

"A sail up the Assiniboine by moonlight, is inexpressibly grand. One's thoughts go out towards that Supreme Being whose creative power is so wonderfully displayed. What a great awe creeps over one, in the stillness of the midnight hour, as he thinks of his own littleness—a speck in the great universe. And yet what a cheering and reassuring thought that not one sparrow falls to the ground without our Heavenly Father's notice.

Gliding up the swift current, the huge Red River boat seems like some giant monster stealthily creeping upon its prey, cleaving its way deftly up the turbid stream, pushing on through the sombre shadows, cast by the dense growth of vegetation on either side, past the over-hanging banks which protrude and serve to mark the serpentine windings of the stream. Now the tangled shrubs and underbrush part. The spell is broken. A more gladsome feeling is felt as the light from the full moon comes streaming down. The fierce, turbulent strugglings of the passing current, seething and boiling are revealed. The sky is unclouded. The stars are brilliant and innumerable in the vast arched concave. The sublimity of the view, brings to mind David's words, "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament sheweth His handiwork."

That horrid whistle! It has brought me down from the seventh heaven. I suppose my meditations must cease, for that is the signal to lay her to and wood up. Now the pilot swings the big boat inshore, and the line is fastened to stout oak trees on the bank. The harsh voice of the mate is commanding, "Out there, boys, and get her wooded up." Although in a deep sleep, the motley crew, nicknamed "roosters," shake themselves, heave the gangway out, and plunge into the bush to where the wood is ready cut and piled. If any of the roosters shirk the work, they are cursed by the mate, who seems always to have the most stimulating oaths at his tongue's end. It does not take long to wood up, and we are soon gliding along as before, with the addition, however, of millions of bloodthirsty mosquitoes.

One man who may be pardoned, for feeling his importance, is the pilot. Though the bends be ever so angular, or the stream narrow, he displays a power of control which is really wonderful. One imagines that the boat will surely strike the bank directly ahead, but just in a twinkling she obeys the hand of her master and barely skims the

dreaded point. A few yards farther on the same is repeated, and so frequently does this occur that at last dread gives place to admiration, and the pilot becomes in one's mind a hero.

It took three days to get to Brandon. The town-site was dotted over with tents, but I saw no wooden houses. My cargo was soon unshipped and then I saw to my dismay immense quantities of the same goods piled up all along the river bank. After inquiring around I found it impossible to dispose of my flour and bacon without serious loss, so I resolved to stay a week and await developments. I raised my tent on the side of a hill, and then made a tour, to discover how many places of business I could find. That night a tremendous thunder storm swept the country, levelling almost every tent in Brandon. I stood up most of the night, leaning my head against the tent pole. I was a pretty sick man. Alone, sick at heart, sick at stomach, the elements raging and destroying on every hand. It was the most miserable night I ever experienced.

While going around I had stopped to talk with a commission man, and during the conversation stood near a barrel of dried apples. I was pretty hungry, and must have unconsciously helped myself liberally to the fruit, for when I got back to my tent I did not care for any supper. I felt thirsty, however, and took a big drink of water. I then threw myself on the blankets and tried to sleep, but in vain. I felt worried about the failure of my venture, for I confidently expected to make two hundred dollars. Soon my mental trouble gave place to a physical trouble. I began to feel an internal fullness which I could not account for. It never occurred to me that dried apples would swell and bulge out three or four times their natural size. I got bigger and still bigger. I thought I was going to burst. The pain was excruciating. I walked up and down moaning, and actually shedding tears. I was in a most deplorable state, and then, to make it worse, the thunderbolts of heaven seemed directed against me, and in order to save myself from the deluge of rain I was forced to hold up my tent. That meal of dried apples lasted me one day and a half.

On the third day I was all right again. I accepted a job of carpentering from Hon. J. W. Sifton, and had the satisfaction of assisting to build the first house in Brandon. After staying ten days, I sold out my stock of flour and bacon at a loss, and landed in Winnipeg again, chuckful of experience, but with not enough money to pay my debts.