

until the 27th of November. This delay was occasioned by ice drifting in the river and lake, through which it was impossible to ascend with a boat; and the only alternative was to wait till this drifting ice consolidated, and became strong enough to bear us and our loads.

A few words here descriptive of the way in which those northern rivers behave in fall will not be out of place. Instead of freezing over, some quiet, cold night, as most of our eastern, easy flowing, streams do, they begin by forming a narrow ribbon along each shore. Ice is at the same time forming all over, but the sweeping current prevents its consolidation, and is continually bearing it, hither and thither, running it into eddies and whirling it into great masses, which drift down stream, stranding in shallows, forming ice islands which gradually widen, running against the shore ice and attaching part of its bulk to it, then on again, leaving a bit here and there until it is absorbed. The cold is continually renewing the supply until the running channel is so contracted that a cold night chokes it, and our river is "set" as it is locally called. But what a "setting!" Instead of the smooth glassy surface our children love to glide over, we have, here, great masses of rough ice piled many feet above the mean surface; there are miles of broken surface over which it is impossible to travel, and no where anything resembling what we see on our streams at home.

I have sometimes thought that journeying over northern rivers in the winter would be good training for men about to try for the Pole over those broken ice fields called by some Arctic explorers the Paleocrystic Sea. The average duration of this drifting is about three weeks, but sometimes if the weather is mild it continues much longer.

This detention was a sore disappointment to all the party, as we had hurried and worked early and late all the way from McPherson to this point (1400 miles) in order to get out in open water, and we knew that our friends would be expecting us in November. As we could not let them know of our enforced delay, we knew they would be indulging in all sorts of wild fancies and fears concerning us, and though we knew we were safe and felt

assured of getting out safely we probably fretted and fumed as much as they did.

As I had only a few Magnetical and Astronomical observations to make at the Fort my time was not much occupied, and it hung heavy on my hands. For a day or two I relieved the monotony by photographing the place and many of the people in it. The presence of a camera in this isolated place was an extraordinary event, and many, if not all of the residents wanted a picture of themselves and little ones to send to friends they had not seen for many, many years, and probably never will see this side of time.

Unfortunately, owing to my long absence, the extreme temperatures experienced, and the continuous proximity to water my films so deteriorated that all my negatives, taken after those I sent out by Dr. Dawson, were very faint and unfit for printing from. This was a sore disappointment to many I photographed; for to them it may have been the one opportunity in their life, and my knowledge of this fact created a sympathy for them almost as painful as their disappointment must have been.

Dances were often got up around the Fort, many of which we attended. The one which I gave, referred to in the last number of the magazine, was the event of the season, as every one in the Fort and around it was invited. Old and young of both sexes, in fact, as in the case of the Widow Malone Ohone, "from the minister down to the Clerk of the Crown," everybody was there. Three fiddlers were in attendance, who played in turns, and only those who have seen a "Red River" or North-West fiddler—no, not violinist—play, may attempt to realize the amount of muscular force which can be put into playing the famous "Red River Jig." Generally seated on the extreme edge of his seat, the performer sways his body back and forth as if in a frenzy, and beats time on the floor with both feet until one who did not know the cause of the noise would fancy a charge of heavy cavalry was passing. He plays all over the strings, up, down and across, and in all possible, and some impossible, keys, and so rapidly that only the most expert can keep time with the (I was almost saying music) tune. Seriously, I don't think Paganini himself could provoke such sounds from