

A CANOE TRIP ON THE SASKATCHEWAN

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About a year ago, when in discussing our proposed expedition for the coming summer to Mount Brown we decided to make a folding canvas boat a part of our equipment, it occurred to me that it would make a very pleasant termination to the trip to paddle down the Saskatchewan to Edmonton from the point crossed by our route. With this in view, I provided myself with a tracing of a portion of Palliser's map, showing the river between those two points. This proved of considerable service later on.

Early in September we commenced our return journey, having completed our explorations in the vicinity of Mount Brown, and being warned by the diminished appearance of our larder that it was time to seek civilization; and on the 9th we stopped for lunch a few miles beyond the Saskatchewan.

My proposal to paddle to Edmonton was strongly opposed by the other members of the party, but I was confirmed in my decision by the condition of our horses, whose backs were becoming very sore through our forced marches. The boat itself, from its awkward shape, was responsible for a good deal of this, and besides relieving the horses of a portion of their loads my departure would leave a saddle-horse at the disposal of the other members of the party. Being fond of boating, I looked forward to the trip with considerable pleasure, notwithstanding its loneliness.

About the middle of the afternoon we reached the Saskatchewan, which we were glad to find fordable, as on our outward journey the height of the water had necessitated a long detour to find a place where the river is confined to a single channel, which was crossed by boat, making the horses swim. After crossing, the horses were unpacked, and preparations soon made for my departure; the boat was put together and the oars converted into a double paddle; all my own belongings, and one-fourth of the provisions (there were four in the party), were put on board; and then, wishing Dr. Coleman and the others good-by, I pushed off, and in a few minutes a bend in the river hid them from view.