

NEWS TO TELL.

Neighbor, lend me your arm, for I am not well;
This wound you see is scarcely a fortnight old;
All for a message I had to tell,
I've travelled many a mile in wet and cold.

You is the old gray chateau, above the trees,
He bade me seek it, my comrade brave and
gray;
Stately forest and river so brown and broad,
He showed me the scene as to a dying lay.

I have been there, and neighbor; I am not well;
I bore his sword and some of his curly hair,
Knocked at the gates and said I had news to tell,
Entered a chamber and saw his mother there.

Tall and straight, with the snows of age on her
head,
Brave and stern as a soldier's mother might be,
Deep in her eyes a living look of the dead,
She grasped her staff and silently gazed at me.

I thought I'd better be dead than meet her eye;
She guessed it all, I'd never a word to tell;
Taking the sword in her arms she heaved a sigh,
Clasping the curl in her hand she sobbed and
told.

I raised her up, she sat in a stately chair,
Her face like death, but not a tear in her eye;
We heard a step and a tender voice on the stair,
Murmuring soft to an infant's cooling cry.

My lady she sat erect, and sterner grew,
Finger on mouth she mentioned me not to say;
A girl came in, the wife of the dead, I knew,
She held his babe, and, neighbor, I fled away!

I tried to run, but I heard the widow's cry,
Neighbor, I have been hurt and I am not well;
I pray to God that never until I die,
May I again have such sorry news to tell!

—All the Year Round.

REPORT ON THE RED RIVER EXPE-
DITION OF 1870.

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[CONTINUED.]

If all the boats should be exposed to wreck in the channel of a river, for which they never were intended, there was reason to apprehend the most serious consequences as to the future progress of the Expedition. We were but at the outset of the journey, and it was most important that they should reach Shebandowan Lake, where the final embarkation was to take place in good order. I therefore urged strongly upon the officer commanding the Field Force, the expediency of sending to Collingwood for waggons, where, as the sowing season was over, any number of farmers could be found ready enough to come forward with their teams. This advice was to a certain extent taken, and a limited number of waggons and horses were brought from that place, but the military teams began to fall off, as their drivers said from starvation, being allowed but military rations. Some 60 of them were in hospital, and there were neither horses nor waggons to spare for the boats. Seeing therefore that there was nothing for it but the river, I sent voyageurs to improve the portages, and endeavoured to organize some system by which the boats might be in as far as possible saved from damage.

As the chief responsibility of getting forward the Expedition was thus thrown on the voyageurs, at a time when the impression was entertained in some quarters that it must be abandoned, I may be permitted before proceeding further, to offer some remarks in regard to the men, from whom so much was expected, and by whose exertions a very different turn was soon given to the general prospect.

The men forming the voyageur force, had been engaged in various parts of the country and comprised among their number boatmen and canoeists, from the St. Maurice, the Saguenay and the Ottawa. There were

Iroquois from Caughnawaga, and Algonquins from the lake of the Two Mountains, Métis from Ponotanguisheno and Sault St. Marie, raftsmen from the Trent, and pure Indians from various points on Lake Superior. The following list shows the numbers and localities whence they came.

Ottawa River.....	150 men.
St. Maurice and Saguenay.....	121 "
Ponotanguisheno, Manitouline, and various points on Lake Huron.....	98 "
River Trent.....	114 "
St. Lawrence, Caughnawaga, and St. Regis.....	99 "
Lake Superior Indians, and Half Breeds.....	117 "
Toronto.....	6 "
	705 men.

The management and organization of such an assemblage, was of course, a matter requiring great care and circumspection. I could not at once turn them over to the military. Two classes, utterly unacquainted with each other's habits and mode of life, had to be brought in contact. The one highly disciplined, but utterly inexperienced in the nature of the work to be undertaken, the other rough, ready and inured to hardship, but holding all fixed rules and restraint in abhorrence. On one hand was the soldier, accustomed to obey orders and cheerfully do whatever might be required of him, without troubling himself as to its object; on the other, the voyageur, generous and obliging, but in the habit of thinking and acting for himself; he, at least would have his views about what he was to do, and how he should do it, and would without meaning it, be very likely to give offence to those accustomed to unquestioning obedience.

Under these circumstances, and after fully weighing the matter, in all its bearings, I conceived it better to keep the voyageurs for a time at least, as much as possible apart from the military, and place them under officers accustomed to their management. I would thus have an opportunity of organizing them, discharging such as should prove inefficient, and replacing them from among the men on the works; and by the time Shebandowan Lake was reached, would be in a position to man the boats with picked crews of the most skillful voyageurs to be found in the country.

The plan of dragging forward the boats by the rocky channel of the river having been determined on, and notwithstanding my remonstrance, persevered in, it remained for me to aid in carrying it out in the manner which as I have said, would afford the greatest chance of safety to the boats; the rocky portages were laid with skids, and careful men were sent with every brigade, whether manned by soldiers or voyageurs, or partly by both.

From the point called "Young's Landing" for eight miles upwards, the river, as already explained, is exceedingly difficult. Soon after the arrival of the first brigade of boats at that point, the officer Commanding the Field Force sent a number of soldiers, unaccompanied by voyageurs under the command of a very active and energetic officer to try the passage, but after doing all that could be expected of inexperienced men and straining every nerve to get forward, they were obliged to return having been unable to get their boats up the rapids. Some interest had been excited by this experiment which it was said was designed to show how much could be effected in the rapids independently of the voyageurs. Before the

discouraging effects of this failure could be spread far I had sent forward a band of voyageurs who took up the boats and, from that time forward, the boats, in this difficult section, were manned wholly by voyageurs. To get them all past the section just referred to, occupied a force of 120 men for upwards of a month, and it had become necessary to spread so many people along the River, in this toilsome work of dragging boats up rocky channels that, much to my regret, I was compelled to reduce the force on the road. At this time (about the 20th of June) matters had become exceedingly critical. The Indians brought at great expense from Nipigon and the Grand Portage, mostly left. The Fort William Indians after a trip or two deserted us. Fond as they are of voyaging, in the usual way, the work of dragging boats had become so distasteful to them that neither the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company nor Mr. Choné, the Missionary at Fort William, both of whom used their influence in our favor could induce them to continue afloat, and I became apprehensive that we should be without guides in the interior. Discontent, at the same time, began to manifest itself among a section of the other voyageurs. "Why," they said, "do you keep us dragging boats over rocks where there is no water to float them, when a single waggon would accomplish more in a day than we can in ten? By using waggons you would have your boats in good order; whereas, by exposing them to such usage as this they are rendered unfit for the long journey yet before us." The majority of them, however, kept cheerfully at their work and when defections took place I had still the force on the works from which to supply the loss. These men knew perfectly well that waggons in sufficient number could easily have been obtained, by simply sending for them. Appreciating this, their patience and endurance, under toil which they believed to be unnecessary and arising from a mistake, cannot too highly be commended.

As may be supposed the boats suffered terribly, row-locks were lost, and oars in quantity, and the tool chests about depleted of their contents.

Boat builders, were however maintained at different points along the route, and as the strained and patched boats were brought forward they managed to repair and fit them for further trials.

Carpenters were set to work to make oars, the blacksmiths produced row-locks as fast as they could, and additional tools were ordered from Toronto.

By struggling on that way the expedition was saved from disaster, and those who were looking for an order to return were doomed to disappointment.

While the boats were being dragged thus tediously over the rocks of the Kamanistiquia and Matawin Rivers, operations were going forward on the road. The waggons at first very limited in number, were gradually coming forward, and stores were accumulating at the Matawin and Oskondage. Except on two occasions, after days of heavy rain, the road as far as the Matawin Bridge, was kept in fair condition. From thence to the Oskondage, it was in a bad state no doubt, but never so utterly bad but that a yoke of oxen, with a waggon, could take from eight to twelve hundred pounds over it, and horses with waggons, as well as oxen, passed frequently to that point.

The principal part of the workmen who remained at my disposal, over and above the numbers engaged in the channel of the river, were placed at convenient intervals along the route west of the Matawin Bridge. Several companies of the regular troops