

prairie chickens are nearly full grown, and the lakes swarm with water-fowl, chiefly ducks and geese. Foxes and badgers are yet quite common in some districts. But perhaps the best sport with running dogs is in the chase of the jackass rabbit. This creature derives its name from its long ears, which are often the only part of the animal to be seen above the grass of the prairie. Its body is about the size of that of an English hare, and its legs are very long. When hotly pursued, the jack rabbit runs with amazing swiftness. No dog but a grayhound has the slightest chance of catching it, and so expert at doubling is the game that it takes a pair of these hounds to make the capture. We saw a couple of bird dogs start a jack one morning, and as it ran off very leisurely they evidently thought to overtake it. But somehow they could not decrease the distance between them and the tranquil-minded jack, and after making the most frantic efforts to that end for a mile or so, they came back slowly with a ludicrous look of mingled shame and unconcern in their faces.

East of the Missouri River, coyotes are no longer common. We saw only one during five months. It was in the evening, and he came down the trail quite boldly until he was within a few yards of us. Then he stopped, looked at us for a few moments, and leaped off into the grass to one side. Trotting on slowly for a few yards he again stopped to regard us over his shoulder, but a salute from my companion's revolver sent him tearing away over the prairie with wonderful speed, and in a very short time he had disappeared over a distant bluff.

In late autumn, after the rains begin, life and travelling on the prairie become dreary and disagreeable. The whole face of nature is a melancholy monotony. There is no variety in the dismal prospect. The dull, gray plain stretches away on every side to meet the dull, gray sky. The slues are full of water and bottomless of mire. When the rain blizzards blow, the traveller has a good chance of losing himself, and, in any case, he is sure to be chilled through and through, in spite of all the clothes he can carry.

After some experiences of this kind, the recollection of the bright wood fires, and warm, comfortable homes of Ontario overcame our resolution to remain longer. We set out for the East about the middle of November, and were glad to leave behind us the first snow-storm as we crossed the *coteau des prairies*, and descended into the valley of the Mississippi River.

A. STEVENSON.

JOTTINGS OFF THE C. P. R.

THE even tenor of our way was broken by occasional soundings with a long pole, and shouts re-echoed from the promenade deck to the wheel-house of "no bottom," "no bottom," "six and a half," "six and a half," "six feet," with other variations of lesser degree, as we swung over the numerous sand bars which obstruct the course of the Columbia when the water is low. Indeed, I was much impressed with Mr. Armstrong's skilful navigation of the river's numerous and tortuous channels, and his thorough knowledge of all its knotty (one should coin a word, and say snaggy) points. We stopped for a second time at four o'clock at Spilla-Machine Landing, consisting only of a couple of cabins that lie at the foot of a gigantic mass of rock, clothed almost to its bare summit with a scattered growth of pines; in fact, we were so immediately below it that the eye was wearied and strained painfully by any effort to gaze up at its rugged crags. We paused here but a few minutes, then steamed on again up the wonderful Columbia, winding from one side of the valley to the other, now to the base of the Rockies, and again to the foot of the Selkirks.

Soon after we left Spilla-Machine, however, the valley opened out as we approached the Lake country, and away to the south of us rose a conical blue hill, like a giant sugar loaf, from which the Selkirk Range fell away in gentle undulations to the horizon. The Rocky Mountains, on the contrary, lost the low wooded plateaux (or grass benches as they are called here) that had marked their bases, and came sloping down almost to the water's edge, the silver river flowing so close by their precipitous sides that one could distinctly see a number of inviting paths marking the face of the rocks. On enquiry, however, these turned out to be the dry beds of mountain torrents formed by the melting snow in the warm months. We noticed, too, occasional signs of the pack trail leading from Golden City to the interior, and observed its course along a dangerous-looking slope, congratulating ourselves upon being able to prosecute our journey by steam instead of horse-power. Nothing could exceed the varied nature of these mountain peaks and summits; some, though barren and rugged, showed occasional scattered groups of pines and firs, while others were streaked far up their rocky sides with the brilliant greens of a recent undergrowth following in the track of some forest fire; all showed an unwearying diversity of conformation. Fourteen miles from Spilla-Machine the character

of the Columbia changed entirely; it left its mud banks, and flowed between low overhanging bushes of cranberry and willows on the west, and clay cliffs, some sixty feet high, on the east side. Near here we came upon a bit of wet sandy beach, in which the tracks of a bear were clearly visible not twenty feet from the boat. The lights and shadows of the setting sun on the mountains and river were exquisitely soft and tender, and the reflections of the trees in the swiftly flowing water were clear and sharply cut. Some twenty miles from our last landing a wooded rocky range came into view on the west bank,—a spur of the Selkirk Range. It was streaked in some places with a red mineral deposit, in others it showed a rich orange colour. These headlands rose to a height of six hundred feet and then fell away down to the water, to be succeeded by others of a similar but less rocky nature, till the shades of evening blent all into one.

At eight o'clock we tied up to the bank, in delightfully primitive fashion, for the night, and were off again at sunrise the next morning. When I stepped out of my cabin I found the mountains on the west bank had entirely disappeared and given place to high bluffs covered with the short bunch grass of the lake region, now burnt to the colour of pale brown paper by the long-continued drought of these dry summer months. Fine fir trees were scattered about, singly and in groups, without any undergrowth, giving the country the air of a well-kept park suffering severely from want of rain. The Rocky Mountains still lay in distant blue masses on the east bank. At nine o'clock we stopped beside a large sand-bar forming the north end of a wooded island, and deposited a settler with his effects, consisting of a farm waggon (in various parts), a plough, a harrow, six pigs, two coops of chickens, lumber, bundles, pots and pans, and other miscellaneous articles. He was a man well advanced in years, and it was positively depressing to leave him alone, a melancholy atom of humanity in the middle of the Columbia River. His son was to join him during the morning and convey him and his *outfit* (western) by boat to his future home on one of the smaller channels of the main stream. A little farther on we draw in to the bank for wood, which has been cut and piled for the steamer's use during the winter; then move on again for some uneventful miles till we reach a high, clay cliff on the east side, carved (by the action of water, it is said,) into the towers and battlements of a miniature fortification. To me it looked more like some curious and inexplicable freak of nature. There are detached pillars of clay, several feet in height, dotted about in this vicinity, which remind one strongly of the chimneys and *débris* of some ruined city. We saw several fine fishhawks floating high over the river, and remarked their large, untidy nests perched in—what would seem to be their favourite locality—the top of a decayed pine tree; on one occasion the tree in question hung so far over the water that the *Duchess* passed almost beneath it.

We had now almost reached our destination—a place called "Lilacs," the euphonious name being derived from its owner, not from any shrub that flowers in the neighbourhood. This delectable spot is some six miles from the Lower Columbia Lake, and we were rapidly approaching it on Monday morning, when we came to a shallow place in the river where the water fell to three feet. We made our way slowly towards a point round which the Columbia flowed with a rapid curve, and just as we were clearing it the current caught the boat's head, and turned it in a second down the stream again. Mr. Armstrong would not risk a second attempt to ascend the river, as we had already narrowly escaped running upon a reef of rock, when the steamer refused to answer her helm, and fell a prey to the violence of the current. We accordingly retired a couple of hundred yards down the Columbia to a favourable nook, and tied up the *Duchess* once more to the edge of the bank, which, fortunately, sloped down in a gentle, grassy declivity to the edge of the water. We found we were a mile from Lilacs, and an Indian, who had been observing our progress from the top of a high bluff, mounted his pony and rode up to spread the news of the steamer's arrival, which is quite an event in that isolated part of the country. From the middle of May, or earlier, until the middle of August, the waters of the Columbia, swelled by the melting snows from the mountains, are sufficiently deep to allow the *Duchess* to penetrate some twenty-five miles farther than the place we reached, viz., to the end of the Lower Columbia Lake, an extension which greatly increases the beauty of the trip. But, owing to the lateness of the season in our case, and consequent low water, these twenty-five miles were added to our riding expedition. We despatched a messenger for saddle and pack horses, and reconciled ourselves to a delay of twenty-four hours until they could reach us, which we were able, fortunately, to spend upon the steamer, as she did not leave till the following afternoon.

E. S.

THE slaves are no longer below us, but they are among us. Barbarism is no longer at our frontiers; it lives side by side with us.—*Amiel*.