who seemed quite a superior person. We felt shocked at such conduct, but we met other parties since then just as insulting to the proper order of things.

In the Fort there were six hundred dogs belonging to the Company or their employees. Dogs were used on toboggans

by the Company and in case of value of buffalo meat dogs were used for food. They were held in great esteem there, in fact, they often were used in place of horses taking in provisions from the plains when the snow was too crusted or unfit for horses to travel.

Such a howling and barking as these dogs indulged in was terrifying and disagreeable. They sometimes got out of the enclosure and played havoc with our meat and pemmican. The trading houses, dwellings, store houses, dog sleds, stables and barns were inside the stockade to be safe from Indian invasion.

The Company had tried to grow wheat and built a small windmill to do some grinding. The frost bothered them in summer and good flour was scarce. I sold flour at 20¢ per lb. there, I think I got a pack horse for twenty pounds of flour. We sold our milch cow for $60.00. We can not speak too highly of the comfort and benefit of a cow on such a journey.

Our Acton party broke up here, three remained to look for gold. I joined the Huntingdon party and the other two travelled along with the general crowd. John B. Burns and the late Thomas Dunn, who died in Lilloet in 1868 were the two Acton men who crossed the mountains with the main party. James Kelso, John Malcolm and Erastus Hall are the three who remained to prospect the Saskatchewan River. bars for gold. These men were out hunting one day when Erastus Hall accidently shot himself by hauling a gun out of his cart with muzzle in hand. The following season Kelso and Malcolm reached British Columbia.

Prospecting for gold Saskatchewan River.

There are others who remained at or near Edmonton until next season and then crossed the Rockies. Mrs. Shubert and children had riding horses, I do not know of any others so provided. We started from Edmonton some seven days after the time of our arrival there. Except a small settlement at St. Albert about eight miles north or a little west of north, the whole country was open to us if we wished to settle there. Good land all around, some spots of timber, and grasses in wonderful abundance, showing plainly that the land was rich.

In the heat of summer, July, we could not expect much sign of frost, but we were informed that summer frosts were a serious drawback to vegetation over most of the Great Lone Land. "Baw", said some of our wise men, those frosts we hear about are to keep people from settling in the country. The Hudson's Bay Co. have too good a speculation, too wide an interest in the great North West to allow settlers to interfere with their Indian and fur trade.

I am of the opinion that ten thousand acres of that best land offered to any of our party at that time would not have been sufficient inducement to hold one of us there as a permanent settler. So remote a place! So isolated a home!

The banishment of any one of us was not our purpose! Such good land, a region of such fertility should be where people could benefit by markets and enjoy the privileges of civilized advantages.

Away we went leaving the H.B. Co; and their Indians all that good land and its future possibilities for others to pick it up, and carry their modern agencies and facilities to build cities, hives of industry, and spread rural life with church and schools, east, north, south and west of two cities at Edmonton now.

We left all and proceeded the first night to St. Albert settlement. This was a Roman Catholic Mission station near enough to Fort Edmonton for the quiet of the missionaries and safer for christian or educational work amongst Indian and Halfbreeds. A few of the latter had houses started near this place even at that time. We thought the land around this place exceedingly rich.

I did not have an opportunity of forming any acquaintance with such remote frontier Christian Missionaries, as our time was limited, and our stock was restless and had to be herded. The mosquitoes were in quantities and I feared would prevent me reaching St. Albert. The horses and ox were so tormented by them that I had to tie one behind the other and lead to prevent them rushing into brush where they might fight mosquitoe pests. We were visited by flies and mosquitoes in several places on our trip, but that short journey was the most trying to men and beast.

Our supply of milk did not follow us here, I missed the milk very much, still I bought some choice pemmican which I found to be the best of all food for such a journey, and soon became reconciled at the loss of the milk.

We had engaged a guide with his horse, in fact, he brought two horses with him. His first name was Andrew a half French and half Indian, an honorable and trustworthy man, he was instructive and entertaining concerning the route and country. He gave us much help in times of need and difficulty. Who that has travelled without a guide can realize the want of one.

After a night's halt at St. Albert's where a rain added weight to our tents, we raised camp and with our animals saddled and packed following our guide west over prairie and pools of water, not many creeks, also some bush land, and on we travelled every day without much to cheer or discourage us.

The country did not seem so favorable for settlement as near St. Albert, or between Fort Pitt and Edmonton. In about five days after leaving Edmonton we arrived at Lac St. Ann's Mission. All were well and hopeful. John Nichols was strong and well with the ambition of a conqueror and much

liked. At a camp some six miles east of St. Ann's Mission one of my horses strayed from the other stock, this detained me half a day behind the whole party.

There were three Sisters of Charity established there to teach the Indian children. Also two Missionary Fathers in another establishment, all sent there by Bishop Tache to christianize the Indians. They, the sisters, complained sorely that the work was not encouraging, for the Indians would not settle long in one place. They lived by hunting and had to follow the game and fur animals.

I thought it a very great sacrifice of life and life's charms made by these lovely Sisters. So denying and zealous Sisters of Mercy I have often had the pleasure to meet since, in different communities and places; laboring to build hospitals, establish schools, build orphanages and in many ways relieving and helping the poor and helpless as well as the suffering and erring.

A Scotch gentleman, Colonel Colin Fraser, was in charge of a trading post in this place. His wife was an Indian woman, he had a family mostly grown up daughters. They had no chance of education except recently by Sisters. The Colonel regretted sorely the want of civilized opportunities for the dear family depending upon his teaching and influence. Here we had some white fish taken out of Lake St. Ann's they were truly fine. Some good butter we secured for use on our journey; also cake of buffalo tallow to supplement our larder; and Indian moccasins a good supply.

I started at noon with my ox and one horse to over take the carvan which had left in the morning. After travelling about four miles over brush and open country on the trail of the main party I got into heavy timber, spruce, cedar and other boniferous timber. The trail was wet and miry and so badly cut up that my animals had great difficulty wading over these swamps. Several times I had to unpack the horse and carry his load over to better footing.

I was thus detained and in much dred of wolves which threatened war on me and my important ox and horse. A kind Providence brought me out of the mire and led me safely away in haste to the great camp of my companions.

The land was slightly rolling after leaving the belt of timber and swamp, parts were prairie, parts bush, and other spots heavier aspen forest. Our trail skirted some small lakes where ducks, and I suppose fish, were sporting. Wood and water were both good and plentiful, and our own cooking and baking were highly relished.

Next day from St. Ann's we found the country part prairie and bush, bush and prairie, and mostly fine travelling. The sun had been bright and the winds breezy and refreshing. All got along finely, no stock strayed away from

us. At noon we had a rest and as usual ate heartily and enjoyed neighborly visits, and had some telling experiences of sore backs on some of our stock. The various styles of pack saddle were not the kind to save our pack animals from sore backs or sides. Besides very few of our stock ever did have packs on their backs prior to their trial at Edmonton. The guide tried perseveringly to train us how to save our animals for the journey, many made mistakes and suffered loss. Much of the superfluous tools clothing and furnishing were thrown on the road as articles not worthy carrying along. This lightened the loads on our pack animals.

Pembina River

We soon reached the first river crossing of Pembina Here we found a small hill part of the East or right bank of the river pouring out a column of smoke. We soon found out that a great bed of coal lay under the water in the river and inferred that the same stratum extended under the land in all directions, not over fifty feet from the surface. The camp fires were all made of coal and burnt freely with a whitish blaze.

Such a country for coal! Is it a coal bed all the way back to Edmonton? And the wood was now plentiful by spots. The land was lighter and the grass not too good.

On the following day we made the crossing. Our guide showed us how to make use of some of our tents. He spread the tent on the beach near the water, then collected our blankets, provisions and other articles, made a neat bundle of them and gathered the fringe or edges of the tents and tied them close as one does a sack of wheat to prevent the water from entering inside. He then mounted his horse and with a rope attached to the big bundle and the wood all ready followed by the bundle floating behind the guide who towed it across to the opposite bank.

Others followed his example and all were over the river safely by noon of that day. I remember one bundle getting some water inside it. The water was nearly that deep as to oblige some of the smaller animals to swim. I can remember yet dear Mrs. Shubert riding her horse over that heavy ford and her horse having to swim. I think she depended on some of the friends taking over her three children safely. Her husband and his two men were attending to the stock, provisions, etc.

That afternoon we pushed on over country that showed small promise of encouraging the farmer. The soil was cold and timber dwarfish and sparse; while in the evening we began to have a taste of mossy swamps, so loose and shaky that our progress was sorely interrupted. Most of the horses and mules especially, were down so badly as to be unable to struggle over with their loads, what oxen were packed waded through much better and seldom needed help.

This was a sample of what we experienced during a

long stretch of our journey, swamps between better land, and timber belts several miles wide between the swamps. We understood that these boggy swamps extended long distances south-west and north-east.

Our progress was very slow and difficult. We all got over at last to MacLeod River, this was surely four times wider than Pembina river that we last passed over. The current was much swifter. The guide led the way over the most shallow parts, over bars of boulders and coarse gravel that made the travelling difficult for the animals. The men forded on foot. There was one of the St. Catherine men who stapped too far down stream into deep water and was being carried away by the swift current but our noble guide Andrew was on hand and made his horse carry him after the drowning man and saved him as only an expert could have done. There were other slight mishaps, but none serious.

On approaching Macleod River several miles in width the land was more timbered and better than near the region of the swamps; On the left and north west bank of the river we pitched our tents and prepared for a long rest of two night and the Sabbath rest and duties.

How great were our successes! How much we owed to the God of all travellers. All worshipped God; for all felt so dependent upon him. There were two gentlemen in the St. Catherines company who were always willing to help lead in devotional exercises. We love them yet. Are they living?

We found fine fir timber on the west shore where we were camped and on the Monday all well rested, without a broken limb or a cut finger. There were scales and corns to make some of us grin a little, still all got ready good and early and the guide led us along the river in a south westerly direction until he got to the most favorable route to avoid other swamps.

From a certain point near the river he took us over varied country of lower land, now timbered then part prairie, stretches of small withered spruce and belts of mixed good sized poplar and fine spruce and I think Balsam.

In one of these tick belts of timber my old cream pack horse dropped out of our caravan and I did not discover that he was missing until we reached our morning camp ground on the south east bank of the great river Athabasca. The view was fine for we could from our high ground enjoy a long view of the river both up stream and down.

Oh, so vexing and disappointing to return and hunt for that missing horse. Grateful boy Economy offered to wait and go back with me to find the horse. Our party proceeded and we two returned some six miles and fancied that we were not far from the horse. We hunted and listened, walking and running in all directions. After a while we heard some tramping and made for that direction not far from the trail, and

found him fighting with the flies in a shady place, his load or pack was in good trim, I was very thankful to find all well.

We hastened back to where we left the other horse. My good friends took my ox with them. We had a splendid keen appetite and no need of tonics to eat our pemmican and black cake.

It was a charming afternoon with an ideal climate all around us. The sun had been shining all day brightly and forest was clothed with rich verdure, wild flowers, and trailing vines beautified the glades of open land. Quantities of grass gave a carpet of soft touch for wearied feet. The great river bore its floods of melted snow fresh from the summits of the great Rockies only a few miles west of us.

The heated air of the upper strata absorbed much of the cold moisture by evaporation from the river. Our lungs seemed to expand, our blood and liver, yes, our very soul seemed to. Out of swamps and forest and difficulty, what was future distress or danger when the present was so joyous and pleasing.

The sun was disappearing west of the Rocky Mountains; we could not see them for the view was hidden from us by the trees. Not much time was lost by Economy and me in getting on the way, our horses needed feeding but we dare not wait. our course was along the east or right bank of the Athabasca not often in view for the timber was between. On we sped urging the horses. At last twilight was gone, the darkness was dense and we could not tell if we were following the road. At times we had to go on our knees to feel the ground and satisfy ourselves that we were not off the road. At last we found it essential to hold on by the tail of the horse in order not to lose sight of him.

The timber in places with the luxuriant brush in bottoms of low valleys we had to cross made the darkness like a cave under a mountain. We were timid and doubtful at times, not knowing what wild beasts might be scenting the trail of our party, or following us up. We moved on slowly and about ten at night a charming full moon rose and lighted us on the rest of our way, and all our fears and troubles again vanished, for we not only had good moonlight but a beautiful land of open forest with no under brush to darken our view.

We trod on hopefully and at last made up to our great advance party enjoying the soundest of sleep with no fear of Indian troubles, and no suspicion of wild beast attacks on their animals. We let our horses loose to graze and joined the sleepers and enjoyed it as we thought never before.

We had to keep this south west course up on the high river bank all that Saturday and were ever curious to peep between the trees to get a view of the Rockies. The following day was a rest, prayers and reading of God's Word. There was hearty praise from strong voices that day. Thank God for the Sabbath!

First Sight of the Rockies.

On the Monday we did not travel long on that high bench near the river when our course led down, down hill so that our knees were pained walking on the steep downward grade. The timber was not so thick as to obstruct our progress, but it was sufficient to hide the mountains from view. When at the low flat we soon walked out of all timber, and there not many hundred yards from us as it seemed, towered the great Rocky Mountains.

Rock from bottom to top and no slope for soil or trees. Mountains were new to the most of us, they gave us a surprise that the guide enjoyed, he wanted to see the effect of this sudden view.

A short walk over a low grassy flat brought us to the edge of the river. We had to wade some channels wide enough, but not too deep, nor swift with sandy bottom, and then we skirted along the foot of Miett Rock or mountain keeping the river still on our right side. Soon we again left the low land near the river and climbed the slope of a mountain some two thousand feet above the river in order to save us from crossing and re-crossing the river. The climb was steep in spots and fatiguing to the men of level country and low customs. On our way up a hornet's nest was near the path and most of our animals were stung and badly rattled in a place that was steep and dangerous. Many of our party showed visible signs of the enemy's attack.

Up we climbed until we reached the summit of the trail but still some four or may be six thousand feet below the summit of the mountain. Here we rested, here was soil and grass, and beaten paths in wonderful numbers, the deep trails or roads of the mountain sheep. There must be flocks of hundreds or thousands feeding quietly unmolested by the hunters

This slope was facing the south, south west, it was a large pasture field, where the early grass would invite the hungry sheep in spring.

"O! for the pen of a ready writer", my powers fail me! I am lost in wonder! No pen picture is equal to satisfy or do the least justice to describe the wonderful amphitheatre before us as we rested for a while on that high ground.

As we looked north west we viewed the great Jasper mountain with its high crest lost in the clouds and eternal snows, showing a grand and majestic slopes starting from the melting snows near the crest and mostly covered with grasses and flowers except where the streams of water formed gulches not too deep to form chasms but east water courses

Jasper Mountain

nearly straight in their course down the side of that mountain, and each gulch decorated with ornamental trees and foliage, and there were not many rocky spots upon that grassy slope.

To the south mountains of harder rock standing boldly a forbidding barrier to the foot of man, while to the south west neighbouring steep and bluff rocks without room for trees or grass. On our left and south east were rough and jagged mountain slopes mostly covered with timber scrubby and gnarled. Again, near the foot of the mountain we were resting on was a wild mountain stream, roaring like a cataract, and grinding the rocks and boulders into pebbles and sand.

A considerable quantity of flat land lay at the bottom of the valley as a fringe, with shrubs and foliage and a few trees around Jasper Lake. This lake was a most natural mirror reflecting the mighty grandeur around it. The great Athabasca River came from the south between the hold high mountains that seemed to bid defiance to our progress in that direction, and flowed slowly through the lake to the outlet near the base of our resting place.

Jasper House

One house, one only and with none other hundreds of miles distant, nestled near the river on its north west bank, about a mile and half from where we were resting. This was Jasper House, once a trading post, but not occupied in1862.

We had to descend from that interesting sheep pasture and vantage ground of admiration. Our way was zig zag and often dangerous and steep, there was very little sign of timber. We were not far from the mountain when we had to step into that terrific mountain creek where our footing was uncertain among the boulders.

The ford across was not one hundred feet and the water not over three feet deep. It was running almost in a foam because of speed. Our course was still down hill until we reached the river near to where it leaves the lake. Our noon camp was charming, the mountains all around us high, and scenery varied. The scattered fleecy clouds hugging the mountain tops as the winds floated them east and north to the plain country. The bright and warm sun reminding us of His great services to the other travellers and tribes of earth. The curious flowers and grasses and some shrubs that were not common, and the blue water of Jasper Lake, all added to the charm.

Our eyes, our souls, had a feast from the views, but we had to come down to pemmican and black flour to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Our animals had a chance of grass and good water to please them. We had some dread of the pack animals suffering in their feet by walking on gravel, rock and boulders. We had several blacksmiths in our party but no forge or shoes for horses, nor oxen.

Hardly two miles south of the lake the valley was more like a canyon. The mountains were a harder kind of rock that withstood the wear of frost and water. Here we had a climb up a boulder slope, not high to the top of a rough and rocky bench. This kind of road was severe on the feet of the pack animals. After a couple of miles of rough road we found a smoother bench land with considerable timber.

Not long after leaving the canyon we found the valley widen and the river running slowly, and I suppose three hundred yards wide. Our guide is again ready and handy. We had to unpack and swim the animals across the river to the west or north west side. When all were ready we brought my old cream horse and instructed him to lead into the water, a good number of the rest followed; but a few gave us some trouble.

There was no boat here to ferry our effects, we resorted to the mode of rafting and poling or paddling with shovels. We found some dry timber which floated very well, and made several small rafts and on these we loaded our effects, and by repeated crossings got every article safely over the river. Some of the horses had to be led across with the rafts.

On we went a short distance to find better feed. The valley was much wider and the mountains were lower, and the valley was mostly light soil, with no heavy crops of grass. The timber was open, travelling easy, but night was near and we had to halt. Our musical men felt like entertaining the boys, we were all pleased at the performance and greatly thankful for our success and safety up to this point.

We could see tracks of animals, but we had not time to hunt, rest and a good sleep were enjoyed by all, and a loud shot to waken the travellers soon after daylight set some cooking, others packing and a large crowd hunting the animals. The most of them were easily found, some had wandered further and were difficult to track, these detained our starting early.

Old Henry House

We found the travelling easy for a few miles, timber open and not much brush. Our guide pointed to a square heap of mouldering rotten logs, with brush growing on and around them, that said he is the old Henry House. It was built by some of the voyagers in the early days before the Hudson Bay Co brought their goods around Cape Horn to British Columbia.

Miett River

We were now bearing more to the west and leaving the Athabasca River and valley. Our course was to reach the Miette River, this was a small river emptying into the Athabasca river near Henry House. We had a narrow pass now, and had to cross the river in shallow places to find sufficient flat land or rock for out path. The mountains were very

close and too steep to travel on their base without losing time to cut a lot of timber. We crossed that stream fourteen times in the one day.

My ox took a notion to cross in the wrong place, and had to swim, it was too deep to ford. There was no help to relieve me, I stripped and swam across to send the ox back. I found the water ice cold and nearly perished with a chill.

We were greatly favored with beautiful and favorable weather. We found a grassy and rolling region after our days journey. Here we saw abundant sign of otter and beaver near this camping ground, the mountains were not so high nor rocky. We drank that morning the last water of the northern or eastern slope, waters that run to Arctic Sea.

The Great Divide

We were now to leave the Miette River and get over the divide of the Rocky Mountains. The path led southwest across a flat piece of finely timbered and good land then on to what seemed to be a beaver meadow without timber, some few miles long, and not more than a mile wide. The grass was good feed, but would not make hay.

Head of Fraser

The traveller stepped over a small stream and were informed that this was the head or beginning of the mighty Fraser River. Here is the beginning of the streams of the western water shed that flows to the Pacific Ocean, in that northern mountain pass. At the south end of the grassy flat there was a short journey over some higher ground where fires had destroyed the most of the timber and where our animals found some bad creek crossings.

We soon came to Moose Lake one of Natures well made reservoirs which received the mountain streams on all sides and discharged them into the Fraser River now a much larger body than when we first found it. We kept the west side of the lake not liking the stones and fallen timber. Some of our time was taken up cutting out such logs as we could not step over.

A strange looking black hairy substance was noticed on some of the brush, we at first thought the falling coat of hair was the dropping of the black bear, and they must be very plentiful. Seeing so much of that hairy stuff we handled, examined and tasted it; and seeing it hanging like a wavy mane on the limbs of the trees both dry and green, we concluded the bears did not lose their hair so high. It was a species of moss. This moss we found in many places in British Columbia, where the rainfall is not too heavy, the moss prevails between the extreme wet and dry regions, while in the wet belts there is a great quantity of green mosses, and in the dry spots not much of any kind of moss.

Moose Lake may be four or six miles in length and from a few hundred yards to a mile in width. The mountains

near us did not seem so high and rugged as near Jasper Park.

At noon near west end of lake we went up an easy slope in search of berries. Someone shouted, "Bring your rifle". In a small cave under a rock we could see some animal. After the shot a procupine rolled out of the cave dead. The guide roasted the tail, I thought the tail good eating, but the other parts were not relished.

All aboard with packs on the animals and on we travelled slowly down the right bank of the Fraser, which after leaving the lake was a considerable stream of rapid river. Part of the route was now on bench land, then on base of mountain and other spells over soft bottom and some beaver meadow, where grass was good and tall enough to cut for hay. Again we had to take to mountain base and bench lands, with their timber, on most parts except the swamps or meadow lands. But the timber was not of a marketable kind generally.

The scenery was not attractive or pleasing since we left the Athabasca Valley, until we reached Cow Dung Lake. The south side of the lake was bounded by a range of mountain with a slope covered with what appeared to be brush or small timber, and the effects of recent frosts gave some grand coloring to the foliage.

We had to follow the north shore of the lake over small boulders and gravel almost three or four miles. This short journey wore the animals feet more than all the rest of the mountain travelling. One of Mr. Shubert's horses swam into this lake with his pack, and the men in charge had a wet time getting him back. The stock suffered so much with their feet that they feared to step on these boulders, we found it difficult to urge them along. I had to drop my gray horse and pile his load on the cream and the ox. It was a great relief to find better roads at the end of the lake. I think we camped for the night early so as to give more rest to our stock.

We still had favorable weather, and on we travelled on the west side or I might almost call it north side of the Fraser; which was much larger coming out of Cow Dung Lake.

The valley was at times narrow and then wider, the travelling was slow over fallen timber among rocks and near the river. The clouds were now gathering and the appearance of rain increasing. I think about the second night from Cow Dung Lake we camped in heavy timber where there was no grass for the stock which were all tied to trees. During the night the rain poured down in torrents and made us all uncomfortable for our tents were placed on rock amongst the trees.

Early in the morning we started and when we came to a grassy place we halted to give our horses and stock some feed. The cattle and horses were fast losing flesh and

heart, and so were the few mules getting weaker. Still there was no remedy but to persevere and feed when the grass was found. It was wet weather by spells about here, feed for stock scarce, the valley narrow and considerable timber, our cheer was not marked.

We had to make a sudden stop and cut a trail along a piece of rock with fast running river of water below. By much hard picking of the rock we completed a sort of trail over which all got safely, except one horse which slipped down and was lost in the river. I remember where we crossed several fast running channels of a small river flowing into the river from the north.

In looking up that valley our guide pointed to three high snow covered mountains which he called "The Three Sisters". From our view we could not see more of these high mountains. The Fraser seemed a larger river now, and the valley was widening, especially on the south side. The timber had been destroyed over large areas by fire. We were informed that some distance to the soth was the head waters of Canoe River, which flows into the Columbia River at Boat Encampment.

If we had followed the Athabasca pass southward instead of turning to Mietee River, we would have reached the Columbia River, at the mouth of Canoe River, also called Boat Encampment. The two high mountains Brown and Hooker are the supposed sources of Athabasca, North Saskatchewan, part of Columbia, and not far from some of the sources of the Fraser River.

Tete Jaune Cache

Our trail was easier and in a short time, soon after noon, we arrived at Boat Encampment, or Tete Jaune Cache. All safely over long distances and both seen and unseen dangers. The guide forewarned us of the probability of Indians being encamped about here, and so there we saw on the south bank, nearly opposite, some signs of wigwam and some smoke rising from a camp fire. They were a small band of Shuswap Indians who had left that tribe some time previous. Some five or that band had attempted to cross the mountains on the snow the Spring of '62, and all were buried but one under a snow slide.

Two canoes with five large salmon came over to our camp, the salmon were paid for by barter, clothing, and other articles. They were in fine condition and were a surprise to us at that great distance from the sea, some eight hundred miles against wonderful currents of long stretches, and very rocky rapids with falls. They were large salmon, our Huntingdon party headed by Captain James Wattie bought one salmon which was sufficient to give a hearty supper and breakfast for our party of seventeen. The salmon was very welcome and proved a great feast. Some of our party secured some dried sunk dried mountain sheep and some tallow.

A wide bench stretched north to the mountain which was not high. Here we fed on very ripe June berry growing on tall bushes in large quantities, there was also much of the blueberry, very tasty.

To the southeast was an extensive and broad plain piece of country reaching far beyond our view towards Canoe River.

Party Divides - Great Discussions re Routes.

The question now was which route to take. The guide did not know what the river route might be to raft on. He, and we knew the Hudson's Bay Co. had run boats down to Fort George and up to this landing. Neither did the guide know much about a route south towards the north Thompson River. A large party decided to start on the Thompson route and secured the most of the animals hoping to get them through Kamloops and have some benefit out of them in the mines later in Cariboo. A large number decided to go down the Fraser River, some made rafts, others canoes, and one party made a boat of ox hides.

Our Huntingdon party soon got a raft of cedar together 22 ft wide and over 40 ft long, with two long sweeps at both ends and well planned rowlocks to swing the sweeps on. After further consideration they concluded to make another crib the same size and lash the last raft ahead of the first, and try to carry some nine head of stock on the leading raft, and have our passengers on the hind crib with all our provisions and luggage. Such a time as we all did not enjoy at this Tete Jaune.

We had forebodings as to the wisdom or folly of any of our plans, or decisions as to which route we should take, or should we cut roads through possible passes leading into Cariboo which we supposed might not be over one hundred and fifty miles. Or should we go with rafts or canoes? Or all go down by North Thompson River to Kamloops? We had many questions but none to give a satisfactory answer. All felt that great times of peril and danger were at hand.

Mr. & Mrs. Shubert expressed a wish to join our Huntingdon crowd on one great raft some 80 ft long and 22 ft wide. Our wise men thought they would be wiser to join the party which had the most animals and take the land route via Thompson ~~xxxx~~ Valley to Kamloops. The Fraser River route was so much longer, and we then thought, the most dangerous.

The McMicken party numbering twenty six built a smaller raft and had it furnished with rowlocks and sweeps and agreed that Robert Harkness from near Iroqua Cut should be Captain and pilot, and commander of the rafts and the men. The Ottawa party had a smaller raft and two oxen on board. Robert Warren and his cousin Robertson, from Goderich, with another gentlemen, dug out two canoes and lashed them together.

Mrs. McKenzie, late of Kamloops, with a young man named Patterson and a third party made one large canoe. Another party of clever men collected several hides of the oxen killed at that camp, stitched the hides together and secured them over a well shaped strong skeleton of ribs and curbs with brace beams. They made a good and water tight boat. The parting hour arrived, the good wishes interchanged.

Raft Starts Down the Fraser - Sept. 1st '82.

The hour came when William Sellers gave order; "Let go that rope". The day was fine, the air balmy, nicely charged with odors from the forest that covered the flat lands on both sides of the river, and up the mountain slopes. The timber was cotton wood, fir, cedar, pine and many kinds of smaller brush, most of which was red and grey willow.

Our great raft and crew were committed to the care of William Sellers, from Huntington, Quebec. We soon found him to be worthy of our confidence. We obeyed him as true soldiers obey their general, or worthy seamen their captain.

The river flowed swiftly and our raft with its load of stock and passengers glided with the current. Captain Sellers was at his post, directing us to work our sweeps so as to follow the deeper and safer channel in order to avoid rocks or bars that might stop us, or injure our raft. We were much cheered that first day's run having had no serious interruption in the river, and making so long a run with no fatigue to animals or men. This was a great change from the labor of walking, cutting a trail or making bridges.

We tied up at night where we could find feed for our stock. Still the timbered valley was considerable in width, and the stars sparkled brightly. Some of the party had joyous dreams, some built castles in the air. Many thought of the dear friends and longing to hear from them, or learn something of their doings.

The night was not too cool. We soon made our humble breakfast with no need of patent tonics for an appetite.

The stock was collected nine in all, they were tied to a frame fixed to the raft. The Captain ordered all aboard, loosed the rope and we started on our second day's run down the Fraser.

A short time after our leaving the last camp, we saw a craft coming after us. They soon overtook, saluted us and passed confidently without any apparent thought of danger.

Robertson Drowned.

About 10 a.m. our people noticed a bar like an Island some distance down stream. We soon saw two men and a canoe on its shore. We then supposed the friends who passed us had

been wrecked. Captain Sellers and I took our canoe and went to the scene of trouble. Our raft was rowed to the south shore and snubbed. We took the two men with us to the raft. Their sad tale was soon told. Mr. Robertson was a swimmer, they did not heed the danger and paddled into a small swell caused by the water flowing over a large boulder. These waves tossed their little craft which filled with water and broke the ties holding them together. Mr. Robertson told Mr. Warren and the third man to hold on to the canoe strongly and he would swim to shore and come to their relief as soon as possible.

We travelled up and down looking for Robertson without finding any sign of him. Late in the afternoon we concluded to go giving him up as drowned. The water was so cold that he could hardly escape having cramps.

Mr. Robertson was an Engineer by profession, from Goderich, Ontario, he was the third captain of the whole party. His manner, his principles and his temper, all fitted him to commend confidence and respect. This first loss of a true friend and companion was a sad blow to us all, and a great sorrow to his immediate two fellow companions. There were some serious meditations for several days following. What may become of us all? Who is the next to find a grave in the cold Fraser?

Running the Canyons of the Fraser

The current of the river was faster, bars more numerous the weather good, and the mountains some distance from us. Our Captain had no jokes to cheer us. Prairie experiences mountain pass travelling were bad enough; but who can tell what the next hour or mile may reveal to us.

Night comes in its turn here as in the civilized parts of the world, and our duty was to rest and have our animals feast on rushes and grasses on a spot where timber was not too thick. We provided as best we could for the two additional friends now so sad at the loss of our dear Robertson. Much regret was expressed, and sympathy shown to these men. That night was the first one of real sorrow since the time of partin with the friends at home.

The sun in due time turned that night into day and all got ready and started our raft on its course. The Captain was all earnestness about his work. "Ho! boys watch your sweeps, send raft to the right, quick and strong" "Now Strong to the left" . There were shallow bars and narrow channels with swift currents. All right, well done.

Now we were borne along swifter and had to be watchful of the channel and draft water. The excitement was increasing. Our speed was faster. The outlook shouted danger ahead. The command was hard to shore on left side. It was a great strain on our men and sweeps to reach the left bank in time.

If we had gone a few yards further we might all have been lost.

We walked along the bank and there saw rough water with a heavy draft of channel hugging near the right bank. and a rocky cliff bent elbow shaped causing the river to form a great eddy or whirlpool of threatening danger to our timbers in the raft. Many of us thought it impossible to get over that eddy or to avoid striking the raft against the bluff rock, or if we did pass that rock there were two terrific eddies to avoid if possible lower down.

We thought we might try the run if we lightened the raft, so all freight and stock and idle passengers were put to shore. Eight of a crew with Captain volunteered to risk their lives with the raft. We pushed and then kept working our sweeps to prevent going to the right side. Down we shot like a cork and our oars barely escaped striking the rock after hauling them in the raft which we felt for a moment was to be dashed against that rock. But a mind Providence seemed to favor the made water power for the time and our raft was borne by another current out from the rock and passed in safety as we thought.

But a new water power in the shape of a whirl caught the left forward corner of the raft holding it fast, while another terrific eddy below the great rock caught the after right corner of the raft and thus we were anchored for a short time. Although we labored and strained at our sweeps with two men at each handle we failed to gain upon the power of the eddies.

We were tired and troubled in this dilemma when all of a sudden by some freak of the eddy we were hoisted past all danger in that place.

The river now widened to a lake nearly a mile, each way across. We soon got our raft to where we could reload everything with man and beast.

I may here mention that Wm. McKenzie who did belong at one time with the Toronto party was ahead of us in a canoe with a young man Paterson, and a third party. They had an upset here and got wet, young Paterson caught cold and died at Fort George.

After we got started it took us a long time to cross that lake with our rowing, we could not pole the raft, the water was deep. We were puzzled as to the course of the river, so we ventured to the south side where we could see no rocks. Our raft was landed in a safe mooring and some of us proceeded to explore the river. We saw where it passed between great rocks, steep on both sides, and with a gradual fall that made white caps on the big swell, with a sudden bend and no further view.

Our news to the crowd was not too flattering for

there was no way to portage anything nor could we travel the animals. We must risk on as usual in the dark, not knowing the perils. On we went running down that foamy rapid at great speed, and instead of touching the rock at the bend our raft was lifted past it by the powerful draft of the water channel.

Here we were in a real canyon now gliding easily on smooth eddies, again caught by the more powerful eddies. Ran over some rapid spots and after a time of anxiety and spells of hard rowing we passed the narrow canyon and reached a wide expanse of river with t rees and roots stuck on the shallows and where our course was very doubtful there being little signs of a channel. The course was not swift and the water muddy from the clay banks falling in the river.

The danger of sticking on shoals was not quieting to our fears.

This last canyon was followed by that kind of doubtful and intricate navigation for a couple of miles when the river settled into a wide and quiet stream that checked our speed, but disarmed our fear. This seemed to be almost a lake, the water did not make over a mile per hour. There was reason now to use our sweeps so as to get more headway.

Floating at Night

One evening our stock were put to shore for an hour to feed and then we reloaded them and floated all night. We seemed far from the mountains on all sides in this part of the river. We were getting well north near some of the tributaries of the Peace River. We supposed that much swamp land was on both sides of the river in that region.

The nights were clear and the sun shone most days; with little sign of cloud or storm. We loved the safety and quiet of the river; but we were anxious to get on faster. I do not think we made over fifteen miles each of the two days. We did not want to fish or hunt, we only saw signs of salmon occasionally and once saw a lynx. The game may be plentiful in that region, but we saw none. I suppose the beaver and otter were abundant also mink and muskrat.

What that part may be for settlement or railway r oute we leave for exploring engineers to report.

Our quiet river narrowed after a while and was more swift and not too difficult to navigate until we reached an Indian encampment with some signs of life.

This was the first sign of human life we had seen since leaving Tete Jaune Cache. We spoke English, but none could understand, nor did they seem to know any French. We could get no information from them touching the river or distance from Fort George. Some of our party bartered with

them for some dried salmon. They did not seem to fear us, and we treated them with some presents.

Our course was generally north west with frequent long stretched north of that point, now we were bearing southwest.

The course of the river and valley was southwest some hours before seeing the Indians. We thought we must have made over 300 miles by raft up to this place. We could see the mountains some distance south, but those north were too distant for us to see.

Over fifteen miles of Rapids.

The water was running swifter now than we had seen it since leaving the dread canyon. On we glided faster and faster, the banks were higher with boulders and gravel in them and soon we saw boulders in the river. The captain at his post most earnestly watching and commanding, "Do boys watch the boulders, help to the right, stronger; the draft of water is sucking us into danger. Good, you worked well. See another bad spot, again with all your strength draw the raft to the right, and all hands are pulling as for dear life." And so on for nearly two hours we ran over 15 miles of very rapid and swift river between and over smaller rocks often so near the surface as to threaten tearing our raft to pieces.

Never was a pilot more attentive and faithful than our noble William Sellers steering us through that unknown channel down those long and terrible rapids. His men were inspired by his spirit of earnest bravery and worked like heroes for life, and loved ones. If the water had been a foot lower it is almost certain that we could have come to grief. It was just a kind Providence that we got through so early at a proper stage of the water.

After a storm comes a calm, and so we found a fine river below these rapids. The current was fast enough, but there were no dangerous rocks or narrow channel to frighten us or compel us to labor so incessantly. Now we saw low lands with large cotton wood trees, very giants around the trunk and tall also. We inferred the climate and soil were both better.

The mountains in the north and west were far out of view, we could see the Cariboo range south east of us, as we suppose. We got to the shore in a place where a fine forest of cotton wood and near to where the grass was fit for our stock.

Camp Fire Discussion re the Future

We passed an interesting evening there together with hopes of no more such dangerous rapids, and bright talk about the future and the letters we would send home if we did not soon return. Bah! who talks about returning after all your

privation and hardships. You will surely try and get some of the Cariboo gold before you leave B. C. The married men and some with families, often thought they should not have left. What is gold! What are riches to happiness? Are we in the path of duty ever running on the brink of danger throwing our life into a deadly snare as we did this day.

Think of all the narrow escapes we have had! Look at the loss of friend Robertson. What a grief to his friends and parents when they hear of his death, and how many more may be lost before we get through. And what is gold or any kind of wealth in the esteem of Robertson's mourning sweet-heart, or to Harry's wife if he is to drown! Some spoke that night as if they would soon return home. After our hard work and heavy sweat sleep came fast and was refreshing.

A breakfast Discussion re Distance to Fort George.

Now boys, said Mr. Wattie, how far are we from Fort George? Don't know, who can tell? Well, I think its fifty miles. Oh! its a hundred look at the map. Shaw, what did these map makers know about the river or country. Out spoke one, it may be Joe White, "I think we will be at Fort George to-day if we are not lost in some canion or another long rapid.

The stock was placed on the raft. "all aboard, and watch for wood piles on deady falls, you that are on the look-out." Thus cried the Wattie. Commander Captain Sellers took his place cooly, like one ready for some great event, or danger So fast flowed the river and free from snags or boulders that we must have ran about twenty miles in three hours. Hurrah! boys, look there, see that house and other small buildings.

Fort George

Oh! see, here we have another river coming from the north, and look, how clear its water is compared with the Fraser. Hard to the right, work your sweeps to get into the right bank. In a few minutes, our raft was tied to a stump and all hands climbed up the bank and stood on the beach land beside the Fort George Hudson's Bay Co., Trading Post.

Patterson's Death & Funeral

Mr. McKenzie and party met and told us that young Patterson died the previous night after much suffering from a bad cold he caught from his wetting at the first bad canion.

We all waited for the funeral. A small canoe was split and shaped into a coffin there being no boards. We had a short funeral service after the grave was dug, and there committed to his last resting place young Patterson from England. He was modest and refined in manner, as to his religious faith we were not informed. He was not assertive or obtrusive and did not make many acquaintances. I believe his companions communicated with his friends in England.

We now knew of two of our party who were gone to their long home. Our party were all serious helping at the last rites to our dead fellow traveller.

Here was a man in charge of the Company's trading post while the proper head was absent. The principal's name was Chads.

Two more Canyons

We would have to run through two fearful canyons. The man in charge said there was no possibility of going down with a raft. We might drop a boat down with a rope but we could not run those places with a boat and keep our passengers and cargo in, these would have to be portaged so this man declared. Some Half-breeds and Indians were consulted and all advised us not to attempt running with the raft. We held council for long hours and at last concluded to hire some Indians with two canoes to come down to the first canyon with us, and be ready to pick up with their canoes what men they could if our raft was wrecked.

So the day after the funeral we got all ready with the raft and the two Indian canoes, and made another start on our journey to the land of gold. The river was not so wide, but swifter, the banks were getting higher, the hills were showing up closer. The country was thickly wooded, and the weather pleasant and bright, the air full of vigor to give a buoyancy to our spirits and nerves.

On went the raft with not much work in guiding. When nearing the bad river we sent two ahead in our canoe with the Indians to survey and bring a report of what we saw of the river.

We found a wide enough channel to the left side away from the dangerous rocks on the right half of the river, but we could see a heavy fall to jump our raft over which we could easily see was s serious probability.

The Indians were placed with their canoes on the east bank of rock and instructed to watch our fate, and if we were wrecked to come and do what they could to save as many as possible. Captainx Sellers and two others arranged them and came back to where the raft was moored and told what they saw and what they thought we should do.

Quite a number of the men concluded to walk over the hills and rocks rather than risk their lives in so dangerous a place. I think some ten men volunteered to stay with the raft and hold the stock on with us. Some of us made silent supplication to God for His guidance and protection.

Away our raft floated easily and slow giving us good opportunity to swing her well from the dangerous island rocks

on the right side. Our speed increased and on we glided between eddies and now with a leap over the fall our raft dipped under water at the front, plunged over the fall. I got one sight of the Indians who threw up their arms with a sad moan as if we were all gone. In a moment the raft was passed the fall and all floating safely down with race horse speed. We soon lost sight of the Indians. While under the water we had our stock and men swimming and all our stuff wet, but every man, held by a rope and all the stock were tied.

Arthur Anderson lost hold of his rope and someone caught him floating off the raft. Our canoe that was lashed to the side of the raft made a clean somersault and of course had it full of water. Again we breathed freely and thanked God for our preservation in so wild a danger.

On we went as if we were running a tobaggan down a long and steep decline. We were wet but none were drowned. As soon as we could the raft as moored to wait for the people who took to the land. We got all on board and proceeded on our only course as we thought our raft was the safest mode of journeying down that river.

Mountains Described.

We saw some interesting mountain views, pinnacles and towers and flags of rock towering high above the timber and their nether parts hidden from our view by the timber. There were strange breaking away from the mountains as of perpendicular walls with doors and windows as if they were ruins of ancient castles, with towers and turrets and impregnable sides. The rock seemed a yellowish brown, subject to weather influences

We camped some 40 miles from Fort George a much happier crowd than we were the day before. Didn't our good Captain guide his men and raft well through that awful place, we often had occasion to thank William Sellers for his successes over the dangerous and critical stretches of the fierce river.

Oh! boys, answered the captain, what could I have done alone or what would have been our fate if the men had been in any way wanting who were working the sweeps. Our course between the rocks was very narrow and unknown to us. We did not have much water to spare in certain places over the sunken rocks. I only did the best I could and you all did the same. Thank God for our safety.

"I thank God," said Arthur Anderson, "that some kind hand got hold of me when I was nearly gone."

"Oh! dear," said Harry, "I thought my breath left me and thought we were all gone when the raft made that terrible plunge over yon dangerous fall."

"Goodness gracious, " said George, "no one in a civilized country would try a raft in such dangerous places.

"That is nothing to the rapids on the St. Lawrence above Cornwall or at Corteau, the Cedar or Lachine rapids where thousands of rafts have gone over and not many accidents to rafts or men." Thus cheerily said a man of that river.

"Very true," said Mr. Wattie, "but they all have pilots who know the channels, the rocks and the play of the currents, and they have more water and wider channels than we had."

"Yes," said Bill Schyler, "and they will continue to run rafts on the St. Lawrence; but it is my opinion that we are likely to be old men, if we live long enough, to hear of another party coming such a long way down the Fraser with so large a raft and nine head of stock on it."

"Oh!" spoke Robert Warren, "when I reflect on the safety of this raft at this favorable stage of water, and the sad mistakes we made in attempting to run with our two small canoes, I feel guilty of the loss of my friend Robertson. -- He thought two canoes would be safer and run faster.

Out spoke John Bowden, "Cheer boys! keep up your hearts, there's only one more canyon to face before we reach Quesnell mouth."

We were drying our clothes and bedding before large fires while thus having our talk. It was like a miracle that none of the men nor stock were lost nor hurt in all that journey, who started with the raft.

The hour for retiring having come we laid our bodies down under blankets, but sleep was slow in coming.

To think of the long months of weary and anxious time, and to hope that one night more is to pass, and if we can only get through this next doubtful canyon we can then say we have accomplished the great journey we had planned to make. Still we would be sixty miles from Cariboo. But then, what of that, all by land, and on a road travelled and easily followed.

We slept or dreamed or passed the night building castles in the air. Another breakfast or pemmican, buffalo tallow and Red River black flour, or dried beef, with a hope that some more palatable food would be found at Quesnell Mouth, and all got aboard the good raft with misgivings as to the dreaded canyon.

Another day of charming September weather with all the fine days before it, was a decided step to health, strength and courage. Again we had the mountains or high banks with very little lowland or benches on either side of the river the most of this day, and timber or bush meeting our gaze on both sides of our course.

The river was swift and exciting. In a certain sudden bend there was a mud slide from the mountain, and trees and roots were in the water near the bank, our raft almost stuck in the tree tops in the water because of the eddies holding the raft for a time. The freak of current gave us a hoist from there and having to make a sudden bend round a point to the left we again got into troublesome eddies and tree tops. We got passed that slide with hopes of no more like it. Our speed was soon cheery and we thought we saw some human being on the bars in the distance, they were Chinese busy at their lunch.

On landing we gave them a surprise but settled their doubts by showing that we were travelling to Cariboo. Mr. Wattie questioned them. "How much gold you catch here one man one day." "Oh some day one dollar, some day four bittee, six bittee, one day long time two dollars." "How far Quesheil river, maybe twenty mile." Some six of them surrounded a dish of rice and bacon soup. Soup which they shovelled into their mouths with chop sticks instead of spoons.

We had never seen specimens of that wonderful people before this time, except Mr. Wattie who had been in California some years previous. They were a wonder to us with their chop sticks pig tail and sallow skins. They were smaller than our men.

"Now for it," said Mr. Wattie, and the raft was again in the swift current. The mountains seemed higher and closer to the river and we rightly judged that danger was near. "All to your oars" two men at each and swifter we glided down a long straight course of river. See that rock in the middle of the river, which side of that rock is the safest? "I can't tell yet" said the captain. "It seems as if there is more water on the left", said the lookout. "Work with all your might, raft to the left of that rock." Steady and strong we all worked to keep the raft from going straight over the rock. We must have been over ten minutes working before we came to the rock, and in spite of all our efforts the right side of the raft was on top of the rock; but never touched it. There was so much force in the swift river that the water climbed over the rock and must have been several feet deep on top of it. The left side of the raft was low down while the right side was thus carried high, and so terrible was our speed that we seemed to fly as a railway train past both sides of the river, soon leaving that dreaded rock in the distance, and none the worse of our big fears.

Much, very much did we feel thankful for our safety again this time, and still we sped on in great speed with no further striking events until we moored our great raft in a small eddy near the village of Quesnell mouth.

Here we all set to work getting our stock off and all our luggage up to a camping place not far from stores and hotels, and some cabins where some people made their homes.

Quesnell.

All safely landed near to Cariboo. We soon learned that several thousand had gone in during the summer, and the majority had returned and hastened down country disgusted with the country and with themselves for giving heed to newspaper reports. That evening a number of men with their blankets on their backs and clothes badly torn and patched arrived from William's Creek, without money and nowhere to earn anyl These had hard things to say about Cariboo. They did acknowledge that a few men found some rich ground, but there was nothing more to be found up there--the rich ground was all grabbed by the few, and a poor man has no show.

We arrived here on the 13th September, I think we came in eleven days from Tete Jaune Cache. During the years of engineering for a proper route for the C.P.R., some parties were surveying up or down that same river in proper boats, and they often wondered at our successful trip. They could not understand it to be possible that we came through without being wrecked.

They declared that the river is not safe for boats, boats three to five tons burden with flat bottom and no keel. Boats had to be strong and well built, and in some cases the cargoes were packed out of the boats on men's backs rather risk the stuff in these dangerous places.

The whole company were a fine lot of men who showed a spirit of order where the law of the land could not punish. The only discord noticed was a fight with fists between two young men who happened to quarrel over food. We grieved to see this one misunderstanding.

On Monday morning early we started and soon found a long and heavy climb to reach the table land. We seemed to be on a level with most of the upland, and except an occasional hill we did not think the travelling rough or difficult. In places the timber was thick, but much of what we would call timber land was grassy and the trees not close together, other stretches the timber was mostly black pine, thick and small.

We passed over many small streams and creeks, travelled near many small and a few larger lakes, and considerable marshland. We passed strings of horses and mules with pack saddles and loads of stuff on their backs. These animals had two trips already and were out to the Arm for a third load. Mr. Barren was the agent of some San Francisco firm who shipped provisions and horses to Victoria and thence byH.B. Co. steamer "Laboucher" to Bentick Arm.

They carried their cargo up river thirty miles by Indians and made a trail from there through to Fort Alexander for packing over. In many places there was thick timber to work through, in others there was steep climbing over slide

rock which was severe on horses feet, besides many small bridges to construct. Later I will describe the route and country.

Very few of our overland party felt like going into Cariboo even after getting so near it. We were all tired of travelling, not many had money sufficient to go there and provide themselves for the trip to Victoria, and then lay in a stock of food for the coming winter. The great bulk of our party started down on foot over the travelled trail by the Fraser Valley, and a number joined the road building below Clive - on towards Lytton.

The horses mules and oxen went with them and served to pack blankets and food. James Wattie and the writer took the ox that I bought from a Mr. Gunn on Red River to Cariboo to pack our outfit. We left William Wattie at Quesnel Mouth. This place is finely situated on a broad bench of upland north of Quesnel River and east of Fraser River. The timber on both sides of the Fraser had been badly burned some seasons previous to our arrival there.

Extract from A. L. Fortune's Early Travels to the Cariboo.

We saw a few men making riches in a short time, much gambling and life of low character - We met Cariboo Cameron in sore trouble about his sick wife who died some weeks later.

We were all satisfied that gold was therein large quantity, but we resolved to go somewhere south for the food was not sufficient to feed many till supplies were brought up in Spring. In less than three weeks we returned to Mouth of Quesnell where William Wattie waited for us. We rafted our ox and packs about 45 miles down the Fraser to Fort Alexander. The next day being Sunday, we heard the Rev. Mr. Sheepshanks preach to a few men, we felt this a privilege. Next day we climbed to the top of the table land and followed a trail made by Mr. Barron from California that summer. He brought a pack train with a cargo of goods, provisions and liquor by steamer Labouchere to river mouth, thence by canoe thirty miles up river, where he built a log house for home and store.

We were hounded by some Indians on our way west of Chilicootan country, but no serious harm resulted. There were serious murders committed here some two years later. Our ox we left in charge of two men cutting and stacking hay west of Penthin Lake. Hungry, tired and very wet we at last reached Mr. Barron's store. The man in charge was down with smallpox a traveller engaged to nurse him and attend to the store. Indians had been camped round the place and many died of the plague.

We hurried away from the stricken place and fortunately

found two canoes ready to run the 30 miles to salt water. We picked up three Indians struggling amongst flood wood. They proceeded us a short time, there were eight in the canoes, some were drunk and caused the drowning of five. The logs and trees were badly jammed. Our men had difficulty. When past the jams of logs we glided swiftely with the current and soon landed near a Mr. Taylor's cabin near an Indian village. We waited expecting the steamer Laboudhere, 21 days. We hired Indians with canoe to Balabala, kindly treated there by chief and people who sent four with canoe to Fort Rupert.

A storm of rain and wind kept us in safe harbour opposite north end of Vancouver Island a short day and night. In crossing Gulf to Fort Rupert our whole party got a fright by a large whale rising high close behind us.

At Fort Rupert we again waited 18 days and the steamer brought us safely to Victoria the centre of interest, commerce entertainment and christianity. As some loyal to the locality put it, this city is the brain and soul of British Columbia.

The Messrs. Wattie crossed the Sound to sawmills, I joined some young men who were making new roads near Mount Tolmie. The late George Dean was foreman. We worked for 100 cents per day and lodged and boarded ourselves. We did not talk of forming a labor union nor disturb the peace by making a strike. The roads radiating from the city make fine drives and were cheaply made.

A number of the overlanders reached Victoria, others Westminster, some went over the sound, a few reached California, and several went back home by Panama to the East.

W.W. Morrow and A. L. Fortune bought a small boarding house on Broad Street long known as the Overland restaurant.

We parted Spring of 1864, Morrow went to Wild Horse Creek, Kootenay and Fortune packed 50 pounds from Yale to William's Creek. I suffered in my feet, I would advise all to get the best fitting and best material for foot use; corns and other sores are like habits, they stick and sting.

I prospected in deep cuts and shafts in the wet and cold, 40 below zero at the top of one shaft, blasted rocks, shovelled all kinds of gravel, earth, quicksand, eighteen months of this life was enough. I spent in prospecting $800.00 besides my time. I paid $600. of a debt, borrowed $36. from a friend, I walked out of Cariboo with no gold and much experience about the last of October 1865.

At Mouth Quesnell, overtook a boating party ready to run the Fraser. I joined and paid my fare and worked the oar. We had an exciting bold and dangerous voyage to Lillooet. We made two portages. I worked on a farm near Lillooet with John Malcolm all winter. Again the gold fever got us, and

this time we reached the Big Bend mines in early May '66. A few warm days near end of May brought heavy floods over the diggings. We left in flood time intending to return soon.

Our good old friend I. A. Mara kept store at Seymour city, with him we entrusted some provisions and a canoe. Mr. Mara kindly delivered all to us. Thus fitted we started exploring and prospecting, first Seymour Arm, and creeks, then about Cape Horn, after that mostly on creeks and rocks on the west shore going south by Sicamous, although we did not see that point until later.

We found our way west by Arm to mouth of Salmon River, all the creeks we ascended and washed in them pans of gravel, sunk a few holes, none deep, found no gold, but in one place a few light colors. Mosquitoes were unbearable, we could only do a little work in the midst of the buzz and sting. Some Indians, one named Teehasket, tried to explain where he saw shiny sand and gravel on the shore of a lake a distance off, south east, from Salmon Arm.

Our curiosity led us to search for the place described. We followed the arm of lake to Sicamous, we found more mosquitoes here than any traveller has ever there since, think so at least. After passing the short river up to what is later called Mara Lake.

We were greatly taken with the water system of Suswap All the hills and valleys were covered with God's planting of trees. The fir and pine, the cedar and larch, the cottonwood and spruce in the damp places, have already been a great help to our people and our times and trade. Our public men can enrich our Province and Dominion by safe guarding and reforestrating where possible.

We reached south end of Mara Lake and found a fine navigable river poruing its waters therein, resolved to go against the stream some distance. We thought the valley might be two, and in places, three miles wide, and surely an ideal home for game and fur bearing animals with fish galore in the waters. Our hopes were heightened when later abundance of salmon came to their spawning grounds.

Saturday 14th June, '66, we ascended this charming river while coasting on one side and then the other for variety, views and eddy currents, helping our progress. The esprey or fish hawk, growled displeasure at our approach to their nests and home. The ducks with young foamed the river surface in their excited flight from the pale face. The eagle's chase to catch the osprey flying with fish high in air, was also entertaining. The birds among the trees sang their chorus to our song of the paddle, and when we ventured into the shade bends, the mosquitoes in swarms gave us their unwelcome entertaining song of blood and battle.

The grey and cool waters of the river, the timbered mountain slopes and valley so full of sap life gave all shade of green to rest the eye, the glory of the blue sky above us, and the bright warm sun touching all nature with his heat and life giving power, made me feel verily God is near.

I cannot forget that first day in Spallumcheen Valley, we were so near to primitive conditions and quiet elements, so near to nature., where men's ambition never utilized nor wasted the wealth of God's arranging. To think of the centuries past and gone, without the sound of ax or saw being heard, over so vast a forest of many thousand of square miles. Verily I have ever looked back with gratitude to God for the privilege of being the first pioneer and settler of His guiding and planting in North Okanagan.

At sunset we camped 3½ miles north of Enderby, near the site of Mr. Anderson's home, saturday 14th June. The morrow being sabbath we prepared a brush awning to rest in, had all our belongings near our head safe from run and rain. Three more men with canoe arrived and lodged near us, they made smudge fires to beat the mosquitoes with smoke. At an early hour the cry of "Fire" we heard saw and felt. It destroyed all our food except a fragment of bacon and part of the flour.

We resolved to leave that place to get some sleep on a bald hill further up stream. The pest was still bad. From this elevation we had a view of the serpentine course of the river, and we supposed a lake in view about 3 miles south. We hoped we might find a resting nook near the lake, we hurried up to the lake, and much disappointed to find no lake but a fine piece of open prairie land with swarms of mosquitoes waiting in the grass, all bloodthirsty.

We hurried across prairie 900 yards, climbed the hill Qune'quaquinlahin where we ate, slept and rested; and our eyes feasted on the long stretch of Spilamowas reaching south to Skinamaxoultin on prairie bend, near Cemetery, Lansdown, and stately forests fringing either side of that six mile stretch.

On Monday we measured the spot we first found near river, staked four claims for Fortune, Malcolm, Dunn and Burns. We dropped down to present site of sawmills, left canoe near mouth of Fortune Creek, walked to site of Lansdown, rested on the high rocks of bench, and built castles in the air.

A wide expanse of prairie and wooded country covering the whole from the eastern range of mountains to Dulkar, and stretching south beyond our vision, must have a future, so pioneers thought. We did not then know where Okanagan layed. We retreated north to the canoe hurried over all waters to

where was the house of B. Martin, got our pack horses and soon applied for a record of our claims in the land office. They would not there record our claims, but referred us to Lytton where I waslked when heat was excessive, but Lytton officer referred me to Mr. Hanes who was officer in Big Bend, in course of time we received the desired reply.

John Malcolm thought our chances of scalping or other Indian troubles might be too risky, he declined joining me, Mark Wallis from St. Thomas took his place.

We made another visit overland by Kamloops, Grand Prairie and thence to Spallumcheen in the fall, built a cabin, made a run with bark canoe up to Mabel Lake, to see the Indians thining gravel, found little sign of gold, but much timber which is now manufactured by the A.R. Rogers sawmill Co. and going very fast into the prairies east of the Rocky mountains. These timber regions looked fine 44 years ago.

We wintered near Lillooet again, and in spring 1867 May 6th, Mark Wallis with an Indian reached Spallumcheen and I in a canoe with seed, tools, and provisions got there also. That was the latest and most backward spring experienced in 43 years.

We commenced laying the foundations of Spallumcheen settlement and frontier life, the year of uniting the Provinces in one Dominion. We have had ups and downs, crosses and losses, crops a failure, crops of great yield. Often no markets, sometimes fair prices, seasons of drought, others of damaging rains on the crops doing serious damage. Still we have had a good share of prosperity, we have been always grateful to God who did all things well.

It was my privilege and pleasure to meet with the Indians on Sabbath afternoons and teach them christianity. We continued this work over fourteen years until a few white families settled in Enderby when we left the Indians and started Sunday School, which we still help in the work and teaching.

My reading friends will bear with me in drawing their attention to my dear wife. I was twelve years in B.C. and she patiently waited until I went East for her in 1874. She was the first white woman here, Captain Tolmie and August Mineuto, proprietors and workers of the small steamer "Peggy" honored her with the Union Jack, and stars and stripes, flying in her honor of being the first white woman up the Spallumcheen River, and the first lady settler in this valley.

Most nobly she bore with me the work, the hardships and the many privations; also the many pleasures. Our lot in Spallumcheen is more than a reward for what we have come through, and our Heavenly Father always kept us in safety.

Thousands of people have had their experience of pioneering since, those early days, and we promise much trial and labor for the millions to follow us. We pray God to guide them all.

Extract from A. L. Fortune's Manuscript of his early travels to the Cariboo.