

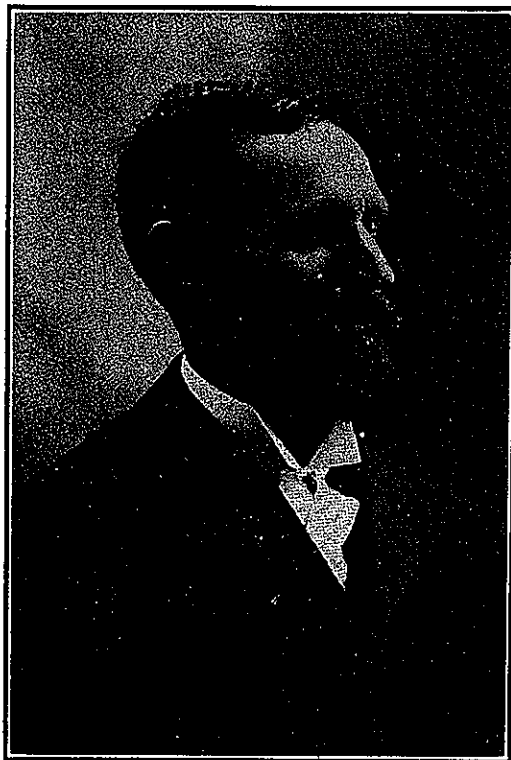
THOMAS FAWCETT.

In 1857 there came to Canada from Scargill, Yorkshire, England, Adam Fawcett, son of James Fawcett and Anne Fawcett, and his wife Anne Weatherell. He was born on Oct. 21st, 1822, his wife on Feb. 6th, 1825, and they were married on Aug. 26th, 1843. They settled at first at Hagersville, and later in Muskoka, near Gravenhurst. Adam Fawcett died at Scarborough on Jan. 29th, 1883, and his widow on May 2nd, 1902.

Thomas Fawcett was born in England on Oct. 28th, 1848. He had eight brothers — James, William (died 1881), Michael, Adam, John (died 1915), Robert, Wesley and Albert, and six sisters—Marian, Marie (died 1888), Betsey, Emily, Jane and Matilda.

In 1872 Messrs. Herman and Bolton (R. W. Herman and Lewis Bolton, of Listowel) were employed on surveys in Manitoba for the Dominion Government, and engaged Mr. Fawcett, then a husky young man of twenty-four years of age, at that time endowed with a common school education only, a magnificent physique, a strong constitution and an ambition to succeed. The next season he became articled to Mr. Herman, and in 1874 assisted him on a Township survey in Ontario. During the Winter months Mr. Fawcett studied at Listowel, where Mr. J. J. Dalton was his companion, the latter being then articled to Mr. Bolton.

In 1875 Mr. Fawcett was entrusted with the transit on block outline work west of Lake Manitoba, by Mr. Herman. In 1876 Mr. Herman moved back to the old homestead at Rednersville, Prince Edward Co., and Mr. Fawcett accompanied him.



Mr. Fawcett qualified as a Dominion Land Surveyor in 1876 and a D. T. S. in 1877, but it was not until January 6th, 1881, that he qualified as a Provincial Land Surveyor in this Province.

He appears to have made but one survey for the Provincial Government, which was the outlining of four blocks along the Thunder Bay Branch of the G. T. P., in 1904. He was, however, employed almost continuously by the Department of the Interior, Ottawa, from 1881 to 1897, and again from 1903 to 1920, in the four Western Provinces on subdivisions, meridians, re-surveys, traverses and inspections.

In 1885 he made exploratory surveys in Keewatin, in 1888 traversed parts of the Athabaska and Churchill, and in 1892 explored between the Assiniboine and the Saskatchewan.

In 1892 he was offered an appointment on the technical staff, Ottawa, which he accepted.

In 1897 he was appointed Gold Commissioner in the Yukon, and went in by Chilkoot Pass in April of that year. He held this arduous position for two years and came out by the same route as he entered the country in April, 1899.

The following is taken from a biographical sketch that appeared in a weekly publication in November last, written by Henry J. Woodside.

"Just after the discovery of the Klondike and Indian River goldfields by Robert Henderson, of Nova Scotia, and the consequent rush to them, Mr. Fawcett was recommended by William Ogilvie, as gold commissioner, both as an honest man, and as a good surveyor, as the office dealt with the location, registration, survey and working of all gold claims in the territory of Yukon.

Therefore Mr. Fawcett was sent in with a small staff of men more ignorant of the work than he was, with a hotch-potch of mining laws partly compiled from the B. C. code, and partly from supposition. He was given blank books and blank paper, and these in small quantities. For direction he was given the mining code, and was told to use his judgment. The accommodation in Dawson was wretched, and at times he appeared like a man trying to do business in his bedroom, with great crowds of importunate people, who never let up in their efforts to secure mining claims, by fair or by foul means.

When a new find was scented, or a claim lapsed from any cause, from three to thirty men would rush to the gold com-

missioner's office, and each one was prepared to swear that he was the original, or the first correct staker.

Some of these men were prepared, when a rich claim was at stake, to use any means of bribery or persuasion to secure the prize. It soon developed among the politically appointed staff of the G. C.'s office, that while there were some who were honest to the end, others betrayed their own and their country's honor, by accepting bribes and retainers. The back door of the office became known as the "\$10 door," because one of the staff, who later became a cheap politician and labor leader in the West, accepted that amount for side information on the location of claims. Had it not been for a few such creatures in the Klondike, Canada would have come through this critical test of her national honor with high credit among the representatives of all nations. Even the gold tax, and the reservation of alternate claims, while bitterly denounced, were perfectly correct measures, when honorably managed and controlled.

On Mr. Fawcett's head fell the full force of all Government measures that were denounced, all mistakes made by ignorant or corrupt officials, every necessary delay to obtain light or direction from Ottawa, and all the graft practiced by cheap political appointments from Ottawa. And added to that he was being stabbed in the back by one worthless man, who later became the idol of the poor miner, but who then aspired to become G. C., no doubt for the opportunities it would afford. As Mr. Fawcett said, he had to be on guard night and day, and human nature cannot stand that very long. He was even threatened with force.

A "gentleman" who was suspected of having terminated the span of two lives in Yukon and in Alaska, and who was then in retirement in the wilds, told the following: "We were going to mob Fawcett, but he grabbed an axe handle (the most trusty weapon a Canadian hand can grasp) and defied us with 'Come on, I will get two or three of you before you can get me.' We gave him a cheer instead, before we broke up."

A friend of mine was with Mr. Fawcett on Christmas morning, 1898, when he opened his mail. He drew forth a hundred dollar bill from an envelope, and holding it up, said: "I do not know where it came from, but I have a shrewd suspicion." A little later my friend saw him put that identical \$100 bill on the collection plate of Dr. A. S. Grant's Presbyterian Church.

On every side were corporations and men who were ready to spend money freely to obtain gold claims, trade or other concessions, and whiskey privileges; and when these learned that they could not bribe Mr. Fawcett, they started a campaign of slander and intimidation against him and honest government officials in Dawson.

Taking up his residence at Niagara Falls, Ont., in August, 1899, he apparently severed his connection with the Department of the Interior, and purchasing the "Daily Record" newspaper, continued as owner and publisher for eleven years. Surveying and exploring, however, were more attractive vocations, and we soon find him again in the field exploring and surveying for the Clergue interests in Algoma. In 1903 he was again in the employ of the Department of the Interior and for some years he was employed by this Department in the Western Provinces.

In 1909 he removed from Niagara Falls to reside in Toronto, but in the following year he removed to Ottawa, having been appointed to succeed the late George C. Rainboth, D.L.S., on the International Boundary Survey. Mr. Fawcett's work involved two straight lines of about 85 miles each at the head waters of the St. Francis River, P.Q., and surveys at the head waters of the Connecticut and St. John Rivers. This boundary country is rough and difficult of access. Satisfactory progress was made in 1910-1916, and in 1917 another party commenced work from the west and ran easterly, the two parties meeting in 1919, and thus completing the re-survey. This work involved many tedious computations before final adjustments were made. In 1920 Mr. Fawcett returned to Quebec to reset four monuments that had not been correctly set by the American Surveyors in 1913. This he accomplished in ten days, taking a series of observations for azimuth.

Three days after his return from this work, he was confined to his house by a recurrence of a former trouble caused by a fall in 1913 while in the field. The nervous shock of this accident was responsible for the trouble that caused his illness and death. A double operation was found necessary, but his death followed shortly afterwards on November 18th, 1920.

In April, 1913, Mr. Fawcett contributed a paper on the Boundary Survey between Canada and the United States, east of the St. Lawrence River, to the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. This paper should be in the library of every surveyor.

About 1876 he married Mary McCullough, a school teacher of Irish descent, by whom he had three children—Herman, born February 8th, 1878, now in Seattle, Wash.; Marie Emily, born March 22nd, 1880 (now Mrs. Dr. Wm. Kautz, of Cincinnati), and Eva Lillian, born August 16th, 1883 (now Mrs. Willis Pratcher, California).

After the death of his first wife in April, 1884, he married Margaret Thompson in 1889, daughter of a retired British Army Officer, by whom he had five children—Lenora Ann, born May 2nd, 1890 (died June, 1897); Myrtle Marguerite, born November 25th, 1893; Capt. Thomas Gordon Fawcett, M.C., R. E., born November 17th, 1895; Arthur Maxwell, born November 13th, 1897, and Jack Osborne, born May 25th, 1902.

The following "Appreciation" has been contributed by Dr. Otto Klotz:—

"Thomas Fawcett is no longer with us. A bleak November morning dawned and carried him across the bar. The world has lost a man, and we have lost a friend and counsellor, while home is made desolate by the absence of a good husband and kind father.

"Thomas Fawcett had that rare combination of qualities—sterling integrity, indefatigable application, unsullied honor, cheerfulness, human sympathy, devoid of all ostentation, devotion to church and family—that give him an enduring place in the hearts of all who knew him or who came in contact with him.

"My acquaintance goes back to the year 1877, when we both came to Ottawa to pass the newly created honorary and difficult examination of Dominion Topographical Surveyor, and our friendship has been uninterrupted these 43 years, although we have not been in close touch throughout, for our spheres lay for years in different parts of Canada.

"Whatever Mr. Fawcett did, he did well, whether as assistant and serving his apprenticeship, or later as surveyor on meridians and base lines; or as explorer in the wilds of the Churchill River, or on the headwaters of the English and Albany Rivers, or on International Boundary Surveys. Of powerful physique, he shared with the strongest of his men the burden of packing and portaging. It was in sharing the hardships of a surveyor's life that endeared him to all who served under him. His very cheerfulness served as a tonic and inspiration about camp.

"More than one striving young man knows the material helping hand that was extended by Mr. Fawcett, whereby a career was established.

"If need be he would apply persuasive power in a visible manner when it meant the defence of the weak or aggression by a bully.

"The days as Gold Commissioner in the Yukon were trying days for him. He gave of what was best in him in a new field. He cleared the brush, opened out a skyline and made the trail easy for his successor. However, the world is thankless.

"The wings of time seemed to pass over him apparently quite oblivious of his presence, or of his fleeting three score and ten, for his youthful face had a perennial freshness, the envy as well as the joy of friends, old and young. His hearty laugh was infectious, and his frank, open countenance spoke of sincerity, that attribute in man that is decadent these days.

"We are all the better that Thomas Fawcett lived, and his memory will abide with us as long as we tread this earth."

The "Yukon Midnight Sun" of October 28th, 1898, contains a brief biographical sketch of Mr. Fawcett, and a crude portrait, probably drawn by the local reporter. This paper also contains an account of the tragic death of J. A. Cadenhead, D.L.S., by drowning. He broke through the ice of the Klondike River and his body was found frozen in by A. M. Talbot. Before losing consciousness, he threw out on the ice his field book and notes. He was 41 years of age. His home was near Winnipeg.

Mr. Fawcett was a member of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada; member and past-president of the Geodetic Society of Canada; member of the Engineering Institute of Canada; President of Dominion Land Surveyors' Association, 1911, and President of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, 1907. He was a member of the Board of Examiners, O.L.S., for some years prior to his death.

In early life he was a Methodist in religion, but joined the Presbyterian Church when in the Yukon.

The late Rev. Michael Fawcett, of Toronto, was his uncle.