

JOTTINGS ALONG THE C. P. R.

THE Pullman I found myself in at Winnipeg proved to be a through car from Montreal to Victoria, and was occupied entirely by men, as I discovered later when the train started. At the time I effected my entrance, however, it was quite empty, and the number of people who were inspecting the different cars, as they were allowed to do, and passing backwards and forwards in the operation, made the possession of the first vacant seat a considerable object to a hot and weary traveller. The black porter was as usual very civil and told me to remain where I was as long as it suited me, so I availed myself of the opportunity to inspect it thoroughly. The "Honolulu" is one of the handsomest cars owned by the Company; it is upholstered most artistically or rather æsthetically with gray green velvet; the sides of the seats and the berths are mounted in cherry, beautifully carved and inlaid with brass; the roof is painted, and the ventilators are provided with amber-coloured stained glass; two lounges occupy each side of the centre of the car, parallel with the sides (a new arrangement to me); and heavy velvet portieres hang over each end door. The wash basins in the lavatories are of dark marble, and one of them is furnished with a small three-foot-six bath which had evidently received much patronage between Montreal and Winnipeg.

The train is supposed to leave at 9.50, but it is about 10.30 when a cry of "all aboard" is heard, followed by a hurried shaking of hands, and the engine with its nine cars—two sleepers (the "Honolulu and the "Selkirk"), a dining car, two first class, two second class, and two baggage cars—moves slowly out of the station bound on its long journey to the far Pacific Slope. For more than a mile outside of Winnipeg we pass crowds of people who have gathered along the line to see the first through train, and I begin to feel myself quite an historical character: the event seems one of such marked importance to this section of the country. The day is close, sultry, and slightly overcast; but once clear of the city, steaming away over the prairie, we leave dull clouds behind us and pass into a region of vivid blue and green, where the land and sky meet upon the horizon and the eye is almost wearied by the glare of colours all about us. We see large herds of cattle browsing upon the plains, and numerous prosperous farms are dotted about on both sides of the railway.

Soon after leaving Winnipeg my friends came into the "Honolulu" in search of me, and I was escorted to my proper place in the "Selkirk," which had been put on at Winnipeg and was a very common and ordinary Pullman compared to the other—already filled by passengers from Montreal to the Coast. The first large town we reach is Portage la Prairie. According to Mr. Sandford Fleming, "this town is situated on the northern bank of the Assiniboine river (we have not, however, caught a glimpse of the river) directly to the south of Lake Winnipeg. Ten years ago, Portage la Prairie had little more than the name by which it was known to the voyageur, it is now (in 1883) a thriving town, with many streets and buildings extended over possibly a square mile; two large elevators are constructed on the railway line for the storage of wheat, and a branch railway has been established to Gladstone." The town appears to me to have increased and developed considerably since the above lines were penned, and is now a busy place. Larger a great deal than Portage la Prairie is Brandon, where we stop for about twenty minutes. It has quite an imposing station, but the town is not visible from the track, being situated on a rising slope from the river Assiniboine. It is now quite an important place. Mr. Fleming says of this part of the country, "The prairie in all directions in the neighbourhood (of Brandon) has a warm subsoil of sandy or gravelly loam, differing from the deep black vegetable mould of the level banks of the Red River. Settlers' houses and huts are seen in all directions, and I learn that a great extent of country has been taken up for farming."

During the afternoon we continue to roll along over the same level prairie land, with occasional peeps of the Assiniboine, whose course is marked by groups of trees varying the monotony of the dead level horizon. We pass numerous ponds close to the line, which abound with small wild ducks, apparently quite indifferent to us as we fly by: they scarcely trouble themselves to turn their pretty heads. Wild flowers cover the prairie in all directions, handsome red lilies, enormous corn flowers, wild sunflowers, dwarf wild roses growing on bushes hardly a foot high, a tall plant with a deep pink blossom unfamiliar to me, and scores of others I do not recognize.

After leaving Brandon we partake of our first meal in the dining-car, where everything is well arranged, and we have an excellent menu, including fresh salmon and other delicacies of the season. The car itself is a new one, exceedingly handsome and massive: the seats are of solid dark leather designed to imitate the fashionable alligator skin, the mirrors and

all available portions of the car are inlaid with bronze, the linen and plate, glass and china, are all fresh and shine resplendent; in fact, the only improvement that could be made is to substitute for the white waiters black ones and increase the number employed upon the trip: doubtless, however, the Company did not anticipate the amount of patronage which was bestowed upon the first through train.

We arrive at Moosomin at seven o'clock: it is a small town scattered over a large area of ground on both sides of the line. There are indications here of a tremendous storm rapidly approaching us from the west; the sky turns from steel blue to copper colour; the wind rises; the dust blows in clouds, completely obscuring the town; and in five minutes after, as we glide again out on the prairie and are seated at tea in the dining-car, the storm breaks over the train, accompanied by heavy thunder and vivid forked lightning, which plays all about us over the plain. The rain descends upon the roof in perfect sheets; not a sound can be heard above the din and rattle as it peppers ventilators and window panes. By common consent, knives and forks are laid aside, and the occupants of the well-filled car cease to shout inaudible orders to patient, much-vexed waiters, and devote themselves to observing the progress of the storm. The landscape, however, is almost shut out by dense sheets of water, except away to the south, where the gray leaden clouds trail their ragged edges over a breadth of golden sky which has caught the reflection of the setting sun. In about twenty minutes we have passed out of the worst of it; windows are thrown up on all sides, and we enjoy the delicious, cool, damp atmosphere after the hot, sultry, dusty air which we breathed all day between Winnipeg and Moosomin; and when we return to our Pullman we feast our eyes upon a magnificent sunset, toward which we are smoothly and silently rolling.

A few miles from Broadview, the next station to Moosomin, our engine developed a hot box and went off either for repairs or to seek a substitute, leaving its nine cars in solitary grandeur out on the boundless prairie without a habitation in sight. The gentlemen all availed themselves of this opportunity to get out of the train and wander about in search of flowers and curiosities. I was presented with a magnificent bouquet of gigantic size, containing most of the flowers I have above referred to; and after a delay of an hour and a half, during which we enjoyed the twilight and abused the mosquitoes, our engine returned, and—once more under way—we all prepared for our night's rest, it being past ten o'clock, though still quite light.

E. S.

OUR PARIS LETTER.

WITH the exception of professors and students, most of those intending to invade the fields and the plains during the summer months have left town. The remaining unfortunates are resigning themselves to ice-eating and drives by moonlight in the Bois.

It is done. The Princes have gone. The calmness with which they have been allowed to depart augurs well for the Republic. Of this latter you hear the seemingly well-founded opinion, "This time it stands *pour toujours*." But I fear that no minor trait in the French character was expressed by that hero of the play,—“and every time I loved it was *pour toujours pour toujours*.”

Of course each "pretender" protested. The "protestation" and the "discourse" are specialties of the Gaul. The former, written by the Comte de Paris, far from dispelling the idea that there was cause for his exile, only confirmed it. The latter, of the young Prince Victor, was certainly a genial, not unworthy little affair. Poor Prince Jerome will miss his Paris sorely.

At the *Gare de Lyon*, early last Sunday morning, a very pretty sight was to be seen—the return of a part of the garrison sent to Tonkin. All along the road they were to march, from the station to the Fort of Vincennes; triumphal arches had been erected, speeches were made, and flowers distributed among the soldiers, the points of whose bayonets disappeared under roses and lilies.

These months of June and July are times of immense excitement for French students. Few outsiders are aware of their surprising capacity for work. They have a quickness of comprehension, a power of concentration, not a little remarkable. It may, perhaps, be said of them that "they see further than any others at the first glance," but, alas! the "second sight" is that which is lacking. Every year scientific studies become more popular, and before the end of the century they will have a decided preëminence over belles-lettres. The engineer is at present the ideal of young France, in spite of the vigorous efforts of some to turn his mind towards literature. However, we can't much deplore any departure from the morbid sentimentality so prevalent some sixty years ago.