

roof of clapboards, open at the ends. My blankets (beds are luxuries outside civilisation), are spread on some clean straw on the top of the freight. My kitchen is four feet square of the stem of a flat boat, and my occupation handling a square sail hoisted on an ash tree six inches in diameter, with a fork at a height of fifteen feet above deck, over which a two inch cable, serving the purpose of a halliard, is rove. The crew consists of ten men including the cook, the latter neither cleanly nor skilful. Two Swedes, one John Linkstrom, a bright, active fellow of five and twenty, well looking and cheerful, ready to stand up for Sweden against all odds; a hard worker, cheerful, and able to take his own part. The other is one of those utterly useless drones with which humanity is cursed. A French Canadian, Pierre La Marche, who served as a soldier during the late war in the United States army, and who relates with great humor his experience of a retreat from Stonewall Jackson; a British Canadian named Harris, the remainder being Americans of English or Irish descent. The mode of progression is to drift down the stream at the rate of from one and a half to three miles per hour, and so tortuous is its course that in two miles our bearings were north-west, south-east, west, and north; each of the bends are all horse-shoe shaped, and some idea may be formed of their character when it is known that the distance from Fort Abercrombie to Georgetown by travelled road is fifty miles, by water it is two hundred and three miles, and occupied sixty-four hours in sailing.

Georgetown, the scene of wonderful adventures of the *Toronto Telegraph* correspondent last spring, is a Hudson Bay post of five or six houses on a commanding point. It will be a place of some importance as the Northern Pacific Railway from Duluth, on Lake Superior, crosses Red River at the post. It has a ferry or pontoon crossing the river, and two miles further up stream is another called Hutch's ferry, maintained to avoid the Buffalo River, which is unfordable at high water.

Newspaper correspondents and Canadians generally have not impressed the people of Minnesota with any favorable ideas of their good sense. The gubernatorial progress in 1869, which led to such deplorable consequences, was particularly distinguished for the absurd conduct of the majority of the individuals attached to or attaching themselves to 'His Excellency's' suite. There were honorable exceptions, of which the Chief Justice, Secretary, and Collector of Customs, were prominent examples. But these only served to set off the folly of the others. And the people who attempted to enter at various times as newspaper correspondents were the worst of all. With what a thrill of astonishment and awe the Canadian people read the adventures of the hero who exchanged laudatory compliments with the *Swampy Crees* snugly located in bush on the

Dacotah side of Red River, while he was enjoying his cigar beside his camp fire in Minnesota, and how he swarmed back in hot haste to the inn at Georgetown through sixteen miles of swamp land all the while to his shoulders in the water and mud, leaving to the aforesaid *Swampies* his corn or prog, and like General Anthony Wayne, "His piunder and his speeches, his cornstalk whisky and his prog, black necktie and brown breeches," and with what earnest expectation, doomed, alas, to disappointment, the succeeding despatch was awaited. His proprietor found out that a fighting correspondent who combined in his own person all the qualities of Homer's heroes, would not pay, and so placed an extinguisher on the "aspiring blood of Lancaster." One of our crew, rejoicing in the name of Peter, was mail carrier at that period, and tells with great glee how he protected the hero aforesaid from the Indians with a plug of tobacco, and how valiantly he cowered beside the aforesaid Peter when encamped at night with a gun and revolver as his bed fellows. Another of those bright Bohemians at the store of Mr. McCaulay, at McCaulayville, near Fort Abercrombie, with the horrible experience and distinguished gallantry of his confrere before him and in his mind's eye, turned his breeches pockets into magazines, and charged his pipe with a metallic cartridge for a small revolver, which exploded while he was enjoying the luxury of a smoke, sending the bullet into the ceiling over head, while the valiant Bohemian sprang to his feet lustily yelling out "Who shot me." Little idiosyncrasies these, and combined with a swaggering pretentiousness which takes the name of "Government officialism," while it may tend to enhance the importance of the bearer adds nothing to his actual value amongst the shrewd frontiersmen, and makes it humiliating to those whose business, public or private, bring in the same line of travel. Such people bring disgrace on the Canadian name and do themselves no service.

The Red River overflows its banks and the country on each side for several miles every spring; it rises over thirty feet in perpendicular height, and for a few weeks in spring must be a magnificent spectacle, only a few feet of the trees on its banks appearing out of water. It deposits a large amount of rich mould—the color of its waters being a dull grey and deposits at once a quantity of fine greasy mud.

At Hutch's ferry we oversailed our log and ran into the structure, at grey dawn on the morning of Wednesday, 6th ult., but owing to the skill of the crew no damage was suffered, but it reminded me of Washington Irvine's assertion that the early Dutch navigators sailed during the day and hove to in the evening in order to avoid running down a continent at night. Below Georgetown the river expands to a width of one hundred feet, its sinuosities are, now bold

sweeps not less than half a mile or more in length. Its average depth is about six feet, and it flows at the rate of three miles per hour, so that it sends 158,400 cubic feet per minute of water containing a least ten per cent. of mud to Lake Winnipeg. The country along its banks is the richest I ever saw and the climate beautiful; the only drawback is want of wood, and that will be remedied by planting. Cultivation will cause many of the peculiarities of the country to disappear. It has already disposed of the grasshopper nuisance, and is disposing of the mosquitoes. The settlers say that in fifteen years it will be entirely a different country, and they aver that the Red River settlement is far away beyond it in fertility and resources.

In many respects the policy of the United States Government is favorable to settlement; a greater section of the land in Minnesota, in area 160 acres, can be had for \$14.50 and railway enterprise which is made to supply the place of public works, is stimulated by a bonus of alternate sections (one square mile) on each side of the line. At the same time the abominable financial and fiscal policy which the present party in power pursues seriously retards an influx of population by making everything twice or three times as dear as the same articles are in Canada. The tariff bears very hard on the farmer, especially on those newly beginning life, whose sole capital is their good right hands.

Fort Abercrombie is a square fort, stockaded, badly put together, with blockhouses on the angles. It is about 600 feet on each face, and boasts no armament; the blockhouses could mount six field pieces, but it has no ditch, rampart, covered way, caponiere, or other flanking or covering work. The buildings inside are good, and it is placed on a bluff formed on two sides by the waters of the Red River. The houses and barracks are very good as well as commodious; but it is on the outside of civilisation, difficult of access, and the garrison must be as much isolated as a community of monks. Up to the present we have made about eighty miles of river navigation per twenty-four hours, and hope to reach Fort Garry within sixteen days from the day of sailing from Abercrombie. Our position today is about mid-way between Wild Rice and Goose Rivers in latitude 47.30, north longitude 97 west, so we are getting on towards the great interior basin of the Arctic circle, with as much of the Bohemian as rough fare and rougher work can stamp upon our party, as we are all obliged to work, and hard too, in this country.

Among the subjects discussed at the last British Cabinet meeting was the *Alabama* question. The Government have decided, it is said, to instruct Mr. Thorncroft to ascertain as far as possible the disposition of the American Government as to re-opening the question, and to intimate the readiness of England to go over the whole discussion again.