

wear and tear; and so it occurred one day last February, when my presence was imperatively demanded at Levis, that I had to cross in a canoe. Looking down from Durham Terrace on the ice-blockaded river, from whose surface rises, as it were, the steam from a caldron, one shudders at the thought of passing through a reality of one of the horrors of Dante's *Inferno*. One can imagine the last struggling with the crashing ice and sinking anon into the freezing flood. One can, here and there, distinguish indistinct forms fighting for life and escape amid the battling floes; and from out, as might be supposed, the sulphur-fumes, sounds as of agony reach one as he gazes down in wonderment and fear. But through that mundane *Inferno* I had to pass; business must be attended to, and to Levis I had to go, "though Hades yawn between." Well clothed in furs and my feet in Indian moccasins, I drove down at ten o'clock in the morning to the wharf. Before me on the *batture* was the canoe—a vessel known in many places as a "dug-out;" it was about thirty feet long and five feet broad, pointed at both ends, at one of which there was a small Union Jack displayed; seats were placed amidships, while in the stern was a luxurious display of buffalo robes, in which the *cabin* passengers were supposed to recline and wrap themselves, of whom there were two besides myself—a newly married pair on a wedding tour to Europe. Poor bride! it was an ominously cold entry on a new life. There were six *steerage* passengers (those who crossed at a cheap rate, and were obliged to assist in working the canoe), and those with the crew, numbering six, occupied the seats. Some freight and some luggage belonging to my fellow *cabin* passengers, were also on board. It was a bitterly cold day, thirty-eight below zero; and as I looked upon the cruel river I could see but the mist rising from its surface, while within a short distance huge masses of ice rushed

down with the resistless tide. It seemed a rash undertaking, a tempting of Providence, a downright madness, to face such danger to cross that river; so I asked one of the men how long it would take to reach the other side; he replied about twenty minutes. This man seemed to take things with the utmost *nonchalance*; he was sitting on the side of the canoe with one foot in the icy water. I thought he was acting so through bravado, and asked him if he was not afraid of wetting his foot and having it frozen. I merely showed my ignorance by the question, as he told me that his foot was frozen, but that he was thawing it by keeping it in the water, which was not frozen.

We the *cabin* passengers stepped into the canoe and wrapped up ourselves as comfortably as possible, waiting for our departure. I could not see much of my companions. A large cloud completely hid the lady's face from view; but, by the way she clung to her husband, she was both terrified and cold. At ten o'clock we weighed anchor, that is, the canoe was shoved from the *batture* into the river. No sooner was it so, than the men began paddling up the river against the tide; but it was so strong that our headway was hardly perceptible. Extra paddles were then handed to the *steerage* passengers to assist, and our progress was a little better. For a long distance we continued to skirt the city wharves, for no opening seemed to offer in the compact and rugged masses of ice which rushed down with the stream. At times a large block would almost graze our canoe, and the higher parts of it overhung us as we passed. Now and then there would happen, as it were, a conflict between the larger masses, when the smaller would be immediately crushed and overturned, causing in the water a sort of miniature maelstrom which threatened to engulf our canoe. Higher up the river we went, till the men thought they could cross without danger of being carried